Macedonian Succession: A Game of Diadems

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Abstract

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In this dissertation, I explore royal succession in Macedonia from the early Argead period until the fall of Macedonia to the Romans in 168 BCE. Particular attention is paid to the transition from the unstable, violent pattern of succession that dominated during and immediately after the Argead period to the peaceful pattern of succession that emerged in Antigonid Macedonia. The experience of the early Antigonid *basileis* is contrasted with that of the dynasties established by other Diadochi after the death of Alexander the Great. I suggest that game theory can provide a useful tool for understanding why violent succession patterns dominated in most Macedonian dynasties and also why a more peaceful pattern of power transfer was able to exist in the Antigonid dynasty. Ultimately, I use the surviving textual evidence from the early successor period to hypothesize a scenario that may have led to Antigonid dynastic stability. I also revisit and challenge several common modern hypotheses pertaining to

Macedonian succession, including claims that Heracles, son of Barsine, was illegitimate and also that most of the Iranian brides married at Susa by prominent Macedonians were set aside by their husbands after Alexander's death.

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to Penelope and Sigmund, who have patiently waited while their father explored vanished worlds they sometimes struggled to see.

INTRODUCTION

Macedonian princes faced a double-edged inheritance. Raised to be warrior horsemen, some young sons who avoided the endemic dangers of childbirth and disease likely died in childhood accidents or first experiences in war before their names had a chance to enter history. As Macedonian kings[1] were polygamous – sometimes enthusiastically so, potential *basileis* who survived childhood typically had brothers, half and full, with whom they had to contend not just for power but often for survival. Commonly, potential kings also had uncles and cousins willing and ruthless enough to challenge the reigning family line for power. Sometimes, rivals had maternal ties to foreign rulers, who often showed themselves to be eager to enable their preferred pretenders to contend for the diadem. And, perhaps most of all, woe to any child-prince whose royal father died – as happened regularly – and left him alone to face these dangers with only an *epitropos* to protect him. In the nearly four-hundred-year history of the ancient kingdom of Macedonia, only once did a prince succeed his regent without first killing him. Even of those men – all Macedonian monarchs were men – who managed to survive the accidents of childhood and the machinations of their extended families to become *basileis*, most died violently and many of the rest died on campaign, their bodies worn out by stress, wounds, and disease.

While the bloody and unstable nature of Macedonian succession is frequently remarked upon by modern historians, it is far from clear why members of the Macedonian royal clan

[1] In this dissertation, I treat *basileus* as though it was the universally accepted title for Macedonian rulers. However, the evidence for the use of this specific title by hereditary Macedonian dynasts is weak in the Argead period.

invested such effort in murdering their closest relatives. Nor is it obvious what the Macedonians themselves, royal and non-royal alike, believed was supposed to happen when a king died – does the impressive royal body count mask some system of succession now lost to us that existed in law, or at least in the broader "custom" or "tradition" sense of *dike*? Would a Macedonian of the mid-fourth century BCE have been able to tell an observer who was the "rightful" heir of the *basileus*? Would a Macedonian of the early second century?

Understanding Macedonian succession is historically important. Macedonia arguably left a deeper impression on world history than any other ancient Mediterranean state save Rome, and almost every aspect of this impression was influenced by the messy Argead succession process. In particular, the lives and deaths of Philip II and Alexander III were shaped by violent disputes over who would rule Macedonia. Though Philip ultimately became one of the more successful rulers in European history – transforming the meagre Macedonian *basileia* into an empire spanning Greece, the southern Balkan Peninsula, and parts of coastal Anatolia in a mere twenty years – it is easy to forget that Philip II was the third and youngest of his full brothers to reign. When he was still a boy, his eldest brother, Alexander II, was assassinated. The assassin, Ptolemy of Aloros, promptly married Philip's mother, set himself up as regent for Philip's next oldest brother Perdiccas, and packed Philip off as a hostage to Thebes. The teenage Perdiccas soon assassinated his murderous stepfather, but Perdiccas himself was slaughtered along with most of the Macedonian field army by Illyrian invaders only six years later. Given the chain of family tragedies which were necessary conditions for his accession, it is remarkable not just that Philip ruled successfully but that he ruled at all. Retaining control of Macedonia required yet

more of Philip's relatives to die; the young *basileus* spent eight years of his reign hunting down and exterminating his half-brothers.

After Philip was, in turn, violently murdered in full view of diplomats from all over Greece by a jilted pederastic lover, his better known son, Alexander the Great, put down the inevitable wave of rebellions, crushed the armies of Achaemenid Persia, annexed most of the Great King's far-flung empire, was hailed as a son of Zeus-Amon by the oracle at Siwah, torched Persepolis, sailed down the Indus, and died while plotting the conquest of Arabia. Yet, despite being Philip's sole martially competent adult son and succeeding with relative ease by Argead standards, Alexander felt his position to be weak enough after his father's assassination that he began his reign by purging his cousin, possibly an infant half-brother,[2] and several senior generals and noblemen. Alexander's refusal to marry early in his reign and his decision to take his mentally disabled half-brother Arrhidaeus, the single close male relative whom he permitted to survive his accession, with him on campaign may also be suggestive of the degree of unease with which the young *basileus* viewed his position.

However, the world historical importance of Macedonian succession goes far beyond providing context for the transformative reigns of Philip II and Alexander III. The chaotic Macedonian succession process was directly responsible for the political chaos and warfare that engulfed the Near East after Alexander died in Babylon without adult offspring. Due in part to

[2]Justin, *Epitome of Pompeius Trogus*, 9.7, 11.2; Pausanias, *Description of Greece*, 8.7.7. Justin states that Alexander executed a brother, Caranus, as a potential rival. It is usually assumed that this Caranus was the infant son of Cleopatra, niece of Attalos. However, this is not certain. Justin does not explicitly state that Caranus was a son of Cleopatra nor does he mention Caranus when recounting the near-simultaneous murder of Cleopatra and her daughter. In contrast, Pausanias does say that that Cleopatra was killed along with an infant son, but the name of the child is not given. Diodorus mentions neither the death of Cleopatra nor the deaths of any of her children. It is consequently possible that Caranus was a son of another of Philip's wives who was killed in addition to Cleopatra and her children, irrespective of whether they were male or female or both.

the thoroughness with which Philip and Alexander had eliminated their close male relatives to secure their own royal positions, Alexander left behind no martially capable male kin closely enough related to him to be able to easily succeed him. Prior Macedonian history suggests that, even had Alexander died in Pella without invading the Achaemenid Empire, his premature death would very likely have led to prolonged political instability as his distant relatives and in-laws vied with one another to either become *basileus* or to rule through his children. However, unlike prior Macedonian kings, Alexander left behind not only a power vacuum but also the most talented cadre of marshals who ever stalked the Hellenic world. In possession of vast territories, centuries of stockpiled tribute to a dozen Persian kings, and tens of thousands of veteran soldiers, these Macedonian aristocrats, some of whom were probably members of formerly independent dynasties that had only accepted Argead suzerainty within living memory, had the means and the will to join the surviving Argeads in the struggle for power. In doing so, they turned places as diverse as Egypt, Thrace, Persia, and Bactria into semi-perpetual warzones as they fought for decades to control Greece and the Near East.

In this dissertation, I will explore Macedonian succession, from the earliest days of the Argead dynasty until the defeat and deportation of Perseus in 168 BCE, in six chapters. In the first chapter, I will summarize Argead political history through the accession of Alexander III. Argead political history has been summarized many times before. However, only rarely has succession been the primary focus of the narrative and only very rarely has such a narrative, focusing on succession, preceded chronologically from the earliest days of the Argead kingdom until the time of Alexander III. By recounting the political history of Argead succession, it will be

possible to identify and emphasize patterns across generations that would otherwise be less noticeable.

The second chapter will use the dynastic political history presented in the first chapter to explore theories about Argead succession proposed by modern historians. Discussion of succession in Macedonia is often entangled in wider considerations about the nature of kingship in ancient Macedonia. As has been recently and eloquently summarized by Carol J. King, theories of Macedonian kingship tend to fall into two distinct groups – one seeing Argead Macedonia as being essentially a constitutionalist state with "established traditions or laws that granted customary rights to groups within the state" and the other viewing Macedonian kingship as essentially autocratic with power flowing, directly or indirectly, from the *basileius*.[3]

Unsurprisingly, attempts to reconstruct a systematic picture of Macedonian succession as it was supposed to occur from the disparate bits of surviving textual and epigraphic evidence indicating what actually happened tend to reflect the constitutionalist/autocratic position of the author on Macedonian kingship generally. For example, one particularly well known treatment of Macedonian succession was written by Miltiades Hatzopoulos, the protégé of Nicholas Hammond who also wrote *Macedonian Institutions under the Kings*, which takes a strongly constitutionalist position.[4] Elsewhere, Hatzopoulos has argued that the Macedonian expectation was that succession would proceed according to primogeniture among those born "in the purple."[5] However, as will be explored, while Hatzopoulos' argument has some explanatory

[3] King, Carol J. "Macedonian Kingship and Other Political Institutions." A companion to Ancient Macedonia (2010), 373-91.
[4] Hatzopoulos, MB. "Macedonian Institutions under the Kings. Vol. 1: A Historical and Epigraphic Study Athens." (1996).
[5] Hatzopoulos, MB. "Succession and Regency in Classical Macedonia." Ancient Macedonia 4 (1986): 279-92.

merit, it fails to explain why Macedonian civil wars occurred virtually every generation throughout the history of Macedonia before the reign of Antigonus Gonatas. After all, shouldn't any expected principle of succession have been accepted by the rest of the royal clan at least some of the time? Other authors have taken a much less ordered view of Macedonian succession. For example, Borja Antela-Bernardez has argued that Alexander's alleged final words "to the strongest," whether Alexander actually spoke them or not, can be reasonably thought to apply not just to the succession crisis after Alexander's death but to the Argead succession process more generally.[6]

In this dissertation, I will argue for a less structured view of Argead succession and suggest, building loosely on prior comments made by Daniel Ogden and others, that game theory can offer a useful model for understanding Argead succession behavior – in effect, Macedonian princes were trapped in what must be among the worst of all Nash equilibria. I will further argue that, given the lack of surviving evidence about the day to day functioning of Argead Macedonia, the relative abundance of information about Argead succession may be a better basis for building an understanding of Argead kingship than studies of Argead kingship are for building an understanding of Macedonian succession. In other words, the demonstrable reality of the Nash equilibrium trapping Macedonian princes across many generations of Argead history suggests strongly that Argead kingship was at most minimally constitutionalist in nature.

The third chapter will recount the political machinations following Alexander's death, with particular focus on succession defined broadly – the transfer of political power among the

[6] Antela-Bernardez, Borja. "Simply the Best: Alexander's Last Words, and the Macedonian Kingship." *Eirene. Studia Graeca et Latina* 1, no. 47 (2011): 118-26.

Argeads and diadochi, beginning with Alexander's final illness and continuing through the extinction of the Argead dynasty at the hands of his non-Argead "successors" who, ultimately, abandoned or murdered every one of his remaining relatives. Particular attention will be paid to the personal experiences of Alexander's generals and relatives with royal succession, their individual connections to Iranian families, their relative power at Alexander's death, and their personal experiences with the dead king and his family.

The fourth chapter will use chapters two and three to address several shortcomings present in many discussions of the power struggle which erupted after Alexander's death. In particular, the modern literature surrounding the Babylon conference rarely places this greatest of Macedonian succession crises into its context in the long chain Macedonian succession crises which preceded it and only rarely attempts to interpret the actions of the Macedonian marshals at Babylon in light of their own experiences with Argead succession. In addition, the literature largely ignores two events that I will argue are of vital importance for understanding the reactions of the individual diadochi after Alexander died – the marriage alliances formed between Persian and Macedonian aristocratic families at the Susa weddings and the rejection of Alexander's quarter-Persian son Heracles at Babylon.

The scant attention paid to Heracles is particularly problematic. Given their available choices – Heracles and Arrhidaeus, it is remarkable that the decision reached by the great marshals of the empire at Babylon was to exclude the only available mentally sound Argead male from the succession in the hope that Roxana would give birth to a surviving son. Nearly a century ago, Tarn was so taken by this paradox that he suggested Heracles was a pretender put forward

by Antigonus, arguing that a son of Alexander by Barsine could not have existed.[7] Despite a thorough refutation by P.A. Brunt,[8] Tarn's suspicions have cast a long shadow; it is not unusual for recent histories of the successor period to indicate doubt about the existence of Heracles.[9] However, a more common recent treatment has been to dismiss Heracles as the illegitimate son of a Persian concubine. I will argue in favor of Heracles' existence and legitimacy and use this to support the idea that some of Alexander's companions – particularly Perdiccas, Ptolemy, and Antigonus – were ready to dispense with the male scions of the Argead dynasty at or very shortly after Alexander's death. Moreover, I will argue that Alexander's marshals were held in check in the years after he died primarily through distance from one another, fear of non-Macedonian competitors, and the disloyalty of their own subordinates, who were more loyal to the remnants of the Argead house than they were to their new rulers.

Chapter five will reconstruct the political history of Macedonian succession from the fall of the Argeads until the end of the Macedonian state in 168 BCE. Though much has been written about the diadochi, both individually and in aggregate, only rarely are the succession strategies of these Macedonian dynasties, whose founders were all steeped in violent experience with Argead succession, directly compared. This is unfortunate, as their strategies for arranging the transference of power to their heirs differed considerably, some maintaining an Argead model and some deviating greatly from it, and were among the factors determining which successor

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[7] Tarn, William W. "Heracles Son of Barsine." *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 41, no. 1 (1921): 18-28.

[8] Brunt, Peter Astbury. "Alexander, Barsine and Heracles." Rivista di Filologia e di Istruzione Classica 103 (1975): 22-34.

[9] Recent examples include Erskine, Andrew. *A Companion to the Hellenistic World.* John Wiley & Sons, 2009, 27. "Now there were only Alexander's sisters, Kleopatra and Thessalonike (Kassandros' wife), ***(arguably)*** the young Heracles, Barsine's son, whose claim had been rejected at Babylon but who had lived on at Pergamon, evidently nurtured by Antigonus, just in case." Emphasis added.

kingdoms and dynasties persisted and which disappeared. Of particular interest is the contrast between the collapse of the successor dynasties founded by Lysimachus and Cassander and the survival of the dynasty of Antigonus Monophthalmus, despite Antigonus' death in battle and the conquest of nearly all the lands he ruled. Indeed, in striking contrast with Argead Macedonia and several of the early successor kingdoms, Antigonid Macedonia was remarkable for its political stability – over a century of Antigonid rule, Macedonia experienced neither civil war nor fratricide.[10]

Chapter six will explore how, after centuries of violent succession struggles, Macedonia quickly transformed into a state in which peaceful transitions of power from one *basileus* to the next became the norm. While others have remarked on this change and some have hypothesized about its causes, the motivation and structural changes which encouraged and enabled Antigonid dynastic stability have rarely been explored. I will hypothesize that the lesson taught by the deaths of the sons of Cassander and Lysimachus, that, if the heirs of a dead king fight among themselves, all of them may lose and someone from a different dynasty may instead become king, is likely to have weighed heavily on the minds of early Antigonid rulers. Building on the work of Daniel Ogden, I will further argue that the success of the Antigonids in building a stable Macedonian dynasty was due in large part to a structural change in succession practice in which the reigning king enforced the status of his eldest son as his designated successor, independent of the status of that particular prince's mother. Finally, returning to game theory, I will suggest that this favoring of one "player" of the succession game above all others resulted in a situation

[10] The only near exception to the Antigonid rule, Philip V's execution of his son Demetrius, powerfully illustrates how far later Antigonid and Argead succession behavior had diverged. It is difficult to imagine any Argead king executing a son merely for sowing the seeds of violent conflict with his half-brother.

in which other potential players were incentivized to cooperate (or not to play at all), destroying the equilibrium in which the Argeads and some of the other successor dynasties were trapped and enabling Antigonid Macedonia to find its way to a different, less violent equilibrium.

CHAPTER 1. ARGEAD MACEDONIA

1.1 MYTHOLOGICAL ORIGINS

The family of Alexander the Great claimed descent from Heracles through his son Temenos, a legendary king of Argos. According to Herodotus, who wrote the earliest surviving account of Argead origins, the Argead dynasty was founded by Perdiccas, the youngest of three brothers of Temenid descent. While they were working as laborers for a local chieftain in Macedonia, this ruler became concerned after hearing that loaves of bread baked for the youngest of the three Argive brothers always rose twice as high as loaves baked for anyone else. Fearing that the omen boded ill for his rule, the chieftain sought to cheat the brothers of their wages and drive them from his lands. After Perdiccas, the youngest Argive brother, cleverly interpreted the chieftain's spiteful words to imply that his family would one day rule Macedonia, the headman's intentions became murderous. After being saved from pursuit by the surging waters of a local river – possibly meant to be the Haliakmon – "to which the descendants of the men who came from Argos sacrifice as their savior," the brothers escaped to the gardens of Midas at the base of Mount Bermion and, from there, conquered the rest of Macedonia.[11]

While we cannot know for certain, it seems plausible that this foundation myth, along with many of the other strongly pro-Argead anecdotes of questionable veracity that lace the pages of Herodotus, originated with the Argeads themselves. Assuming the Argeads were in fact the primary source of Herodotus' account, the most relevant aspect of this origin myth for Argead

[11] Herodotus, *Histories*, 8.137-138. Translation is from: Strassler, Robert B, and Andrea L Purvis. *The Landmark Herodotus: The Histories.* Anchor Books/Random House, 2009. 659. The details given in Thucydides, *Peloponnesian War*, 2.99 are consistent with Herodotus' account, though Thucydides gives less detail than Herodotus and omits the Argead foundation myth.

succession is that, at the very beginning of recorded Macedonian history in the mid-fifth century, the Macedonians had a dynastic origin story in which the youngest brother, rather than the eldest one, became the leader of his people as a result of divine portent, *metis*, and ultimately victory in battle.

This theme of power being legitimately seized by one clever and skilled enough to hold onto it was a common one in early Greek myth. For example, it not only applies to Perdiccas, but also to his alleged divine ancestors Cronus and Zeus. Cronus conspired with his mother to castrate and overthrow his own father.[12] Zeus in turn overthrew Cronus in bloody rebellion.[13] Like Perdiccas, Zeus was the youngest of his siblings. Similarly, Cronus was the youngest among the titans, though Ouranos and Gaia were said to have had other, still younger sets of children – giants, cyclopes, etc. Such tales of power gained by means of either *metis* or martial prowess with little regard for birth order, which permeate early Greek myth, seem likely to have served as powerful exemplars to those alleged descendants of Herakles living beneath Mount Bermion.

1.2 Historical Origins

Though Herodotus listed six generations between the founding of Macedonia and the Persian wars – Perdiccas, Argaios, Philip, Aeropos, Alketes, and Amyntas, almost nothing specific is known about any members of this royal clan or about how power was transferred within it before the fifth century BCE.[14] Justin and Herodotus both preserved a few anecdotes from the

[12] Hesiod, *Theogony*, 165-180.
[13] Hesiod, *Theogony*, 450-505.
[14] In contrast to Herodotus and Thucydides, Justin recounts the early history of the Argead dynasty through the reign of Alexander I in more, though still very brief, detail. Unfortunately, as is often true of Justin, the details that he offers which can be checked against our other sources do not inspire confidence in the material we cannot check. For example, Justin omits approximately sixty years of Macedonian history well documented by Thucydides, skipping directly from Alexander I (r. 498 – 454) to Amyntas III (r. 393 – 370), weaving his narrative together seamlessly so

reign of Amyntas I (r. 540 – 498), but they tell us little more than that he married his daughter Gygaia to the Persian lord Boubares and paid tribute to the Persians.[15] The silence of Herodotus, who recorded the paternal lineage of Amyntas but otherwise tells us nothing about his forbearers, may indicate that, as far as the wider Greek world was concerned, there were no Argead rulers of importance before Amyntas and possibly none of importance before his son Alexander (r. 498 – 454).[16] Certainly, Thucydides, while summarizing the history of Macedonia in the late fifth century BCE, mentioned no Argead rulers before Alexander, of whom the historian wrote as though he were the founder of the Macedonian kingdom.[17] Archeological evidence survives which is compatible with this picture of Argead kings being either very weak or non-existent before Amyntas I; elite burial practices at Vergina became more elaborate in the mid sixth century BCE, likely indicating an increase in the power and wealth of those who ruled there.[18]

While the Argead dynasty had humble territorial origins, geographically, the Macedonian *ethnos* was spread over a wider area than that dominated politically by the Argeads. Thucydides wrote, "for the Lynkestai, Elimiots, and other tribes more inland, though Macedonians by blood and allies and dependents of their kindred [living in the lowlands and ruled over by the Argeads], still have their own separate *basileia.*"[19] In practice, prior to the reign of Philip II, these highland

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that Amyntas III appears to be the nephew of Alexander I. Due to lapses like this one, it is impossible to have much confidence in Justin when he is our only source. Justin, *Epitome of Pompeius Trogus*, 7.1-4.

[15] See: Herodotus, *Histories*, 5.20; Justin, 7.3. Herodotus credits Alexander with marrying his sister to Boubares and paying a large amount of money, but the context indicates that Amyntas was still alive. The point may be largely moot as, presumably, the situation was dominated by Boubares and Megabazus.

[16] Herodotus, *Histories*, 8.139.

[17] Thucydides, *Peloponnesian War*, 2.99.2-6.

[18] Kottaridi, Angeliki. "Discovering Aegae, the Old Macedonian Capital." *Stamatopoulou and Yeroulanou* (2002): 78.

[19] Thucydides, *Peloponnesian War*, 2.99.

Macedonians and the aristocratic families that governed them were certainly often, and perhaps always, independent of Argead political control. For example, Arrhabaeus of Lynkestis waged open war on the Argeads during the first phase of the Peloponnesian war, actively collaborating with the Illyrians against Perdiccas II.[20] Indeed, it is questionable to what extent some portions of upper Macedonia ever reconciled themselves to their incorporation into a unified Macedonia under the Argead or later Antigonid royal lines.[21]

Like other historical Greek rulers, notably the Spartan kings, the Argead rulers of lowland Macedonia justified their unstable rule by virtue of their divine descent through Herakles and by fulfilling the traditional, Homeric role of protecting their dependents from the incessant raiding and attempts at outright conquest that plagued Macedonia before the reign of Philip II.[22] In the context of Greek religion, kinship with the gods and martial prowess are inherently related. It was the duty of a Macedonian king to intervene on behalf of his dependents with the gods in order to protect them. The upper Macedonian *basileis* probably used similar means to justify their control of the highland cantons; Strabo reported that the "Bacchiad" kings of Lynkestis also claimed descent from Herakles.[23]

Much of the scant information about the first Argead rulers which survives does so because of the role of Alexander I in the Persian wars. Indeed, despite the fourth century Macedonian crusade against Achaemenid Persia, Argead Macedonia may have ultimately owed

[20] Thucydides, *Peloponnesian War*, 4.79, 4.83, and 4.124-125.
[21] For example, the upper Macedonian region of Orestis rebelled from the Macedonian kingdom and aided the Romans in their war against Philip V one hundred and fifty years *after* Philip II came to the throne. Polybius, *Histories*, 18.47.6.
[22] For example, the geographer Hecataeus of Miletus did so. Herodotus, *Histories*, 2.143.1-4.
[23] Strabo, *Geographica*, 7.7.8.

its status as a regional power to the earlier Achaemenid invasions of Europe. By marrying Gygaia to Boubares, Amyntas established familial ties with the Persian aristocracy.[24] Assuming that the Boubares who married Gygaia is the same Boubares who later supervised the canal project which allowed the Persian fleet to bypass Mount Athos, which seems likely given that Alexander's brother-in-law had already campaigned in the region and would therefore have been familiar with the geography, the Boubares who married Gygaia was the son of Megabazus, the Persian conqueror of Hellespontine Phrygia and Thrace who was himself the son of Megabates, a first-cousin of Darius.[25] By being connected by marriage to the family of Megabates, Alexander also gained marital ties to other men in important positions of power in the western Achaemenid Empire. For example, Boubares' brother was installed in Dascylium, later the capital of the Pharnacid satrapal dynasty, after Megabazus conquered the region.

It is difficult to reconstruct how important Alexander's relationship to the family of Megabates was to his success. The historian Justin viewed Alexander's marital connections with the Persian aristocracy to have been so valuable that he implausibly reported that Xerxes gave Alexander all the lands between Mount Olympus and the Haemus mountains, the southernmost range of the Balkans, which no Macedonian king would actually rule before Philip II (r. 359 – 336).[26] However, even if Alexander's Persian connections provided him with no direct material aid, support, or even goodwill, they may still have been a powerful asset to Alexander, even after the Persian withdrawal from Europe. Simply being related to powerful Achaemenids by marriage

[24]The exalted nature of the marriage of Alexander's sister, Gygaea, is suggested by the fact that the Persian king later gave her half-Persian son Amyntas the city of Alabanda in Phrygia to supply his needs. Herodotus, *Histories*, 8.136.1.
[25]Herodotus, *Histories*, 4.143-44, 5.32.
[26] Justin, *Epitome of Pompeius Trogus*, 7.4.

would have meant that all other rulers with whom Alexander interacted had to consider the possibility of Alexander being able to acquire Persian diplomatic or material support. Herodotus provides some evidence of the importance that fifth century Greeks attached to marital connections with the Persian aristocracy – Pausanias, the Spartan general who led the victorious Greek army at Plataea, allegedly attempted to convince the Persians to install him as tyrant of Greece by seeking to marry a daughter of Megabates.[27]

Certainly, Alexander participated in Xerxes' great invasion of Greece in 480-479 BCE, fighting on the Persian side against the allied Greek army in the battle at Plataea. According to Herodotus, Alexander sometimes served both Xerxes and his general Mardonius as a messenger to the Greeks, which suggests that his Achaemenid masters considered him to be reasonably trustworthy, reasonably important, and also reasonably expendable.[28]

In the aftermath of the Persian defeat at Plataea, Alexander faced what was likely the greatest challenge of his reign – how to react to the Persian withdrawal from Europe in a way that insulated him from the vengeful inclinations of the victorious southern Greek coalition, which might reasonably have been expected to hold a grudge against a petty Macedonian king who had served as the mouthpiece for Persian demands, ruled over territories where the would-be conquerors had based their armies, and was connected to them by marriage. Few Greeks would have appeared more prominent among the "medizers" than Alexander. According to Herodotus, Alexander displayed his "true" loyalties by brazenly switching sides after Plataea, betraying and slaughtering a retreating Persian force as it fled through Macedonia. Diodorus

[27] Herodotus, *Histories*, 5.32.
[28] Herodotus, *Histories*, 8.140.

gives a more plausible account, saying only that, "Artabazus with as many as four hundred thousand of the fleeing Persians made his way through Phocis into Macedonia, using the quickest routes, and got back safely with his soldiers into Asia."[29]

Likely, Alexander's later reputation for philhellenism has its origins in this final period of his reign, when he had abundant reasons to play down his earlier Persian connections, at least when talking to the Athenians and their allies, and to instead stress his supposed though actually ahistorical affinity with the victorious Greeks who had humbled Xerxes and Mardonius.[30] Anecdotes preserved in Herodotus (and nowhere else) suggest that Alexander waged a campaign to emphasize his hellenicity and explain away his relationship with the Persian aristocracy. For example, Herodotus reported that Alexander extravagantly demonstrated his Hellenic credentials by appearing at the Hellene-only Olympic Games, claiming Argive descent, and winning the right to compete.[31] Herodotus also reported a sordid, bloody, and implausible tale that Alexander secretly murdered seven high ranking Persian noblemen as a young man, encouraging his barbarian guests to drink to excess and then having male Macedonian teenagers dress up as concubines and butcher them.[32] According to this story, Alexander married his sister

[29] Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History*, 11.33.1.

[30] Though the Greeks were relatively restrained with those who had sided with Persia, there was no way for Alexander to have known this in the aftermath of Plataea. For the reign of Alexander I, see: Borza, Eugene N. *In the Shadow of Olympus: The Emergence of Macedon*. Princeton University Press, 1992, 98-131.

[31] Herodotus, *Histories*, 5.22.2. The relationship between Macedonian and Greek ethnicity, language, and culture has been debated at length and was probably complex. The extent of Macedonian Greekness at various times during the history of the Macedonian kingdom depends greatly on what aspects of Macedonia most interest the researcher. In particular, see: Hall, Jonathan M. *Hellenicity: Between Ethnicity and Culture.* University of Chicago Press, 2002. For the view, which seems to be fading, that the Macedonians were not particularly close to Greeks in language or culture, see Borza, *In the Shadow of Olympus: The Emergence of Macedon,* 77-97.

[32] Herodotus, *Histories*, 5.18-21.

to a Persian nobleman as part of a bribe to cover up these murders rather than to improve his political connections within the Persian aristocracy.

A likely originator of these stories is Alexander himself, who had ample motivation to convince the Athenians that he had always been on their side, at least secretly. After all, Herodotus lived and wrote in Athens for an Athenian audience. As the vengeful Delian league rose to prominence in the aftermath of Salamis and Plataea and herded the Persians and their lackeys out of the Aegean, it is hard to blame Alexander for seeking to downplay his Persian connections to Athenian sympathizers as vigorously as he was able. The historically implausible anecdotes in Herodotus suggest that the wily king convinced many of his critics of his affinity for the southern Greek *poleis* and animosity for the Achaemenids.

Despite his claims of Greek solidarity, the Persian retreat from Thessaly, Macedonia, and Thrace left a power vacuum that there is every reason to think Alexander, along with other local powers – most notably the Delian league, did his best to fill. Likely, it was during this period of collapsing Persian authority in northern Greece that the Argeads first expanded their rule into Pieria and seized the cities along the seacoast. Indeed, Alexander, due to his marriage connections, was possibly in a unique position allowing him to take advantage of the power vacuum left behind by Persian withdrawal while only minimally risking the ill-will of the Achaemenid Empire should their departure not prove to be permanent.

Ultimately, Alexander expanded his lands and avoided vengeance at the hands of the victorious Greek coalition and reigned for another quarter century, dying in the 450s. Little is known about Alexander's later reign, which fell between the periods covered by Herodotus and Thucydides, so limited context for the king's death survives. Quintus Curtius implies that

Alexander was assassinated.[33] However, as Borza argued, the relevant passage is problematic and I think it more likely that Curtius' source conflated Alexander I with Alexander II, whose assassination is well attested.[34] If Curtius is correct and Alexander I was indeed assassinated as a very old man, nothing is known about the assassin or his motivations.

1.3 ARGEAD SUCCESSION

This first Argead royal succession about which substantive historical details survive was already extended and bloody. Alexander had given control over portions of his territory to at least three sons— Perdiccas, Philip, and Alcetas are mentioned by name. However, it is possible that Alexander's gifts of territory to relatives may have extended beyond his sons. In particular, Derdas of Elimeia was described by the scholiast for Thucydides as "the son of Arrhidaeus and the cousin of Perdiccas and Philip." [35] While Hammond assumed that Derdas and Alexander's children were cousins as a result of Arrhidaeus either marrying the sister of Alexander or having a sister who was married by Alexander, a possibility not discussed by Hammond is that Alexander himself subdued Elimeia in the aftermath of the Persian retreat from northern Greece and installed a brother named Arrhidaeus as the local, and possibly initially subservient, ruler of Elimeia.

Though Alexander's lands were ultimately divided among his sons, it is unfortunately not clear when or why this happened. One possibility is that Alexander relied on relatives to oversee new areas of his *basileia* which lay beyond his ability to personally administer. Certainly, in

[33] Quintus Curtius, *History of Alexander,* 6.11.26. The order in which the kings are listed implies that Alexander I and not Alexander II was assassinated, however this could easily be an error on the part of an ancient copyist.
[34] Borza, *In the Shadow of Olympus*, 133.
[35] Hammond, Nicholas GL, and Guy T Griffith. *A History of Macedonia II*. Vol. 225: Oxford, 1979, 18.

Alexander's time, there is no reason to think that northern Greek chieftains had much experience governing areas even slightly remote from themselves. Indeed, it is unclear whether any administration existed in any Macedonian *basileia* during the early fifth century beyond the personal household and retinue of the *basileus*. Much is uncertain. Did Alexander intend a permanent division of the territory under his control? In what light should Alexander's actions be interpreted; was the gift of lands to his kin intended as a revocable act of royal administration – as it would have been in the Persian model – or was the intent more in line with aristocratic Greek inheritance custom? I.e. did Alexander view his expanded *basileia* as a permanent political entity or as an estate to be divided among his heirs?

While early Greek inheritance custom is too broad a topic to be covered here, it is worth noting several of its common characteristics. Perhaps most importantly, absolute primogeniture is alien to the surviving evidence about early Greek inheritance. Instead, what evidence survives suggests that what was normal was for land and other property to be divided among surviving children, without much regard for birth order. There is evidence that disputes were common. Hesiod, writing in the archaic period, chastised his brother about disputing the division of their inheritance writing, "Let us settle our dispute here with true judgment which is of Zeus and is perfect. For we had already divided our inheritance, but you seized the greater share and carried it off, greatly swelling the glory of our bribe-swallowing *basileis* who love to judge such a cause as this."[36] The frequency and destructive nature of inheritance disputes is suggested in archaic Gortynian inscriptions from Arcadia, where "anyone who violates the rules for the distribution of land shall be accursed, his property confiscated, and his home demolished, 'just as in the

[36] Hesiod, *Works and Days*, 35-40.

homicide law.'"[37] The equating of homicide and incorrect land distribution makes intuitive sense. In a place and time where there was little state apparatus to prevent property disputes from turning violent, dividing land in a manner perceived to be unjust was likely to result in bloodshed.

Certainly, Alexander's death resulted in bloodshed. Many of the details of the ensuing power struggle among Alexander's sons are lost, but it is clear that, at a minimum, Philip and Perdiccas disputed rule over the lower Axios valley, which had been assigned to Philip. However, it is not certain whether this dispute followed immediately after Alexander's death or only happened in later years. It's also unknown which brother was the eldest, though Perdiccas is typically assumed to be the senior sibling. If Philip and Perdiccas quarreled immediately after Alexander's death, Philip probably remained independent for many years as Philip and his cousin, Derdas of Elimeia, waged war against Perdiccas beginning around 432.[38] Alcetas presumably supported Perdiccas in this struggle, as epigraphic evidence from the 420s provides evidence that Alcetas' authority in the Argead kingdom was surpassed only by Perdiccas, suggesting that Alcetas remained powerful but accepted Perdiccas as his overlord.[39] Thucydides did not record the death of Philip, but the lord of the lower Axios valley likely died violently in 429 when his Thracian allies betrayed him and came to terms with Perdiccas.

The suspicion that Philip did not survive this betrayal is strengthened by the fact that, after Perdiccas almost inevitably quarreled with the Thracians, they attacked Macedonia again and attempted to install Amyntas, son of Philip, as *basileus*, whether in Macedonia as a whole or

[37] Gagarin, Michael. *Early Greek Law*. Univ of California Press, 1986. 95 n47.
[38] Thucydides, *Peloponnesian War*, 1.57.3.
[39] Borza, *In the Shadow of Olympus*, 135.

only within Philip's former lands is unclear.[40] While a few cities along the Axios river came over to Amyntas, possibly out of loyalty to the family of Philip, the Thracians ransacked the lands through which they passed, which seems unlikely to have endeared the Macedonians to Amyntas, and ultimately Perdiccas was able to buy off the Thracians by marrying a sister to a Thracian prince "along with a rich dowry."[41] Like the fate of his father, the fate of Amyntas is not recorded in Thucydides, but he is not mentioned again either in Thucydides' narrative or anywhere else and it seems unlikely that he survived the Thracian rapprochement with Perdiccas.

It would be fascinating to know why the Thracians came to the aid of Philip and Amyntas. Unfortunately, no account detailing their motivations survives. Did they seek to weaken Perdiccas? Did they thirst primarily for plunder? Presumably, the answer is complex, and motivations varied greatly among individual participating Thracians. However, one possible motivation for the Thracian king is that Philip and Amyntas, whose lands bordered Thrace, may have been calling on relatives by marriage to aid them. If so, Perdiccas' marriage of his sister into the family of the attacking Thracian ruler makes even more sense than it would have otherwise as it offered an alternative, more valuable marital alliance to the Thracians in place of the one they were hoping to benefit from by restoring Philip or Amyntas as *basileus* over the lower Axios.

This Thracian support of Philip and Amyntas is the first known example of a common phenomenon in Macedonian history – foreign rulers or states intervening in Macedonian succession crises. Either for reasons of kinship or merely out of perceived advantage, it was common for Macedonia's neighbors to back one contender or another during succession

[40] Thucydides, *Peloponnesian War*, 2.95.1-3.
[41] Thucydides, *Peloponnesian War*, 2.101.6.

disputes.[42] It is interesting that, despite the frequency of these attempts, they were almost universally unsuccessful, at least from the perspective of establishing the pretender as *basileus*. At no time in Argead history did a foreign army successfully install a ruler in Macedonia for more than a few months. As will be discussed in chapter four, while the Macedonian diadem was sometimes successfully transferred with the aid of foreign armies during the early successor period, success was never lasting, and differed in important ways from what occurred during the Argead dynasty. Most notably, during the early successor period, Macedonian nobles used foreign armies they personally controlled *a priori* to press their own claims to the Macedonian *basileia* rather than seeking aid from independent rulers with their own armies. As we shall see, even this revised practice, in which pretenders had more direct control over their bid for kingship, did not usually prove to be successful.

The most fundamental reason for the lack of success of virtually all attempts by virtually all Macedonian claimants who sought foreign aid is illustrated already in the case of Amyntas and Philip – "victory" for the invading army and "victory" for the Macedonian pretender often meant, in practice, very different things. In the case of Amyntas, the Thracians received booty, bribes, and a useful marital alliance. They were compensated for their troubles, weakened Macedonia, and, presumably, left feeling comfortable with their relationship with Perdiccas. Amyntas, in contrast, almost certainly either ended up dead or in permanent exile. For Macedonian pretenders, the typical outcomes of a bid for the *basileia* were to either be firmly established as *basileus* or to be killed. Their foreign supporters had other options.

[42] The most successful such claimant was Argaeus, who briefly managed to contest Amyntas III's control of Macedonia in 393-392 with Illyrian support. Little is known of the collapse of his rule, but the timing is suggestive that his situation became untenable almost immediately after the Illyrians went home.

Another significant problem with seeking foreign aid to become ruler was that one of the most fundamental – arguably the fundamental – role of a Macedonian *basileus* was to protect those over whom he ruled, both ecclesiastically by virtue of his religious status as a relative of the gods and temporally as a martial protector. Since foreign armies typically sought plunder, relying on foreign troops to seize the kingdom undermined the credibility of a claimant as a protector at the very moment – the beginning of his rule – when he most needed to demonstrate his ability to protect his people from things like ravaging foreign armies.

Beyond practical considerations, for a Greek to be driven from his native land and to become a wanderer – as often happened to Argead princes who failed to become *basileus* and weren't killed outright – was to become a dishonored figure of suspicion and contempt. For example, in the famous words of the Spartan poet Tyrtaeus:

> It is good for a man to fall and die fighting in the front ranks for his native land, whereas to leave one's city-state and rich fields and be a beggar is the most wretched condition of all, being a wanderer with one's dear mother and aged father and little children and wedded wife. For he is hateful to everyone whom he approaches, being bound to neediness and hateful poverty. He disgraces his lineage and betrays his good looks. Since there is no consideration, no honor, no respect, and no pity for a man who is a wanderer, let us fight with courage for our land and die for our children and never spare our lives.

As Robert Garland has discussed in his book *Wandering Greeks*, the contemptible plight of the wanderer is a common theme in ancient Greek literature from the earliest surviving poetic fragments until well into the Hellenistic period.[43] The stigma, spectacle, and rumor of a Macedonian prince being driven out of his native land and condemned to wander, forced to

[43] Garland, Robert. Wandering Greeks: The Ancient Greek Diaspora from the Age of Homer to the Death of Alexander the Great. Princeton University press, 2016. Poetic fragment is FR. 10 *IEG.* Translation is taken from Garland, pp. 18-19.

humiliate himself by begging and scraping for aid from foreigners while scheming against his own *ethnos* and even against his own kin, can only have reduced any appetite existing in Macedonia for his return.

Like his father, Perdiccas lived long enough to become old, dying in 413 BCE. Like his own succession, that of his son Archelaus (r. 413-399) was disputed. Most of the surviving information about Archelaus' succession comes from a hostile and sometimes maligned passage in Plato's *Gorgias.*[44] The philosopher accused Archelaus of murdering his better-born seven-year-old half-brother, his uncle Alcetas, and Alcetas' son Alexander to gain the throne. Plato also alleged that Archelaus was the son of a slave-girl.[45] This is confirmed by Aelian, who indicates that a slave named Simache was Archelaus' mother.[46] Regardless of the status of Simache within Macedonia and the allegations cast by Plato, Archelaus was almost certainly not treated as a *nothos* by his father; epigraphic evidence suggests that Archelaus was already being publicly presented as the third most prominent person in Macedonia long before Perdiccas' death.[47] There is also little to suggest that the Argeads understood legitimacy in the kind of absolute way that it was understood in Athens and some other southern Greek *poleis,* which may indicate that those women whom men such as Plato characterized as 'slaves' in fact had more ambiguous social status.[48] In particular, no evidence survives which suggests that Alexander I practiced polygamy, so Perdiccas may have been the first Argead ruler to do so. If royal polygamy was a new custom

[44] Borza, *In the Shadow of Olympus*, 161.
[45] Plato, *Gorgias*, 471a-c.
[46] Aelian, *Varia Historia*, 12.43.
[47] Carney, Elizabeth Donnelly. *Women and Monarchy in Macedonia*. University of Oklahoma Press, 2000. 17. The date of IG I 89 is disputed but placed by Borza and Hammond in the 420s.
[48] Hammond, *A History of Macedonia II*, 154-155. Greenwalt argued that it is likely that Simache possessed lower social status but that her status was far above that of a slave. Greenwalt, William. "Polygamy and Succession in Argead Macedonia." *Arethusa* 22, no. 1 (1989): 19.

in Macedonia at the time of Archelaus' accession, perhaps as a result of Persian or Thracian influence, the problem of negotiating succession among royal half-brothers, and by extension the challenge that Greek writers faced in accurately understanding and describing the struggle for succession among Macedonian half-brothers, may also have been new.

However, there is no reason to doubt Plato's basic account that Archelaus killed three family members to attain the *basileia*. Moreover, his family relationships with those whom he murdered are suggestive of his motivations. In particular, it is interesting that the same inscription - IG I 89 - that recorded Archelaus third in a list of prominent persons in Macedonia during Perdiccas' reign, listed Alcetas second, immediately after his brother Perdiccas. Assuming that the ordering in IG I 89 is reflective of the relative prestige of those listed at the time the inscription was made, as seems likely, this implies that, roughly a decade before his accession, Perdiccas viewed Archelaus to be of lower prominence than his paternal uncle Alcetas. One possible reason for this may be that Alcetas' support for Perdiccas against Philip after the death of Alexander did not come with any sense of loyalty or submission to Perdiccas' heirs, so the elimination of Alcetas may have represented a move by Archelaus against the splintering of the *basileia* after the death of Perdiccas. Another likely possibility, which is not mutually exclusive with some ambiguity about whether Alcetas' lands comprised an independently heritable *basileia*, is that, at the time IG I 89 was commissioned, Archelaus may not yet have been old enough to rule on his own.

Given that Archelaus felt that he needed to kill Alcetas, it is unsurprising that Alcetas' son Alexander was also killed. Not only would Alexander have been the obvious successor to Alcetas as *basileus*, the slaying of his father would have been a powerful motive for vengeance. Greek

myth is replete with examples of sons who are glorified for growing up to avenge their fathers – e.g. Orestes. Perhaps in part for this reason, root-and-branch execution in which entire Macedonian family lines were eliminated are well attested from the reign of Alexander the Great and throughout the successor period. For example, the Macedonian general Parmenion was assassinated on Alexander's orders after his son Philotas was executed for treason.[49] Similarly, when Alexander killed his infant half-brother, he also did away with the child's mother and uncle, Philip's general Attalos.[50] In addition to guilt, innocence was also sometimes conceived of in familial terms. For instance, when Amyntas son of Andromenes successfully defended himself from charges of conspiring against Alexander, this seems to have also exonerated his three brothers, including one who had fled from camp.[51]

The elimination of Archelaus' child half-brother is easily explained if we posit that the sons of Macedonian kings had unequal succession prospects based in part on the social status of their mothers. This can hardly have been anything but true; even if there was no aristocratic bias in Macedonia against the sons of lower-born or foreign women per se, which seems unlikely given the hierarchical nature of early Greek society in general and Macedonian society in particular, the children of women with powerful Macedonian relatives would have been able to use their maternal family ties as a power-base in any dispute for the throne, giving them a de facto selective advantage even if they did not possess one in *dike*.[52] Perhaps more importantly, in the case of a seven-year-old with powerful relatives, the child's maternal uncles could have

[49] Arrian, *Anabasis*, 3.26.3-4.
[50] Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History*, 17.2.3-6.
[51] Arrian, *Anabasis*, 3.27.1-3.
[52] This is something of a false dichotomy as what is probable tends to be similar to what happens and, in time, becomes what has most typically happened in the past, which is virtually a definition of *dike*.

immediately used him as a pawn in a bid for control of Macedonia before Archelaus' position had become secure and may well have already been doing so at the time of the child's murder. After all, the fact that Archelaus eliminated relatives to become king does not at all imply that his relatives were not trying as hard as they could to do exactly the same thing to him.

The wife of Perdiccas whose young son was murdered by Archelaus was named Cleopatra. As her son was young and as Archelaus himself had a son with a woman named Cleopatra soon after taking power, it has been suggested that Archelaus may have married his father's former wife.[53] This highlights an important limitation imposed on our understanding of Argead succession – before Philip II, even when our sources bother to mention them, they rarely tell us the family background of the wives of Argead *basileis*. For example, while Whitehorne speculated that Cleopatra may have been Lyncestrian, there is no information in any surviving ancient source about Cleopatra's family background (or family backgrounds if Carney is wrong and we are talking about two different people). Not knowing the family connections of Argead wives tends to bias discussion of Argead succession and political history in favor of male members of the dynasty in a way that may not be historical. For example, because we do not know who Cleopatra's relatives were, we are almost forced to view the execution of her son as being about her son and the threat he posed to Archelaus rather than viewing it to be about the allies a hypothetically cunning and well-connected royal mother may have been able to mobilize on his behalf. In other words, as mothers and sons formed natural court alliances, not knowing the

[53] Carney, *Women and Monarchy in Macedonia*, 22. See also: Whitehorne, John. *Cleopatras*. Routledge, 2002, 19-30. Whitehorne discusses Cleopatra (Perdiccas' wife) at length and speculates about her identity, background, and Archelaus' motivations. Carney suggests that the wives of Archelaus and Perdiccas named Cleopatra were in fact the same person.

family connections of a child's mother deprives us of vital information needed to gauge the potency of a mother-child(ren) succession threat to other royal mother-child(ren) succession teams.

After dispatching many of his closest male relatives, Archelaus reigned until he was killed in 399 BCE. The surviving sources disagree about the cause of his death. Aristotle has Archelaus assassinated by a retainer named Craterus in what was possibly a palace plot tinged with pederasty very similar to the one that cost Philip II his life some sixty years later.[54] In contrast, Diodorus Siculus conveys a different account in which Archelaus died in a hunting accident, being accidently struck and killed by a javelin cast by Craterus.[55] Hammond's suggestion that Craterus was put on trial but acquitted seems questionable as it presumes a level of state organization that it is not clear existed in Macedonia at the turn of the fourth century BCE.

Whatever the precise details of his untimely and violent death, it is likely that Archelaus died without adult sons since his juvenile son Orestes succeeded him. As far as we know, this was the first time in the history of Macedonia that a child was given the title *basileus*. The ensuing succession crisis foreshadowed the Great Crisis that occurred after Alexander the Great's death. Similarly to Alexander the Great, Archelaus had killed off many or all of his closest male relatives and then died suddenly and unexpectedly before his own children had the opportunity to grow to adulthood.

Macedonia's first experiment with child-rule did not go well. Orestes was soon killed by his guardian (*epitropos*) Aeropus, who usurped the throne.[56] Unfortunately, like so much else

[54] Aristotle, *Politics*, 1311b.11.
[55] Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History*, 14.37.6.
[56] Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History*, 14.37.6.

from the Argead period, the family relationship of Aeropus and Orestes is unknown. It seems probable, given that he was an adult and had not succeeded immediately in his own right, that Aeropus was not a son of Archelaus. It is possible that he was a full brother of Archelaus and less likely, given that Archelaus murdered at least one of his half-brothers, that he was a half-brother of Archelaus. It is also possible that Aeropus was a non-Argead, possibly one who had married the mother of Orestes or else was her brother, though this seems unlikely given that, as we shall shortly see, several other adult Argead males survived and are *not* known to have challenged Aeropus after he killed his ward. Hammond's guess, which is not impossible, was that Aeropus was an older grandson of Alexander I from a branch of the family that cannot now be reconstructed.[57] My own equally unprovable suspicion is that Aeropus was a younger full-brother of Archelaus as this is compatible with his survival to the end of Archelaus' reign, his status as *epitropos* of Orestes, and his successful retention of the *basileia* after he killed his ward. Regardless, given the state of our sources, it is impossible to do more than speculate about the familial relationship of Aeropus to previous Macedonian rulers.

According to Diodorus, Aeropus died of disease within six years of murdering Orestes.[58] The ensuing struggle for power was only briefly and inconsistently outlined in the surviving sources. Diodorus recorded that Aeropus' son Pausanias succeeded him and that, after reigning for about a year, the man we know as Amyntas III (r. 393-370) assassinated Pausanias and became king. However, some later king lists mention a different Amyntas reigning briefly

[57] Hammond, *A History of Macedonia II*, 169-170.
[58] Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History*, 14.84.6. The exact number of years in Aeropus' reign is subject to question. Hammond, *A History of Macedonia II*, 168-169.

between Aeropus and Pausanias.[59] Moreover, Aristotle, who – given his years in Macedonia as a royal tutor and member of the Macedonian court – would likely have known who the recent kings of Macedonia had been, mentioned a "little" Amyntas in a list of assassinated rulers whom, we might say colloquially, "had it coming."[60] It seems likely, though not absolutely certain, that Aristotle's "little" Amyntas was the short-lived Amyntas situated between Aeropus and Pausanias in the king lists.

Unfortunately, the positions in the Argead family tree of "little" Amyntas and Amyntas III are both uncertain. While Justin explicitly stated that Amyntas III was a son of Menelaus and a grandson of Alexander I, the historian seems to have had no knowledge of several important and indisputably historical Macedonian kings, most notably Perdiccas II and Archelaus, which casts doubt on the information he relates about the family relationships of other early Macedonian rulers.[61] A few modern scholars have attempted to sort out this confusion. Hammond rejects Justin's account and reconstructs a hypothetical family tree for the Argead dynasty which included all of the known claimants of the early fourth century, but his account, while possible, is highly speculative.[62] Whatever the specifics, it seems probable that the succession from Orestes to Aeropus to Amyntas to Pausanias to Amyntas within a decade represented at least

[59] Hammond did not specify which king list(s) he was using. The earliest such reference that I have been able to find is Eusebius, *Chronicles*, 87. The low reliability of the *Chronicles* is suggested by the fact that Eusebius, *Chronicles*, 86 contains a different list of Macedonian kings which Eusebius claimed to have drawn from Diodorus Siculus. However, the "Diodorus" list of Macedonian kings in the *Chronicles* disagrees significantly with surviving manuscripts of Diodorus' *Bibliotheca Historica*. Without the passage in Aristotle, I'd be inclined to dismiss this Amyntas as a scribal error. It is also possible that the "little" Amyntas was the ruler of a highland canton and not an Argead.

[60] Aristotle, *Politics*, 5.1311b.

[61] Justin, *Epitome of Trogus*, 7.4. Billows' opinion of Justin is so negative that he throws him out entirely on the grounds that he was such a terrible historian that he requires external confirmation to be believed, which renders him superfluous. My own opinion of Justin is not quite as negative as Billows, but I agree that he is very unreliable and should generally be discounted when he conflicts with other sources, particularly early on. See: Billows, Richard A. Antigonos the One-Eyed and the Creation of the Hellenistic State. Vol. 4: Univ of California Press, 1997, 348-351.

[62] Hammond, Nicholas GL, and Guy T. Griffith. *A History of Macedonia II*. Vol. 225. Oxford, 1979, pp. 176-177.

two and possibly three branches of the family of Alexander I attempting to rule Macedonia and that, by the time Amyntas III became king, these parallel family lines had suffered considerable attrition, though subsequent events suggest that there were Argead family lines other than that of Amyntas III which had not been completely wiped out.[63] From the perspective of Macedonian succession, the message from the early fourth century succession crisis seems to be that virtually any martially capable male who could trace his descent to Alexander I was a potential *basileus*.

Amyntas III, the grandfather of Alexander the Great, ruled during a period of heightened large-scale political instability throughout the Aegean world. Amyntas faced sometimes repeated conflicts with the Illyrians, Olynthians, Athenians, Spartans, and Thebans. The troubles Macedonia experienced during the reign of Amyntas should be viewed in the general context of escalating, reactive state building among the most powerful of the Greek *poleis* and other powers in and around the Hellenic world. All of the powers with which Amyntas fought during his quarter-century reign were either attempting to project imperial power across the Aegean world or displaying increased organization in response to other powers which were doing so.

A more unified and organized Illyria, capable of projecting increased power across greater distances for longer periods of time, proved to be a particularly difficult challenge for Amyntas and other minor powers in northern Greece.[64] A defining event of Amyntas' reign was his

[63] See: Hammond, *A History of Macedonia II,* 165-177. Also see: Borza, *In the Shadow of Olympus*, 177-178 for an extensive and highly speculative reconstruction of the Argead family tree and of the events of the turbulent decade between the murder of Archelaus and the rise of Amyntas III.

[64] For example, Diodorus tells us that the Illyrians also defeated the Molossians during this period, killing more than 15,000 of them. Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History*, 15.13.3. See also: Wilkes, John. *The Illyrians*. Wiley-Blackwell, 1995, esp. pp. 117-120. Part of the strength of the Illyrians during this period may have been the result of the chieftain Bardylis living and remaining capable for an unusually long period of time. Fragments from Theopompus have him fighting (on horseback?!) against Philip II at 90 years of age. Even if he was actually only 70, that would still be a long lifespan for a ruler in the central Balkans during 5th-4th centuries BCE.

struggle to regain Macedonia after being defeated in battle by Bardylis and driven out of the majority of Macedonia. The situation was complicated by a challenge from a rival, Argaeus, whom Amyntas drove into exile but did not manage to kill. It is unclear from the surviving sources exactly when Argaeus challenged Amyntas relative to his defeat by the Illyrians, though it seems most probable that the challenge came after Amyntas' defeat. As we shall see, Argaeus not only survived his failed bid for kingship but lived long enough to contest the succession of Philip II a generation later.[65] Like most of the claimants of the early fourth century, the exact familial relationship of Argaeus and Amyntas is unknown. However, Hammond hypothesized a plausible copyist error in an otherwise confusing fragment from Theopompus which, if correct, would make Argaeus a son of Archelaus.[66] This is consistent with much of what we know (or probably know) about Argaeus – he challenged Amyntas roughly a decade after Archelaus died, implying that he may have been quite young at the time of his father's death. This suspicion is reinforced by the fact that Argaeus lived long enough to challenge Philip II a generation later, again implying that he was probably relatively young when he attempted to seize the *basileia* from Amyntas III in the late 390s or early 380s.

After Amyntas died, the throne passed in turn to his sons by Eurydice: Alexander II (r. 370-368), Perdiccas III (r. 365-359), and Philip II (r. 359-336). No initial challenges to Alexander's succession are preserved in our sources. However, Alexander ambitiously attempted to impose Macedonian authority on Thessaly and in doing so incurred the wrath of Thebes, whose power was at its zenith. Pelopidas, who had been one of the two generals who had defeated Sparta at

[65] Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History*, 14.92.3-4. See Eugene N. Borza, *In the Shadow of Olympus*, 296-297 for a discussion about what has been speculated about Argaeus.
[66] Hammond, A History of Macedonia II, 175. See also: *FGrH* 115 F 29.

the battle of Leuctra in 371 BCE, marched north toward Macedonia at the head of a Boeotian army and demanded numerous hostages, including Alexander's youngest brother, the future Philip II, to ensure Alexander's subservience to Thebes.

An internal consequence of Alexander's adventure in Thessaly was that one of his rivals among the lowland Macedonian aristocracy, a man named Ptolemy from Aloros, raised a rebellion against him at home. Alexander II was assassinated soon afterward. Ptolemy became regent for Alexander II's younger brother, the teenage Perdiccas, and is alleged to have been Eurydice's lover by some sources.[67] Whatever its character, his relationship with Eurydice raises the question of whether Ptolemy needed her to rule. If he were not an Argead, this would make sense given the general patterns of Greek inheritance law as maternal uncles or stepfathers (typically related) often served as caretakers if no paternal uncles existed to manage a minor's inheritance. That Amyntas III had no brothers who survived into adulthood is likely given the lack of any mention of royal cousins during or after the reigns of Alexander II, Perdiccas III, and Philip II. If they existed, it seems almost certain that branches of the Argead family descended from brothers of Amyntas III would have emerged into the historical record after the death of Alexander the Great.

While Borza and Hammond believed that Ptolemy of Aloros was an Argead,[68] other scholars disagree.[69] Little evidence survives to support either view. In Diodorus, Ptolemy is referred to in passing as the "son of Amyntas."[70] However, it is unclear who is meant by

[67] See Justin, Epitome of Trogus, 7.4.7-8, 7.5.4-8 for the most sordid version.
[68] Hammond, *A History of Macedonia II*, 181-183. Borza, *In the Shadow of Olympus*, 190-193.
[69] Carney, Elizabeth, and Daniel Ogden. Philip II and Alexander the Great: Father and Son, Lives and Afterlives. Oxford University Press, 2010, 288 n29.
[70] Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History*, 15.71.1.

"Amyntas" in this passage as the name was common. Hammond, echoed by Borza, assumes that this Amyntas was the ill-fated and briefly mentioned Amyntas II who reigned during the instability after Archelaus' death. However, no ancient source unambiguously states that Ptolemy was an Argead and some evidence weakly supports the idea that he was not. For example, no person who was indisputably an Argead is ever known to have carried the name Ptolemy. Additionally, the specification that Ptolemy was "of Aloros" seems to imply that he was likely *not* an Argead, as Argead rulers are elsewhere never specified by place of origin in the *Library of History*.

Ptolemy ruled on behalf of Perdiccas until the teenage Perdiccas killed him (or had him killed), though Ptolemy's grip on power seems to have been tenuous as he faced a rebellion led by a man named Pausanias whose Argead credentials were stressed by Diodorus.[71] This was put down not by Ptolemy but rather by the Athenian general Iphicrates, whom Eurydice entreated successfully to assist her sons.[72] Perhaps because of the intervention of Iphicrates, Perdiccas is among the only Macedonian kings not known to have had a contested succession. However, as little is known about Ptolemy's assassination, the smooth succession may also have been a result of Perdiccas or Eurydice securing extensive backing before Ptolemy was eliminated.

Perdiccas spent much of his own six-year reign fighting with little success against the Athenians and then had to face an invading Illyrian host commanded by the same Bardylis who likely forced Macedonia to become an Illyrian tributary under Amyntas III. Perdiccas' confrontation with Bardylis was a disaster for Macedonia. In 359 BCE, when Philip was

[71] See: Borza, *In the Shadow of Olympus*, 193-194 for a discussion of this rebellion and the Athenian role in temporarily defeating Pausanias. See: Hammond, *A History of Macedonia II*, 192 for a numismatic argument that Ptolemy was regent and not king.
[72] Aeschines, *Speeches*, 2.26-2.29.

approximately 23 years old, Perdiccas III and 4000 of his men were slaughtered by the Illyrians. It is unknown whether Philip was on hand when his brother died, though it is clear he either missed the battle or else survived the debacle; given the desperate military situation and Philip's age and social status, it seems to me most likely that he was present at the battle, quite possibly as a subordinate commander, and managed to escape.[73]

After Perdiccas died fighting the Illyrians, Eurydice's third son Philip succeeded Perdiccas despite the existence of several adult half-brothers and Perdiccas' infant son, Amyntas, though Philip may have initially been appointed *epitropos* for Amyntas. Over the next twenty years, Philip managed almost incredibly to transform Macedonia from a shattered principality with an unbeaten Illyrian army on its doorstep into a large, secure proto empire in possession of one of the finest military machines on earth. Given the broad visibility and impact of his accomplishments, it is perhaps unsurprising that, in comparison to previous Macedonian rulers, a wealth of information survives about the reign of Philip II. For the first time, it possible to reconstruct much of the context the succession machinations that played out over the course of Philip's reign and ultimately led to the succession of Alexander the Great.

Unlike that of his brother Perdiccas, we know that the succession of Philip II was contested. The Pausanias who had challenged the rule of Ptolemy returned to contest Philip's succession with Thracian backing. Similarly, the same Argaeus who had rebelled against Amyntas III, tried again a generation after his first attempt to install himself as *basileus,* this time with

[73] It is possible that Antigonus' father Philip was among the slain, as we know that Antigonus' mother bore a son to a different husband shortly after this. See: Heckel, Waldemar. *The Marshals of Alexander's Empire: A Study of the Makedonian Aristocracy and the Politics of Military Leadership*. Routledge, 2005. 50. Billows also speculated to this effect: Richard A. Billows, *Antigonus the One-eyed and the Creation of the Hellenistic State* (Hellenistic Culture and Society, 4. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992): 24.

backing from the Athenians.[74] It is also probable that the eldest of Philip's half-brothers, Archelaus, made an attempt to compete with him for the *basileia*. Archelaus did not long survive, but his brothers, who presumably supported him, escaped and took some years for Philip to hunt down.[75] As Carney has noted, the speculation by some modern historians that Philip's half-brothers were from an earlier marriage conflicts with ancient sources who specifically stated that Alexander I was Amyntas' eldest son. Moreover, given the instability in Macedonia during this period, it seems likely that these brothers would have challenged the sons of Eurydice sooner had they been of age to do so.[76]

Because of the comparative wealth of information that survives from Philip's reign, the path to the diadem that the young Alexander the Great walked can be reconstructed in much greater detail than for any previous Macedonian prince. It is worth bearing in mind that, by the standards of Macedonian princes, Alexander had a relatively straightforward and uncomplicated succession. With powerful maternal relatives (his close maternal relatives were kings of Epirus throughout his life), no capable brothers who survived childhood, and obvious martial skill and physical prowess demonstrated early in life, Alexander was not just a compelling candidate but almost the only candidate. Aside from his own sons, Philip eliminated all other known Argead males – we never hear of another branch of the Argead dynasty after his reign – with the

[74] Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History*, 16.2.6.
[75] It is unclear exactly what happened and it's possible that Philip struck first, eliminating Archelaus out of suspicion. Most of the information about Philip's half-brothers comes from Justin. See Justin, *Epitome of Pompeius Trogus*, 7.4 & 8.4. See Hammond, *A History of Macedonia II*, 699-701 for an extensive discussion of these brothers and speculation about what they did to call down Philip's wrath.
[76] Carney, *Women and Monarchy in Macedonia*, 47.

exception of Amyntas, the single son of Philip's full brother Perdiccas, and then had an unusually small number of male children for a Macedonian king.

Philip's small number of sons, only Alexander and Arrhidaeus survived long enough to enter the historical record, is made all the more surprising by the scale on which Philip practiced polygamy. While at least some previous Macedonian kings had been polygamous, Philip married at least seven times, and several of his marriages were early in his reign. The order in which Philip married his wives is not perfectly known, but often assumed to be the order in which they were listed by Athenaeus – Audata, Phila, Nicesipolis, Philinna, Olympias, Meda, and Cleopatra.[77] Some have argued that not all of these women were actually married, i.e. that some were concubines. This is an unnecessary assumption. There is no evidence that any Macedonian women mentioned as consorts of any Macedonian king were concubines in the sense of the word *pallake*. Certainly, some women of Macedonian kings had unequal de facto status based on the relative prestige of their families and, more importantly, on the number and quality of their sons, but their status relative to one another seems to have been fluid.[78] As discussed by Elizabeth Carney, rather than some women of the king having greater official position than others, they instead all seem to have had relatively low status. The never-ending possibility of new wives being added to court meant that all wives (and their sons) were in direct competition and thus had little if any security. It is in this context that two particularly important events of Alexander's youth – the attempt to arrange a marriage between the daughter of Pixodarus and Arrhidaeus

[77] Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistae*, 557c.

[78] I accept Carney's position that the statement in Athenaeus that Philip married *kata polemon* really just means that he married to secure perceived political advantages. The conflation of political advantage with war in the minds of Hellenistic writers seems an easy one. Carney, *Women and Monarchy in Macedonia*, 54.

and the insult Alexander received from Attalus – which show him and Olympias in competition with other Macedonian royal mother-child teams should be interpreted.

During the early 330s, Pixodarus, the breakaway Persian satrap of Caria, and Philip negotiated a marital alliance in which Arrhidaeus was to marry the daughter of Pixodarus. This caused Alexander to feel so threatened that he connived to substitute himself for Arrhidaeus in the alliance. Pixodarus was, understandably, thrilled by this proposed change. However, Philip was angered and canceled the marriage alliance.[79] This incident highlights the unstable position of even very secure Macedonian princes. Arrhidaeus was, by all accounts, not capable of ruling on his own. He posed little direct threat to Alexander. However, for him to have powerful relatives by marriage opened the possibility that he could one day be used by someone wishing to rule through him (or his children) to challenge Alexander for the throne. Similarly, marriage to the daughter of Pixodarus would have potentially given Alexander a powerful ally who could support his own bid for the throne in a Macedonian succession war. From the perspective of Philip, it would have been potentially destabilizing for Alexander to have had another independent source of support and refuge in addition to Epirus. Philip himself could not feel completely secure as long as Olympias, and by extension Alexander, possessed powerful sources of support external to Macedonia. Moreover, Alexander's attempt to alter the marital alliance was itself an act of defiance, which could not be tolerated.

While it is possible that the dearth of male heirs from Philip's reign is a consequence of infant mortality – Philip's wives may well have given birth to more than two sons, averaging less than one surviving child per wife (including his four daughters) is nonetheless a very low rate

[79] Plutarch, *Life of Alexander*, 10.

when spread across seven wives and twenty years. It is tempting to wonder whether the wily Philip, who had fought numerous male relatives for the diadem, deliberately minimized the number of heirs he produced to avoid production of a politically destabilizing numbers of sons.

In approximately 337 BCE, Philip married for the final time to Cleopatra, the niece of his general Attalos. It is unfortunately impossible to know how Alexander and Olympias would have reacted to this marriage if Attalos had not, at the wedding feast, insulted Alexander by suggesting that now that Philip had married his niece there could at last be legitimate heirs to the kingdom. In the ensuing quarrel, a drunken Philip attempted to defend Attalos by drawing his sword and then tripping over a couch, leading Alexander to insult his father with the words, "Look now, men! Here is one who was preparing to cross from Europe into Asia; and he is upset in trying to cross from couch to couch." Afterwards, Alexander fled to Epirus with his mother. [80]

This incident illustrates the extent to which, even a successful, grown prince like Alexander – this was after Alexander had led the cavalry at Chaeronea and served as regent in Philip's absence, nonetheless could be viewed as vulnerable by others in the kingdom. In the mind of men like Attalos, the question of succession was not yet closed even though Alexander was on the cusp of adulthood and Philip had no other capable sons. The fact that Alexander later had Attalos killed in one of the first acts of his reign and that, moreover, Olympias murdered Cleopatra and her infant daughter shortly afterwards suggest that Alexander and Olympias perceived a real threat rather than just idle boasting at a drunken wedding feast.[81] In his

[80] Plutarch, *Life of Alexander*, 9.4-5.
[81] Justin, *Epitome of Pompeius Trogus*, 9.7; Pausanias, *Description of Greece*, 8.7; Plutarch, *Life of Alexander,* 10.7.

discussion of Alexander's succession, Diodorus explicitly mentioned that Attalos was a powerful rival (*ephedros*) for the kingdom and that Alexander decided to kill him for that reason.[82]

When Alexander III (r. 336-323) came to power, he also quickly did away with his cousin Amyntas, whom Philip II had married to one of his own daughters. It is unclear whether Amyntas actually intended to contest Alexander's succession, but it is certain that Thebes and Athens at least claimed that they intended to make Amyntas king after Philip II died during their revolt and that he had some support within the Macedonian aristocracy.[83]

[82] Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History*, 17.2.3.
[83] Green, Peter. *Alexander of Macedon: 356-323 BC: A Historical Biography*. Berkeley: U of California Press, 1991. 1974. 135-137.

CHAPTER 2. THEORIES OF ARGEAD SUCCESSION

2.1 MACEDONIAN KINGSHIP DEBATE

While reviewing the entirety of the scholarly debate about Macedonian kingship is beyond the scope of this dissertation, it must be summarized to put arguments about Argead succession into context. As eloquently stated in a recent review by Carol J. King, theories of Macedonian kingship broadly fall into two categories – "the 'constitutionalist' position and that of monarchic 'autocracy.'"[84] The constitutionalist position was originally proposed by Granier.[85] It has since been developed by others, but Hammond and his student Hatzopoulos have been particularly influential. The core assumption of the constitutionalist position is that the army, composed of citizen soldiers in a manner akin to that of Greek *poleis*, possessed "the right to choose the king (or regent) and to judge cases of treason."[86] The rights of the army assembly are sometimes argued to have been greater than merely these, but acceptance of these two rights is nearly universal among constitutionalists.

A problem with the acceptance of either of the hypothetical rights of the Macedonian assembly is that there are no extant examples of the Macedonian army acting in either capacity before the reign of Alexander the Great. While there is evidence from the reign of Alexander to support both core constitutionalist assumptions, the available evidence consists of a handful of events that either have ambiguous interpretations or else occurred in highly unusual

[84] King, Carol J. "Macedonian Kingship and Other Political Institutions." *A Companion to Ancient Macedonia* (2010): 373-91.
[85] Granier, Friedrich. *Die Makedonische Heeresversammlung: Ein Beitrag Zum Antiken Staatsrecht*. Vol. 13: Beck, 1931. 48–57.
[86] Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History*, 17.2

circumstances, rendering it impossible to know how typical they really were. While I am skeptical about the existence of both proposed rights of the Macedonian army assembly, in this dissertation, I will discuss only the hypothetical right of the assembly to select the king, as the hypothetical right of the army to judge cases of treason is not directly relevant to a discussion of Argead succession.

The first Macedonian succession for which our surviving sources reveal in some detail not just who fought over Macedonia, but also the process through which the victorious proto-*basileus* achieved and consolidated his victory was that of Alexander the Great. Even for Alexander, only some included information about how he came to power, and those who did recount the process by which he became king did so only briefly. Arrian, for example, does not mention the details of Alexander's accession, merely stating that Alexander, "marched into Peloponnesus as soon as he had secured the regal power."[87] Diodorus wrote that, "[Alexander] established his authority far more firmly than any did in fact suppose possible, for he was quite young and for this reason not uniformly respected, but first he promptly won over the majority (*pleithos)* to his support by tactful statements."[88] However, it's not clear who this majority was. Was it the common people, the army, the aristocracy?

Justin provides a compatible account that includes more detail. After Philip's assassination, Justin recounted a volatile brew of factions in the Macedonian army with divergent emotions and ambitions. According to Justin, some were "oppressed with an unjust yoke, [others] were excited with hopes of recovering their liberty; [yet] others, from dislike of going to

[87] Arrian, *Anabasis of Alexander*, 1.1.3-4
[88] Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History*, 17.2.2-3.

war in a distant country, rejoiced that the expedition would be called off." The implication of Justin's narrative is that Alexander moved quickly to ensure the support of the Macedonians themselves by freeing them from obligations, such as forced labor or taxation, except military service. Specifically, Justin wrote, "He granted the Macedonians relief from all burdens, except that of service in war; by which conduct he gained such popularity with his subjects, that they said they had changed only the person, not the virtues, of their king."[89]

Note that Justin's narrative suggests that Alexander did not become king through purely or even primarily legalistic means through a universally accepted succession procedure. Instead, the surviving sources describe a blend of Macedonians and subject peoples who viewed the occasion of a royal succession as an opportunity to revisit past grievances and to renegotiate the terms of any continued subservience. Alexander's strategy seems to have been to ensure the support of the ethnically Macedonian factions as fast as possible and, initially, he was willing to pay a high price to do so. This does not seem like a process governed by law with fixed rules to determine who the next *basileus* would be. While Justin's account does suggest that Alexander viewed the support of the army as necessary and made efforts to secure it, there is no description in Justin or Diodorus of any sort of election process, certainly not in the sense of multiple candidates being given a chance to sway the army and the army then choosing among them. Instead, since Alexander was fortunate enough to be on hand, he had the opportunity to try to convince the army – probably through its leaders – that supporting him was in their interests.

Rather than being an elective monarchy with an established succession procedure, what may have existed in Argead Macedonia was more of a brief moment in time in which the old king

[89] Justin, *Epitome of Pompeius Trogus*, 11.1.

was dead, but no one had sufficient support to be sure of any claim on the *basileia*. This period was likely a rolling, informal, and extremely high stakes negotiation in which enormous risks and potential rewards existed for Alexander and the more powerful men in the realm – Antipater, Antigonus, Parmenion, Attalus, etc. Immediately after Philip's death, the price Alexander was willing to pay for support was virtually unlimited. For example, despite his brothers' involvement in the assassination of Philip II, for which they were subsequently executed, Alexander of Lynkestis was pardoned by Alexander the Great, despite his suspected guilt, "because after Philip's death he was among the first of his friends to come to him, and, helping him put on his breastplate, accompanied him to the palace." Moreover, Alexander the Great didn't just pardon Alexander of Lynkestis. "The king afterwards showed him honor at his court, sent him as general into Thrace; and when Calas the commander of the Thessalian horse was sent away to a viceroyalty he was appointed to succeed that general."[90] While the post-assassination actions of Alexander of Lynkestis no doubt helped convince Alexander to spare and then elevate him, it is likely that this mercy and subsequent favor was also an effort to secure Antipater's loyalty, as Alexander of Lynkestis was Antipater's son-in-law. After the Lynkestrian publicly supported Alexander the Great and was spared in the first moments of Alexander's reign, Antipater too supported Alexander, virtually ensuring Alexander would be able to rule. Alexander's gratitude and trust can be likely be glimpsed in the appointment of Antipater as regent in Macedonia when Alexander departed to invade the Persian empire.[91]

[90] Arrian, *Anabasis*, 25.

[91] Heckel, Waldemar. *Who's Who in the Age of Alexander the Great: Prosopography of Alexander's Empire*. John Wiley & Sons, 2008, 35-38. Heckel provides a summary of what is known about Antipater and his career.

However, while Alexander needed the support of some of the great men of the realm, he did not need the support of all of them, even those who possessed significant military resources. Once some powerful figures had declared support for Alexander, his treatment of others quickly transformed from generous and forgiving to coercive and murderous. For example, Attalus, the powerful uncle of Philip's final wife Cleopatra, was murdered on Alexander's orders, despite his lofty position and the high esteem in which he was held by his soldiers.[92] This is usually interpreted as a consequence of the antipathy for Alexander displayed immediately after Philip's marriage to Cleopatra, but one wonders, had Attalus been present at Philip's death in the chaotic and desperate first moments of Alexander's reign as he frantically struggled to build a base of support, if even Attalus might have been able to survive and prosper under Alexander if he had immediately and publicly announced his support when few others had yet done so.[93]

Alexander's elimination of Attalus fits into a broader pattern of Alexander doing whatever needed to be done to expeditiously secure the loyalty of the Macedonians and his other subject peoples as quickly as possible. Diodorus wrote, "But, for all the problems and fears that beset his kingdom on every side, Alexander, who had only just reached manhood, brought everything into order impressively and swiftly. Some he won by persuasion and diplomacy, others he frightened into keeping the peace, but some had to be mastered by force and so reduced to submission."[94] It is precisely Alexander's pragmatic willingness to do whatever he needed to do

[92] Diodorus, *Library of History*, 17.2.4-5.
[93] Attalus was a son-in-law of Parmenion. Curtius, *History of Alexander the Great,* 6.9.17.
[94] Diodorus, *Library of History*, 17.3.6. Translation is from: Siculus, Diodorus, CH Oldfather, Charles L Sherman, Bradford C Welles, Russel M Geer, and Francis R Walton. *Library of History.* Harvard University Press Cambridge, Mass., 2006.

to seize and secure power that is being praised by Diodorus. Nothing about this suggests any kind of constitutional or legalistic system of succession.

A similarly chaotic succession process unfolded after Alexander's own death thirteen years later. We are told by Quintus Curtius that, after the king died, "Alexander summoned his principal friends and the army officers to the royal tent. These were followed by a crowd of the rank and file, all anxious to know to whom Alexander's estate would pass. Many officers were unable to enter the royal tent because they were prevented by the milling crowds of soldiers, and this despite a herald's announcement forbidding access to all but those called by name - having no authority, this order was ignored."[95] Here, unlike at Alexander's accession, those whose participation was intended are made clear in our sources. Quintus Curtius explicitly stated that it was the close friends of the king and the officers who were summoned. The soldiers are described as being curious and physically in the way, not as being invited or having any kind of right to attend or participate in deliberations.

However, there is reason to think that the situation was more complex than described by Curtius. Diodorus and Arrian both indicate that the infantry separately selected Arrhidaeus as king. Arrian, according to fragments preserved by Photius, indicated that "a quarrel broke out between the infantry and the cavalry."[96] It is not clear whether the mass of the Macedonian infantry genuinely wanted Arrhidaeus to be king or if this occurred at the direction of some of their officers, possibly out of loyalty to Meleager, their commander. Certainly, Meleager is the only senior figure on hand described as being opposed to the future of the *basileia* being sorted

[95] Curtius, *History of Alexander the Great,* 10.6.1-2. Translation is from: Rolfe, John. *Quintus Curtius, History of Alexander.* Loeb Classical Library. Edited by Jeffrey Henderson. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1956.
[96] Photius, *Bibliotheca*, 92. Translation is from: Photius, and John Henry Freese. *Photius: The Library*. 1920.

out by Alexander's inner circle. Curtius states that Meleager acted out of animosity to Perdiccas, though Arrian implies that the selections were simultaneous. Diodorus also reports that the selections were simultaneous, with the infantry and the companion cavalry acting separately and each coming forward with a separate succession arrangement. However, Diodorus attributes Meleager's alignment with the infantry to treachery, suggesting that he was part of the group around Perdiccas who negotiated the succession and was only then sent to the infantry, "demanding submission to their orders," whereupon he defected to the side of the rebellious infantry for personal benefit.[97]

While the ability of the infantry to choose a king at first seems to support the constitutionalist position that citizen soldiers of the Macedonian army had the right to select their king, the reaction of Perdiccas to the infantry meddling in the selection of Alexander's successor undermines the constitutionalist position. After becoming regent (and being prevented by Meleager and the infantry from becoming *basileus* outright),[98] in what was virtually his first official act, Perdiccas brutally purged the infantry. He did this in the presence of Arrhidaeus – who owed his diadem to the support of the men who were slaughtered. Moreover, the way in which Perdiccas arranged and staged the murders suggested that it was Arrhidaeus himself who had ordered the executions. "Perdiccas, under the pretense of reviewing the army, seized the ringleaders of the disturbance, and put them to death in the presence of Arrhidaeus, as if he had ordered it."[99] This suggests that Perdiccas not only took brutal revenge on those who

[97] Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History*, 18.2. Translation is from: Photius, and John Henry Freese. *Photius: The Library*. 1920.
[98] The details of Perdiccas' partially blocked succession attempt will be discussed in the next chapter.
[99] Photius, *Bibliotheca*, 92.

had dared challenge his will and that of the rest of Alexander's most senior intimates and officers, but that he was also keen to isolate and likely terrify Arrhidaeus. Shortly afterwards, Perdiccas completed his purge by having Meleager murdered.

These violent acts suggest that Perdiccas did not view the behavior of either the infantry or Meleager as an exercise of rights in a modern or even ancient Athenian sense, and he likely thought – possibly in a state of visceral rage – that Meleager and his supporters among the infantry were exceeding their proper station. More generally, Perdiccas' actions fit the same pattern of behavior that we saw in Alexander's own accession, where the goal of a new ruler is to build a base of support by any means possible and then, after this base is large enough, to kill, coerce, or intimidate anyone who does not support him or is a threat to his rule. Whether or not the Macedonians themselves considered the army assembly to have had the right to select a king during the Argead period as the constitutionalists suggest, we are justified in questioning the meaning and relevance of a right that could only be exercised at the risk of a sudden and murderous reprisal. We could almost as reasonably posit a "right" to murder a neighbor or charge naked into battle ahead of the phalanx. In practice, all three would often have amounted to elaborate methods of suicide. While it is possible that the aftermath of Alexander's death was unusually bloody, this is not necessarily true. As discussed in Chapter 1, virtually all Argead successions were contested and bloody purges of the sort carried out by Perdiccas may well have been the norm. In the absence of more detailed sources, we cannot know how representative Perdiccas' actions were.

Similar problems exist not just with the constitutionalist right of the army assembly to choose the king but also with more detailed structural theories about Macedonian succession

which have occasionally been proposed. Perhaps the most influential of these is the case made by Hatzopoulos that legitimate Macedonian succession was passed down to the eldest son born after a *basileus* began his reign, to the oldest prince "born in the purple." According to this theory, a close male relative was appointed regent if this son was a minor when his father died.[100] I will not directly respond to Hatzopoulos' theory, as I believe an adequate case against it was made by Greenwalt nearly thirty years ago and has been made by others since.[101] However, beyond being unprovable given the state of our sources (we don't know the birth order of many Argead princes) as well as incompatible with Macedonian polygamy (as discussed by Greenwalt), I believe that the biggest problem with Hatzopoulos' theory – and with virtually all other constitutionalist attempts to define rules for succession in Argead Macedonia – is that it is not clear that any Argead succession that his system would deem legitimate ever occurred without being contested. The sheer omnipresence of contested successions – as discussed in Chapter 1, they were virtually all contested, often by multiple claimants – makes it impossible to convincingly argue that a legalistic system of succession was in place in Argead Macedonia that was widely perceived as legitimate. What can it mean for there to be a rightful heir or legitimate successor if the normal result after the death of a basileus was for multiple close relatives of the dead king to compete to kill one another, often after dividing the *basileia* in civil war? Instead, as has been argued by Carney and Ogden, in such an unstable environment, I agree that it makes more sense to view the occasional claims of legitimacy preserved in surviving sources as more akin to factional propaganda, existing to persuade or justify a succession attempt in an

[100] Hatzopoulos, M. B. "Succession and Regency in Classical Macedonia." *Ancient Macedonia* 4 (1986): 279-292.
[101] Greenwalt, William. "Polygamy and Succession in Argead Macedonia." *Arethusa* 22, no. 1 (1989): esp. 22-26.

environment in which claims of rightful succession were not universally accepted, than as accurate accounts of broadly accepted succession customs.[102]

However, while it is difficult to argue in favor of any specific positive theory of Argead succession, it is important not to go too far in emphasizing the lack of succession rules. While I do not think there is or can be convincing evidence of a predictable system governing how (or to whom) power was transferred after the death of an Argead *basileus*, there were *negative* customs governing succession that were consistently followed throughout the Argead era. While it was probably not possible to predict with certainty who would become the next Argead ruler, even in relatively uncontested cases like that of Alexander the Great, there do seem to have been at least two widely accepted customs governing who could not become *basileus* in Argead Macedonia.

In particular, non-Argead Macedonians, even the rulers of the often-independent highland cantons, do not appear to have challenged the Argead dynasty for supremacy. The only possible exception during the Argead period is Ptolemy of Aloros, whose Argead credentials (or lack thereof) are not clearly indicated in the surviving source material, as was discussed earlier. Likewise, women – even the most influential of royal Argead women – never became or, as far as we know, even sought to rule on their own. Even during the unstable period after the death of Alexander the Great, when the Argead dynasty was collapsing, Olympias and Eurydice, though at times personally commanding armies and exerting widespread influence on behalf of their grandchild and husband (respectively), did not act as independent competitors for the *basileia*,

[102] Ogden, Daniel. *Polygamy, Prostitutes and Death: The Hellenistic Dynasties*. Classical Press of Wales, 1999. 43. See also: Carney, Elizabeth, and Daniel Ogden. *Philip II and Alexander the Great: Father and Son, Lives and Afterlives*. Oxford University Press, 2010.

but rather attempted to wield political power on behalf of a male relative. Before the death of Alexander, there is no evidence that any royal women ever wielded significant military or political power in Macedonia.

While these negative customs were insufficient to prevent Macedonia from experiencing frequent civil war and did not typically allow for the smooth transfer of power from one *basileus* to the next, by greatly shrinking the pool of potential contenders for the *basileia*, they nonetheless provided (sometimes barely) adequate stability for Macedonia to endure as an independent state in the late classical period. In effect, the negative succession rules present in Argead Macedonia were sufficient to restrict the set of potential *basileis* to a number that permitted the nigh-inevitable murder spree or civil war that followed the death of a king to be typically brief, however ruinous for those who did not emerge victorious.

2.2 Game Theory: An Alternative Approach to Succession

I suggest that an alternative way of understanding Macedonian succession may be from a game theory perspective. Game theory is a branch of mathematics that is used to study human decisions, most often in a competitive context. While these competitions can take the form of traditional games played for fun between willing participants, the applications of game theory are broad, and it is often used to model behavior and strategies in situations in which the outcome is far more consequential than a mere "game" in the normal usage of the term. For the purposes of most game theory problems, participants are assumed to be mathematically rational – i.e. they are assumed to be playing with the goal of obtaining the best outcome for themselves and to be searching for the strategy that will give them the best chance to do so. A key advantage of thinking about Argead succession using game theory is that doing so shifts our focus away

from Macedonia as a perpetual political entity – e.g. what was it about the Argead kingdom that caused their royals to endlessly murder one another? – and instead shifts the focus to the cumulative multi-generational decisions of the Argead princes themselves. Rather than viewing power transfer within the ruling clan as a consequence of the succession laws of the ancient kingdom of Macedonia, which the omnipresent violence preserved in our sources demonstrate either did not exist or were so weak that challenges to them were the norm, game theory allows us to instead use mathematical models to explore how the logical structure of the cumulative decisions made by Argead princes across generations instead may have restricted and shaped the behavior of future claimants of the *basileia*.

Indeed, assuming that it makes sense to view early states such as Argead Macedonia as political entities with stable rules which stood apart from the cumulative decisions of their rulers may simply be an example of bias introduced into the historical record by historians who have lived in more complex states and projected this complexity back in time. While the surviving historians from antiquity do often speak of Macedonia as though it were a state, Arrian, Justin, and Diodorus were all writing either during the Hellenistic period or during the Roman Empire, when state building had reached a more advanced state throughout much of the Mediterranean world. The Athenian orators Demosthenes and Isocrates, who were both active during the lifetime of Philip and Alexander, did not usually speak of Macedonia or even the Macedonians. Instead, when attempting to mobilize Athenian resistance to Philip (Demosthenes) or encourage Philip to launch a Pan-Hellenic crusade against Achaemenid empire (Isocrates), these authors almost always demonized, praised, or appealed to Philip himself.

A useful game theory model which has received widespread coverage outside of specialist circles is called the "Prisoner's Dilemma."[103] There are many variations of the Prisoner's Dilemma in circulation and a correspondingly large body of literature stretching across more than sixty years which has extended and applied it to many fields, but a simple version of the problem is as follows. Consider two prisoners, let's call them A and B, who were arrested for committing some crime together. They are unable to communicate with each other after their arrest. Both are interrogated. Both have two choices – they can either betray their partner in crime, providing information on the other player (criminal) or they can remain silent. If they both refuse to betray one another, there is a high probability both will be released without charges being filed against either. If they both decide to betray the other, they will both receive reduced sentences in recognition of their willing cooperation with authorities. However, if only one cooperates with police, the cooperating criminal, henceforth called "player," is needed to convict the other and will receive a greatly reduced sentence as a reward. In contrast, the convicted player who refused to betray his partner will receive a comparatively harsh sentence. The problem is summarized in the table below, where the notation A | B refers to the severity of the consequences for players A and B respectively – e.g. Very Low | Very Low in the case where both players refuse to betray the other and they both experience very low consequences for their misdeed.

[103] While I have not been able to find any succession related discussions of game theory in antiquity, the Prisoner's Dilemma has been used as a tool to discuss competition among *poleis*. See: Ober, Josiah. "Public Action and Rational Choice in Classical Greek Political Theory." *A Companion To Greek And Roman Political Thought* (2009), pp. 70-71.

A | B	B remains Silent	B Betrays A
A remains Silent	Very Low | Very Low	High |Low
A Betrays B	Low | High	Medium | Medium

Notice that the degree of trust between players is likely to have an impact on their mutual selection of strategies. If the trust between two players is high, then they can each be reasonably sure that their silence will be matched by their partner, leading to the best possible outcome for both. However, without confidence that the other player will also remain silent, neither player can unilaterally select a strategy that is superior to betrayal. Talking to the police is, in other words, the best solution available to either player without additional information about what the other player is going to do and cannot be improved on by either player *by themselves*. In game theory, this type of strategy – where players cannot select a better strategy on their own without the cooperation of the other players – is called a Nash equilibrium.[104] While some games can have multiple Nash equilibria, in the simple version of the Prisoner's Dilemma described above, mutual betrayal is the only Nash equilibrium. Without additional reason to think that the other player is going to choose to cooperate, betrayal is the rational strategic choice in any situation that can be convincingly modeled using the simple Prisoner's Dilemma.

[104] Nash, John F. "Equilibrium points in n-person games." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 36, no. 1 (1950): 48-49. For a more recent general discussion, see: Holt, Charles A., and Alvin E. Roth. "The Nash equilibrium: A perspective." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 101, no. 12 (2004): 3999-4002. The discovery of this type of mathematical equilibrium ultimately won John Nash the Nobel Prize in Economics in 1994.

Consequently, in real-world applications of the Prisoner's Dilemma, extra-game systems are often established to permit and enforce trust between players. For example, successful criminal organizations often kill members who are suspected of cooperating with police, enforcing trust among real players of this game. Another real-world example is arms reduction treaties, where the players are nations or alliances of nations and verification programs and inspectors can help establish and maintain trust between geopolitical rivals, allowing them to take the mutually safer path of disarmament.

While the simple Prisoner's Dilemma described above is too simple to model Macedonian succession well, it can be applied as a limited, artificial thought problem. For example, let's assume that there are two Macedonian princes and they need to decide who will succeed a dead *basileus*. Ruling jointly – either by peacefully dividing the *basileia* or ruling a single kingdom cooperatively – is the outcome that is likely to lead to the highest probability of survival for both "players." However, if either attempts to seize power for himself, the prince who breaks trust is likely to have an advantage (e.g. assassination) and have a high probability of successfully disposing of the other player. Hence, if mutual trust is low, we should expect both princes to attempt to seize the throne – indeed, if they are rational players, they should do so, as this is the best chance they have for survival in a low trust environment. Otherwise, they are just waiting around to be killed.

Given that almost all Argead *basileis* and many Argead non-*basileis* died violently, most at the hands of other family members, it seems safe to conclude that a low trust environment was virtually omni-present in Argead Macedonia among males of the royal clan. As previously discussed, one likely cause of the low level of trust between Argead princes was almost certainly

polygamy. Argead mother-son succession teams competed against one other for the *basileia*, typically with lethal consequences for the losers. It is telling that there are no known cases in which an Argead king allowed a half-brother to live other than Alexander III sparing the disabled Arrhidaeus. Moreover, despite his disability, it is suggestive that Alexander brought Arrhidaeus with him to Persia rather than leaving him behind in Macedonia. This suggests that, while Alexander may have felt that Arrhidaeus and his maternal relatives did not normally represent a significant threat, his trust in Arrhidaeus did not extend to leaving him to his own devices hundreds or eventually thousands of miles away from royal scrutiny.

To better model succession as it existed in Argead Macedonia, it is useful to consider a common extension of the Prisoner's Dilemma: when it is played not just once, but repeatedly. Of course, Macedonian succession struggles did not typically involve the same potential *basileis* facing one another in multiple succession games (though this did happen during the reign of Amyntas III), but – crucially – players can be assumed to have possessed information about how previous succession contests had played out. In other words, while the same players did not typically face one another in multiple rounds of the "game," they would have possessed knowledge about how previous succession struggles had been resolved, which would have shaped their expectations about how they and their opponents could be expected to behave. This allows us to think about a series of succession struggles as a game with multiple iterations despite the players themselves often changing. Actual succession in Macedonia was much more complex than this slightly extended but still very simple model – real succession struggles often did not involve simultaneous decisions among princes, equal prospects of success, equal abilities, equal knowledge of previous succession attempts, etc. However, far more complex and accurate

game theory models are possible, one of which will be discussed later, and many features of more complex models that are more directly applicable to the reality of succession as practiced among real people in real states, are present and easy to discuss in extended versions of the Prisoner's Dilemma.

Over the past generation, there has been a great deal of research into what strategies are the most effective when the Prisoner's dilemma is repeated more than one time, both in simulations and among real players in tournament settings, as well as into the necessary conditions for cooperative strategies to emerge and become dominant equilibria, as this problem has direct applications to many fields, particularly evolutionary biology. Many of the most successful strategies in the iterative Prisoner's Dilemma are variants of tit-for-tat, where a player starts out by attempting to cooperate and thereafter does whatever his opponent did on the previous iteration of the game. Note that, once one player chooses to defect and betray the other player, if both players play a pure tit-for-tat strategy thereafter, this will result in an endless series of mutual betrayals. While there are better strategies available in iterative Prisoner's Dilemma games, playing a tit-for-tat game is a relatively strong strategy.[105] In the case where your opponent is playing tit-for-tat, tit-for-tat is better still. In that case, it is mathematically "balanced," and no strategy exists which does better against it than it does against itself.[106] Hence, if a player believes that their opponent is playing a purely tit-for-tat strategy, tit-for-tat is the correct response. For the purposes of succession in Argead Macedonia, tit-for-tat equates

[105] Mathieu, Philippe, and Jean-Paul Delahaye. "New Winning Strategies for the Iterated Prisoner's Dilemma." (2017): 1665-1666.
[106] Orkin, Michael. "Balanced Strategies for Prisoner's Dilemma." *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 31, no. 1 (1987): 186-91.

to acting based on what happened in the previous succession struggle. One could try to cultivate a relationship with rivals and come to some kind of arrangement, but if you have good reason to think they are likely to try to kill you, such as having a mutual father as a role model who murdered his own rivals to gain the throne, you'd probably be better off just trying to preemptively kill anyone who seemed to be a contender.

A feature of competitive cooperative equilibria is that they are more complex to implement than the unforgiving and brutal but simple tit-for-tat.[107] For successful cooperative strategies to emerge among a population of players over multiple iterations, several things are required. In particular, the population has to be willing to allow cooperation to emerge.[108] In iterative versions of the Prisoner's Dilemma, "Equilibrium is completely determined by any group of N-1 players." In other words, there can be no cooperative equilibrium if there is not a near consensus that cooperation is the goal, as a small number of adverse actors have the ability to destroy a cooperative equilibrium even when there are many players; it is impossible to move to an effective cooperative strategy if other players do not wish to do so. To see this, consider tit-for-tat in an iterative two-player Prisoner's Dilemma game. If one player doesn't want to cooperate despite the greater collective rewards for doing so, a player who plays the unforgiving tit-for-tat strategy will still lose as the non-cooperative player will choose betrayal in the first iteration of the game, reducing the subsequent game to an endless cycle of mutual betrayal for both players (as the tit-for-tat player will respond to the initial betrayal with subsequent

[107] Axelrod, Robert. The Complexity of Cooperation: Agent-Based Models of Competition and Collaboration. Vol. 3: Princeton University Press, 1997.

[108] Kalai, Ehud, and William Stanford. "Finite rationality and interpersonal complexity in repeated games." *Econometrica: Journal of the Econometric Society* (1988): 397-410.

betrayal), but with a score advantage for the uncooperative player who additionally defected during the first round when the tit-for-tat player was momentarily experimenting with cooperation.

In addition to a near-universal desire to cooperate among the players, an additional feature is important for enabling the emergence of stable cooperative strategies in many iterative games, including iterative versions of the Prisoner's Dilemma. In general, environments in which the players have more experience with previous iterations of the game (longer memories) are conducive to the evolution of cooperative strategies not just in the Prisoner's Dilemma, but in iterative games more generally.[109] Experience enables cooperation by allowing players to better perceive what is in their own best interests as well as by giving them more time to judge the intentions and character of their opponents and to adjust their own strategies accordingly over time.[110]

Applied to Argead succession, the emergence of competitive cooperative strategies would have depended on a collective desire to cooperate and repeated exposure to the succession game. Once distrust had been established among Argead family members, it would have been difficult to rebuild trust without the circumstances in which succession occurred changing. The cultural lack of trust would have been subsequently intertwined with the logical structure of the Argead succession game itself and would not have been easy for the Macedonians to correct on their own as a minority of defectors would have been adequate to

[109] Jurišić, Marko, Dragutin Kermek, and Mladen Konecki. "A review of iterated prisoner's dilemma strategies." In MIPRO, 2012 Proceedings of the 35th International Convention, pp. 1093-1097. IEEE, 2012.
[110] Kraines, David P, and Vivian Y Kraines. "Natural Selection of Memory-One Strategies for the Iterated Prisoner's Dilemma." *Journal of Theoretical Biology* 203, no. 4 (2000): 335-55.

make cooperative strategies suboptimal. Low levels of trust between Argead princes, once established, would have been difficult to remedy even had a majority of Argead princes had no desire to inflict violence on their relatives.

In order to disrupt the violent equilibrium of the repetitive succession game so that a cooperative equilibrium could emerge, the Prisoner's Dilemma suggests that either some extra-game (politically external) system of enforcement would have been needed to explicitly rebuild trust among players – for example a foreign or internal power strong enough and committed enough to punish anyone who violated some system of succession – or else the succession "game" can be expected to have continued in a state in which Macedonian princes constantly defected (or were killed by defectors while attempting to play sub-optimal cooperation strategies) until such time as the political context changed and the iterative game ended. For example, if a Macedonian *basileus* was successful at wiping out nearly all other Argead princes and then conquered a vast empire, suddenly dying far from home with only incapable potential successors who could not play the game on their own, this might be a moment when a different sort of succession game could come into being. We can expect that the emergence of cooperative strategies in such circumstances would be more likely still if a new, larger population of "players" were personally able to observe a large number of succession disputes over the course of a single lifetime and develop a high level of experience with the game itself and with the population of competing players. As will be discussed in subsequent chapters, this is, of course, what happened during the forty years after the death of Alexander the Great.

While the relatively simple Prisoner's Dilemma can provide some insights into the decisions made by Argead contenders, more complex game theory models can also be used to

model succession and can result in more general and convincing conclusions. For example, in an illuminating paper, Georgy Egorov and Konstantin Sonin used a highly complex game theory model to simulate what they termed "The Killing Game," non-democratic succession.[111] While the authors drew their historical examples from recent autocratic states (e.g. 19-20th century Latin America) with briefer discussions of medieval England and the Ottoman empire, the model developed in their paper is general, makes no assumptions that limit its applicability to modern, early modern, or medieval states and it is consequently applicable to Argead succession.

Specifically, the assumptions for the succession "game" setup by Egorov and Sonin are as follows. It is assumed that there is an unlimited pool of potential challengers. This is, of course, never actually true in the real world. However, in practice, assuming an unlimited pool of candidates means merely that the model fails if it runs out of candidates, so this is not a liability. It is also assumed that there is a single ruler – dictator, king, emperor, etc. – and that the ruler will reign until there is a challenge, which may succeed or fail. If a challenge is successful, the challenger becomes the new ruler and the game continues as before. After each challenge, the winner has the choice to either spare or execute the defeated ruler. Ruler reputation – a moral cost for choosing to execute – is also built into the model.

The authors then consider how the Markov perfect equilibria – a Markov equilibrium is an extension of the Nash equilibrium concept discussed earlier and is basically a Nash equilibrium in a complex game with changing conditions that cannot be improved upon until the game

[111] Egorov, Georgy, and Konstantin Sonin. "The Killing Game: A Theory of Non-Democratic Succession." *Research in Economics* 69, no. 3 (2015): 398-411.

conditions change – vary under different game scenarios.[112] Their conclusions, which they proved mathematically for their theoretical model, are as follows:

> The rational winner of a power struggle determines the fate of the loser. His equilibrium choice of strategy is motivated by two basic considerations: first, he is willing to increase the probability of survival by reducing the set of potential contenders. Second, he fears that a bad reputation would serve him poorly should he in turn become the loser. One conclusion that we are able to illustrate employing a historical narrative is the existence of markedly different equilibria paths.[113]

An additional key finding of their paper is that, when it is probable that a ruler will be able to rule for a long time after being challenged without facing a new challenge, the Markov perfect equilibrium for the succession game is to *always kill an opponent*. This result, which is from a model that is much closer to reality than the Prisoner's Dilemma, is intuitive and useful. It suggests that an Argead contender who killed his rivals (typically a small number of closely related men) should be viewed not as breaking the laws of ancient Macedonia (or enforcing them by killing other lawbreakers) or even in indulging in an understandable response to the turbulent political environment of late classical Macedonia. Instead, such a murderous ruler should be viewed as maximally rational, even if, through his brutality, he was all but ensuring that he himself would be killed in the next round of the succession game should he be unlucky enough to end up playing again and losing. The normal outcome of victory was that he would thereafter endure in power for a long time and would likely die of something other than a succession struggle – e.g. natural causes (Alexander I, Perdiccas II, Amyntas III, Alexander the Great), battle

[112] Maskin, Eric, and Jean Tirole. "Markov perfect equilibrium: I. Observable actions." *Journal of Economic Theory* 100, no. 2 (2001): 191-219.
[113] Egorov, Georgy, and Konstantin Sonin. "The killing game: A theory of non-democratic succession." *Research in Economics* 69, no. 3 (2015): 407.

against foreign opponents (Perdiccas III), or non-succession related assassination (Archelaus, Philip II). Together, Alexander I, Perdiccas II, Amyntas III, Perdiccas III, Archelaus, Philip II, and Alexander the Great ruled for nearly the entirety of the duration of the Argead kingdom.

CHAPTER 3. THE GREAT SUCCESSION CRISIS

Due in no small part to the thoroughness with which Alexander and his father Philip had eliminated their closest male relatives, Alexander had no militarily capable male family members able to succeed him after he died. As established in the previous two chapters, even had Alexander died in Pella without invading the Achaemenid Empire, his premature death under such circumstances would almost certainly have led to civil war as his distant relatives and in-laws vied with one another to either become *basileus* or else to rule through his children, with grim prospects for the ultimate survival of the children themselves. However, in addition to having no surviving male relatives capable of ruling, Alexander died far from Macedonia with more powerful and numerous subordinates than past Macedonian kings. Consequently, while the transfer of power after Alexander's death bore some broad similarities to previous Argead successions, it was longer, more intensely contested, more violent, and ultimately unsuccessful, resulting in the division of Alexander's empire into numerous independent states.

3.1 NOTE ABOUT ANCIENT SOURCES

Many ancient sources for the Argead period – e.g. Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophon, Isocrates, Demosthenes, etc. – are themselves the closest known accounts to the events they describe. While they include material that their authors did not personally witness and were not immune to bias, they were generally written within living memory of the events they chronicled. Likewise, the reign of Alexander the Great and its aftermath were documented by contemporary sources, sometimes by companions of Alexander such as Ptolemy and Nearchus. However, the works of these contemporary historians of Alexander the Great were ultimately victims of later

Roman interest in the life of Alexander and his successors, which peaked after Trajan's successful invasion of the Near East. Of our five major surviving ancient sources for the life of Alexander the Great – Arrian, Plutarch, Diodorus Siculus, Justin, and Quintus Curtius Rufus, all are from the Roman period and were based (directly or indirectly) on much older Greek primary sources. While no doubt more accessible to their intended audiences, the existence of these later popular works meant that they slowly replaced the original Greek texts, all of which were ultimately lost. So, for example, we are left with Arrian rather than the original histories by the eyewitnesses Ptolemy and Aristobulus, on which Arrian based his *Anabasis*.[114]

Plutarch mentioned many authors that were close in time to Alexander's own life and seems to have had access to a rich library of primary sources – he explicitly named more than two dozen in his *Life of Alexander*, of varying quality and reliability.[115] Justin's work is a late epitome of the lost history of Gnaeus Pompeius Trogus, himself a contemporary of Augustus. While there are notable factual problems with some passages in Justin's epitome, this may be more a result of Justin's own carelessness than an accurate reflection the original work being abridged. Given that we have only an epitome of his work, it is difficult to know exactly who the sources used by Pompeius Trogus were. However, some parallel passages in Justin and Quintus Curtius suggest that Pompeius Trogus and Quintus Curtius did not write wholly independently, either because Quintus Curtius used Pompeius Trogus as one of his sources or else because they both used at least one overlapping source, which has been hypothesized to either be or

[114] Arrian, *Anabasis of Alexander*, Preface.
[115] Powell, J. Enoch. "The sources of Plutarch's Alexander." *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 59, no. 2 (1939): 229-240.

ultimately derive from Cleitarchus.[116] Diodorus Siculus is believed to have primarily relied on Cleitarchus for Alexander's life and campaigns, though he also used other sources.[117]

In the ensuing discussion, I will generally treat Arrian, Justin, Quintus Curtius, and Diodorus as independently derived and assign them relatively equal weight. While they did use some of the same sources, and probably all of them (except Arrian) may have relied to some extent on Cleitarchus, they differ in critical details and are at least partially independent. As Quintus Curtius and Pompeius Trogus are arguably more dependent than any other two sources, I will typically lean more heavily on Quintus Curtius while he is available, both because his work contains fewer major errors of the kind that sometimes makes Justin problematic and also because, being unabridged, Quintus Curtius' work is simply more complete and more detailed in the form we currently possess. As Plutarch was a biographer interested primarily in discussing the character of his subjects, he contains little information directly pertaining to succession and so will be used only occasionally.

Our sources quickly diminish in number and detail soon after Alexander's death. Quintus Curtius' *History of Alexander* ends after Perdiccas' regency is established. Arrian's *Anabasis of Alexander* ends with Alexander's death, though fragments of the historian's lost *Events After Alexander* are preserved in the work of the Byzantine scholar Photius and are complete enough to provide a useful, if heavily summarized, supportive narrative until shortly after the settlement at Triparadeisos. Justin's *Epitome of Pompeius Trogus* remains available through the early

[116] Justinus, Marcus Junianus, and Waldemar Heckel. *Justin: Epitome of the Philippic History of Pompeius Trogus: Volume II: Books 13-15: The Successors to Alexander the Great*. Vol. 2. Oxford University Press, 2011, p 5-6.
[117] Siculus, Diodorus, C. H. Oldfather, Charles L. Sherman, Bradford C. Welles, Russel M. Geer, and Francis R. Walton. *Library of history*. Harvard University Press, 2006, Volume IX, p. vii-viii.

successor period, though he covers this period in less detail than the life of Alexander the Great. By far the most detailed surviving account for the final years of the Argead dynasty is that of Diodorus Siculus, whose *Library of History* depended heavily on the lost work of Hieronymus of Cardia for the early successor period. Any modern account of the early successor period must rely heavily on Diodorus. Supporting details about the final days of the Argead dynasty are available in numerous lesser sources that do not offer complete narratives of the period. The most important of these is arguably Plutarch's *Life of Eumenes*, which sometimes provides insight into the decisions made by the most important royalist among the successors and generally supports Diodorus' account where they do cover the same information.

3.2 Aftermath of Alexander's Death

When Alexander died, the Argead dynasty had no remaining males who were able to lead the Macedonians in war. The only adult Argead male was Alexander's mentally disabled half-brother Arrhidaeus, whom Alexander had allowed to live and who was present in Babylon when Alexander died. Alexander also had an approximately four-year-old son, Heracles, by Barsine, a daughter of the former Achaemenid satrap Artabazus and sister of the Persian general Pharnabazus.[118] In addition, Alexander left behind at least one pregnant wife – Roxana, daughter of the Sogdian lord Oxyartes. Moreover, Alexander had recently married both Stateira and Parysatis, daughters of the former Persian kings Darius III and Artaxerxes III. It is unknown whether either of these women were pregnant when Alexander died, but Plutarch indicates that Roxana, with support from Perdiccas, murdered Stateira and her sister almost as soon as

[118] Following Tarn, the existence of Heracles is sometimes disputed. More frequently, he is declared illegitimate and ignored. I strongly support his existence and legitimacy; these are assumed in this chapter but will be addressed in Chapter 4.

Alexander's body was cold. Carney suspects that Plutarch is incorrect about Stateira's sister being killed and believes that it was more likely Parysatis who died along with Stateira.[119] While I find Carney's suggestion probable, it is possible that Parysatis survived but was childless and therefore not of much additional interest to the male historians of the period. Certainly, no former consorts of Alexander other than Roxana and Barsine appear in our sources after Alexander's death.

There were more surviving Argead women than men. Alexander's surviving female relatives included two half-sisters, Thessalonike and Cynane, who had formerly been married to Alexander's first-cousin Amyntas;[120] and a single full-sister, Cleopatra. In addition, Cynane had a daughter, Eurydice, from her marriage to Amyntas. None of Alexander's female relatives were married when he died. While it is tempting to view this as a deliberate policy on the part of Alexander to restrict the number of potential male Argead heirs, it may simply reflect Alexander's preoccupation elsewhere. It seems likely that royal women would have needed his permission to marry, which would have been difficult to obtain from a king who spent most of the final decade of his life on campaign in Afghanistan and India, at the periphery of the Greek world, and who was sometimes out of contact even with Babylon. While not technically an Argead, Alexander's mother Olympias was still alive and active when he died. She also still possessed strong family ties to Epirus and ultimately proved a powerful and ruthless enemy of those whom she perceived as threatening the right of her grandchildren to rule.

Given prior Macedonian history, a situation in which the only male heirs were a mentally disabled half-brother, a four-year-old, and a possibly-male fetus would have been likely to lead

[119] Carney, *Women and Monarchy in Macedonia*, 110.
[120] Alexander had executed Amyntas at the beginning of his reign.

to disagreement and bloodshed. However, unlike prior Macedonian kings, Alexander also left behind enormous resources and many experienced commanders. For the first time, many Macedonian aristocrats, in possession of vast territories, centuries of stockpiled tribute to generations of Persian kings, and tens of thousands of veteran soldiers, had the means to join the surviving Argeads in the struggle for power. In addition, native aristocracies with no history of loyalty to the Argead dynasty had partially merged with the Macedonian elite during Alexander's reign. Alexander's original senior commanders had suffered severe attrition by the time he died, most being killed in war, by disease, or by execution after they failed to adapt to the changes in the political system Alexander introduced.

In addition, it is important to remember that Alexander's empire, while large, had been only very recently and incompletely conquered. The cabal of officers in Babylon surrounding Alexander when he died found themselves very far from their homeland surrounded by a host of potentially hostile native peoples, most of whom had little reason to show loyalty to the Macedonian conquerors if their strength seemed to falter. More threatening, the satraps and other high-ranking men of the empire at the end of Alexander's life were not all Macedonians. In his final years, Alexander had appointed many Iranians (e.g. Artabazus, Oxyartes, Atropates, etc.) as well as important non-Macedonian Greeks (e.g. Eumenes and Nearchus) to some of the most important positions in his realm, including senior military commands and satrapal thrones. Alexander had also deliberately married the daughters of the most elite Iranian families to his senior Macedonian and Greek officers during the mass weddings at Susa a year earlier.[121] This may have increased acceptance of the conquest by tying important Iranian and Macedonian

[121] Arrian, *Anabasis of Alexander*, 7.4.

families together into a new hybrid elite, but it had also elevated many high-born Iranians into positions of power throughout an only very recently Macedonian empire.

As discussed in chapter two, Macedonian succession had traditionally depended on the real-time ability of the most significant men of the kingdom, who knew each other well and were sometimes relatives by marriage, to jockey for power and make deals immediately after the former king's death. The transfer of power to a new king was subject to negotiation in a broad sense, which could incorporate coercion and outright violence. Potential Argead contenders and senior members of the nobility who were not physically present operated under a disadvantage in the scramble for power during a royal succession, possibly not even being aware that the king had died until many of the details of a succession had already been negotiated. In past Macedonian history, where succession had pertained only to a small kingdom in the Balkans, the chances that a significant number of the most important men in the kingdom would not quickly be available was low. However, after Alexander's death, many of the most powerful men in the kingdom – some with armies or satrapies bigger than Macedonia itself – were not present in Babylon. In particular, some of the most senior figures, including Antipater, Craterus, and Antigonus, were not only not present, they were hundreds of miles away in Anatolia and Macedonia.

Some of the most powerful men in the empire had not even seen Alexander in a very long time. The case of Antigonus is particularly illuminating. In the initial Anatolian phase of Alexander's invasion of the Achaemenid empire, the recently crowned Alexander entrusted

Antigonus with command of the 7000-strong allied Greek contingent.[122] While he was present at the Battle of the Granicus, the middle-aged Macedonian general did not remain with the main invasion force for long and did not participate in the great battles at Issus and Gaugamela. After the Macedonian army defeated the combined forces of the Persian satraps of Asia Minor, Alexander detached Antigonus from the main army in 333 to become the new Macedonian satrap of the partially conquered Persian satrapy of Phrygia with orders to complete the conquest. As far as we know, Antigonus never saw Alexander again.[123] Senior figures like Antigonus would likely have known few of the Iranian nobles and satraps who wielded power in the empire, not been personally familiar with Alexander's wives, and if he had interacted with the most senior Macedonian officers in the empire, it would have likely been when they were in far more junior positions, typically as his inferiors. The same can be said of Antipater, whom Alexander had left behind as regent in Macedonia at the beginning of his reign. When last Antipater and Antigonus saw them, Perdiccas had been a regimental infantry commander and the Greek exile Eumenes had been Alexander's secretary. When Alexander died, Perdiccas was *chiliarchos*, effectively Alexander's vizier, and the Greek exile Eumenes was *hipparchos*, commander of the companion cavalry. These are just two examples among many. It is reasonable to wonder whether any settlement arranged in Babylon by men who had been junior

[122] Antigonus is not mentioned as the commander of the allied hoplites by Diodorus, who listed them as part of a greater force commanded by Parmenion, but Arrian explicitly stated that Antigonus was the commander of the *summachoi* at the time he was appointed satrap of Phrygia. See: Arrian, *Anabasis of Alexander*, 1.29.3; Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History*, 17.17.

[123] Alexander certainly never came back to Anatolia. It is possible that Antigonus traveled to see Alexander at some point, but our surviving sources give us no hint that such a journey took place.

officers at the beginning of Alexander's campaigns could have been viewed as wholly legitimate by men such as Antigonus or Antipater.

Whatever their personal feelings, the need for haste meant that the Macedonian cabal in Babylon could not wait to bring the more remote Macedonian grandees into the succession negotiations. The existence of many Iranians in positions of power, the lack of Argead males capable of leading the Macedonians in battle, and vast tracts spear-won land populated by millions of culturally alien subjects who had no reason for loyalty to an imposed Macedonian regime, meant that a quick and decisive resolution to the succession was needed. Unfortunately, the lack of capable, adult Argead males meant that, even should an Argead eventually rule again, there would be a lengthy period of time in which a non-Argead would need to make decisions on behalf of whoever was to be the titular king. This was unprecedented in the prior history of Argead Macedonia. A completely new solution to a complicated succession problem would have to be worked out rapidly with only some of the most important stakeholders present in an environment in which civil war had the potential to ruin them all. While the senior figures of the empire did try, it ultimately proved to be too great a challenge.

It is reasonable to wonder why Alexander permitted this uncertain situation to occur. Did he not value the preservation of the empire he had spent his lifetime building? There have been those who have viewed him as more focused on personal deeds than on than on ensuring the stability of his kingdom.[124] This is no doubt true to some extent, but also unfair. Alexander was not quite thirty-three when he died – still a young man, and he died suddenly. In his final years,

[124] Carney, *Women and Monarchy in Macedonia*, 206.

he had married at least four times and left behind a young son and at least one pregnant wife.[125] This does not suggest a king who was negligent in producing heirs, just one who died suddenly at a young age with many intentions unfulfilled.

Moreover, when Alexander realized that he was going to die in Babylon in 323 BCE, he took steps to indicate what he wished to occur after his death. According to most of our sources, Alexander gave Perdiccas his signet ring on his deathbed.[126] This suggests that the *basileus* intended Perdiccas as either his successor or as some sort of caretaker. However, Quintus Curtius also stated that, after Alexander was asked to whom he gave his kingdom, he responded, "to whomever is the best."[127] Similar words are attributed to Alexander by Diodorus and Justin, with Justin having "to the most worthy" and Diodorus "to the strongest."[128] By themselves, these statements seem to suggest that Alexander did not necessarily value the survival of his empire. However, importantly, ancient sources differ in the order in which these events occurred. Quintus Curtius and Diodorus both have Alexander first handing his signet ring to Perdiccas and then responding when questioned explicitly about the succession that the kingdom was to go to the best or strongest. However, Justin reversed the order of these events, indicating instead that, when asked early in his final illness, Alexander responded vaguely or perhaps flippantly that the succession should go to the worthiest. Then, days later, when Alexander could no longer speak, he only then gave Perdiccas the signet ring, which Justin indicates was "an act which

[125] For a discussion of Alexander's sexuality, see Daniel Ogden's article in: Heckel, Waldemar, Lawrence A. Tritle, and Pat Wheatley, eds. *Alexander's Empire: Formulation to Decay*. Regina Books, 2007, 75-108.
[126] Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History*, 17.117; Quintus Curtius, *History of Alexander*, 10.5.4, Justin, *Epitome of Pompeius Trogus*, 12.15.
[127] Quintus Curtius, *History of Alexander*, 10.5.5. Latin: "*ei qui esset optimus."*
[128] Justin, *Epitome of Pompeius Trogus*, 12.15; Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History*, 17.117.

tranquilized the growing dissention" and was taken by his officers as an indication of Alexander's intent. [129]

While Justin is often not our most reliable source, in this particular case, there are reasons to suspect that he is transmitting the more faithful tradition. In contrast to the narrative presented by Diodorus and Quintus Curtius, Justin's account does not require us to believe that Alexander cared little about the survival of his empire and actively encouraged his friends to slaughter each other (and possibly also his wives and children) in an extended competition for power. Given the challenges he received after his own father died, Alexander could have had little doubt about the consequences of allowing men like Ptolemy, Perdiccas, and Antigonus to work the succession out for themselves.

Instead, Justin's account is what any ruler of an empire with relatively open succession rules and no viable kin capable of succeeding him would be likely to do – early in his final illness, when Alexander still hoped to recover, he deflected questions about the succession to avoid revealing his hand and allowing a powerbase to coalesce around an appointed heir in a way that might become a threat to himself or his offspring if he recovered. However, Alexander, who may have been understandably slow to conclude that he was going to die in his early thirties with many plans unfulfilled, moved to publicly indicate his intent when he realized – late in his illness – that he wasn't going to recover, by handing Perdiccas his signet ring. However, by the time the dying king acted, he had nearly waited too long and was no longer even able to speak. It is not surprising that these events were (likely) reversed by some of the lost authors drawn on by Diodorus and Quintus Curtius – reversing them makes Alexander appear to sanction the

[129] Justin, *Epitome of Pompeius Trogus*, 12.15.

generation of butchery and betrayal that followed his death, providing retroactive legitimacy for the generals who undermined his final instructions, killed his family, and in time elevated themselves to royal rank. While Arrian's *Anabasis* does not discuss the succession, his account provides support for the idea that Alexander did not expect to die until very soon before he lost the ability to speak, as he was still planning the campaign to conquer Arabia as his final illness progressed.[130] Arrian's failure to mention Alexander's selection of Perdiccas is not strong evidence against its occurrence as Arrian based his account on that of Ptolemy, who was not a Perdiccan supporter at Babylon and ultimately led a successful rebellion against Perdiccas, which Perdiccas did not survive.

While Justin, Diodorus, and Quintus Curtius all record the gift of Alexander's signet ring to Perdiccas and the companion cavalry's feud with the infantry and its advocacy of Philip Arrhidaeus, only Quintus Curtius gives a detailed account of the deliberations among the Macedonians. The chaotic account he presents, detailing a confused period of posturing by different commanders and groups of soldiers, is plausible, at least in its broad outline. Virtually all actors are described as behaving in ways that do not conflict with anything in our other sources and make sense given earlier and later events.[131]

As might be expected, chaos initially seemed to reign after Alexander's death. Initial deliberations were mobbed by soldiers who ignored orders to keep outside, making it difficult for negotiations to occur.[132] Despite being given the signet ring, Perdiccas initially advocated for

[130] Arrian, *Anabasis of Alexander*, 7.25.
[131] Quintus Curtius, *History of Alexander*, 10.6-9.
[132] Quintus Curtius, *History of Alexander*, 10.6.2-3.

Roxana's unborn child, possibly not daring to directly advocate for his own selection.[133] The optimal outcome for Perdiccas would have been a delay while everyone waited to see if Roxana's child was male, after which Perdiccas could be selected as regent if the infant proved to be male and *basileus* otherwise. This would also have given Perdiccas several months to get control of the situation, build a stable and predictable base of support, and disperse or eliminate his competitors.

However, Perdiccas was not permitted to have the time he needed. Meleager, who hated Perdiccas, accused him of planning to "seize the kingdom" while it was under his protection as regent.[134] Nearchus advocated for his (half) brother-in-law, Heracles, which was generally unpopular.[135] According to Justin, Meleager also supported Heracles initially, though Quintus Curtius' more detailed account does not confirm this.[136] Ptolemy suggested that Alexander not be replaced. Instead, he proposed a ruling council of Macedonian generals, conducted in the presence of the empty throne of Alexander.[137] This proposal found some support; Curtius suggests that it was the most popular of the initial proposals. However, Aristonus and Peithon soon advocated for Perdiccas to become king outright since this was what Alexander had wanted. This seems to have won some acceptance for a time, as "there was no doubt that Aristonus'

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[133] Errington, R. Malcolm. "From Babylon to Triparadeisos: 323–320 BC." *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 90 (1970): 50. In general, I agree with Errington's analysis of Perdiccas' behavior immediately after Alexander died. However, Errington interpreted Perdiccas' hesitation as being caused by the uncertainty of Roxana's pregnancy. While I agree that this was likely a factor, I doubt it was the primary reason he hesitated. Perdiccas had only been aware that Alexander was dying for a few days at most and had only been the designated successor for mere hours. He had had very little time to plan, could not be sure of the support of the other great lords, and likely was concerned about fatal overreach.

[134] Quintus Curtius, *History of Alexander*, 10.7.7.

[135] Quintus Curtius, *History of Alexander*, 10.6.10-12.

[136] Justin, *Epitome of Pompeius Trogus*, 13.2.7.

[137] Quintus Curtius, *History of Alexander*, 10.6.15.

opinion was the truth." However, Perdiccas was slow in accepting, perhaps not feeling like his support was great enough to be confident of success. Perdiccas' delay allowed Menander to rally the phalanx in favor of Arrhidaeus, whom they declared to be king. Meanwhile, Alexander's inner circle and the companion cavalry rallied around Perdiccas's plan to wait for Roxana's child to be born and quickly withdrew from the city.

While some of the animosity of the infantry to Perdiccas was likely cultivated by Meleager, the suspicion with which the phalanx viewed Perdiccas made sense in light of recent Macedonian history. Within the lifetimes of the men in Babylon in 323 BCE, there had been two regents prior to Perdiccas who had ruled on behalf of minor Argead kings. As we have seen, Ptolemy of Aloros had assassinated Alexander II and used his teenage brother as a tool to control Macedonia. This situation ended when the teenager, Perdiccas III, murdered Ptolemy and seized control of his *basileia*. The other possible regent to rule in Argead Macedonia during the lifetimes of Alexander's men was Philip II himself, who depending on whether one accepts the account of Diodorus or Justin, may initially have been appointed regent for his infant nephew Amyntas before replacing him as king. While most of Alexander's men were probably not troubled by Philip II's seizure of power, the reign of Ptolemy of Aloros had been a disaster for Macedonia. Moreover, both regencies gave Macedonians ample reason to view the motivations of their regents with suspicion. None of the men in Babylon, of any rank, would have remembered a regent for an Argead prince who had voluntarily turned power over to his ward. The loyalty of the common Macedonian soldiers to the Argead dynasty, as demonstrated by their support for Arrhidaeus, is a consistent theme throughout the early successor period and continued to cause problems for other ambitious non-Argeads long after Perdiccas himself had died.

Once Perdiccas and the other friends of Alexander escaped to the countryside with the companion cavalry, Perdiccas quickly ordered food imports into Babylon interdicted, and famine began in the city almost immediately.[138] This forced Arrhidaeus, Meleager, and the other leaders of the phalanx to negotiate. A hasty compromise was negotiated, in which both Arrhidaeus and Roxana's child, if male, would become king. Perdiccas was left in command of the royal army and was effectively guardian of the kings and regent of the empire, though he may not have been given a title which made this role unambiguous.[139] All sources agree that, after negotiations and the subsequent purge of the phalanx, Perdiccas was firmly in command of the royal army and had Roxana and Arrhidaeus in his possession. However, the formal position of Perdiccas is given slightly differently in different accounts. Quintus Curtius says simply that there was agreement that Perdiccas would command the royal army.[140] Diodorus, while stressing Alexander's dying gift of his signet ring, says Perdiccas was the manager of the kings.[141] Justin gives a less plausible account, saying that Craterus, who was not present, was given command over the royal coffers while the "command of the camp, the army, and the war" were entrusted to Meleager and Perdiccas. The surviving summary of Arrian's *Events After Alexander* gives the most complete account of the respective roles of those elevated at Babylon, "It was agreed … that Antipater should be general of the forces in Europe; that Craterus should look after the kingdom of Arridaeus; that Perdiccas should be *chiliarch* of the troops which had been under the command

[138] Quintus Curtius, *History of Alexander*, 10.8.11-12.
[139] Diodorus is vague about Perdiccas' position.
[140] Quintus Curtius, *History of Alexander*, 10.10.4. "Perdicca ut cum rege esset copiisque praeesset quae regem sequebantur."
[141] Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History*, 18.2.4. Diodorus says Perdiccas was ἐπιμελητής, which was used as a formal title in many Greek polities.

of Hephaestion, which amounted to entrusting him with the care of the whole empire; and that Meleager should be his lieutenant."[142]

Whatever the specific titles, what appears certain is that a power sharing arrangement was negotiated and that Perdiccas and his supporters were merely part of a dispersed ruling coalition. However, Perdiccas was left in a stronger position than anyone else to consolidate his power afterwards. Indeed, as discussed earlier, Perdiccas immediately acted to secure the royal army and intimidate Arrhidaeus into subservience, arranging the purging of Meleager and his supporters in Arrhidaeus' name. He then, again in Arrhidaeus' name, reassigned satrapal thrones throughout the empire:

> After Perdiccas had assumed the supreme command and had taken counsel with the chief men, he gave Egypt to Ptolemy, son of Lagos, Syria to Laomedon of Mitylene, Cilicia to Philotas, and Media to Peithon. To Eumenes, he gave Paphlagonia and Cappadocia… To Antigonus he gave Pamphylia, Lycia, and what is called Greater Phrygia; to Asander, Caria; to Menander, Lydia; and to Leonnatus, Hellespontine Phrygia… Thrace and the neighboring tribes near the Pontic sea were given to Lysimachus, and Macedonia and the adjacent peoples were assigned to Antipater… To Pithon he gave the satrapy next to the Taxiles … and the satrapy next to the Caucasus, called that of Paropanisadae, he assigned to Oxyartes the Bactrian… He gave Arachosia and Cedrosia to Sibyrtius, Aria and Drangine to Stasanor of Soli, Bactria and Sogdiana to Philip, Parthia and Hyrcania to Phrataphernes, Persia to Peukestes, Carmania to Tlepolemus, Media to Atropates, Babylon to Archon, and Mesopotamia to Arcesilaus."[143]

While Perdiccas' motivations for these decisions are not discussed by any surviving source, his likely goals can be inferred from the appointments he made. Some of Alexander's most senior

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[142] Which side wanted to include the non-present Craterus is unclear. Errington discusses this problem in detail. Errington, R Malcolm. "From Babylon to Triparadeisos: 323–320 BC." *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 90 (1970): 55-56. My own guess is that Craterus was simply viewed by those at Babylon as dangerous and likely to challenge any settlement if he was not given some important status. In effect, his authority may have been deliberately intended to be vaguely defined and to amount to little actual power.

[143] Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History,* 18.3. Translation is from the Loeb library.

officers, including Ptolemy, were dispersed throughout the empire. This had the effect of simultaneously enriching and rewarding these men, while also removing them from the capital and inhibiting their ability to plot against Perdiccas in the short term. However, by giving them powerful bases of support far from Babylon, Perdiccas simultaneously increased the long-term danger to himself. In addition, Perdiccas eliminated all Iranians from senior positions of power who did not have strong ties to the Macedonian regime.

The only Iranians who kept their satrapies after the Perdikkan purge were Atropates, Oxyartes, and Phrataphernes. All three of these men had strong ties to the Macedonian conquerors. Perdiccas was married to a daughter of Atropates.[144] Oxyartes was the father of Alexander's wife Roxana, whose unborn child ultimately became Alexander IV. Phrataphernes, though he had served as an important commander at Gaugamela on the Achaemenid side, had surrendered to the Macedonians after Bessus murdered Darius III. Phrataphernes was retained as a satrap by Alexander and thereafter repeatedly demonstrated his loyalty to the Macedonians. He suppressed a revolt of the Areians, helped the Macedonians hunt down the renegade Achaemenid satrap Autophradates, was entrusted with an independent command of Thracian auxiliaries, participated in the invasion of India, and intervened on his own initiative to save Alexander and much of his army during their otherwise ill-fated march through the Gedrosian desert.[145]

[144] Arrian, *Anabasis of Alexander*, 7.4.5.

[145] Sub commander of Darius: Arrian, *Anabasis*, 3.8.4; Ordered to suppress Areian rebellion: Arrian, *Anabasis*, 3.28.2; role in capture of Autophradates: Arrian, *Anabasis*, 4.18.2; commanding Thracian auxiliaries: Arrian, *Anabasis*, 5.20.7; saving Alexander in the Gedrosian desert: Arrian, *Anabasis*, 6.27.6.

A wave of rebellions followed quickly on the heels of Alexander's death. Perhaps due to Perdiccas' satrapal purge, there were few if any new satrapal revolts, though some Achaemenid satrapies – notably Armenia and Cappadocia – remained unconquered and others, especially those of Antigonus and Antipater, may well have been left in the hands of their current satraps in part because it would have taken an army and a protracted campaign to dislodge them. However, numerous Greeks, many of whom still chafed at their subordinance to Philip II and Alexander the Great, did rebel. Greek settlers, many of whom Alexander had forced to immigrate to Bactria, rebelled in large numbers and attempted to go home. Meanwhile, Rhodes evicted its Macedonian garrison, Cyrene attempted to break away from Egypt, and the Athenians led a widespread revolt of southern Greek *poleis*, often called the Lamian war. In Thrace, the Odrysian king Seuthes had led a rebellion against the Macedonians when Alexander was still alive, which had not been suppressed.

Perdiccas ordered the satraps to put down these revolts, which most of them did, and which served both to shore up Macedonian dominion over the Near East and also to keep Alexander's most dangerous marshals occupied for an extended period. Peithon, the newly appointed satrap of greater Media, was dispatched to prevent the rebellious settlers in Bactria from leaving. Suspecting that Peithon would attempt to win the personal loyalty of the Greek rebels and add them to his own powerbase, Perdiccas ordered the rebels executed and promised their property to the soldiers in Peithon's army. This had the desired effect of inducing Peithon's men to slaughter the rebels even after Peithon had accepted their surrender.[146] Ptolemy, in his new position as satrap of Egypt, spent an extended period campaigning against distant Cyrene,

[146] Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History,* 18.7.

and he eventually brought it back under Macedonian control.[147] Despite some initial Athenian victories, including a major battle in which Leonnatus was killed, Antipater and Craterus defeated the Athenians and their allies after a protracted campaign, breaking Athenian power permanently by deporting large numbers of the poorer citizens who manned the oars of the Athenian fleet, calling them "warmongers." To make doubly sure Athens was finished attempting to reclaim its former independence, Antipater also transformed Athens into an oligarchy and garrisoned the city.[148] In attempting to take up his satrapy in Thrace, Lysimachus entered into a protracted struggle with Seuthes, the native Odrysian king.[149] This campaign was long and bloody and, though Seuthes was eventually made a vassal of Lysimachus, he survived and retained his kingdom.

Antigonus ignored Perdiccas' command to conquer Cappadocia and install Eumenes as satrap. Leonnatus, who had been present in Babylon and had been given the same instructions, did initially obey, though he was soon distracted by his ill-fated adventure in Greece. After these notable lapses of obedience, Perdiccas mobilized the royal army and invaded Cappadocia

[147] Photius, *Fragments of Arrian's Events After Alexander*, 12.

[148] John R. Hale, Lords of the Sea: The Epic Story of the Athenian Navy and the Birth of Democracy (New York, NY: Viking, 2009). The friction between the Athenian aristocrats and the common people over the political consequences of naval power is a major theme of this book. For the details of Antipater's settlement with Athens, see: Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History*, 18.18.4-6: "Antipater dealt humanely with them and permitted them to retain their city and their possessions and everything else; but he changed the government from a democracy, ordering that political power should depend on a census of wealth, and that those possessing more than two thousand drachmas should be in control of the government and of the elections. He removed from the body of citizens all who possessed less than this amount on the ground that they were disturbers of the peace and warmongers, offering to those who wished it a place for settlement in Thrace. These men, more than twelve thousand in number, were removed from their fatherland; but those who possessed the stated rating, being about nine thousand, were designated as masters of both city and territory and conducted the government according to the constitution of Solon. All were permitted to keep their property uncurtailed." Translation is from: Oldfather, Charles Henry, Charles L. Sherman, Francis R. Walton, and Russel Mortimer Geer, eds. *Diodorus of Sicily in Twelve Volumes*. Harvard University Press, 1933. 2004.

[149] Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History,* 18.14.2-4.

himself. Ariarathes, the Achaemenid satrap of Cappadocia, had used the years he'd been left alone to amass considerable forces, and the Cappadocians, strengthened by mercenaries, resisted bitterly and in large numbers.[150] According to Diodorus, Perdiccas used a light touch on the local people, but he tortured and impaled Ariarathes and as many of his relatives as he could get his hands on. After this, Perdiccas established Eumenes as satrap of Cappadocia.[151] Given that Eumenes made sure to take Cappadocian hostages, one might reasonably wonder how light the touch of Perdiccas had really been.[152] After departing Cappadocia, Perdiccas marched into Pisidia and severely punished several cities which had rebelled during Alexander's reign.[153]

During this initial period after Alexander died, when Perdiccas controlled at first one and then, after Alexander IV was born, both kings, the Macedonian nobility who had not been present at Babylon struggled to either connect themselves with the new regime or else to insulate themselves from its power. In particular, Antipater seems to have strongly desired to cement alliances through marriage with the other Macedonians who had come out of Babylon in positions of power. During the Lamian revolt, Antipater offered a daughter in marriage to Leonnatus, Macedonian satrap of Hellespontine Phrygia, in exchange for his aid.[154] Soon afterwards, Craterus married Antipater's daughter Phila, possibly the same daughter previously intended for the deceased Leonnatus. Around the same time, Antipater also matched his

[150] Justin, *Epitome of Pompeius Trogus*, 13.6.1-3; Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History,* 18.16.1-2.
[151] Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History,* 18.16; Photius, *Fragments of Arrian's Events After Alexander*, 10.
[152] Plutarch, *Life of Eumenes*, 12.3.
[153] Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History,* 18.22.1.
[154] Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History,* 18.12.1-2. Diodorus says that this marriage offer was made to "Philotas, satrap of Hellespontine Phrygia." However, Diodorus earlier indicates that Hellespontine Phrygia was assigned to Leonnatus, who did in fact come to assist Antipater and was killed doing so. Philotas, in contrast, was satrap of Cilicia and was therefore not well positioned to assist Antipater. Consequently, I have assumed that Antipater's marriage offer was actually made to Leonnatus.

daughter Nicaea with Perdiccas.[155] A third daughter, Eurydice, was offered to Ptolemy, though this may not have occurred until later. The exact timing of Eurydice's marriage to Ptolemy is not preserved in any surviving source. These marriages alliances made sense for a man who had long ruled Macedonia but who had no widely recognized right to do so aside from the word of a dead king and, more recently, the assent of Perdiccas, the non-Argead manager of a living Argead half-wit, who had begun his rule by rearranging satrapal appointments.

With no capable Argead men in existence, the Argead women began to serve as important political actors in their own right, sometimes aggressively seeking to arrange marriages with the more powerful among Alexander's successors. Cynnane, the former wife of Amyntas, son of Perdiccas II, whom Alexander the Great had executed at the beginning of his reign, attempted to travel to Babylon to offer her daughter in marriage to the titular king, Philip Arrhidaeus. Given that Arrhidaeus could not rule on his own, this could be interpreted as a direct threat to Perdiccas' control of Arrhidaeus. Any children such a union produced would also make it more difficult for Perdiccas to ultimately become king.

To prevent this marriage, Alcetas, a brother of Perdiccas, intercepted Cynnane and killed her.[156] It's unclear whether Alcetas acted on his own or in communication with Perdiccas, though Polyaenus implies Alcetas acted alone in Anatolia and was far away from Perdiccas at the time. The fragments of Arrian's *Events After Alexander*, however, say merely that, "Soon afterwards Cynane was put to death by Perdiccas and his brother Alcetas." Whatever occurred, her killing

[155] Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History,* 18.23.1; Justin, *Epitome of Pompeius Trogus*, 13.6.4-7.

[156] Arrian reports that she was killed by Perdiccas and Alcetas. Polyaenus gives an account of her leading a contingent of soldiers with her, whom Alcetas engaged and defeated. It is unclear how she died, though Polyaenus implies she participated in the battle and fell in the fighting. See: Polyaenus, *Stratagems*, 8.60; Photius, *Bibliotheca*, 92.

proved to be a miscalculation. The outright killing of a half-sister of Alexander upset the royal army enough that Perdiccas was forced to allow the marriage of Cynnane's daughter Eurydice to Arrhidaeus to maintain order. Essentially, by dying, Cynnane ultimately forced Perdiccas to place her daughter in a position of great potential power, as she too would be in an excellent position to attempt to rule through the feeble titular king. As with the infantry's resistance to Perdiccas' initial flirtations with declaring himself *basileus* after Alexander died and also with their support of Arrhidaeus, this episode emphasizes that the rank and file among the Macedonians, particularly those in royal army, remained staunchly loyal to the Argead dynasty. Perdiccas was able to command them so long as he did so in the name of the feeble Argead kings, but they would not assent to be transparently used against the remaining members of the Argead dynasty, male or female.[157] In their own minds, they were instruments of royal power, not tools of Perdiccas or any others among the diadochi.

During the same period, Perdiccas himself was reportedly weighing two rival marriage alliances. Antipater had already offered Perdiccas his daughter Nicaea. However, Olympias, who had been a rival of Antipater during Alexander's life, had sent Cleopatra, the only full sister of Alexander, to marry Perdiccas. According to Justin, these offers were simultaneous.[158] Diodorus provides a more nuanced chronology that better explains events; evidently, Perdiccas had married Nicaea when he was not yet firmly established in his position.[159] This makes sense as Antipater, who wasn't present in Babylon when Alexander died and was in control of Macedonia, would have been a dangerous rival for other disaffected satraps to gather around. However,

[157] Photius, *Bibliotheca*, 92. Translation from: Photius, and John Henry Freese. *Photius: The Library.* 1920.
[158] Justin, *Epitome of Pompeius Trogus*, 13.6.4-7.
[159] Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History*, 18.23.1-3.

after Perdiccas had time to place his supporters in positions of authority in the royal army, established dominance over Arrhidaeus, suppressed the revolts of the Greek settlers in Bactria and personally conquered Cappadocia, his position was stronger than it had been in the early days after Alexander's death. Instead, his most dire weaknesses appeared to be the continued loyalty of the Macedonian soldiers he commanded to the Argead dynasty. Both the ascension of Arrhidaeus and the need to allow Eurydice to marry the titular *basileus* had revealed a serious weakness in Perdiccas' position. While he might dominate the feeble Arrhidaeus and often be able to rule through him, Perdiccas simply could not rely on the support of the royal army if he appeared to have conflicting interests with members of the Argead dynasty. If he was to rule safely, whether through Arrhidaeus and Alexander IV or in his own name, Perdiccas needed to tie himself more closely to the family of Alexander.

For this reason, the chance to marry the only full sister of Alexander the Great must have been appealing to Perdiccas. Suddenly, his role as de facto regent would have been solidified with the closest marriage tie possible to the dead king, as well as to the still living Arrhidaeus, since Arrhidaeus did not have any full siblings. However, choosing Olympias over Antipater was a dangerous gamble, as Antipater was in military control of Macedonia and Greece. There seems to have been disagreement within the Perdiccan party about what to do. Alcetas advocated for maintaining their relationship with Antipater, while Eumenes advocated marrying Cleopatra. Ultimately, Perdiccas decided to repudiate Nicaea and to marry Cleopatra instead. Whatever Perdiccas' intentions – whether he planned to claim the title of *basileus* or not, his repudiation of Nicaea and intended marriage to Cleopatra certainly signaled that he intended to rule from a position of more secure personal authority and also that he did not plan to need the support of

Antipater any longer – his opponents interpreted his actions as a direct threat to themselves and as evidence that he intended to come to Macedonia as king.[160]

From virtually the moment Alexander's body had begun to cool, Antigonus had loomed as a potential danger for the Perdikkan regime in Babylon. Very few Macedonians were in a stronger position when Alexander died than the fifty-nine-year-old Antigonus; he controlled much of Anatolia, possessed a sizable army, and had enjoyed a decade head start over most of the other diadochi in consolidating power. Though Perdiccas had confirmed Antigonus as the satrap of Phrygia after Alexander's death, he likely did so because he felt as though he had no realistic alternative. Moreover, there had been strings attached. Perdiccas had ordered Antigonus to assist Eumenes in taking possession of the unconquered satrapy of Cappadocia. Antigonus had ignored this command and Perdiccas had consequently been forced to invade Cappadocia himself. After Perdiccas had subjugated Cappadocia and impaled Ariarathes, he summoned Antigonus to give an accounting of his failure. Possibly because Meleager had been executed by Perdiccas through treachery,[161] Antigonus made no attempt to defend himself and instead fled to Macedonia, bringing with him the news that Perdiccas intended to reject Nicaea and planned to marry Cleopatra.[162]

Antipater, Craterus, and Ptolemy quickly allied with Antigonus against Perdiccas. It is highly telling that of these four major challengers, three had not been at Babylon when Alexander died and that the other, Ptolemy, led a party which attempted to prevent Perdiccas' rule at

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[160] Photius, *Bibliotheca*, 92; Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History*, 18.23.3. Arrian gives a slightly different chronology than Diodorus. According to Photius, Arrian had Antigonus being summoned before the marriage offers, refusing to come, and remaining at large and hostile. In this account, Perdiccas initially chose Nicaea but changed his mind after the episode with Eurydice and Cynnane.

[161] Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History,* 17.57.

[162] Olympias and Antipater had a poor relationship during Alexander's lifetime. See: Photius, *Bibliotheca*, 92.

Babylon in favor of a ruling council, something for which we know of absolutely no precedent in either Macedonian or Persian history. Perdiccas responded to the rebellion by marching the royal army (and the kings) into Egypt to expel Ptolemy from his satrapy. He also induced the Aetolians to attack Antipater in Thessaly.[163]

Eumenes was sent to the Hellespont with orders to contain Antipater, Craterus and Antigonus. To do this, Perdiccas gave Eumenes authority over not just Cappadocia but also Paphlagonia, Caria, Lycia, and Phrygia, which included the lands Antigonus had previously ruled.[164] Moreover, Neoptolemos and Perdiccas' brother Alcetas were assigned to support Eumenes with their armies. Eumenes, though he was resented and abandoned by Alcetas and betrayed outright by Neoptolemos, who joined his enemies, fought a pitched battle against a Macedonian army led by Craterus which landed in Asia. Despite not trusting his own army to engage their opponents if they knew Craterus was leading the other side, Eumenes won a decisive victory, with Craterus and Neoptolemus both among the dead. Craterus was deliberately targeted and killed by Eumenes' Asian cavalry, led by the former Achaemenid general Pharnabazus, Eumenes' brother-in-law, and Phoenix of Tenedos. Eumenes reportedly sought out and killed Neoptolemos in single combat during the battle, stripping his armor in Homeric fashion.[165] Fortunately for Antigonus, Ptolemy, and Antipater, Perdiccas suffered a minor defeat while attempting to cross the Nile. Some of the dead were not recovered for proper burial and there was consequently widespread unrest among the infantry, who had never been completely content with Perdiccas' leadership. Soon afterwards, a number of officers, of whom

[163] Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History,* 18.38.1.
[164] Justin, *Epitome of Pompeius Trogus*, 13.6.13-14.
[165] Plutarch, *Life of Eumenes*, 7.4-7; Diodorus, *Library of History,* 18.31.1-5.

Peithon, Seleucus, and Antigenes were among the most prominent, assassinated Perdiccas mere days before news of Eumenes' victory reached the still largely intact royal army.[166]

The death of Perdiccas resulted in the victors meeting to re-divide the empire at Triparadeisos in the Levant. Interestingly, Eurydice, the wife of Arrhidaeus, was increasingly successful at swaying the common Macedonian soldiery.[167] She was able to partially wrest control of the royal army from Peithon and the other assassins and later attempted to use a pay dispute to turn the royal army against Antipater once he arrived. This was eventually suppressed, but only with difficulty. When the dust settled, the now seventy-six-year-old Antipater was given control of the kings, Antigonus retained his provinces, assumed control of the royal army, and was dispatched to hunt down Eumenes and Alcetas, who were sentenced to death in absentia. After a murder-spree that carried off many of Perdiccas' closest relatives and supporters, Antipater altered a number of satrapal appointments – the assassins Seleucus and Antigenes gained satrapies – and then retired to Macedonia with Philip III and Alexander IV "in order to restore the kings to their native land."[168] Interestingly, despite her nearly successful attempt to take control of the royal army, Eurydice not only survived but remained married to Arrhidaeus. Evidently, no one at Triparadeisos was willing to risk her murder.

Perhaps more than the untimely death of Alexander, the assassination of Perdiccas doomed the nascent Macedonian Empire as a single political entity. Not only had a satrapal revolt successfully altered the power structure of the realm, after the death of Perdiccas, no one

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[166] Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History*, 18.37.1.
[167] Photius, *Bibliotheca*, 92; Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History*, 18.39.2-4.
[168] Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History*, 18.37.2; 18.39.5. Translation is from: Siculus, Diodorus, CH Oldfather, Charles L Sherman, Bradford C Welles, Russel M Geer, and Francis R Walton. *Library of History.* Vol. 10: Harvard University Press Cambridge, Mass., 2006.

survived with a close enough connection to Alexander or the Argead house to compel the great lords whom Perdiccas had appointed as satraps to obey any central authority on an empire-wide scale. If a non-Argead who had been Alexander's second in command and to whom Alexander had handed his signet ring on his deathbed could not rule, it was unlikely that any other non-Argead would be able to either, save by reconquering the empire with the spear. It is possible that had Antipater been fifteen or twenty years younger, he might have had sufficient prestige and resources to be able to enforce obedience. However, the old marshal died in 319 only two years after the gathering at Triparadeisos and long before the pieces of Alexander's empire could be reassembled. That Antipater, perhaps alone among the diadochi at Triparadeisos, may still have been loyal to the Argead line can be seen most clearly at his death, when he passed over his son Cassander and instead appointed the elderly Polyperchon to succeed him as manager of the kings, quite possibly because he understood the ambitions of his son and the hatred Cassander bore for Alexander.[169] It is interesting that Antipater also passed over Antigonus and Ptolemy, quite possibly because he doubted their loyalty to the kings.

However, Polyperchon had never been appointed by Alexander to any high position and could not therefore command the same level of respect or legitimacy that Antipater and Perdiccas had enjoyed. Likewise, Polyperchon was also not chosen by a council of the most powerful men of the empire like the previous two managers had been. Predictably, neither Cassander nor Antigonus accepted the authority of Polyperchon, both believing that the position

[169] Cassander traveled to Babylon during the final period of Alexander's life. According to Plutarch, Cassander had the bad judgment to mock a group of Persian notables who were performing proskynesis before Alexander. The king "grasping him violently by the hair with both hands, he struck his head on the wall." Cassander was so terrified of Alexander that, according to Plutarch, a statue of Alexander could drive Cassander into trembling fits long after Alexander's death. Plutarch, *Life of Alexander*, 74.1-4. Translation is mine.

should have gone to them instead.[170] Nor, in truth, was there much reason that they should have accepted Polyperchon. There was no precedent in Macedonian history for the manager of a mentally unfit king, who had himself been awarded the title by the winners of a bloody rebellion, to appoint his own successor. Why was Polyperchon any more legitimate than anyone else of satrapal or other high rank in the disintegrating empire? Only the Herakles-born Argead house and its link with the accomplishments of Philip and Alexander could indisputably provide legitimacy. With Perdiccas and Antipater, the two men who could most plausibly claim a direct link to that authority, dead, the surviving satraps and generals of the increasingly unstable Macedonian Empire had to decide which, if any, of an increasing number of people possessing increasingly ephemeral claims of Argead connection they were going to obey.[171] Many of the most powerful, both Macedonian and Iranian, chose to obey only themselves.

In particular, there is no evidence that, after Antipater's death, either Antigonus nor Ptolemy ever again accepted claims of authority from anyone else, Argead or otherwise. From 319, they behaved in a manner that was increasingly impossible to distinguish from that of independent *basileis*. In particular, after Antipater died, Diodorus wrote that, "Antigonus had in mind to go through Asia, removing the existing satraps, and reorganize the positions of command in favor of his friends."[172] His possession of the royal army put Antigonus in a uniquely favorable position to do this. The fact that other satraps who possessed far inferior military forces also

[170] Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History*, 18.48-50.
[171] Several other commanders who could claim a close connection to Alexander, including Leonnatos, had died. Heckel, Waldemar. *Who's Who in the Age of Alexander the Great: Prosopography of Alexander's Empire*. John Wiley & Sons, 2008. 147-151.
[172] Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History*, 18.50.5. Translation is from: Siculus, Diodorus, CH Oldfather, Charles L Sherman, Bradford C Welles, Russel M Geer, and Francis R Walton. *Library of History.* Vol. 10: Harvard University Press Cambridge, Mass., 2006.

became increasingly willing to take independent action to increase their own powerbases after the death of Antipater sometimes played directly into Antigonus' hands. For example, shortly after Antipater's death, the satrap of Hellespontine Phrygia attacked the independent Greek *polis* of Cyzicus, attempting to bring it under his rule. Antigonus marched to Cyzicus to relieve the city and sent subordinates to hunt down the "rebellious" satrap, whose name was Arrhidaeus (not the *basileus*). Antigonus' minions defeated Arrhidaeus, penning what remained of his army in the city of Kios on the Propontis.

Meanwhile, Antigonus stormed Ephesus and removed the satrap Cleitus from his province of Lydia. Unlike the case of Arrhidaeus, there is no evidence that Antigonus offered any pretext at all for sacking Cleitus; as far as we can tell, the removal of Cleitus was an act of unprovoked aggression. Tellingly, Diodorus does not mention a replacement for either Cleitus or Arrhidaeus; Antigonus may have added Lydia and Hellespontine Phrygia directly to his own dominions, giving himself something of a super-satrapy consisting of more than half of Anatolia. By seizing Lydia and Hellespontine Phrygia, Antigonus inaugurated a long period in which the satraps of the empire warred with each other much as the *basileis* of the Macedonian cantons had done since time immemorial.

Despite the accelerating collapse of central authority and Antigonus' blatant annexation of Lydia and Hellespontine Phrygia a mere four years after Alexander's death, Antigonus and the other diadochi waited more than a decade before they declared themselves *basileis*. There are many reasons why Antigonus probably did not do so in 319. First among them is that Antigonus was powerful largely because of his possession of the royal army and its augmentation by a levy

of native Macedonians from Antipater shortly after Perdiccas' death.[173] Many of these men were the same men who had repeatedly showed a high level of loyalty to the Argead house. They had foisted Arrhidaeus on Perdiccas to prevent him from claiming the diadem four years earlier, nearly rebelled when Cynnane was killed, and been willing to obey Eurydice and do violence to the other diadochi after Perdiccas was assassinated. To command such men necessitated maintaining the fiction that whatever Antigonus did was somehow done for the sake of the feeble Argead kings he in fact sought to undermine.

Perdiccas and then Antipater had both found the royal army difficult to control when their interests did not align with those of the remaining Argeads. Antigonus would soon pay a very high price to learn the same lesson. That year Antigonus, who had succeeded in using the royal army to defeat and then trap Eumenes and his entourage in the all-but-impregnable mountain fortress of Nora, tired of the lengthy siege and offered terms to Eumenes, despite the fact that the Cardian had been sentenced to death at Triparadeisos. The surrender terms suggest that Antigonus did not think of himself as beholden to any other living ruler. Specifically, he offered Eumenes his life and freedom if the Cardian would swear an oath to have the same friends and enemies as him in the future, attempting to bind the capable Eumenes to his service. However, by offering Eumenes these transparently self-serving terms, Antigonus miscalculated, overestimating the willingness of Eumenes and also his own officers to commit themselves to his personal advancement. In Antigonus' absence, the commanders of the siege allowed Eumenes

[173] Photius, *Bibliotheca*, 92. I agree with Billows that the forces transferred were probably 8,500 infantry and 1,000 cavalry and that *isous* is a likely copyist error for *chilious*. Billows, Richard A. *Antigonos the One-Eyed and the Creation of the Hellenistic State*. Vol. 4: Univ of California Press, 1997. 72.

to alter the oath of loyalty that Antigonus had commanded him to swear; instead of declaring his allegiance to Antigonus, his own men permitted Eumenes to swear to have the same friends and enemies as *Olympias and the kings*. By the time Antigonus realized what his subordinates had done, Eumenes and several hundred of his most devoted companions had already begun raising a new army in Cappadocia.[174]

As though a phoenix, the Greek exile who had been the personal secretary of the two greatest Argead kings rose from the ashes of the Macedonian empire to lead the greatest struggle to preserve the Argead monarchy. Polyperchon understood the opportunity the royal army had given him by allowing Eumenes to escape from Nora. He quickly took advantage of Eumenes' freedom by "officially" reinstating him to his satrapal throne and encouraging him to continue the fight against Antigonus. Despite Polyperchon's limited legitimacy in the eyes of the other grandees of the empire, his support mattered to many Macedonians who were not great lords in a sophisticated rebellion against a disintegrating throne. In addition to reinstating him as a satrap, the new manager of the kings also ordered the royal treasury in Cilicia to supply Eumenes with funds and, perhaps more importantly, named the Cardian to be *strategos autokrator*, i.e. supreme commander or viceroy, in Asia.[175] To further strengthen Eumenes, Polyperchon ordered Antigenes and Teutamus, the commanders of the elite *argyraspides* and *hypaspistai,* to place themselves and their veterans at Eumenes' disposal.[176] They soon did so,

[174] Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History*, 18.53.5-7.
[175] *Strategos autokrator* is the same title that was given to Alexander by the League of Corinth and is also the title used by Diodorus to describe the position of Hamilcar and Hasdrubal the Fair in Iberia between the first and second Punic wars.
[176] Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History*, 18.57.1-4. See: Richard A. Billows, *Antigonus the One-Eyed and the Creation of the Hellenistic State*, 85 n8 for the argument that the *hypaspistai* were included and that Diodorus was being sloppy by mentioning only the *argyraspides* in this passage.

though reluctantly, likely because their men would not have tolerated them to be seen acting against the kings.[177]

Eumenes had now witnessed the difficulty a succession of Macedonian lords had experienced in motivating rank and file Macedonians to act in their own interests whenever they could be construed to be against those of the kings. He'd also had sufficient experience attempting to command such lords (e.g. Alcetas and Neoptolemos) to be able to predict that his non-Macedonian origins were likely to be a serious obstacle in compelling their obedience. For this reason, he decided that a perpetual reminder of the Argead dynasty was needed. For this reason, Eumenes "cast a golden throne out of the royal treasure stored in Cilicia, placing the royal insignia upon it, requiring all commanders to burn incense to Alexander in front of it every day, and holding his staff meetings near it."[178]

Antigonus and Ptolemy made numerous attempts to try to induce the elite Macedonian units to betray Eumenes. However, Eumenes was successful in rebuffing these challenges. The fact that Eumenes was able to gain and hold the loyalty of the *argyraspides* and *hypaspistai* is strongly indicative of the respect and loyalty that the Macedonian soldiery and many of the native Macedonian officers still had for the memory of Alexander and for the Argead dynasty in general. It also indicates the power that Polyperchon's appointment as regent by Antipater gave him with the common soldiers independently of actual political control of the empire. Even if Antigonus and Cassander were unwilling to accept Polyperchon out of personal ambition, many of the

[177] Plutarch, *Life of Eumenes*, 13.2.
[178] Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History*, 18.60.6. Eumenes presumably remembered the difficulties he had experienced a few years earlier in convincing the Macedonian lords Alcetas and Neoptolemos to obey him. Translation is from: Translation is from: Siculus, Diodorus, CH Oldfather, Charles L Sherman, Bradford C Welles, Russel M Geer, and Francis R Walton. *Library of History.* Vol. 10: Harvard University Press Cambridge, Mass., 2006.

soldiers of the empire were still willing to act to preserve it in 319 BCE. After all, the Argead line was weak but not yet broken. Both kings and one additional uncrowned son of Alexander (Herakles) still survived. It was still possible that Alexander IV would one day rule in truth instead of merely in name. If the child-king died young, it was also still possible that Arrhidaeus would have children. And even if both kings died, there was still Herakles. With the right supporters, he too might one day have ruled. For those who cherished the memories of Alexander and Philip, it was still possible to hope that the future would yet hold another strong Argead king.

After a complex series of naval engagements that eventually went against the royalists, Eumenes marched east through Babylonia with fifteen thousand infantry and more than three thousand cavalry toward the eastern satrapies, commanding the satraps of the old Achaemenid heartland to assemble their levies and prepare to join him to face Antigonus.[179] This policy met with mixed success. Though Seleucus was careful to stress his loyalty to the kings, Peithon and Seleucus, the Macedonian satraps of Media and Babylonia, responded by repeatedly attempting to persuade Eumenes' army to betray him. They openly attacked his non-Macedonian origins, arguing out that he had until recently been under a death sentence, and directly appealing to Antigenes to remove the Cardian.[180] These events highlight that not everyone who fought against Perdiccas and Eumenes had done so for the same reasons. Seleucus, Peithon, and Antigenes had all rebelled against Perdiccas; Antigenes and Seleucus both had obtained their satrapies at Triparadeisos, likely as a reward for killing Perdiccas. However, Seleucus and Peithon failed to convince either Antigenes or Eumenes' army to abandon him. After his failure to have

[179] Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History*, 18.73.2-4.
[180] Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History*, 19.12.2 and 19.13.1. I am unconvinced by Anson's thesis that Eumenes was not disadvantaged by not being Macedonian. Anson, Edward. Eumenes of Cardia: *A Greek among Macedonians*. Brill, 2004.

Eumenes removed, Seleucus sent messengers to Antigonus requesting help and attempted to slow down Eumenes' army until this began to seem dangerous, at which point he changed policy and tried to get Eumenes out of his satrapy as quickly as possible.

Unfortunately for Antigonus and indicative of the general collapse of central authority throughout the empire, Peithon and Seleucus were already in the middle of their own war with most of the other eastern satraps. Because of this, the satraps of Persia, Karmania, Arachosia, Paropanisadae, Aria, Drangine, and the Punjab had already assembled an army that was slightly larger than that of Eumenes and included 120 war elephants.[181] Perhaps predictably, the eastern satraps had rivalries among themselves and did not trust one another.[182]

> Eumenes, however, fearing that through their rivalry with each other they would become an easy prey for Antigonus, advised that they should not set up a single commander, but that all the satraps and generals who had been selected by the mass of the army should gather in the royal tent each day and take counsel together about what was to the common advantage. For a tent had been set up for Alexander although he was dead, and in the tent a throne, before which they were accustomed to make offerings and then sit as a council in regard to matters that demanded attention.[183]

The eastern satraps were faced with a difficult situation. They were under personal threat from Seleucus and Peithon. Most of these men also likely feared Antigonus, who had already removed multiple satraps in acts of naked aggression for his own personal advantage. Their own appointments depended on the authority of distant and feeble kings, with whom they had little if any contact and from whom they could expect little if any direct assistance. By this time, most

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[181] While war elephants fell out of favor over time as Hellenistic and later Roman armies learned how to effectively counter them, they played a powerful role in the early successor period. See: Heckel, Waldemar, Lawrence A. Tritle, and Pat Wheatley, eds. *Alexander's Empire: Formulation to Decay*. Regina Books, 2007. 209-230.

[182] Plutarch, *Life of Eumenes*, 13.5.

[183] Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History*, 19.15.3-4. Translation is from: Translation is from: Siculus, Diodorus, CH Oldfather, Charles L Sherman, Bradford C Welles, Russel M Geer, and Francis R Walton. *Library of History.* Vol. 10: Harvard University Press Cambridge, Mass., 2006.

must have suspected that they were on their own and that no strong Argead king would ever again emerge. However, the possibility of the empire remaining unified had not yet completely disappeared. And the capable and dangerous Eumenes stood among them, in command of the elite veterans of Alexander's army, who had personally conquered the satrapies they now ruled. Those satraps with strong ethnic Macedonian forces under their command could not have been sure that their armies would obey them if their actions could be construed to be against the interest of Eumenes, the representative of the kings. Even if their own forces remained loyal, they could not trust that Eumenes would not arrest or remove them with the aid of Alexander's elite veterans. So, they needed to cooperate, both with each other and with Eumenes, for their mutual survival, but they did so while knowing that their alliance was probably an ephemeral one and that many of their current "friends" would one day be enemies.

Eumenes managed to maintain uneasy control of the combined army with the aid of the nascent cult of Alexander, the sometimes-grudging support of Antigenes, and by means of considerable cunning. He was also aided by his unique right to withdraw money from the still unlooted treasure cities of the east, which allowed the Cardian to more easily support his portion of the combined army than many of the other satraps. He also flatly bought the support of the elephant commander Eudamus.[184] The fact that revering the dead Alexander in religious terms worked not just for controlling the *argyraspides* but also for controlling the army of the eastern satraps is evidence for both the respect and awe with which Alexander was regarded by

[184] Little is known about Eudamus, but he appears to have been Peithon's brother, which makes this episode even more interesting. Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History*, 19.14.1.

Macedonian soldiers and officers alike as well as evidence of the uncertain position and power of the satraps who ruled over the shards of his dying empire.[185]

Antigonus, marched his army east to chase down Eumenes, allying with Seleucus and Peithon along the way. After a long campaign in which Eumenes and the eastern satraps three times sharply defeated Antigonus but failed to kill him or destroy his army,[186] Antigonus finally succeeded in capturing the baggage train of the *argyraspides,* including their wives and children, largely due to either the incompetence or deliberate betrayal of Peukestes. That evening, the *argyraspides* decided that their wives, children, and accumulated wealth were more important to them than any cause and they betrayed Eumenes to Antigonus in exchange for their families and possessions. As soon as Eumenes lost the support of the *argyraspides*, Peukestes and his native Persian compliment also immediately turned on the Cardian.[187]

After defeating Eumenes and the eastern satraps, Antigonus proceeded to make sure that Eumenes and the other royalists, whether grudging or enthusiastic, would not rise a third time. He threw Antigenes, the commander of the *argyraspides,* who had been Eumenes' most persistent and important supporter among the eastern satraps, into a pit and burned him alive. Antigonus also executed several other commanders who had consistently supported Eumenes, including the elephant commander Eudamus.[188] When asked how Eumenes should be kept, a frustrated Antigonus allegedly roared, "As [I would keep] an elephant or a lion."[189] In addition,

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[185] Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History*, 19.15.1-5.
[186] Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History*, 19.18-33 provides the only continuous account of this campaign that survives. Justin, who provides the next most detailed account of the time, has only a short summary of a portion of the struggle. Justin, *Epitome of Pompeius Trogus*, 14.2-3.
[187] Polyaenus, *Stratagems in War*, 4.3.13.
[188] Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History*, 19.44.1.
[189] Plutarch, *Life of Eumenes*, 18.3. Translation is mine

Antigonus broke up the *argyraspides*. Some men were discharged but other more die-hard cases, including the men who had ultimately betrayed Eumenes, were sent to Arachosia, where the local satrap was ordered to arrange their death in battle.[190] After some dithering on account of their old friendship, Antigonus also executed Eumenes, allowing his remains to be given to his wife and children for burial. These actions by Antigonus were hammer-blows against what remained of the disintegrating empire. The execution of the capable Eumenes and the disbanding of the elite *argyraspides* removed two major sources of strength available to anyone who wished to see the empire preserved under Alexander's descendants. Neither was ever replaced.

After his execution of Eumenes, Antigonus purged the satraps of the east. His actions were not aimed merely at suppressing royalist sentiment in Asia, but rather at breaking the power of any satrap who might potentially be a threat to him. Tellingly, his wrath fell particularly hard on his ostensible allies, Peithon and Seleucus. While still in Media in the immediate aftermath of Eumenes' capture, Antigonus lured Peithon into his presence on false pretenses, immediately putting him to death and replacing him with the native Median Orontobates. Similarly, while marching back through Babylonia, Antigonus demanded an accounting of the revenues of Seleucus' satrapy. Seleucus refused to submit to this audit and then, no doubt with the sudden execution of Peithon firmly in mind, slipped away with some retainers, racing to Egypt to seek help from Ptolemy.[191] To the extent possible, Antigonus also purged the satraps who had

[190] Polyaenus, *Stratagems in War*, 4.3.15. Polyaenus confused Arabia and Arachosia but otherwise offered a more complete picture than Diodorus of the fate of the *argyraspides.* See: Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History,* 47.3.1 for Diodorus' less detailed account.
[191] Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History*, 19.55.2-5.

supported Eumenes. Stasander, satrap of Aria, was the first to go. Later, after marching his army into Persia, Antigonus also deposed Peukestes, who was popular and had been appointed personally by Alexander.[192] To ensure that the native Persians got the message, Antigonus executed the ambassador that the Persian aristocracy sent to protest the removal of Peukestes.

Despite these successes, Antigonus did not remove most of eastern satraps who had fought against him. For example, he did not even attempt to dethrone the hostile satraps of Carmania or Bactria. Likewise, he did not challenge Oxyartes because "he could not be removed without a long campaign and a powerful force."[193] Indeed, almost every satrap whom Antigonus was able to dethrone was replaced when Antigonus and his army were nearby. In particular, Peithon, Seleucus, and Peukestes were all removed while Antigonus and his army were actually in their satrapies. After the death of Eumenes and the dispersal of Alexander's veterans, Antigonus was unquestionably the most powerful man in the empire, but his power was a shadow of that recently possessed by Perdiccas, who had appointed and dismissed many distant satraps at will. Antigonus had destroyed the ability of Polyperchon, and likely any future Argead king, to rule Asia, but he could not compel loyalty or obedience except with an immediate and credible threat of violence. A mere seven years after Alexander's death, even lesser satraps had effectively become the rulers of separate states.

While Eumenes was keeping Antigonus busy in heart of what had once been the Achaemenid empire, Polyperchon invited Olympias, the mother of Alexander the Great, to come back to Macedonia from her exile in Epirus and take charge of Alexander IV, her grandson. Her

[192] Peukestes had been appointed by Alexander as satrap of Persia after adopting Persian dress and customs and even learning to speak Persian. Arrian, *Anabasis of Alexander*, 6.30.2-3.
[193] Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History*, 19.48.1-5. Translation is mine.

return was not a hasty affair, being negotiated between Olympias and Polyperchon over a period of time. It is unclear exactly what role she was offered, though the language used by Diodorus generally implies that she was exercising the authority of the king on his behalf; i.e. that she would rule as his regent, at least in some contexts. Likely, the ambiguity in her position was much like that of Perdiccas, Antipater, Eumenes, Antigonus, and Eurydice. All had at times wielded royal authority, but this was not based on a well-defined constitutional or institutional foundation. They were instead able to wield power because, in an unstable political arena in which violence and intimidation were accepted political tools, they could command enough respect from enough other actors to compel obedience within certain contexts, the limits of which were not always predictable to anyone in advance.

When Olympias agreed to return to Macedonia and take over the protection of her grandson, her actions strongly suggest that she did not believe she was entering a situation in which her position or even her life were secure. In addition to Polyperchon, Olympias chose to return to Macedonia in the company of her cousin, Aeacides, king of Epirus, and an Epirote army.[194] Eurydice, perceiving Olympias as a dire threat, and conspired with Cassander against Polyperchon and the queen-grandmother. Given the hostility Cassander had already showed to the Argead house, it is unlikely that she put much trust in Cassander, and she and her husband also raised an army themselves. However, when faced with Olympias and Aeacides, rather than fighting, her supporters instead abandoned her and went over to Olympias, who soon executed Eurydice and Arrhidaeus. The remaining Argead males had been reduced from three to two and Macedonia again had a single Argead king.

[194] Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History*, 18.57.2; Justin, *Epitome of Pompeius Trogus*, 13.14.5.

As discussed by Elizabeth Carney, all surviving sources indicate that the mutiny of Eurydice's army was due to the loyalty of her men to the memory of Philip II, rather than for any constitutional reason. In short, Olympias prevailed over Eurydice because of who she was, not because of any specific title or political office she had been given.[195] After this, Olympias attempted to take control in Macedonia, and she wielded violence as a political tool, as had been done in Argead Macedonia since time immemorial. Predictably, she executed those of Cassander's supporters whom she was able to catch. In particular, she murdered Cassander's brother Nicanor and desecrated the tomb of his brother Iollas, whom she believed had poisoned Alexander.[196]

However, the triumph of Olympias was short-lived. As had happened in previous foreign invasions of Macedonia, her foreign support soon proved unreliable. While the Epirote king was away from his kingdom in Macedonia, Cassander incited a rebellion in Epirus and Aeacides lost his throne. Around the same time, many of Polyperchon's men were bribed into abandoning him, and he was left with only a reduced cadre of his most loyal followers.[197] Cassander then returned to Macedonia from the south, eventually trapping Olympias at Pydna. After a siege, Cassander executed Olympias. As with previous moments where the interests of the Argeads transparently conflicted with those of the *diadochi*, Cassander initially had difficulty finding Macedonians who were willing to kill the mother of Alexander, but some relatives of those she'd purged eventually carried out the execution.[198] Notably, Cassander's difficulties did not extend

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[195] Carney, *Women and Monarchy in Macedonia*, 141.
[196] Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History*, 19.11.1-9. Olympias may well have been right about Iollas poisoning Alexander, as the cause of his early death has been debated since antiquity.
[197] Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History*, 19.36.1-6.
[198] Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History*, 19.49-51.

to the mutiny of his army after Olympias was killed. However, the discipline problems may have been more complex and persistent than we are now aware. Certainly, Cassander did not kill Roxana or Alexander IV at this time, though he did confine them to house arrest in the citadel at Amphipolis. After Olympias' death, he also took care to tie himself permanently to the Argead dynasty, marrying Alexander's half-sister Thessalonica.[199] Cleopatra, Alexander's still unmarried full sister, resided in Anatolia at Sardis, where she had remained since the days of Perdiccas, and was presumably beyond the reach of Cassander's matrimonial ambitions.

With the deaths of Eumenes, Olympias, Arrhidaeus, and Eurydice, the breakup of the argyraspides, the abandonment of Polyperchon by much of his army, and the imprisonment of Alexander IV, the sun had nearly set on Argead house. While Alexander IV and Heracles still lived, none of the remaining warlords who dominated the carcass of the Achaemenid empire had any vested interest in seeing the isolated princes grow up to rule, except possibly Polyperchon, who was now militarily weak and approximately eighty years old. While two Argead princes still lived, they no longer had any significant base of support.

It is telling that the next great struggle among the diadochi was fought among rival warlords without the involvement of any remaining Argeads. Understandably, Ptolemy, Cassander, and Lysimachus saw the sacking of Peukestes, the exile of Seleucus, and the murder of Peithon, who had all served under Alexander and whose positions and semi-independence had previously been comparable to their own, as highly threatening. The remaining diadochi allied against Antigonus. The allies issued an ultimatum; they demanded that Antigonus give up control of large parts of the territory he dominated, share the wealth he had looted from the east, and

[199] Justin, *Epitome of Pompeius Trogus*, 14.6.3; Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History*, 19.52.1.

reinstate Seleucus. Antigonus responded by using his now immense wealth to raise multiple armies and campaign against all of the allied dynasts simultaneously.[200] One can only wonder what Roxana told her powerless child-king in accented Greek as they sat in their Aegean prison. While Alexander IV nominally ruled an empire stretching from Macedonia to India, that empire had in fact splintered into autonomous, mutually hostile parts which were not willing to accept orders from any of the others. In addition, throughout the empire, lesser satraps and other local rulers were becoming increasingly difficult to control. Disrespect for central authority, which Antigonus and Ptolemy had done so much to cause, was becoming general as anyone who felt that he had the means to do so attempted to carve out a petty state from the carcass of the Achaemenid Empire.

The Argead dynasty ended with a whimper. Despite the fact that rival warlords had divided up the Achaemenid Empire amongst themselves, Alexander IV was alive, under guard in Amphipolis, and slowly growing up. However, Alexander IV was a bigger problem for Cassander than he was for the other Macedonian dynasts. Antigonus, Lysimachus, Seleucus, Ptolemy, and the rest of the diadochi ruled over native populations that had no traditions of loyalty to the Argead dynasty and relied less and less on native Macedonians for their military strength as time passed. This gave them an advantage over Cassander, who primarily ruled over ethnic Macedonians and had to contend with the same old, powerful aristocratic families that had been dominant in Macedonia for centuries as well as lingering loyalty to the remnants of the Argead

[200] Antigonos dispatched forces under subordinates to Cyprus and Rhodes to trouble Ptolemy, sent an army under his nephew Ptolemy into Cappadocia to relieve the siege of Amisus, defeated an attempt by Cassander to invade Anatolia, and also sent a subordinate with money to the Peloponnesus to raise a mercenary army to harass Cassander and seek an alliance with Polyperchon. Antigonos himself assembled a fleet during this period. Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History*, 19.57.4-5 and 19.58.1.

house. In addition, unlike the other areas of the empire, Macedonia did not have a satrapal tradition. While it is highly unlikely that Antigonus or any of the other diadochi would have actually surrendered control of their hard-won territories to the teenage Alexander IV, there was nothing to prevent them from tentatively acknowledging his overlordship if circumstances conspired to make doing so politically useful to them. Cassander, on the other hand, held a position that was incompatible with the existence of a reigning Macedonian king. Consequently, when the Macedonian nobility began suggesting that the young Alexander IV ought to be released and taught to rule, Cassander secretly had the young king and his mother Roxana poisoned.[201]

The last living Argead male, the half-Pharnacid Heracles, did not long outlive Alexander IV. Despite the secrecy with which Cassander had executed Alexander IV and Roxana, loyalty to the Argead dynasty proved to still strong be in Macedonia in 309 BCE. After news of Alexander's death leaked out, the now eighty-five-year-old Polyperchon left his Peloponnesian stronghold and invaded Macedonia with the intention of installing Heracles, who was now old enough to rule without a regent, as *basileus*. Enough of the Macedonian nobility rallied to Heracles that Cassander seems to have been caught off guard. While he raised an army and moved to confront the royalists, he worried that his army would betray him if asked to fight against the last Argead prince.[202] For these reasons, Cassander publicly let it be known that he would accept the decision and obey Herakles if the Argead dynasty was restored to power. However, while Heracles

[201] Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History*, 19.105.1-2. The exact timing of Alexander IV's death is unknown and Diodorus explicitly stated that Cassander had him killed secretly.
[202] Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History*, 20.28.1-2 and 20.20.2-4.

appeared a formidable opponent when Cassander was pitted against him in a contest for the loyalty of a Macedonian army, the last Argead prince proved to be just as vulnerable to treachery as Cleopatra and Alexander IV had been. While he fretted about the loyalty of his army and made public proclamations about his willingness to accept the return of the Argeads, Cassander secretly negotiated with Polyperchon, bribing him to kill Heracles. So died the last Argead prince. The only remaining Argead was Thessalonica, by now the mother of Cassander's children.

Despite the assassination of the last Argead prince, neither Antigonus, Cassander, nor any of the other diadochi claimed the title *basileus* for several more years. Indeed, they even continued issuing coinage in the name of the dead Alexander IV. There are several probable reasons for this reluctance to adopt the title of king. First among them was that, in practical terms, the diadochi already had complete political independence. In such circumstances, the title *basileus* was not necessary, while merely claiming it carried risks. Any claim to be *basileus* could be seen by the other diadochi as an attempt to impose authority on them, inviting immediate retaliation from the others. In particular, donning the diadem would have been particularly dangerous for Lysimachus, Cassander, or Ptolemy who had to contend with the omnipresent threat of Antigonus. The only guarantee that the lesser diadochi had of continued political independence was their ability to act in a concerted manner against Antigonid aggression. In contrast, Antigonus, while more powerful than any of the other diadochi, had much to lose by provoking them to act in unison. The fact that he fended off the first attempt by the other diadochi to unite against him did not mean that he would necessarily defeat another, particularly after Seleucus returned to Babylon and eventually stripped away the eastern satrapies.

While the Achaemenid Empire ultimately broke up into many independent states, we have the benefit of viewing the political machinations of the diadochi with a great deal of hindsight. In the last decade of the fourth century BCE, there had been only one king reigning over the whole of the Near East for more than two centuries. There was no recent tradition of many *basileis* ruling Asia. With such history fresh in mind, claiming the title *basileus* was a provocative act, one that implied an intent to dominate everything. Neither the Achaemenid kings, who were referred to in Greek by the naked title *basileus*, nor Macedonian kings like Alexander had ever willingly shared power. For this reason alone, any attempt by Antigonus to assume the title *basileus* could only come after an awesome victory, at a moment when he appeared favored by the gods with overwhelming temporal power. He had to be confident that he could in fact impose his will on the other successor satraps. This is, of course, eventually what happened, and the other diadochi declared themselves *basileis* in response to Antigonus, whom they eventually succeeded in defeating together.

CHAPTER 4. LEGITIMACY AND EASTERN MARRIAGES

This chapter will directly address two shortcomings present in some modern discussions of the power struggle which erupted after Alexander's death in more detail that was possible in the reconstructed narrative of the proceeding chapter. Recent literature, taking its cues (sometimes unconsciously) from early and mid-twentieth century historians such as Tarn and Hammond, largely ignores two events that I will argue are of importance for understanding the reactions of the individual diadochi after Alexander died – the marriage alliances formed between Persian and Macedonian aristocratic families at the Susa weddings and the rejection of Alexander's quarter-Persian son Heracles at Babylon.

4.1 REJECTION OF HERACLES

As discussed in the previous chapter, when Alexander the Great died in Babylon in 323 BCE, the males of the Argead royal house had been reduced to two: Philip's disabled son Arrhidaeus and Alexander's four-year-old son by Barsine, Heracles. Given their available choices, it is remarkable that the decision reached by the great marshals of the empire at Babylon was to exclude the only available mentally sound Argead male from the succession in the hope that Roxana would give birth to a surviving son. Nearly a century ago, Tarn was so taken by this paradox that he suggested Heracles was a pretender put forward by Antigonus, arguing that a son of Alexander by Barsine could not have existed.[203] Despite a refutation by P.A. Brunt,[204] Tarn's suspicions have cast a long shadow; it is not unusual for recent histories of the successor

[203] Tarn, W. W. 1921. "Heracles Son of Barsine". *The Journal of Hellenic Studies.* 41: 18-28.
[204] Brunt, P. A. 1975. "Alexander, Barsine, and Heracles". *Rivista di Filologia e di Istruzione Classica*. 108: 22-34.

period to indicate doubt about the existence of Heracles.[205] However, a more common recent treatment has been to dismiss Heracles as the illegitimate son of a Persian concubine. The evidence for this position is exceedingly thin and reexamination of the rejection of Heracles at the Babylon settlement after Alexander's death is warranted. In the sections below, I will expand on Brunt's argument that Heracles did indeed exist and further argue that his rejection in 323 BCE had little to do with legitimacy.

4.2 Review of Heracles Sources

Brunt refuted Tarn's only challenge with the capacity to prove that Heracles could not have existed, that a daughter of Artabazus who was also a wife of Mentor of Rhodes would have been too old to be the mother of a child by Alexander.[206] Elizabeth Carney has since strengthened Brunt's argument by taking into account that it was not unusual for Persian or Greek women to be married in their teens, implying that Barsine was probably only a few years older than Alexander, likely being born around 360 BCE though perhaps not until the mid-350s, making it possible that she was the king's exact contemporary.[207]

No ancient source questions Heracles' parentage. Moreover, Diodorus records something of the public reaction to the claims of Heracles – that large numbers flocked to aid in the Argead restoration – and recounts that Cassander was concerned that the Macedonians

[205] Recent examples include Erskine, Andrew. A Companion to the Hellenistic World. John Wiley & Sons, 2003. 27. "Now there were only Alexander's sisters, Kleopatra and Thessalonike (Kassandros' wife), ***(arguably)*** the young Heracles, Barsine's son, whose claim had been rejected at Babylon but who had lived on at Pergamon, evidently nurtured by Antigonus, just in case." Emphasis added.
[206] Tarn, *Heracles Son of Barsine*, 24-25. Brunt, *Alexander, Barsine, and Heracles*, 28.
[207] Carney, Elizabeth Donnelly. "Alexander and Persian Women." *American Journal of Philology* 117, no. 4 (1996): 572.

might betray or abandon him.[208] Diodorus also describes Cassander's strategy for undoing Heracles, making naked appeals to Polyperchon's self-interest and ultimately bribing him to murder the teenager.[209] Given the context of Diodorus' passage, it is seems unlikely that he would have failed to mention allegations that Heracles was a pretender, as they are directly relevant to his narrative about Heracles' bid to become *basileus*. Likewise, it hard to imagine that Cassander would not have publicly challenged the family history of Heracles if there was any doubt about his parentage.

Since there is no mathematical reason that Heracles could not have existed and since no ancient source questions his existence, there is no reason to doubt his reality other than that the Alexander historians disagree about some details of his life, which hardly makes him unique, and that he was not selected as king at Babylon. In fact, though some minor details vary, and it is not possible to reconstruct all of his movements, the surviving anecdotes about Heracles are reasonably consistent. Plutarch and Justin both recount the beginning of Alexander's relationship with Barsine after her capture at Issus. For motivation, both authors stress her beauty. Plutarch also credits her Greek education, high birth, and, somewhat unusually, her interest in the king. Justin mentions Alexander's desire to imitate the Persian court.[210] The overall impression is of a beautiful woman in her twenties who may have been actively seeking a match with the king, though the detail given is not rich enough or unusual enough to rule out the possibility that Justin, Plutarch, or their sources were simply filling in tropes to mask a lack of specific information. Some have speculated that Barsine may have known Alexander as a child

[208] Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History*, 20.28.1.
[209] Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History*, 20.28.2.
[210] Justin, *Epitome of Trogus*, 11.10.3. Plutarch, *Life of Alexander*, 21.7. Plutarch, *Life of Eumenes*, 1.7.

during her father's exile in Macedonia. This is a plausible conjecture, though no surviving source mentions a childhood connection.[211] As her mother and first two husbands were Rhodian, and her father was from the semi-Hellenized Pharnacid satrapal dynasty and had additionally spent years in exile in Macedonia, Barsine would certainly have spoken Greek, likely from infancy.

It is unclear exactly when Heracles was born. Diodorus says that he was approximately seventeen when he left Pergamum.[212] Justin gives his age at death as fifteen, though this is in the context of a notoriously garbled passage that several authors, including Pat Wheatley, have argued is a blending of details about Heracles and Alexander IV and which conflicts with the prologue of Pompeius Trogus' history, which is compatible with the narrative given in Diodorus.[213] In any case, the two sources that mention Heracles' age imply that his birth was either in the vicinity of 227 BCE or 224 BCE, with the less problematic passage suggesting the earlier date.

One of the more troubling textual difficulties surrounding Heracles is that Arrian, arguably the best surviving source for Alexander's conquest of Achaemenid Persia, does not mention him at all. Moreover, Arrian discusses Heracles' mother Barsine only in the context of the Susa weddings – where her daughter from her first marriage was matched with Alexander's admiral Nearchus.[214] Not surprisingly, Arrian's omission of Heracles and silence about any relationship between Alexander and Barsine were among Tarn's objections to Heracles' existence – objections

[211] E.g. Lane Fox, Robin. 1974. Alexander the Great. New York: Dial Press, 177.
[212] Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History*, 20.20.1.
[213] Erskine, *A Companion to the Hellenistic World*, 278-279. See also, Wheatley, PV. "The Date of Polyperchon's Invasion of Macedonia and Murder of Heracles." *Antichthon 32* (1998): 19.
[214] Arrian, *Anabasis of Alexander,* 7.4.6.

that Brunt did not address.[215] However, when Arrian's omission of Heracles and Alexander's relationship with Barsine are considered in the context of his *Anabasis*, they are less troubling.

Arrian rarely discussed women in his *Anabasis*. When he did occasionally mention them, he often did not name them, even when the women in question were of considerable importance. For example, Arrian did not give the name of Darius' mother despite mentioning her many times and taking pains to recount how well Alexander treated her.[216] Moreover, Arrian discusses Alexander's family only very rarely—Alexander's sister Cleopatra, half-sister Thessalonike, and his half-brother Arrhidaeus are not mentioned in the *Anabasis* at all.[217] In this context, by simply mentioning Barsine by name, the Nicomedian author placed her in a very select group of women. While Barsine is not explicitly described by Arrian as a wife or concubine of Alexander, the one time she is mentioned in Arrian's text, it is as the only mother of a bride at the Susa weddings whose name is given. In the other cases where a parent is mentioned, only the father is listed. Moreover, the fathers whom Arrian names were all men who were among the most important of the Iranians – Darius, Artaxerxes, Oxyartes, Artabazus, Atropates, and Spitamenes – in that order.[218] Among this exalted list, former kings and grandees of the Achaemenid Empire, the majority of whom had retained their ranks under Alexander, sits the name of one mother – Barsine.

She was certainly not named because her daughter did not have any high-ranking, well-known male relatives whom Arrian could have used to identify her. The daughter of Barsine

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[215] Tarn, *Heracles Son of Barsine*, 24.
[216] Arrian, *Anabasis of Alexander*, 2.11.9, 2.12.3-8, 2.14.1-3, 2.14.8, 2.25.1, 3.17.6, 3.22.4, 4.20.1-2.
[217] Arrhidaeus and Cleopatra are mentioned in the surviving fragments of Arrian's *After Alexander*. See Arrian, *After Alexander*, 1.1 and 1.21 among others.
[218] Arrian, *Anabasis of Alexander*, 7.4.4-6.

could instead have been described as a granddaughter of Artabazus, or the niece of Pharnabazus, or simply as the daughter of Mentor of Rhodes, who as a satrap and supreme commander of Achaemenid forces in the west had wielded influence and power in the final years of the Achaemenid empire akin to that held by the greatest of Achaemenid princes in earlier times. Indeed, there were very few women in the Persian empire with a more distinguished ancestry or more socially elevated lineage than Barsine's daughter. The fact that Barsine was used to identify her in this context suggests that her mother was of great importance and known widely by name in her own right. While this is not explicit evidence of her relationship with Alexander, if she was not named because she was either Alexander's wife or concubine, what else would justify her inclusion?

The early years of Heracles' life are difficult to reconstruct as no source mentions him in the context of any specific historical events until after Alexander's death. However, details about his extended family are extant and these are useful for putting Heracles' early life into context. We read of the surrender of Artabazus, Heracles' maternal grandfather, to Alexander after Bessus deposed Darius III.[219] After initially being appointed satrap of Bactria by Alexander—an appointment that is easier to understand if Alexander viewed him as a father-in-law, the old man resigned, citing his age, after perhaps two years. It is difficult to know what to make of this resignation. Brunt and Carney have both seen it as a reaction to Barsine being eclipsed by Roxana at court, but this cannot be proven.[220] After losing his family's ancestral satrapy of Hellespontine Phrygia in an Achaemenid civil war, spending years in exile in Macedonia, experiencing the twin

[219] Arrian, *Anabasis of Alexander*, 3.23.7; Curtius, *History of Alexander*, 6.5.1-6.
[220] Carney, *Alexander and Persian Women*, 575-576. Brunt, *Alexander, Barsine, and Heracles*, 29.

disasters of Issus and Gaugamela, witnessing the betrayal of Darius III, and ultimately being tasked with helping a king who had burned Persepolis and destroyed the Achaemenid empire consolidate his power, it is easy to imagine that Artabazus might have had a strong desire to retire from public life.[221] He might also have had any number of age-related ailments that could have made active campaigning in unstable Bactria difficult – Artabazus was likely around sixty and possibly older.[222] Whatever his reasons for resigning as satrap, the family of Artabazus continued to play a significant role at Alexander's court, as suggested by the inclusion of at least three women from his family among the Susa brides — his daughters Artonis and Artacama and his granddaughter through Barsine are specifically mentioned but there may have been others who were not named.[223] Moreover, Artabazus' son Kophen was inducted into Alexander's cavalry agema alongside Roxana's brother Itanes in 324 BCE– suggesting that the family of Artabazus was still of great importance near the end of Alexander's reign and possibly indicating social equivalence of Kophen and Itanes.[224]

Heracles first enters recorded history at the succession crisis after Alexander's death. Though Diodorus mentions only Arrhidaeus in the context of the succession debate and does not mention Roxana, Alexander IV, Barsine, or Heracles, other sources record a more complete picture.[225] We read that Heracles' case was championed by his brother-in-law Nearchus, following Quintus Curtius, or Meleager, following Justin, though Meleager's support is possibly

[221] For a summary of primary source evidence pertaining to Artabazus, see: Heckel, *Who's Who in the Age of Alexander the Great: Prosopography of Alexander's Empire*, 55.
[222] Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History,* 20.20.1.
[223] Plutarch, *Life of Eumenes*, 1.7; Arrian, *Anabasis of Alexander,* 7.4.6.
[224] Justin, *Epitome of Pompeius Trogus*, 13.2.
[225] Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History,* 18.3.

merely another error by an often careless author.[226] Nonetheless, it is possible that Meleager did initially support Heracles until it became apparent that the others were not willing to accept him; such a strategy would have served at least some of Meleager's motives. As discussed in Chapter III, he seems to have been concerned most with ensuring that Perdiccas would not be able to easily usurp power and declare himself king. Since Roxana's child was not yet known to be male and, even if male, had not yet survived childbirth or infancy, not appointing either Arrhidaeus or Heracles as king would have seemed by many of those at Babylon in 323 BCE tantamount to abandoning the Argead dynasty. While Arrhidaeus was an ideal tool for chaining Perdiccas to a perpetual regency, declaring Heracles king would have similarly blocked the chiliarch. In any case, writing that the suggestion of Nearchus that Heracles be king "was approved by no one," Curtius makes it plain that the cabal of Macedonian noblemen plotting the succession had little interest in Heracles.[227]

One difficulty with Heracles' candidacy may have been that, according to Justin, Barsine had already taken him to Pergamum.[228] However, as no other source mentions this, it seems probable that this is a chronological error and that Justin was confused due to Barsine's later, better attested residence at Pergamum. A more likely alternative is conveyed to us by Strabo, where Perdiccas is described as taking the "children" of Alexander with him to Egypt shortly before his own assassination.[229] From there, we have no information about how Heracles and

[226] Justin, *Epitome of Pompeius Trogus*, 13.2. While opinions of Justin vary, my own is nearly as harsh as Billow's – that Justin was so terrible historian that he requires external confirmation to be believed, which renders him superfluous. Billows, Richard A. 1990. *Antigonus the One-Eyed and the Creation of the Hellenistic State*. Berkeley: University of California Press. 348-351.
[227] Quintus Curtius, *History of Alexander,* 10.6.10-13.
[228] Justin, *Epitome of Pompeius Trogus*, 13.2.
[229] Strabo, *Geography*, C794. τὰ παιδία τὰ Ἀλεξάνδρου

Barsine ended up in Pergamum, but it seems reasonable to conjecture that Antigonus took possession of them when Roxana and the kings were taken to Macedonia by Antipater.[230] Not only would this have provided Antigonus with some members of the royal family to balance out, at least in part, Antipater's possession of the kings, an additional motivation for Antigonus to seek control of Barsine and Heracles may have been that Perdiccas' lieutenant Eumenes, who had defeated and killed Craterus and Neoptolemus shortly before Perdiccas was assassinated, remained undefeated and in possession of a large army in Anatolia. The former Achaemenid general Pharnabazus, arguably the greatest of the living maternal relatives of Heracles, was an important subordinate of Eumenes, his relative by marriage – Pharnabazus and Phoenix of Tenedos commanded of the Asiatic cavalry which engaged and killed Craterus.[231] It is interesting that, after this battle, Pharnabazus does not appear again in surviving sources as one of Eumenes' sub-commanders. While there are many possible reasons for this, e.g. death in battle, one possibility is that Pharnabazus abandoned Eumenes after Heracles and Barsine came into the possession of Antigonus.

In addition to the historians already mentioned, some lesser sources also allude to Heracles' existence.[232] Pausanias mentions Heracles along with Alexander IV as the "two sons of Alexander" and condemns Cassander for poisoning them.[233] Similarly, both the Parian Marble and a fragment of Porphyry refer to two sons of Alexander, though without giving their names.[234]

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[230] Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History,* 18.39.5.
[231] Plutarch, *Life of Eumenes*, 7.1.
[232] Carney and Ogden summarize the extant references from minor sources about Heracles in Carney, Elizabeth Donnelly, and Daniel Ogden. *Philip II and Alexander the Great: Father and Son, Lives and Afterlives*. Oxford University Press, 2010. 278 n 37.
[233] Pausanias, *Description of Greece*, 9.7.2.
[234] *FGrH* 260 F 3.3; *FGrH* 239 B 18.

Appian transmits a similar statement.[235] While it is possible that this body of evidence masks a pretender, the lack of any ancient accusation that Heracles was a pretender and the numerous surviving anecdotes about Barsine and Heracles in the works of Arrian, Justin, Diodorus, Curtius, Strabo, Plutarch, and others render this a remote possibility.

4.3 LEGITIMACY

While Tarn's suspicions of Heracles have cast a long shadow, it is a shadow that has receded in the last two decades. While it is not uncommon to find Heracles' existence questioned in recent historical work, it is more typical for him to be described as illegitimate and, sometimes, it is claimed that Alexander did not acknowledge Heracles as his son.[236] This last claim is particularly problematic. As Elizabeth Carney has noted, no information survives about whether Alexander acknowledged Heracles or not.[237] Moreover, given Barsine's exalted social status, the importance of her kin in Alexander's later administration, Philip II's long record of marrying foreign women, and the fact that Alexander had no other sons when he died, it seems unlikely that Alexander would not have acknowledged Heracles. In any case, in the absence of any ancient evidence that Alexander rejected Heracles, our default position must be that he was accepted, by Alexander and by those around him, as Alexander's son.

Some Roman-era authors do imply that Heracles was illegitimate – Plutarch, most damningly, refers to Barsine as the only woman Alexander slept with in Asia before marriage.[238] However, Plutarch and the other Roman-era Alexander historians sometimes struggled to

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[235] Appian, *Syrian Wars*, 54.
[236] E.g. Romm, James S. 2012. *Ghost on the Throne: the Death of Alexander the Great and the War for Crown and Empire*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 279.
[237] Carney, *Alexander and Persian Women*, 580.
[238] Plutarch, *Life of Alexander,* 21.7.

understand Alexander's relationships with women. While they were aware of the king's multiple marriages, they had difficulty interpreting the social consequences of this and sometimes lapsed into thinking of Roxana as Alexander's only wife. In particular, despite his claim that Alexander's relationship with Barsine was *πρὸ γάμου*, Plutarch elsewhere credits Eumenes with relationship by marriage to Alexander through Barsine's sister Artonis.[239] As Carney has argued, Alexander's relationships with women, and the relationships of Macedonian kings in general with their women, are better seen as existing along a continuum of prestige rather than being defined rigidly.[240] As discussed by Maria Brosius in her book *Women in Ancient Persia*, Achaemenid society conceived of several varieties of honorable relationships between the king and his sexual partners, all of which could produce children with the capacity to succeed to throne under the right circumstances during the later Achaemenid period.[241] Within Macedonian society, the women of the king seem to have commanded varying degrees of respect based on their backgrounds, ethnicity, and successful production of healthy male children, again suggesting that a continuum is more appropriate for understanding their relative prestige and that of their children.

A problem with our textual tradition is that the majority of our information derives from long after Alexander died when the events of the great succession crisis had already played themselves out. Because of this delay, we should expect to see selection bias – discussing historical figures based on how important they ultimately became rather than how important they seemed at the time— in our sources. For this reason, since Roxana's son was selected as

[239] Plutarch, *Life of Eumenes*, 1.7.
[240] Carney, *Alexander and Persian Women*, 571.
[241] Brosius, Maria. *Women in Ancient Persia*, 559-331 BC. Oxford University Press, 1996. 13-33.

king, it makes sense that Alexander IV and Roxana are more thoroughly treated and respected in our sources than Barsine and Heracles. However, it does not follow from this that Roxana was either more important or more respected during the later portion of Alexander's reign. Indeed, Alexander's marriage to the daughters of Darius and Artaxerxes at Susa and Roxana's subsequent murder of Stateira after Alexander's death, suggest that Roxana was in the process of being eclipsed at the end of Alexander's reign. Ogden captured the uncertainty of the actual status of Barsine, writing, "We have no way of proving that Plutarch's assumption about the status of Heracles does not owe its origin to the successful arguments against his elevation to the throne at Babylon."[242]

That legitimacy and illegitimacy for Macedonian princes should not be seen as a dichotomy but rather as a continuum was observed by Tarn a century ago.[243] Ogden has stated this much more elegantly than Tarn, stressing that we must "bear in mind the importance of reading all claims of bastardy cast against princes—direct or indirect—discursively."[244] Macedonian princes were more and less likely to succeed to the throne depending on a number of factors. First among these were Argead descent and the ability to be accepted as a credible war leader. Philip II's displacement of the infant Amyntas provides a ready example of a brother of a dead king being preferred to a son for exactly this reason.

As no martially capable adult Argead males existed in 323 at Babylon, Alexander's inner circle was forced to make a terribly difficult choice between three horrible candidates; an unborn child who might not survive and might not be male, a disabled adult, and a young boy. Moreover,

[242] Ogden, *Polygamy, Prostitutes, and Death*, 43.
[243] Tarn, *Heracles Son of Barsine*, 20.
[244] Ogden, *Polygamy, Prostitutes, and Death*, 43.

the Macedonian aristocrats at Babylon were faced with the challenge of holding down vast barely conquered native populations and tens of thousands of unhappy Greek colonists who were well aware that there were only the most pathetic of candidates available for the Argead throne. Alexander also left numerous Iranians in positions of power in the empire. As discussed previously, one of the consequences of the settlement at Babylon was an immediate purge of native satraps and their replacement by ethnic Macedonians.[245] The only native satraps left in place by Perdiccas were Oxyartes, the father of Roxana, Atropates, his own father-in-law, and Phrataphernes, who had saved the Macedonian army while it was crossing the Gedrosian desert.

In this context, Heracles would have been a terrible choice for the junta of Macedonian officers deciding the succession. With blood ties to one of the most exalted Achaemenid families, which included not only Barsine's brother Cophen but also the half-Greek Achaemenid general Pharnabazus – the most successful surviving Persian commander of the war, Heracles had militarily and politically experienced maternal relatives capable of challenging Macedonian domination if they were included in the ruling coalition. Moreover, Alexander had married one of Barsine's sisters to Eumenes and her daughter to Nearchus, whose non-Macedonian origins disadvantaged them after Alexander's death; Nearchus left Babylon without a satrapy and Eumenes left with a satrapy which had yet to be conquered. From the perspective of a man like Ptolemy, making a child with maternal relatives like Eumenes and Pharnabazus king would have

[245] Perdiccas gave Egypt to Ptolemy, Syria to Laomedon, Cilicia to Philotas, Media to Pithon, Paphlagonia and Cappadocia (unconquered) to Eumenes. He confirmed Antigonus in his control of Pamphylia, Lycia, and Greater Phrygia. Asander received Caria, Menander got Lydia, and Leonnatus was assigned Hellespontine Phrygia. Lysimachus got Thrace, Macedonia went to Antipater, Taxiles to Pithon, Paropanisadae to Oxyartes, Arachosia and Cedrosia to Sibyrtius, Aria and Drangine to Stasanor of Soli, Bactria and Sogdiana to Philip, Parthia and Hyrcania to Phrataphernes, Persia to Peukestes, Carmania to Tlepolemus, Media to Atropates, Babylon to Archon, and Mesopotamia to Arcesilaus. Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History,* 18.3. Translation is mine.

been anathema.[246] This is, of course, precisely the reported reason why Ptolemy argued against both Heracles and also any potential son of Roxana. Quintus Curtius puts the following words in the future Pharaoh's mouth, "Is that why we have conquered the Persians, that we might serve their stock, a thing which those just kings, Darius and Xerxes, sought in vain with armies of so many thousands and such great fleets?"[247] Many Macedonians must have felt similarly in 323 BCE, as Quintus Curtius flatly tells us, and it seems much more likely that it is for this reason – that he was *too legitimate* from an Achaemenid perspective, rather than any details about his mother's relationship with Alexander, that Heracles was not chosen to be *basileus*.

4.4 Susa Marriages: Diverse Outcomes

In 324 BCE in Babylon, Alexander the Great presided over a massive wedding celebration, conducted in the Persian style, in which Alexander himself married Stateira, the daughter of Darius III, and Parysatis, the daughter of Artaxerxes III. Alexander also commanded that the daughters of the most prominent among the Iranian nobility be simultaneously wedded to his most senior officers and companions.

> To Hephaestion he gave another daughter of Darius, Drypetis, his own wife's sister, since he wanted Hephaestion's children and his own to be cousins. To Craterus, he gave Amastris, the daughter of Oxyathres, Darius' brother. To Perdikkas, he gave the daughter of Atropates the Median satrap. To Ptolemy his bodyguard and to Eumenes his royal secretary he gave the daughters of Artabazus, Artacama and Artonis. To Nearchus he gave the daughter of Barsine and Mentor, to Seleucus the daughter of Spitamenes the Bactrian. In like manner

[246] Though Ptolemy also married a daughter of Artabazus at Susa, making the Macedonian general a maternal uncle of Heracles, there is no evidence that this union was important – none of Ptolemy's reported children had an Asiatic mother. This is compatible with Ptolemy's reported contempt for the idea of a half-Asian king, his reliance on Greek colonists rather than Asiatic troops in his dominance of Egypt, and the near total autonomy of his behavior after Babylon. For his contempt for the idea of a half-Asian king, see: Quintus Curtius, *History of Alexander*, 10.6.13.
[247] Quintus Curtius, *History of Alexander*, 10.6.14.

> he gave the other companions the Persians' and Medes' most distinguished daughters, about eighty in number.[248]

Arrian records that most among Alexander's entourage were angered that these weddings were conducted in the Persian manner rather than the Macedonian.[249] As Alexander died a mere year later, it is often supposed by modern scholars that the Susa marriages were transient and that the Macedonians repudiated the daughters of the Iranian nobility after Alexander's death.[250] While, in most cases, we do not know even the names of these high-born Persian and Median daughters or their Macedonian bridegrooms, the limited evidence that is available does not support the idea that they were repudiated en masse and instead suggests a diverse range of marital outcomes.

4.5 Context: Macedonian Conquest of the East

One of the principle challenges of the last decade of Alexander's life was to forge a functional state from the administrative and cultural wreckage he had created within what had been the Achaemenid empire for the proceeding two centuries. After all, just because the Macedonians had defeated and scattered Achaemenid armies didn't mean that any of them knew how to rule a vast, complex empire with hundreds of ethnically and geographically diverse subject peoples speaking a myriad of languages and worshipping countless gods. Nor did it mean

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[248] Arrian, *Anabasis of Alexander*, 7.4.5-6. Translation is from: Romm, James. "The Landmark Arrian: The Campaigns of Alexander." *New York: Pantheon* (2010).

[249] Arrian, *Anabasis of Alexander*, 7.6.3.

[250] The assertion that most Susa marriages ended in repudiation is common and has remained so for a long time. For example, see: Troncoso, Víctor Alonso, and Edward M. Anson. *After Alexander: The Time of the Diadochi (323-281 BC)*. Oxbow Books, Limited, 2013, p. 210. See also, Worthington, Ian. *Alexander the Great: Man and God*. Pearson Education, 2004, p. 247. See also, Mensch, Pamela, and James S Romm. *The Landmark Arrian: The Campaigns of Alexander*. Anchor, 2012. 279 (n7.4.6c). Also, Green, Peter. *Alexander of Macedon: 356-323 BC: A Historical Biography*. Berkeley: U of California Press, 1991. 1974. 447-448. See also: Worthington, Ian. *Ptolemy I: King and Pharaoh of Egypt*. Oxford University Press, 2016. 113.

that any among the conquered viewed the Macedonian conquerors with any sort of loyalty or viewed their regime as in any sense legitimate. Alexander needed people whom he could trust who understood the complexity of the former Achaemenid empire to help him rule it.

This administrative void was exacerbated by several factors that made many Macedonians poorly suited to rule the empire they had labored to conquer. Perhaps most importantly, there weren't many of them in absolute terms and many of the inner circle of Macedonian nobility were either left behind in Macedonia, killed in battle during Alexander's campaigns, purged by Alexander himself, or turned into administrators in western and less culturally alien regions (from a Macedonian perspective) of the Achaemenid empire early in the campaign.

The lack of an adequate number of administrators who were closely connected to the reigning regime was a problem sometimes faced by the Achaemenids themselves. It was not uncommon for the Achaemenids to have local peoples administered by their own native rulers, particularly below the satrapal level. Hence, they initially installed Greek tyrants in the Ionian cities rather than attempt to impose Iranian administrators and, after the Ionian revolt, were more willing to tolerate more diverse types of local self-rule among the Ionian Greek *poleis*.[251] Cyrus the Younger eloquently summed up the basic problem that had been faced by Achaemenid rulers across the centuries and that was faced by Alexander in turn when trying to rule their empire. When asked whether he would have enough wealth to reward the Greek mercenaries he'd manipulated into helping him try to seize the throne from his brother, Xenophon (who was

[251] Briant, Pierre. *From Cyrus to Alexander: A History of the Persian Empire.* Eisenbrauns, 2002. Discussion of Achaemenid administration is a major theme in this book. See, for example, pages 496-497 for a discussion of Persian tolerance of local rulers in Ionian cities.

one of the mercenaries) reported the Persian prince as replying, "My father's dominion extends toward the south to where men cannot live due to heat, and to the north where they cannot live due to cold; and my brother's friends rule all that is in between as satraps. If we are victorious, it is necessary to make our friends masters of this. I do not fear that I shall not have enough to give to my friends, but rather that I shall not have enough friends to whom to give."[252] Alexander likely would have empathized.

As Alexander conquered lands ever farther to the east, many of the Macedonians who remained in the entourage of the king proved themselves not only uninterested but sometimes actively hostile to ruling over Asian peoples far from home, particularly if this meant respecting or, worse yet, adopting any of their customs. In the eyes of some of the Macedonians, the denizens of the Persian empire were merely culturally alien captives living on spear-won land. To expect the conquerors to respect the customs of the conquered was anathema. This contemptuous Macedonian attitude can be seen throughout Alexander's later reign as the king struggled to organize the vast swaths of land and diverse alien peoples he had conquered. For example, Alexander murdered Cleitus the Black, the brother of his wet-nurse, in a drunken rage shortly after Cleitus was elevated to satrap of Bactria after Cleitus publicly mocked the king. Among Cleitus' frustrations were that Alexander was increasingly adopting eastern customs as well as elevating himself farther above the Macedonian nobility (these complains were interrelated). Tellingly, Cleitus saw his appointment as satrap of Bactria – one of the most important of the Achaemenid satrapies – as more of a punishment than a reward. Cleitus felt he was being sentenced, in effect, to spend the rest of his life far from home ruling over restless and

[252] Xenophon, Anabasis, 1.7.6-7. Translation is mine.

violent barbarians.[253] Other examples of Macedonian contempt for the Asiatic nobility are manifold. For example, Cassander traveled to Babylon during the final period of Alexander's life. According to Plutarch, the son of Antipater had the poor judgment to mock a group of Persian notables who were performing proskynesis before the king. By this point thoroughly sick of Macedonian recalcitrance, Alexander became so angry with Cassander that, "grasping him violently by the hair with both hands, he struck his head against the wall."[254]

It is doubtful that men such as Cleitus or Cassander would have made good rulers over Iranians, particularly in areas that were subject to revolt (such as Bactria) and where the local aristocracy needed to be accommodated to keep them non-murderous. While some among the Macedonians did prove to be capable administrators of Iranian or Indian peoples who were very willing to remain in the East – e.g. Peukestes, eventually appointed satrap of Persia – as his reign progressed, Alexander increasingly relied on those who were capable, knowledgeable, and loyal, wherever he could find them. The meritocratic charnel house that was Alexander's perpetual war of conquest created opportunities for capable men who, at the beginning of the invasion, would not have been integrated enough into the aristocracy of the Macedonian kingdom to have been entrusted with any significant command. So it was that the Cretan exile Nearchus, who had no official position at the beginning of the campaign, became first a satrap and later the admiral of Alexander's fleet. Similarly, Alexander's personal secretary Eumenes was slowly entrusted

[253] Quintus Curtius, History of Alexander, 8.1.19-37. Quintus Curtius indicates that Cleitus had been selected as satrap of Sogdiana but also indicates that he was a replacement for Artabazus, who had resigned as satrap of Bactria. Arrian does not mention Cleitus' frustration at being named satrap of Bactria but made it plain that Alexander's accommodation of Iranian customs was among his frustrations. Arrian, *Anabasis of Alexander*, 4.8. For Artabazus' status as satrap of Bactria rather than Sogdiana, see: Arrian, Anabasis of Alexander, 3.29.1; 4.15.5-6.

[254] Plutarch, *Life of Alexander*, 74.1-4. Translation is mine. According to Plutarch, Cassander was so traumatized by this experience that a statue of Alexander could drive him into trembling fits long after Alexander's death.

with increasing responsibility until he ultimately became one of Alexander's most trusted commanders, leading troops independently in India, and ultimately commanding the companion cavalry after Hephaestion died, which brought a Greek scribe with minimal command experience to the apex of power in Alexander's empire.

In addition to the Greek members of his entourage, Alexander relied increasingly on many among the Iranian and Indian nobilities as he marched east. When he felt them to be reliable, Alexander often proved willing to reappoint local rulers who quickly submitted to his rule. This began early in the Macedonian invasion during the conquest of the western provinces. For example, Alexander confirmed Ada as Queen of Caria as well as the local Egyptian nomarchs Petisis and Doloaspis.[255] However, as Alexander proceeded east, he more and more relied on Iranian and Indian nobles who had surrendered, often reappointing them to their previous positions, even when these had been positions of great power.

Selectively lenient treatment may have enticed additional Iranians to defect, particularly after the battle of Gaugamela, after which Achaemenid power entered a rapid and terminal decline. Some of these Achaemenid lords, a few of whom had been among the most exalted of the Persians and most of whom had fought against the Macedonians, proved willing to adapt to the Macedonian conquest and served Alexander as capable administrators and even military commanders within the fledgling Macedonian empire. For example, Alexander appointed Sabictus satrap of Cappadocia, Mithrenes as satrap of Armenia, Ariobarzanes and Phrasaortes (in turn) as satraps of Persia, Phrataphernes as satrap of Parthia and Hyrcania, Oxyartes as satrap of Parapanisadae, Oxethres as satrap of Paraetacene, Mazeus as satrap of Babylon, Atropates as

[255] Arrian, *Anabasis of Alexander*, 1.23.6 (Ada), 3.5.2 (Petisis and Doloaspis).

satrap of Media, and Artabazus as satrap of Bactria. Taken together, these provinces formed the heartland of the Achaemenid empire. In total, Alexander appointed Iranian satraps for eleven of the twelve satrapies conquered after Gaugamela between 331 and 227.[256] Though many of these men were accompanied by Macedonian garrisons as a check on their loyalty, Alexander still placed substantial trust in them, and they were able to influence events in and around their territories.[257] Moreover, Alexander's Iranian satraps appointed others to lower positions of power throughout the east. We can glimpse this in the existence of men such as Pharasmenes, who served the Macedonians loyally under Artabazus, refusing to join Bessus.[258] While few such lesser Iranian rulers entered the historical record, it seems probable that there were many more of them than there were Iranian satraps.

However, unsurprisingly, many among the Iranian nobility took advantage of any perceived Macedonian weakness to risk rebellion. This included several of the Iranians whom Alexander had appointed as satraps. For example, Satibarzanes was initially retained by Alexander as satrap of Areia, but betrayed the Macedonian contingent sent with him and murdered them, declaring his allegiance to Bessus.[259] Later, Arsaces was also appointed to the satrapy of Areia and was removed for treachery, arrested, and brought to Alexander in chains.[260] Before the more loyal Atropates was appointed satrap of Media, Oxydates was given this

[256] Briant, Pierre. *Alexander the Great and his Empire: A Short Introduction*. Princeton University Press, 2012. 113.
[257] Arrian, Anabasis of Alexander, 2.4.2 (Sabictus); 3.16.5 (Mithrenes); 3.19.2 (Oxathres); 4.15.4-5 (Pharasmenes); 3.16.4 (Mazeus). As was often the case with Iranian satraps under the Macedonians, Mazeus was accompanied by a Macedonian garrison and Macedonian officers. Sabictus and Mithrenes evidently failed in their assigned tasks as those satrapies remained unconquered. Perdiccas eventually conquered Cappadocia, but Armenia was never conquered by the Macedonians and became permanently independent during this period.
[258] Arrian, Anabasis of Alexander, 4.15.4-5.
[259] Arrian, *Anabasis of Alexander*, 3.25.2-5; 3.28.3. Quitus Curtius, *History of Alexander*, 7.4.40. Erygius of Mytilene ultimately killed him in single combat and brought Alexander his severed head.
[260] Arrian, *Anabasis of Alexander*, 4.7.1.

assignment and had to be removed for unspecified crimes.[261] The satrap Autophradates was replaced by Phrataphernes and executed after he was caught plotting against the Macedonians.[262] Phrataphernes, arguably the most active and loyal of Alexander's Iranian appointees, also arrested Nabarzanes, the former Chiliarch of Darius III, for rebelling and acting in support of Bessus after Alexander had spared him.[263] Astaspes, satrap of Carmania, was executed in 324 for plotting rebellion while Alexander was in India.[264] Orxines usurped the satrapy of Persia while Alexander was in India and was executed by Alexander upon his return.[265] Lesser Iranian nobility also sometimes rebelled. For example, Baryaxes the Mede, about whom little is known, led a short-lived rebellion against Alexander.[266] On another occasion, Craterus captured the Persian noblemen Ordines and Zariaspes, who had begun a local uprising.[267]

4.6 The Carrot and the Stick

Late in his reign, Alexander took steps to more closely bind the upper echelons of the Iranian nobility to their Greco-Macedonian conquerors. This seems to have been especially on Alexander's mind after he returned from India and was forced to conduct an administrative purge of those who had been disloyal in his absence. Alexander offered rewards to the most loyal of the Iranians, unambiguously raising them into the aristocracy of the new empire. For example, Alexander created a new hipparchy in the companion cavalry and appointed Hystaspes, a

[261] Arrian, *Anabasis of Alexander*, 3.25.2-5
[262] Quintus Curtius, *History of Alexander*, 10.1.39.
[263] The reconstruction of Nabarzanes' career is complicated. See Heckel*, Who's Who in the Age of Alexander the Great*, 171.
[264] Quintus Curtius, *History of Alexander*, 9.10.21-29.
[265] Arrian, *Anabasis of Alexander*, 6.30.2.
[266] Arrian, *Anabasis of Alexander*, 4.18.3.
[267] Arrian, *Anabasis of Alexander*, 6.27.3. Quintus Curtius, *History of Alexander*, 9.10.19.

kinsman of Darius III, to command it. This has sometimes been interpreted as adding an additional hipparchy to the companion cavalry for non-Macedonians, but this interpretation is not certain from what Arrian wrote. Arrian indicates that this new unit "was not wholly barbarian," which implies that some Greco-Macedonians were among its members. Prominent eastern noblemen may also have been more widely distributed throughout the companion cavalry, as "Bactrian, Sogdian, Arachosian, Zarangian, Areian, and Parthian cavalrymen, along with Persian cavalrymen, were being distributed into the companion cavalry…"[268] Alexander also inducted a number of preeminent Iranians into the elite *agema,* including brothers of Roxanna and Barsine as well as two sons of Phrataphernes. It is hard to view these acts as anything other than rewards for loyal and important Iranian families signifying their acceptance into the elite of Alexander's new empire, which was intended to be ethnically broader and more inclusive than merely the Macedonian nobility. At the same time, Alexander introduced near eastern boys, who had been trained in the Macedonian fighting style and Greek language, into the royal army, which Arrian indicates was also disapproved of by the ethnically Macedonian veterans of Alexander's previous campaigns.

While Alexander rewarded and exalted some among the Iranians, he also required them to bind their families to the Greco-Macedonian conquerors. In most of the eighty such elite marriages referred to by Arrian, history does not preserve the identity of either the bride or groom. However, for eight marriages, a record of the participants survives and, in some of these

[268] Arrian, *Anabasis of Alexander*, 7.6.3-5. The Greek text here is compatible with either interpretation.

cases, we know the ultimate outcome of the marriages. For all of them, we know at least some subsequent historical context.

Hephaestion died before Alexander and shortly after the Susa weddings, so he presumably did not divorce Drypetis. However, since Hephaestion predeceased Alexander, this is not informative about the success of these arranged marriages in the absence of the coercive presence of Alexander. Of the remaining seven marriages about which anything is known, only one certainly ended with the rejection of an Iranian wife. Craterus divorced the Achaemenid princess Amastris (daughter of Oxyathres, brother of Darius III). However, it is not clear that Craterus did this out of any dissatisfaction with Amastris. One of the unexplained details of the final period of Alexander's reign and the beginning of the successor period is that, after being ordered to return to Macedonia, Craterus seems to have taken a great deal of time to actually do so. He had only traveled as far as Cilicia when Alexander died and, after that, seemed to be in no hurry to go anywhere. It is unclear whether Craterus ever personally returned to Macedonia; he seems to have still been in Anatolia when he marched against Eumenes, ultimately being killed in battle. It has been suggested that this delay – which lasted more than a year – was in part a result of his marriage to Amastris, whom he likely did not feel would be an asset in Macedonia but who did offer him prestige in Asia, which given the high position bestowed upon him in absentia at Babylon and the ambiguous nature of Perdiccas' own position, put him in an excellent position to contest with the *epimeletes* for primacy in the empire.[269]

[269] Romm, James S. *Ghost on the Throne: The Death of Alexander the Great and the War for Crown and Empire.* Knopf, 2011. 94-97.

What ultimately swayed Craterus against Amastris was that Antipater, whom Craterus had been ordered by Alexander to remove, made him a better offer – his own oldest daughter, who was, either immediately or soon afterwards, accompanied by an alliance against Perdiccas. However, it is probable that Craterus took some time to make sure his Persian wife landed well, so to speak, in a position befitting her rank. She almost immediately married Dionysius, the local ruler of Heraclea Pontica, located on the Anatolian coast of the Black Sea. After her new husband's death, she continued to rule Heraclea Pontica until her increasingly frustrated sons finally committed matricide nearly forty years after she was rejected by Craterus. Perhaps uniquely for a woman in this period, Amastris even founded a city in her own name.[270] Later in life, she briefly married the by-then-polygamous Lysimachus during his invasion of Anatolia during the final campaign against Antigonus, though it is unclear to what extent this marriage existed in anything but name.[271]

There is only one other companion of Alexander for whom we definitively know the outcome of their marriage at Susa. Seleucus emphatically did not reject Apama, the daughter of the defeated Sogdian rebel Spitamenes. While it is sometimes noted that Seleucus may have found her useful in his eventual role as king of much of the Near East, he did not attain satrapal rank at Babylon after Alexander died, only gaining a satrapy (Babylon) at Triparadeisos after the assassination of Perdiccas. Though Seleucus is sometimes thought to have kept Apama because she was useful in ruling over Asian provinces, it's not obvious that Apama brought Seleucus much

[270] Strabo, *Geographica*, 12.3.10. For a summary of what is known about her life, see: Heckel, Waldemar, ed. *Who's who in the Age of Alexander the Great: Prosopography of Alexander's Empire*. John Wiley & Sons, 2008. 21.
[271] Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History*, 20.109.7. Erskine, Andrew, ed. *A Companion to the Hellenistic World*. John Wiley & Sons, 2009. 31.

advantage in Babylon as she was the daughter of a Sogdian warlord who had rebelled against Alexander and had then been killed. She was not Babylonian and may have had few useful family connections in Babylonia. Moreover, while Seleucus eventually ruled over most of the old Iranian heartland of the Achaemenid empire, this took him many years to achieve and he had been married to Apama for an extended period before he ruled over large Iranian populations. Given this delay, it seems unlikely that he remained married to her for primarily political reasons. Nor is it the case that Seleucus kept her but married many more times. As far as can be reconstructed, Seleucus was at most only barely polygamous. He is known to have married only one other time, to a daughter of Demetrius Poliorcetes named Stratonice, when he was perhaps sixty, a quarter century after he had married Apama.[272] It is unclear whether Apama was still alive when Seleucus married Stratonice.[273] There is no more convincing reason for the duration of Seleucus' marriage to Apama than that their marriage was a happy one. At a distance of more than two millennia, there can be perhaps no better measure of Seleucus' esteem for Apama than his naming of no less than three different cities after her.[274]

The other Susa weddings about which anything is known are all cases in which we do not know the outcome of the marriages for certain. This is complicated by the fact that polygamy, which had been practiced by Argead kings but not, as far as we can reconstruct, by other Macedonian nobles, was commonly practiced among the Iranian nobility, as well as by many of

[272] Ancient sources differ on whether he remarried after Apama's death or while she was still alive.
[273] This second marriage was short-lived, and the old king soon passed his much younger second wife to his son and heir, Antiochus, after learning that his son was smitten with her. It has been argued that the stories of Antiochus' infatuation are spurious and mask political motivations. See: Waterfield, Robin. *Dividing the Spoils: The War for Alexander the Great's Empire*. Oxford University Press, 2012. 195.
[274] Appian, *Syrian Wars*, 12.57.

the other peoples of the Achaemenid empire. This meant that Macedonians living in the non-Hellenic portions of Alexander's empire had several models of marriage to choose from, particularly if they were not concerned about returning to Macedonia. Ptolemy, for example, married at least two other times after Susa and also kept other women, most flamboyantly the *hetaira* Thais, with whom he had three children and whom some sources indicate he also married.[275]

The case of Thais illustrates the ambiguity that could exist in the relationships of early Hellenistic rulers. Regardless of what labels were used to described Ptolemy's relationship with Thais in and outside of Egypt, the children of their long union had high status, though as far as we know their sons never contended for power with Ptolemy's other children. However, as may be the case with Alexander's son Heracles, the fact that Thais' sons didn't succeed their father may be the reason for the perception that Ptolemy's relationship with her was inferior rather than evidence that it was perceived as inferior by those around Ptolemy during his life. Her sons could as easily have been deemed by their father as less temperamentally suited for the throne and less dangerous to the future Ptolemy II than Ptolemy Keraunus, his son by Eurydike whom he eventually exiled. While we do not know what became of the sons of Thais, her daughter certainly had substantial status. She married a local ruler in Cyprus, where Ptolemy struggled to compete with the Antigonids for control.[276] Ultimately, it is important to remember that the Diadochi became independent rulers in their own right and, like Argead kings before them, had

[275] Ogden, Daniel, ed. *Polygamy, Prostitutes and Death: The Hellenistic Dynasties*. Classical Press of Wales, 1999. 68. This book contains a detailed discussion of the status of Thais.
[276] Athenaeus, *Deipnosophists*, Book 13, 576e.

the ability to influence the status of particular women and their children. They were at most only lightly bound by systems of law or custom that displeased them.

While we do not know whether Ptolemy repudiated Artacama, the case of Thais should make us hesitate to assume that she was repudiated. No surviving ancient source mentions Artacama again after her marriage to Ptolemy. It is very possible that Ptolemy did repudiate her after Alexander died for political advantage much as Craterus rejected Amastris. It is also possible that Amastris either died in childbirth or remained married to Ptolemy but bore no children of whom we are aware. It is also possible that she was kept around by her husband in case she someday proved useful but was considered to be of lower status than Bernice, Eurydice, and Thais and was relegated to what was effectively a neglectful, if likely comfortable, concubinage. We simply do not know.

Similar uncertainty surrounds Perdiccas and the daughter of the Median satrap Atropates. At least initially, there is good reason to suspect that Perdiccas kept his Iranian wife after Alexander died, as Atropates remained satrap of Media throughout the Perdiccan regime. However, as discussed in the previous chapter, Perdiccas later negotiated to marry both a daughter of Antipater and the full sister of Alexander. Whether this meant that the daughter of Atropates had been repudiated or whether it meant that Perdiccas was contemplating polygamy is unknown. It is also possible that the daughter of Atropates had already died in childbirth or from other causes.

The two remaining officers of Alexander who we know married Iranian women – Nearchus and Eumenes – never returned to Europe and are not known to have repudiated their Iranian wives or taken any others. However, in both cases, very little is known for certain.

Nearchus married the daughter of Barsine and, as discussed in the previous chapter, he advocated for her son Heracles to succeed Alexander at Babylon, which may suggest that these family connections were important to him at that time. Nearchus later served as a prominent subordinate of Antigonus, where we can conjecture that the extensive Anatolian history and connections of his wife's family may have been advantageous. He accompanied Antigonus in his march east against Eumenes and attempted to convince Antigonus to spare Eumenes after his capture.[277] This could have been due to their family connection through the Barsine. It could also have been due to personal affinity unrelated to their marriages or to political concerns lost to us. However, in what we know of Nearchus' later career, there is no evidence to suggest that Nearchus repudiated the daughter of Barsine. It is possible that Heracles surviving to adulthood was due in part to the advocacy of maternal relatives such as Nearchus in service to Antigonus, but we cannot know for certain.

Slightly more can be inferred about Eumenes and Artonis than Nearchus and Barsine's unnamed daughter. While he did not advocate for Heracles at Babylon after Alexander died, we find Artonis' brother Pharnabazus not only fighting for Eumenes in the first war among the Diadochi but jointly commanding the part of his army with arguably the most important task in the most important battle Eumenes fought – quickly killing Craterus. Given Eumenes' difficulty maintaining the loyalty of his ethnic Macedonian subordinates such as Alcetas and Neoptolemus, it is probable that Eumenes not only did not repudiate Artonis but actively relied on the non-Macedonian members of his entourage as much as possible. While nothing else is heard about Artonis or any of the Pharnacids during the remainder of Eumenes' life, Antigonus did not treat

[277] Plutarch, *Life of Eumenes*, 18.2.

Eumenes vindictively, unlike his treatment of many of the others who opposed him. While he felt compelled to execute Eumenes, he allowed his remains to be treated with respect and, after proper funeral rites, he allowed Eumenes' companions to, "collect the ashes and place them in a silver urn, that they might be returned to his wife and children."[278] There is no reason to think that this was anyone other than Artonis and "children" suggests that he had been married for long enough to have had multiple children. The mention of his wife before his children may also suggest that she was the primary recipient and that the children were still young. This evidence is relatively weak but also quite compatible with the eight years Eumenes would have been married to Artonis.

What I have presented above is the whole of what is known about the fate of the scores of high-born Iranian women married to Alexander's companions at Susa in 324 BCE. What can be concluded from this meager evidence? Certainly not that they were overwhelmingly repudiated. We have exactly two cases in which the outcome is certain – one case of repudiation (Craterus and Amastris) in which the Macedonian bridegroom may have assisted his Persian wife in finding a high-status replacement husband and one case of a long and apparently successful marriage (Seleucus and Apama). In four more cases, we know a bit of context but do not know the outcome of the marriages with certainty. While both Ptolemy and Perdiccas negotiated for high status Macedonian wives, they both did so to secure immediate political advantage during unstable times; like Craterus, Ptolemy married a daughter of Antipater while Perdiccas vacillated between the full sister of Alexander and a daughter of Antipater. Moreover, the possibility of polygamy makes these negotiations less interpretable than they would otherwise be. Either

[278] Plutarch, *Life of Eumenes,* 19.1; Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History*, 19.44.2-3.

Ptolemy or Perdiccas may have kept their Persian wives and negotiated to marry others, likely with the Persian wives in a subordinate position. This seems more likely in the case of Perdiccas as Atropates remained satrap of Media throughout his regency and may have been hesitant to risk alienating a man who was in secure enough possession of his satrapy that he was able to escape from Macedonian domination after Perdiccas died.[279] In contrast, it has been argued that Artacama would have been a liability to Ptolemy in Egypt.[280] It's also notable that, in every case in which a Macedonian is known to have either abandoned or subordinated an Iranian wife, this was to marry either Cleopatra or a daughter of Antipater to secure a political alliance. Most of Alexander's companions could not have had alterative marriage offers that were as compelling as those of Craterus, Perdikkas, and Ptolemy.

In contrast, there is no reason to suppose that Nearchus or Eumenes repudiated their Susa wives. They may have done so, but nothing in the subsequent historical record suggests either that they actually did or even that repudiation would have been advantageous for them. Eumenes successfully relied on his wife's brother during one of the more dangerous moments in his life. Moreover, both Eumenes and Nearchus spent their remaining lives in Anatolia and central Asia, where marriage to high-ranking Iranian nobility had long been a sign of esteem.[281] Their wives also linked them directly to Alexander, whom Eumenes played a role in deifying.[282]

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[279] Troncoso, Víctor Alonso, and Edward M Anson. *After Alexander: The Time of the Diadochi (323-281 Bc).* Oxbow Books, Limited, 2013. 174.

[280] Troncoso, *After Alexander,* 203-205. These pages summarize the arguments against her usefulness in an Egyptian context.

[281] It's possible that Nearchus permanently left Anatolia after the collapse of Antigonid power there in 301 BCE, but if so, at least some of his children would likely have been grown by then. It's also possible that Nearchus died of natural causes before Ipsos or else was killed in the disastrous Battle of Gaza in 312 BCE, where he was likely an advisor of Demetrius. The last mention of Nearchus in any ancient source is as an advisor to Demetrius in the time proceeding the battle of Gaza. See: Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History*, 19.69.1.

[282] Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History*, 18.61.2-3; Polyaenus, *Stratagems of War*, 4.8.2.

It is particularly hard to imagine Eumenes willingly giving up a family tie to Alexander while he was seeking to protect his dynasty and elevate the king to virtual godhood.

Taken together, the evidence above suggests a different interpretation than that Alexander's companions overwhelmingly rejected their Susa brides. It seems much more likely that these marriages had a diverse range of outcomes. Many, perhaps most, of Alexander's companions remained in Asia after he died. Of these, many of their Iranian spouses likely offered them useful connections during the successor period; it was, after all, the importance, wealth, power, and perceived legitimacy of their families that had caused them to be selected as Susa brides to begin with. The Macedonian satraps and other subordinate rulers in central Asia, who could only rely on small numbers of Greeks and Macedonians to assist them in controlling large native populations, would have been particularly likely to have benefited from high-born Iranian spouses. We know very little about these men other than (sometimes) their names, which makes selection bias likely – we are, in effect, the least likely to know anything about precisely those Macedonians who would have benefited most from Iranian wives and were most willing to continue to live in Asia. Moreover, while in some cases they may have wished to replace Iranian wives with Macedonian ones whom they culturally preferred, for Macedonians who remained in Asia, this would have been difficult as Macedonia was not close by and marriage negotiations would have taken an extended period and involved difficult journeys. Finally, it is worth noting that time would have worked to the advantage of many of the Susa marriages. Even if an Iranian wife married in a Persian ceremony had once been undesirable to some of Alexander's companions, it would have been more difficult to cast aside a woman who possessed useful family ties and soon became the mother of their children. In short, in Asia, Alexander's desire to

weld together the Greco-Macedonian and Iranian nobilities may well have resulted in some success, particularly in the eastern satrapies. We simply do not know.

CHAPTER 5. SUCCESSION AMONG THE DIADOCHI

In 301 BCE, Demetrius and Antigonus fought one of the largest battles in pre-modern history against the combined armies of Seleucus, Cassander, and Lysimachus. All told, the encounter may have involved as many as 150,000 men and 550 elephants. Unfortunately, we lack a detailed description of this pivotal event; the surviving portions of Diodorus Siculus break off right before the battle at Ipsus and it is consequently only possible to reconstruct a rough outline of what transpired.[283] However, whatever the specific details, Ipsus ended with the octogenarian Antigonus killed in battle and was followed by the collapse of the Antigonid kingdom in Anatolia. However, paradoxically, the Antigonid dynasty did not come to an end. Falling back first to Cyprus and then to the Greek mainland, Antigonus' son Demetrius eventually succeeded in establishing Antigonid rule over Macedonia and much of the Greece mainland.

After losing Macedonia during the prelude to a massive invasion of Asia minor to reclaim his patrimony, Demetrius voluntarily abdicated and passed power over the remainder of his dominions to his eldest son, Antigonus Gonatas, who in time regained control over Macedonia, which his descendants retained until they were conquered by the Romans. This striking example of dynastic success would not have been possible without the peaceful transfers of power which remained a feature of the Antigonid dynasty throughout its history. In contrast with the Argead

[283] See Billows, *Antigonus the One-eyed,* 181-185 for what can be reconstructed about the battle of Ipsus. From this point on, all citations of Diodorus are drawn from later epitomes or quotations of the text. See the introduction of the final volume (XI) of the Loeb edition of Diodorus for specifics.

dynasty as well as with the successor dynasties of Lysimachus and Cassander, Macedonia experienced neither civil war nor fratricide during more than a century of Antigonid rule. This chapter will reconstruct the political history of the dynasties which sought to rule Macedonia during the early successor period and suggest some reasons for the divergent stability among them. While the focus of the narrative will be on the Antigonid dynasty, which ultimately replaced the Argead dynasty in Macedonia, the dynasties of Cassander, Lysimachus, Ptolemy, and Seleucus will be compared with the Antigonids as they all held power in Macedonia itself for part of this period.

5.1 The Not-Quite-Fall of the Antigonids

Plutarch claims that Alexander appeared to Antigonus in a dream before the battle of Ipsus and declared himself to be on the other side.[169] Whatever the truth, the non-contiguous surviving accounts agree that Seleucus' war elephants were decisive, preventing Demetrius and his cavalry from returning to the battle after they had been drawn off the field by the enemy cavalry and consequently allowing Antigonus' phalanx to be enveloped and destroyed. The battle ended in complete defeat for Antigonus and Demetrius. As the enemy cavalry closed in around Antigonus, Plutarch alleged that one of his surviving retainers said to him, "They are on you, sire." The octogenarian was said to have replied, "Who other than me should they have as a target?"[284] He fell, riddled by javelins. In death, the other diadochi showed their respect for Antigonus and buried him "as a king."[285]

[284] Plutarch, *Life of Demetrius*, 29.4.
[285] Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History*, 21.1.4b. What is known about the battle of Ipsus is discussed by Richard Billows. See, Billows, Richard A. *Antigonus the One-Eyed and the Creation of the Hellenistic State*. Vol. 4. Univ of California Press, 1997, pp. 175-184.

Demetrius escaped the disaster at Ipsus with less than ten thousand men and fell back first to Ephesus and then fled to Cyprus, which he had personally conquered and where his mother Stratonice had waited out the battle. From Cyprus, Demetrius sailed to Athens. There, he experienced some of the famed fickleness of the Athenian *demos*. They dispatched messengers to Demetrius and told him not to come, though the Athenians prudently returned the ships and other property he had previously left there. According to Plutarch, this abandonment by those whom he had twice protected from Cassander and whom had once offered him divine honors frustrated Demetrius more even than Ipsus. As he sailed north through the Aegean, the victors sliced up the vast Antigonid *basileia*, "as if it had been a great carcass."[286] As his cities and soldiers abandoned him, Demetrius tried to preserve scattered scraps of the state his family had built.

He accomplished this by becoming mobile and pursuing a thalassocratic strategy. Leaving his brother-in-law Pyrrhus, who would one day become the famous adversary of Rome, in charge of his remaining Greek possessions, he fell first on the Thracian Chersonese. Once Demetrius had secured the entrance to the Black Sea, he ravaged Lysimachus' dominions. Looting them extensively, he used Lysimachus' lightly defended territory to rebuild the confidence of his men.[287] It may have been at this time that Demetrius, though so poor that he was nearly unable to pay his soldiers, doubled the size of his army by enrolling fresh recruits. When asked how he expected to pay his men, Demetrius reportedly replied, "the more powerful we are, the weaker

[286] Plutarch, *Life of Demetrius*, 30.1-4.
[287] Plutarch, Life of Demetrius, 31.2.

we shall find our enemies; and the more easily make ourselves masters of their county. From thence tribute and free gifts will come in, that will soon fill our coffers."[288]

Demetrius was helped in his efforts to endure in power by the fact that the other diadochi did not have much interest in finishing him off or assisting Lysimachus. Indeed, the victors, who had little cause to unite in the absence of Antigonus, began to quarrel almost immediately and, within months, the renegade *basileus* was already being sought as an ally in their struggles with one another. Seleucus arranged a marriage alliance with Demetrius, taking the sea-king's seventeen-year-old daughter as his second wife.[289] While traveling to meet Seleucus, Demetrius raided Cilicia extensively, enraging Cassander's brother Pleistarchus, who had been given Cilicia by the victors after Ipsus. Demetrius sent his wife Phila, Cassander's full sister, to arrange peace with her brother. Ptolemy, too, soon came to terms with Demetrius.[290] Freed from the existential threat posed by Antigonus, the other diadochi do not seem to have held a grudge against his son.

For the next three years, Demetrius campaigned widely. Much is sometimes made of the fact that, during this period, Demetrius was a "king without a kingdom."[291] However, it is important to remember that Demetrius very much had a physical kingdom between 300 and 294 BCE. In particular, he firmly held Cyprus until the very end of this period.[292] Cyprus was a consistent source of naval strength throughout the classical and Hellenistic periods. Demetrius

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[288] Polyaenus, *Stratagems of War*, 4.7.1.

[289] As discussed in the previous chapter, it is unknown whether Apama was still alive when Seleucus married Demetrius' daughter. This daughter was ultimately transferred to Seleucus' heir Antiochus.

[290] Plutarch, Life of Demetrius, 32.1-3.

[291] Green, Alexander to Actium, 121: "It is noteworthy that he still regarded himself as a king, as his father's royal successor, even though he held almost no land, and was at this point little more than a naval condottiere."

[292] Like so much about this period, it is unclear when Demetrius lost Cyprus, but Plutarch placed it at virtually the same moment that Demetrius became king of the Macedonians.

was also reported, at times, as holding other cities of importance throughout the Aegean and Near Eastern worlds. In particular, in addition to the Thracian Chersonese, Demetrius is known to have controlled Tyre, Sidon, parts of Cilicia, many of the Aegean islands, and assorted cities on the Greek mainland.[293] Indeed, if Plutarch's numbers can be trusted, he was able to raise a fleet of 300 ships to face a Ptolemaic fleet in 297 BCE.[294]

The easiest explanation for how Demetrius was able to support such forces after Ipsus is that he was still receiving considerable tributary income. His apparently missing *basileia* becomes much easier to understand when we remember the poor condition of our sources during the period after Ipsus. After the surviving narrative of Diodorus Siculus breaks off immediately before Ipsus, it is difficult to reconstruct even a rough outline of the actions of the most important diadochi during the subsequent decades, let alone to keep track of which cities in the eastern Mediterranean were controlled by which kings at which times.

Moreover, Antigonus had ruled some portions of Anatolia for more than thirty years. Many who had done well under Antigonus still possessed the estates they were granted by Antigonus in Anatolia and likely felt some degree of loyalty to his heir. Moreover, given the degree of difficulty that Antigonus himself had in consolidating the mountainous reaches of Anatolia, it is likely that the other diadochi did not simply take possession of Anatolia overnight. Many individual cities which were ruled by Antigonid appointees or sympathizers probably retained some loyalty to the old dynasty or, commonly, attempted to simultaneously appear loyal to more than one of the Diadochi. Others chose Ipsus as a moment to break away on their own

[293] Plutarch, *Life of Demetrius*, 32.4. For a more general discussion, see Green, *Alexander to Actium,* pp. 26, 121.
[294] Plutarch, *Life of Demetrius*, 33.4

rather. Hence, rather than picturing Anatolia as a prize cut up by the victors after Ipsus, the death of Antigonus should probably be viewed as the beginning a period of political unraveling and decentralization during which no king knew exactly which cities, regions, or peoples he controlled in Anatolia with any great certainty. Tribute, when it was paid, probably depended a great deal on whose military forces were nearby. In such an environment of unstable and shifting loyalties, it would have been useful to maintain a powerful fleet and to be able to suddenly appear near coastal cities all over the eastern Mediterranean, which is precisely what we have already seen that Demetrius chose to do. The son of Antigonus would soon use this cultivated ability to act over a wide area with a locally strong force to take advantage of first major succession dispute among the Macedonian successor dynasties.

5.2 The Fall of the Antipatrids

In 297 BCE, four years after Antigonus was killed, Cassander died in his fifties, possibly of tuberculosis.[295] It's unknown how carefully Cassander planned the succession. However, shortly after his own death, his eldest son and immediate successor, Philip IV, also succumbed to disease.[296] There is no surviving account that Philip IV's succession was challenged. However, Cassander's two remaining sons by Thessalonica argued over who would rule.[297] It is often thought that these sons ruled jointly, but the evidence for this is weak. While Justin does refer to them arguing over "the division of the kingdom," it is unclear that this meant that Macedonia

[295] Justin, *Epitome of Trogus*, 15.4.24. Green, *Alexander to Actium*, 724 n. 25.
[296] Hammond, Nicholas Geoffrey Lemprière, and Frank William Walbank. *A History of Macedonia: 336-167 BC*. Vol. 3. Oxford University Press, 1988. 210. The evidence for the fate of Philip IV comes from fragmentary sources. Hammond briefly discusses the evidence.
[297] They are sometimes thought to have ruled jointly, but this is not clear in the ancient source material. They may simply have quarreled over who should rule. See: Waterfield, Robin. *Dividing the Spoils: The War for Alexander the Great's Empire*. Oxford University Press, 2012, p. 180.

itself was being divided. Certainly, if portioning Macedonia was the intent of Thessalonica, nothing like this had been done in Macedonia since the days of Alexander I and nothing like would be done again until after the Roman conquest.[298] It seems more probable to me that what was intended was either joint kingship, which had occurred during the reigns of Philip III and Alexander IV and had been repeated without resulting in violence when Antigonus claimed the title of *basileus* for both himself and Demetrius simultaneously, or else an unequal split in governance with the younger son being given some important position.[299] Whatever the case, the conflict between the brothers is an interesting contrast with the Argead dynasty, as full brothers seem to have almost always cooperated during the Argead period. Thessalonica seemed to prefer her son Alexander, at least in the eyes of her older son Antipater, who soon had her killed. Alexander responded by seeking external help from Pyrrhus, who had seized control of Epirus, and also Demetrius, who after garrisoning Athens and then defeating the Spartan king Archidamus, was attempting to take control of the Peloponnese.[300] Antipater likewise attempted to call on Lysimachus, who does not seem to have sent him any substantial assistance, though Plutarch says that he attempted to forge correspondence from Ptolemy encouraging Pyrrhus to withdraw.[301]

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[298] *Causa parricidii fuit, quod post mortem mariti in diuisione inter fratres regni propensior fuisse pro Alexandro uidebatur.* Hammond thought that splitting Macedonia would have been inconceivable during this time period. Hammond, Nicholas Geoffrey Lemprière, and Frank William Walbank. *A History of Macedonia: 336-167 BC*. Vol. 3. Oxford University Press, 1988. 211, n1.

[299] Lund, Helen S., and Helen S. Lund. *Lysimachus: a study in early Hellenistic kingship*. Routledge, 2002, pp. 94-95. Lund argues that the attempt to partition Macedonia and give part to the younger brother is what led Antipater to execute Thessalonica. I find this a plausible conjecture, but it goes beyond what any ancient source says.

[300] Plutarch, *Life of Demetrius*, 36.1-2; Plutarch, *Life of Pyrrhus*, 7.1-2.

[301] Plutarch, *Life of Pyrrhus*, 6.3-5.

While we cannot know what any of these ancient figures were thinking, we can reconstruct what might have been expected based on earlier Argead history. Alexander and Antipater were the grandsons, through their mother, of Philip II. Alexander the Great had been their maternal half-uncle. Their father and brother had reigned before them. As far as we know, their brother had succeeded their father peacefully. Both Alexander and Antipater had reason to feel that Macedonia was firmly in the grip of their family, which they likely thought of as at least a partial continuation of the Argead dynasty. In this context, by calling on neighboring powers to assist them in their feud, Alexander and Antipater did not do anything that had not long been done in Macedonia. Lysimachus and Demetrius, in particular, were both their paternal uncles, having married sisters of Cassander. Lysimachus was also Antipater's father-in-law, as Antipater had married his daughter Eurydice.[302]

Pyrrhus promptly did as Alexander asked and placed him on the Macedonian throne, took a territorial bite out of Macedonia as payment, and went home. Note the familiar pattern from Argead history – by relying on a foreign prince to help him secure Macedonia, Alexander had to weaken his kingdom in order to pay for that help and also soon lost the support of the army that had put him in power as it eventually had to depart and return home. Demetrius took longer than Pyrrhus to respond. However, after taking time to besiege and capture Athens, he too marched toward Macedonia.[303] Alexander met him in Thessaly. Neither Demetrius nor Alexander trusted the other and they quickly began plotting against one another. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the older and more experienced son of Antigonus struck first. In frustration, one

[302] Justin, *Epitome of Pompeius Trogus*, 16.1.
[303] Plutarch, Life of Demetrius, 35.3-5.

of Alexander's dying companions is said to have wailed that Demetrius had been a single day ahead of them.[304]

5.3 The End of Single-Dynasty Legitimacy

Immediately following the death of Alexander, the dead king's entourage did something unprecedented in Macedonian history. They accepted a royal assassin who had never lived in Macedonia and who was related to the dead king only through marriage as *basileus* due to "their lack of a better man." The Macedonian aristocracy at large quickly accepted the decision "for they remembered the crimes which Cassander had committed against the posterity of Alexander the Great." Cassander's extermination of Alexander's line had been neither forgiven nor forgotten. Moreover, the Macedonian aristocracy is said to have supported Demetrius because he had a son "to be his successor in the realm, a son who was already quite a youth, and was serving in the army under his father."[305] Antigonus Gonatas, the eldest son of Demetrius, was approximately twenty-three when his forty-one-year-old father became king of Macedonia. Antipater fled to the court of his father-in-law Lysimachus, who provided him with refuge but did not contest Demetrius' usurpation of Macedonia as he was already tied down in a war with the Thracians.[306]

While tolerating Demetrius as king was a pragmatic and sensible decision under the circumstances, it set a dangerous precedent that any strong man with an army and a family connection, paternal or maternal, to anyone who had previously reigned could march into

[304] Plutarch, Life of Demetrius, 36.6; Diodorus Siculus, Library of History, 21.7.1. The surviving epitome of Diodorus does not say that both kings plotted against the other but only that Demetrius assassinated Alexander.
[305] Plutarch, *Life of Demetrius*, 37.1-3. Demetrius also quickly caught and killed Alexander's brother Antipater, exterminating Cassander's dynasty.
[306] Justin, *Epitome of Pompeius Trogus*, 16.2.

Macedonia from anywhere in the vast territories now controlled by Hellenic dynasts and become *basileus*, with at least a semblance of legitimacy. During the Argead period, succession had only passed along lines of paternal descent; no one ever inherited or, as far as we know, even claimed the Argead domains through maternal kinship. Cassander had been the first the break this tradition, killing the last Argead princes and marrying the last surviving female member of the royal line, explicitly tying himself to the Argead dynasty through marriage.

It's also worth pausing to think about the degree of intermarriage that had occurred among the Diadochi, primarily due to Antipater's efforts to secure marriage alliances with the more powerful Macedonian satraps in the aftermath of Alexander the Great's death. The number of potential kings that could claim a family connection to either Cassander or Demetrius was large indeed. Demetrius had married Phila, a daughter of Antipater. Demetrius was also married to a sister of Pyrrhus of Epirus. Seleucus was married to a daughter of Demetrius. Lysimachus too had married a daughter of Antipater. Ptolemy had married Eurydice, a daughter of Antipater, as well as Berenice, who was likely a niece of Antipater.[307] Moreover, by the time Demetrius took power in Macedonia, the original Diadochi were all in at least late middle age and had adult sons. Some had adult grandchildren. All of these men, spanning generations, now had reason to view themselves not just as potential kingmakers in Macedonia but as potential kings. After all, Demetrius had gotten away with pressing no stronger a claim.

In many ways, Demetrius proved a poor choice as king of the Macedonians. Raised essentially as royalty in Anatolia, he had little personal familiarity with Macedonia. Though he was an experienced and capable general and quickly restored the core of Philip II's kingdom,

[307] Worthington, Ian. *Ptolemy I: King and Pharaoh of Egypt*. Oxford University Press, 2016. 102.

driving Pyrrhus out of Macedonia and then capturing Thessaly and much of Greece in quick succession, Plutarch reports that Demetrius was scorned for his purple robes, felt slippers, and other extravagant Persian-inspired clothing.[308] The Macedonians also complained about his satrapal habit of not granting prompt audiences to his subjects.[309] It may not have helped that Demetrius does not seem to have aspired to be king of the Macedonians as an end unto itself but rather as a means to recover his lost Asian empire. He used his powerbase in Macedonia and Greece as a staging platform for a planned invasion of Anatolia, assembling an enormous army and powerful fleet that outnumbered the one used by Alexander the Great.[310]

However, before Demetrius could complete his preparations, the other Diadochi, who were understandably concerned, united against him. Ptolemy invaded Greece; Lysimachus and Pyrrhus invaded Macedonia. Interestingly, Lysimachus did not invade in the name of his son-in-law Antipater. Instead, he claimed Macedonia for himself. When Antipater and Eurydice complained about this, the old king put his son-in-law to death. Eurydice, who had supported her husband, was imprisoned.[311] Helen Lund has argued that this reveals the "swift decline in the prestige of the Antipatrid house" and that Antipater's crime was primarily that he had become an inconvenient embarrassment to Lysimachus.[312] While quite likely true, this probably understates the advantages of Antipater's death. A young man who had rashly committed

[308] Plutarch, Life of Demetrius, 42.1-5.
[309] Xenophon, *Hellenika*, 1.6.6-7. Pharnabazus was described as being embarrassed about his finery in the presence of Agesilaus. See also: Xenophon, *Hellenika*, 6.1.30; Plutarch, *Life of Lysander*, 6; Plutarch, *Life of Demetrius*, 62.3.
[310] Plutarch, *Life of Demetrius*, 43.2-3. Plutarch indicates 100,000 men and 500 warships; however, his numbers are often less reliable than Diodorus', whose narrative is unfortunately lost for this incident. It is hard to imagine Demetrius raising a force of anything like this size in Macedonia, though he may well have severely strained the country in the scale of his preparations.
[311] Justin, *Epitome of Pompeius Trogus*, 16.2.
[312] Lund, Helen S., and Helen S. Lund. *Lysimachus: a Study in Early Hellenistic kingship*. Routledge, 2002. 100.

matricide, leading directly to the intervention of Pyrrhus and Demetrius in Macedonia, whom he had proven unable to resist militarily, had not displayed qualities that would have encouraged Lysimachus to view him as a trustworthy means of maintaining a friendly Macedonia. Beyond this, Antipater's willingness to kill his own mother when he perceived her as a threat to his ambitions would have made him seem dangerous for Lysimachus to keep around after the old king decided not to reinstate him in Macedonia.

However, despite the ambitions of Lysimachus, it was Pyrrhus who ended Demetrius' reign in Macedonia. When confronted by Pyrrhus and his army, Demetrius' forces mutinied.[313] Demetrius fled and his first wife Phila, the daughter of Antipater, committed suicide by drinking poison.[314] While Demetrius had lost Macedonia, he still controlled much of southern Greece. Assembling as many men as he could, he invaded Anatolia on less advantageous terms that he originally hoped and, after a long campaign, was eventually captured and imprisoned by Seleucus. Demetrius managed to send word to his heir Antigonus Gonatas and to his garrison commanders at Athens and Corinth, telling them to "put no trust in letters or seal purporting to be his, but to treat him as dead, and to preserve for Antigonus his cities and the rest of his power." Three years later Demetrius died at approximately fifty-four; Gonatas was approximately thirty-six. Though the moralizing Plutarch attributed the king's demise to luxurious living, it seems as likely that Demetrius' starvation-and-disease-plagued Anatolian campaign had ruined his health.[315] For four years after his father's death, Antigonus Gonatas remained in Greece, ruling

[313] Plutarch, *Life of Demetrius*, 44.1-7.
[314] Plutarch, *Life of Demetrius*, 46.3-4.
[315] Plutarch, Life of Demetrius, 52.4.

a petty principality, much as Polyperchon had done for fifteen years after the death of Antipater. During these four years, the world of the diadochi was transformed.

5.4 Fall of the Lysimachids

The final conflagration, which eventually stably rearranged power among the diadochi, was sparked by the decline of Ptolemy, who had married multiple times and, as discussed earlier, had adult sons by at least three different mothers when he died. While the children of Thais are not known to have contested the succession, his sons by Eurydike and Berenice, both relatives of Antipater, seem to have struggled for preeminence in the final years of their father's life. The eldest son of Eurydike, Ptolemy, was later called Ceraunus or "Thunderbolt," which seems an apt epithet based on what is known about him. However, the elder Ptolemy ultimately selected his only son by Berenice, who was also named Ptolemy, as his successor and ruled jointly with him after 285 BCE. Thunderbolt went into exile. Appian is the only surviving ancient author who reports his motives and states that, "He had left Egypt from fear, because his father had decided to leave the kingdom to his youngest son."[316] It tempting to suspect that the situation on the ground in Egypt may have been more complex and that, rather than fleeing on his own, Thunderbolt may have been pushed out by his father, with the elderly Ptolemy permitting him exile as a means of sparing his life. Thunderbolt's younger full-brother Meleager may have gone with him.[317]

[316] Appian, *Syrian Wars*, 62. Some additional context is provided by Pausanias 1.6.8.

[317] His maternal half-brother Magas remained in Egypt and later wrested the North African city of Cyrene from Ptolemy II, reigning as an independent king for a quarter century. See: Carney, Elizabeth Donnelly. *Arsinoë of Egypt and Macedon: A Royal Life*. Oxford University Press, 2013. 14-41.

The exiled Ptolemy traveled to Thrace, to live under Lysimachus. However, in the Thracian court, he soon found that his half-brother's ascension had repercussions that he could not easily outrun.[318] Indeed, Thrace soon proved a more lethal arena for family intrigue than the elder Ptolemy had permitted to exist in Egypt. Thunderbolt's sister Lysandra was the wife of Lysimachus' eldest son and presumed heir Agathocles, who was in his mid-thirties and an experienced and capable general. All indications are that everyone expected Agathocles to succeed Lysimachus. However, sometime in late middle age, Lysimachus had married Arsinoe, a full sister of Ptolemy II. This marriage had been fruitful, and they had three teenage sons. The eldest of these children, yet another Hellenistic prince named Ptolemy – this one eventually nicknamed *epigonos* or "heir," was at the cusp of adulthood. Soon after the arrival of Thunderbolt at Lysimachus' court, Agathocles was killed, though exactly how this was brought about is impossible to convincingly reconstruct. The surviving source material from antiquity consists of late, minor, or fragmentary accounts which are inconsistent in many details. They have been elegantly summarized by Helen Lund:

> Most accounts give Arsinoe a major role in Agathocles' death, though in some she is the plot's chief instigator, in others the all too willing accomplice of her husband. The portrayal of Lysimachus varies accordingly; to some he is a frail old man, putty in the hands of his scheming wife, to others the classic tyrant, outraging by his act the norms of paternal/filial affection and of humanity itself. On Justin's account, the murder was followed by a purge of Agathocles' supporters; those who survived, including the widow Lysandra, her brothers and her children, fled to Seleucus who was only too happy to take up the avenger's sword.[319]

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[318] It has been speculated that Thunderbolt, with his own fresh grievance, may have helped spark conflict in the court of Lysimachus. While this suggestion is plausible, it is not based on ancient source material, which does not present Ptolemy in an active role. See: Carney, *Arsinoë of Egypt and Macedon: A Royal Life*, 42.

[319] Lund, Helen S, and Helen S Lund. *Lysimachus: A Study in Early Hellenistic Kingship.* Routledge, 2002. 186-187. Source material, much of it fragmentary, is summarized on p. 255, n7.

My personal suspicion is that the aging king, who had always been quick to violence, was beginning to suffer the effects of cognitive decline, not to such a degree that he was incapable of functioning as *basileus* but to a sufficient degree that he was suggestible and that his judgement was impaired.[320]

Within this context, I find convincing the argument by Sviatoslav Dmitriev that the selection of a son of Berenice as the next king of Egypt, which likely came as a surprise to many – particularly those outside Egypt, meant that the balance of power within the Thracian court shifted drastically during the final years of Lysimachus' life. Suddenly, the presumptive heir Agathocles found himself married not to the sister of the next ruler of Egypt but instead to a lesser figure in the Ptolemaic house of quite possibly negative political value, as his wife's brother Thunderbolt was the exiled rival of the next Egyptian king. In contrast, the minor Ptolemaic princess Lysimachus had married late in life, who had likely been presumed to be of minor political importance, was suddenly the full sister of the next Egyptian king and the prestige of her nearly adult children rose accordingly.[321] If not controlled by a nimble ruling hand, it is not surprising that conspiracy and violence followed such a shift. This was, essentially, a normal Argead succession struggle playing out among two sets of non-Argead, but still Macedonian, half-

[320] It is, of course, impossible to conclusively evaluate the sanity of an ancient king during a period about which only the faintest of literary echoes remain. Lund, while acknowledging that the state of Lysimachus' mental competence cannot be convincingly reconstructed, argues against the outright senility of Lysimachus. I accept her basic premise, that some of the limited evidence seems to point in the direction of continued capability. However, I believe her analysis suffers from seeing senility as a dichotomy rather than a continuum. It is entirely possible that Lysimachus was not incapable but nonetheless had reduced judgment and displayed inconsistent competence; i.e. he could have experienced cognitive decline but not been senile. Lund, *Lysimachus: A Study in Early Hellenistic Kingship,* 195. See also: "Cognitive Skills & Normal Aging." Emory University: Goizueta Alzheimer's Disease Research Center. http://alzheimers.emory.edu/healthy_aging/cognitive-skills-normal-aging.html (Accessed June 20, 2019).

[321] Dmitriev, Sviatoslav. "The Last Marriage and the Death of Lysimachus." Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies 47, no. 2 (2007): 147.

brother princelings. What is most interesting about the fall of Agathocles may be that, unlike in the Argead period, where we almost never know the political importance of the female relatives of Argead princes, which forces us to view men as political actors even in situations where their mothers or sisters may well have played an important or even dominant role, here we can glimpse the political importance of the women who influenced a succession struggle.

However, while the feuding between Agathocles and Ptolemy the "Heir", played out as a Thracian echo of an essentially normal Argead succession struggle, the aftermath revealed again that it had become much more dangerous for Macedonian princes to fight with their half-brothers than it had been in Argead times. As had happened to the Antipatrid dynasty in Macedonia, both sides in the struggle for succession in Lysimachus' Thracian kingdom paid a heavy price for their feud. This time, not only did the ruling dynasty lose power as a result of outside interference, the entire Hellenistic kingdom Lysimachus had spent a lifetime building was unmade.

After Agathocles was ushered off the mortal coil, his wife Lysandra, her brother Thunderbolt, and some of Agathocles' companions fled Thrace and sought refuge with Seleucus. Agathocles' death also seems to have cost Lysimachus some of his support as king, though the extent of this is difficult to determine from the surviving evidence. Justin, who has left us perhaps the most detailed description, says only:

> [The death of Agathocles] was the first commencement of his calamities, the prelude to approaching ruin; for executions of several great men were added to the murder of his son, who were put to death for expressing concern at the young prince's fate; and, in consequence, both those about the court who escaped this cruelty, and those who were in command of the troops, began at once to desert

> to Seleucus and incite him to make war upon Lysimachus; an enterprise to which he was already inclined…[322]

Fragments of the lost history of Memnon of Heraclea suggest that Lysimachus' troubles may have developed into a more general rebellion which included entire cities as well as the desertion of important commanders."[323] Pausanias preserves one important case, writing that, "Philetaerus, at the same time, to whom possessions of Lysimachus had been entrusted, enduring with difficulty the death of Agathocles and supposing he would be viewed with distrust by Arsinoe, seized Pergamum, and, having sent a herald, gave himself and the territory he controlled to Seleucus."[324]

A likely explanation for why the death of Agathocles resulted in such political difficulties for a dynast who appeared as secure as Lysimachus is that it may have caused widespread doubt about the future of his dynasty, which then essentially became a self-fulfilling prophecy.[325] The future of the house of Lysimachus was now in the hands of young and unproven princes with a distrusted and possibly murderous mother. Perhaps more importantly, if Agathocles was not safe in Lysimachus' old age, who around him could have felt safe? After all, Lysimachus had previously been willing to kill a son-in-law as well as two stepsons for personal gain.[326] Killing his heir-apparent late in life, particularly if this seemed to have been done with the intent to benefit Arsinoe and her children, may have caused many around the old king to wonder if they too were vulnerable, particularly since they would have been likely to have long-cultivated good relations

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[322] Justin, *Epitome of Pompeius Trogus*, 17.1.
[323] *FGrH 434 5 7*
[324] Pausanias, *Description of Greece*, 1.10.4. Translation is mine.
[325] Lund, *Lysimachus: A Study in Early Hellenistic Kingship*, 200.
[326] For the deaths of his stepsons (sons of Amastris): Lund, *Lysimachus: A Study in Early Hellenistic Kingship*, 105; *FGrH 434 5 3.* For the death of his son-in-law: Justin, *Epitome of Pompeius Trogus*, 16.2.

with Agathocles as a means of ensuring their continued prominence and safety after Lysimachus died. To kill Agathocles late in life was essentially to throw the arrangements for continued preeminence and personal security made over many years by the most important men in the realm into question as well as to make a formerly minor queen whose favor the great magnates may not previously have felt much need to seek appear to be able to wield potentially deadly power over themselves and their families. In such a context, it is not surprising that some men rethought their loyalties to Lysimachus.

Whatever the lost specifics, the internal political situation was difficult enough for Lysimachus that Seleucus seized the opportunity to invade his dominions in Anatolia. In 281 BCE, they fought a pitched battle on the plain of Corupedium in Lydia. We know even less about the Battle of Corupedium than we do about the Battle of Ipsus. Whatever the details, this last great battle among the two remaining Diadochi ended with Seleucus victorious and Lysimachus among the slain. Seleucus then attempted to annex as much of the domain of the dead *basileus* as he could. However, Seleucus did not live to enjoy his victory for long and, despite outliving the rest of the Diadochi, he was ultimately unable to escape the fatal embrace of rich-haired Nemesis. In the end, she came for him as she had already come for nearly all of the companions of Alexander.

Within a few months of Corupedium, Thunderbolt assassinated the victorious septuagenarian, claiming first Thrace and then Macedonia for himself. This assassination often receives only a brief mention in modern histories of the period.[327] However, the fact that Thunderbolt was able to successfully murder Seleucus and survive and then compound his success by installing himself as ruler of part of Lysimachus' former domains says a great deal

[327] For example, see: Erskine, Andrew, ed. *A Companion to the Hellenistic World*. John Wiley & Sons, 2003. 33.

about succession in this period among Macedonian *basileis* and is therefore worth exploring in some detail.

As is typical during this period, our ancient source material is meagre.[328] The surviving epitomes of Pompeius Trogus and Memnon of Heraclea provide the only contiguous narratives of the period and offer only scant detail about how Ptolemy actually came to become *basileus*. Justin's epitome of Pompeius Trogus preserves nothing about how, specifically, Thunderbolt managed to become king after he assassinated Seleucus. Photius' fragments of Memnon say only slightly more – that after Seleucus defeated Lysimachus, he returned to Macedonia, intending to live the rest of his life in his homeland, which he hadn't seen since he left with Alexander as a young man. According to Memnon, Seleucus held Thunderbolt in a position of honor, intending to make him king of Egypt. However, "… the kindnesses in no way improved his evil nature. For he organized a plot and attacked and killed his benefactor. And having mounted a horse, he fled to Lysimacheia where he put on a crown and, with a splendid bodyguard, went down to the army. The troops, who previously were subject to Seleucus, welcomed him of necessity and called him 'king'."[329]

Assuming this account is broadly accurate, which we have little choice but to do since it is our only account which preserves details about Thunderbolt's accession, it clarifies several points of confusion. First, given Thunderbolt's survival after the assassination and his "splendid bodyguard," it seems that there must have been a broader conspiracy against Seleucus afoot.

[328] What is known is explored by Daniel Ogden. See: Ogden, Daniel. *The Legend of Seleucus*. Cambridge University Press, 2017, esp. pp. 247-252.

[329] Photios, *Bibliotheca* 224.222b.9-239b.43 (FGH 434). Translation taken from Brill's online Jacoby. (accessed July 4, 2019; https://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/brill-s-new-jacoby/memnon-434-a434#BNJTEXT434_F_1)

This was not merely a rash act by Ptolemy Thunderbolt; he not only escaped after he murdered his benefactor, he had supporters who were numerous enough and willing enough to ride out with him and take control of the forces at Lysimacheia, who felt as though they had no choice but to submit to him. While it is not known what provoked the conspiracy against Seleucus, it is possible to make an intelligent guess. When Lysandra, Thunderbolt, and the other supporters of Agathocles joined Seleucus, it seems unlikely that they intended for Seleucus to become king of Thrace and Macedonia. Instead, it seems much more likely that their hope was for the children of Agathocles and Lysandra to rule, likely with some combination of Lysandra and her full-brother Thunderbolt serving as regent until they were of age.[330]

However, after her flight to Seleucus, we do not hear again of either Lysandra or her children in any ancient text.[331] While it cannot be proven from the sources that survive, it is worth noting that Lysandra and her sons would have been threats to Seleucus' ambitions in Thrace and Macedonia. Do we hear no more of them because Seleucus quietly had them killed? This is certainly possible, though it seems suspicious that we aren't told of their deaths if they were in fact violent. We do, for example, know what eventually happened to all of Arsinoe's children. Moreover, Seleucus does not seem to have been quite so willing as Lysimachus to kill those who were inconvenient to him. As ruler of a domain that spanned the Near East and included parts of what are now Pakistan and Afghanistan, he had similarly effective options that were not as irreversible as murder – he could always just transport those who were inconvenient to a comfortable life somewhere in Asia and leave them there. As we have seen, this is how

[330] Pausanias, *Description of Greece*, 1.10.3. Agathocles had at least two children by Lysandra.
[331] Carney speculates that she lived the remainder of her life in quiet retirement. Carney, Elizabeth Donnelly. *Arsinoë of Egypt and Macedon: A Royal Life*. Oxford University Press, 2013. 55.

Seleucus had already handled Demetrius. For this reason, a likely explanation for the silence of the ancient sources is that Lysandra and her children were comfortably dispatched to some location in Asia by Seleucus when he decided to annex Lysimachus' kingdom. If the banishment of Lysandra did indeed occur, Thunderbolt's murderous dissatisfaction with Seleucus, distrust of his promises, and willingness to take the risk of killing his ostensible benefactor become much more understandable. After all, if Lysandra could be exiled and the birthright of her children ignored when inconvenient, what was to stop Seleucus from doing the same thing to Thunderbolt even if they were somehow successful in deposing Ptolemy II in Egypt? The hypothetical supplanting of Lysandra would also explain the fact that Thunderbolt had a ready base of support after the assassination of Seleucus. For those loyal to the memory of Agathocles or who just didn't see any benefit to themselves in a Seleucid takeover of Thrace and Macedonia, to what better candidate could they have turned?

Immediately after seizing power in Lysimacheia, Ptolemy Thunderbolt had to immediately address the fact that many of the most powerful people in the Hellenic world were likely to view his seizure of power as cause for war. He had already left Egypt due to poor relations with his half-brother Ptolemy II; would Ptolemy be glad to hear that his rival half-brother was no longer a powerless refuge but now king of an important realm? In the east, Antiochus the Savior, king of kings, king of the universe, mourned the death of a father whom Ptolemy Thunderbolt had assassinated.[332] How forgiving could Antiochus have been expected to be? How great might be his rage? To the south and west, Antigonus Gonatas and Pyrrhus both coveted Macedonia. Both

[332] Stevens, Kathryn. "The Antiochus Cylinder, Babylonian Scholarship and Seleucid Imperial Ideology." *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 134 (2014): 66-88.

had fleets and armies of their own. Even Arsinoe and her sons still possessed some slight resources. During the collapse of Lysimachus' kingdom, Arsinoe had seized the fortress-city of Cassandreia in the Chalcidice and had barricaded herself there with her sons.

Antigonus Gonatas struck first, invading Macedonia by sea as soon as word of what had transpired reached him. However, Ptolemy Thunderbolt, in possession of a fleet that had formerly served Seleucus (perhaps originally belonging to Lysimachus), defeated Antigonus and threw him back into Boeotia.[333] After this initial victory, Ptolemy soon took possession of much of Macedonia in addition to Thrace. In contrast to Antigonus Gonatas, the expected threat of Antiochus was slow to materialize as he struggled against multiple rebellions in the aftermath of his father's death. In addition to other difficulties, Antiochus soon became embroiled in an Anatolian war against Heraclea Pontica and the Bithynians.[334] His difficulties were apparently serious enough that he came to some sort of agreement with Thunderbolt, who did what he could to appease Antiochus, despite the fact that his father remained unavenged.[335] While we might reasonably doubt whether Antiochus would ultimately have overlooked the murder of his father, his agreement with Thunderbolt lasted long enough for outside events to render their conflict irrelevant.

In addition to his arrangement with Antiochus, Ptolemy Thunderbolt moved to calm as many other diplomatic waters as he could. For example, he made efforts to smooth things over with his half-brother Ptolemy II, explicitly renouncing his own claims to Egypt. He also entered

[333] Fragment of Memnon: BNJ 434 F 1; Photius, *Bibliotheca*, 224.222b.9-239b.43. See also: Justin, *Epitome of Pompeius Trogus*, 24.1.
[334] Fragment of Memnon: BNJ 434 F 1; Photius, *Bibliotheca*, 224.222b.9-239b.43.
[335] Justin, *Epitome of Pompeius Trogus*, 24.1.

into a marriage alliance with Pyrrhus of Epirus, loaning his new brother-in-law a large force for the latter's campaigns in Italy.[336] We are not told exactly who these men were, but the inclusion of war elephants suggests that they may have been soldiers formerly in service to Seleucus in whom Thunderbolt may not have had much confidence. Ptolemy Thunderbolt also convinced his half-sister Arsinoe to marry him, promising to make her sons by Lysimachus his heirs. The oldest child of Lysimachus and Arsinoe, also named Ptolemy, suspected treachery and fled, eventually becoming the client ruler of Telmessos under the suzerainty of Ptolemy II.[337] That Arsinoe was willing to trust her half-brother under any circumstances at this stage reinforces the suspicion that, by whatever means, Lysandra and her children were no longer around.

However, in the case of Arsinoe, Ptolemy Thunderbolt did not negotiate in good faith. Though her eldest son successfully made good his escape, eventually traveling to Egypt, as soon as Thunderbolt had the two younger sons of Arsinoe and Lysimachus in his power, the new *basileus* had them killed. Fragments of Memnon merely indicate that he married his half-sister, killed her sons, and then banished her from his domains.[338] However, Justin described a particularly detailed, ruthless and brutal act of murder, which included carefully premeditated manipulation of Arsinoe, the swearing of false oaths, and the butchering of the two younger princes in front of their mother while she desperately attempted to intercede. Ptolemy Thunderbolt is even said to have denied the princes a decent burial.[339] The account illuminates Thunderbolt in a particularly harsh light. While there is no reason to doubt that he executed his

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[336] Justin, *Epitome of Pompeius Trogus*, 17.2; 24.1.
[337] Hölbl, Günther. *A History of the Ptolemaic Empire*. Psychology Press, 2001. 38.
[338] *FGrH 434 8 7*.
[339] Justin, *Epitome of Pompeius Trogus*, 24.2-3. Carney, Elizabeth Donnelly. *Arsinoë of Egypt and Macedon: A Royal Life*. Oxford University Press, 2013. 60.

stepsons soon after they were in his power, the more salacious details of Justin's account may well be slanderous.

Regardless of the details of her half-brother's betrayal, it is interesting that Arsinoe, however unwisely, was willing to trust her half-brother at all. Certainly, the cultural context of her decision to marry Thunderbolt could not have given her much peace of mind. Previous Macedonian regents, from Aeropus to Cassander, had more often killed their wards and seized power than not. While Ptolemy Thunderbolt was king in the sense that he had some supporters and some soldiers and was extracting tribute from some territory, any legitimacy he might have had beyond the military forces at his direct command, some of whom had recently served Seleucus and whose loyalty may have been stretched thin, was based on former marital ties to Lysimachus' dynasty and cannot have been thought to have been particularly strong or compelling when considered in isolation. Indeed, if Justin's account can be believed, in negotiations with Ptolemy II, Thunderbolt portrayed his claim to Macedonia and Thrace as that of a conqueror who had seized his dominion by the spear, saying, "He would no longer ask for that from a brother which he had more honorably obtained from his father's enemy [Seleucus]."[340]

In such circumstances, Arsinoe's willingness to marry her half-brother seems particularly curious. Elizabeth Carney has interpreted the underlying theme in these years of Arsinoe's life as the pursuit of political power on behalf of her sons, even in circumstances in which that pursuit was nakedly dangerous.

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[340] Justin, *Epitome of Pompeius Trogus*, 17.2. Translation is from: Justinus, Marcus Junianus. "Epitome of the Philippic History of Pompeius Trogus, translated, with notes by the Rev." *John Selby Watson. London: Henry G. Bohn, York Street, Convent* (1853).

> Rather than retreating to Alexandria, she played some part in the succession struggle with Agathocles; after her brother's defeat and death, rather than departing for her brother's court, she took the risky course of returning to Macedonia to pursue the possibility of rule for her sons, and when confronting the fact of Ceraunus' recognition as king, she chose to take the risk of marrying him in hopes of keeping the throne open to her sons, once more refusing to retreat to Alexandria. Arsinoe repeatedly chose peril in pursuit of political power for her sons (and herself). Alexandria proved the rejected option, the road not taken. Only when Arsinoe had no other options left did she take ship for the city of her birth, and even then, if I am right, only after a considerable passage of time.[341]

While I generally agree with Carney's assessment of Arsinoe's decisions – that she consistently chose to risk the personal safety of herself and her children to maximize their chances of obtaining political power, I think Carney downplays the degree of desperation in Arsinoe's position after Thunderbolt seized much of her former husband's *basileia*. To refuse to marry her half-brother would have left Arsinoe with only two options - to remain in Cassendreia and await Thunderbolt's army or else to flee, which would have meant, in addition to the usual dangers from weather and piracy which were endemic on the journey to Egypt, the need to creep past the victorious fleet of Thunderbolt and the recently defeated fleet of Antigonus Gonatas, both experienced commanders who were known rivals of her children. To wait in Cassandreia while her half-brother secured all the surrounding lands was, sooner or later, likely to result in a siege by a powerful army at a time chosen to be optimal for her half-brother. Moreover, Thunderbolt had a formidable enough fleet that he'd been able to quickly defeat Antigonus Gonatas. Unless Ptolemy II was willing to commit to a major naval operation in the Aegean, which we have no reason to think he was, it seems unlikely that Arsinoe would have been able to muster sufficient naval forces to challenge Ptolemy Thunderbolt at sea. In such circumstances, to refuse the terms

[341] Carney, Elizabeth Donnelly. *Arsinoë of Egypt and Macedon: A Royal Life*. Oxford University Press, 2013, p. 64.

she was offered by her half-brother, even if she did not fully trust him, was not to find safety. Instead, it was to court the real and maybe likely possibility that she and her children would soon end up in her half-brother's power without the benefit of any sort of initial negotiation.

5.5 Regional Disaster

An interesting detail about the life of Lysimachus is how rarely he became tied up in the machinations of the other Diadochi. In particular, he nearly always maintained peaceful relations with whomever was ruling Macedonia. In contrast, he seems to have spent much of his life fighting forces, about which few details survive, to the north and west. In addition to fighting many wars against the Odryssian Thracians, whom he never conquered, Lund has speculated that Lysimachus also served as a bulwark for the Hellenic world against sometimes restless tribes beyond the Danube.[342] Years before, Alexander the Great had been shocked by the fierceness and independence of some of these peoples. When Alexander had marched north to the Danube at the beginning of his reign to reinforce his control over the barbarian tribes at the fringes of Philip's dominions, ambassadors came to him from the Celts settled on the Adriatic. When Alexander attempted to entice the Celts into saying that they feared him above all other things, the Celtic ambassadors allegedly replied that "their greatest dread was that the sky would fall upon them, and that, while they admired Alexander, neither fear nor interest had prompted their embassy." Alexander decided to declare them his friends and sent them home without harassment.[343]

[342] Lund, 49-50.
[343] Arrian, *Anabasis of Alexander*, 1.4.8.

Some fifty years later, with parts of Thrace and Macedonia in a state of dynastic upheaval, some well-organized tribes to the north of the Greco-Macedonian world, almost certainly from beyond the Danube, launched a large-scale invasion of the southern Balkans. As our Roman-era sources generally refer to these migrating tribes as Gauls, I will follow this usage henceforth with the understanding that *keltoi* and *galatai* were both words used in antiquity by those outside the cultures being described, and that the Celts and Gauls, to the extent that they were ever well-defined and distinct groups of peoples, referred to peoples who all spoke Celtic languages and who would appear broadly similar to modern eyes. At this distance, we cannot know whether some combination of the successive and violent removal of Agathocles, Lysimachus, and Seleucus tempted these Gauls to opportunistically migrate south or whether the invaders were merely fortunate in their timing. However, many have argued in favor of the former.[344]

The Gauls enjoyed considerable initial success. After subjecting the Paeonians, a Gallic army under a chieftain named Belgius invaded Macedonia. Ptolemy marched against them with "a few undisciplined troops." According to Justin, Ptolemy Thunderbolt met the Gallic heralds, refused to pay the Gauls tribute, and taunted their ambassadors, saying that he would agree to peace, "only on condition that they would give their chiefs as hostages, and deliver up their arms; for he would put no trust in them until they were disarmed." During the ensuing battle, "Ptolemy, after receiving several wounds, was taken, and his head, cut off and stuck on a lance, was carried round the whole army to strike terror into the enemy. Flight saved a few of the Macedonians;

[344] E.g. Erskine, Andrew, ed. *A Companion to the Hellenistic World*. John Wiley & Sons, 2009, p. 138. Lund, 49-50.

the rest were either taken or slain."[345] Surviving fragments of Diodorus Siculus agree with Justin in stressing the rashness and impetuousness of Ptolemy Thunderbolt, but do not mention any deliberate provocation of the Gauls, stating only that, against the advice of his companions, the *basileus* rushed into battle without waiting for part of his army to arrive, which was behind schedule. Then, "King Ptolemy was slain and the whole Macedonian army was cut to pieces and destroyed by the Gauls."[346]

The extent of the disaster is difficult to reconstruct without more information than we now possess – we are effectively told that Thunderbolt underestimated the Celts and rushed into battle with an undersized army, which was then annihilated, but no source preserves any numerical details pertaining to either side. However, while the surviving source material for this period is particularly poor, which typically forces modern scholars to depend heavily on a small set of sources, some of what surviving ancient authors do say about this episode is particularly unconvincing. For example, the claims of Ptolemy's youth and inexperience in the fragments of Diodorus are questionable, as Thunderbolt was perhaps forty and had a daughter who was old enough to have married Pyrrhus. Moreover, Ptolemy had long been a likely successor to his father in Egypt and, in that capacity, it is likely that he was provided with military training and experience. Certainly, the speed with which Ptolemy Thunderbolt had defeated Antigonus Gonatus is more compatible with a view of Ptolemy as experienced and capable than as

[345] Justin, *Epitome of Pompeius Trogus*, 24.4. Translation is from: Justinus, Marcus Junianus. "Epitome of the Philippic History of Pompeius Trogus, translated, with notes by the Rev." *John Selby Watson. London: Henry G. Bohn, York Street, Convent* (1853).

[346] Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History*, 22.3. Translation is from: Siculus, Diodorus, CH Oldfather, Charles L Sherman, Bradford C Welles, Russel M Geer, and Francis R Walton. *Library of History.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 2006.

inexperienced. Carney has plausibly suggested that some sources may exaggerate the mistakes of Thunderbolt due to the later propaganda of Antigonus Gonatas.[347]

While his short time as *basileus* indicate that he was daring and ruthless, Thunderbolt's actions prior to facing the Gauls do not suggest incompetence. Instead, his aggressive behavior may simply have masked weakness. Thunderbolt had reigned neither long nor securely and it is unclear what portions of Thrace and Macedonia he actually controlled, at least from the perspective of being able to call on them quickly for military manpower. The only territory we can be reasonably sure that Thunderbolt possessed is the Macedonian heartland around Pella, Lysimacheia, and the Chalcidice. Seizing the opportunity for battle may simply indicate that the *basileus* did not feel that his military position was likely to improve with time. If Ptolemy did not fully trust his army to remain loyal, feared his forces might desert in the face of a dire external threat if given time to ponder their situation, or if he suspected that the Gauls might receive more reinforcements than him if battle was delayed, fighting immediately could potentially have been the best course of action available to him. In short, from this distance, when filtered through meagre source material, it is no longer possible to tell the difference between overconfidence and the desperate, but not necessarily incompetent, playing of a weak hand.

It is possible that Ptolemy possessed neither a large nor particularly well-organized army, having been king for less than two years and having recently sent many soldiers with Pyrrhus to Italy.[348] In particular, if Ptolemy actually contributed anything like 4,000 cavalry to Pyrrhus' cross-Adriatic adventure, as Justin indicates, this would likely have constituted a significant drain on his

[347] Carney, Elizabeth Donnelly. *Arsinoë of Egypt and Macedon: A Royal Life*. Oxford University Press, 2013. 64.
[348] Eusebius of Caesarea, *Chronography*, 109.8-113.32 (BJN 260 F3; FGH F3.10).

strength. Alexander the Great had, after all, only possessed somewhat more than 5,000 cavalry when he invaded Achaemenid Persia.[349] While it is possible that the Macedonia of Ptolemy Thunderbolt may have been richer than that of Alexander the Great and thus possibly had more horsemen available, it is hard to imagine that a force large enough to have appeased Pyrrhus adequately enough that he acquiesced to Ptolemy's control of Macedonia, which Pyrrhus had himself repeatedly sought, would not have also been large enough to weaken Ptolemy.

Justin's account of the Macedonian response to this defeat also raises the possibility that worship of Alexander and Philip had taken root in Macedonia, "When the news of this event was spread through all Macedonia, the gates of the city were shut, and all places filled with mourning. Sometimes they lamented their bereavement, from the loss of their children; sometimes they were seized with dread, lest their cities should be destroyed; and at other times they called on the names of their kings, Alexander and Philip, as deities, to protect them; saying that 'under them they were not only secure, but conquerors of the world;' and begging that 'they would guard their country, whose fame they had raised to heaven by the glory of their exploits, and give assistance to the afflicted, whom the insanity and rashness of Ptolemy had ruined.'"[350] Certainly, if the Argead god-kings heard the prayers of their supplicants, they had a large pool of potential candidates from which to select a new *basileus* as a savior.

Some parallels exist between the defeat of Ptolemy Thunderbolt at the hands of the Gauls and the defeat of Perdiccas III at the hands of the Illyrians eighty years earlier. In both cases,

[349] Arrian, *Anabasis of Alexander*, 1.11.3. Other ancient sources give slightly lower estimates.
[350] Justin, *Epitome of Trogus*, 24.5. Translation is from: Justinus, Marcus Junianus. *Epitome of the Philippic History of Pompeius Trogus, translated, with notes by the Rev. John Selby Watson.* London: Henry G. Bohn, York Street, Convent (1853).

relatively new *basileis* faced powerful invading armies and were defeated and killed. However, Perdiccas had left behind an adult brother (Philip II), a son (Amyntas), and several half-brothers in a context in which only Argead males were potential contenders for the *basileia*. As discussed in Chapter I, while Philip II did face challenges to his rule, defeating several challengers, he did not have to contend with the descendants of multiple other quasi-royal dynasties who had all ruled Macedonia in recent memory. In contrast, while Ptolemy Thunderbolt also left behind an adult brother (Meleager), he is not known to have had any sons. Anyone seeking to succeed him had to contend with the reality that both Antigonus Gonatas and Pyrrhus were experienced generals in possession of armies and territory who had repeatedly sought to use their resources to extend their own rule over Macedonia – in the case of Pyrrhus, with some previous success. In addition to these potent challengers, adult male relatives of Lysimachus, Ptolemy, and Cassander were all in or near Macedonia. Moreover, in a Macedonia in which many dynasties could potentially supply *basileis*, what was to stop other powerful men from seeking to establish themselves as *basileus* during such a moment of simultaneous dynastic and military crises?

A surviving summary of part of the lost sections of Diodorus Siculus provides a succinct description of what happened next:

> During this period the Gauls attacked Macedonia and harried it, since there were many claimants to the kingship, who possessed themselves of it briefly and were driven out. One of these was Meleager, a brother of Ptolemy, son of Lagus, who ruled for only a few days and was then expelled. Similarly, Antipater [Etesias] ruled for forty-five days. After them came Sosthenes, then Ptolemy, as well as Alexander, and Pyrrhus of Epirus. All together, they reigned for three years, according to Diodorus.[351]

[351] Summary by Georgius Syncellus (circa 800 CE) of a lost and originally much longer portion of Diodorus Siculus. Translation taken from: Siculus, Diodorus, C. H. Oldfather, Charles L. Sherman, Bradford C. Welles, Russel M. Geer, and Francis R. Walton. *Library of History*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2006.

There are several reasons to believe that either Georgius Syncellus or someone in the tradition he was relying upon erred when he described Meleager as the brother of Ptolemy "son of Lagus." It is much more likely that Meleager was the brother of Thunderbolt rather than his uncle. Ptolemy I is known to have had multiple sons by Eurydike. Moreover, it is hard to reconstruct a plausible scenario in which a brother of Ptolemy I was still living and vigorous enough to have sought to be *basileus* during a moment of existential military crisis. By the time Thunderbolt was killed, it had been almost ninety years since his father was born. Even if Ptolemy I had possessed much younger half-brothers, which no ancient source suggests, it seems unlikely that they would not have been in at least their sixties by 279 BCE. In contrast, a brother of Thunderbolt would have had similar reasons to flee Egypt as did Thunderbolt himself. Moreover, it is probable that, even if he wasn't already with his elder brother while Thunderbolt was with Seleucus, he would likely have come to Macedonia after his older brother became *basileus*. In addition, Eusebius of Caesarea, while quoting Porphyry, explicitly refers to the Meleager who reigned during this period as the brother of Thunderbolt, so there is some ancient textual support for this position. According to Porphyry, Meleager was removed for incompetence. However, what he actually did to spark his removal is not specified.[352]

Posterity gave the next candidate, a nephew of Cassander named Antipater, the bitter epithet "Etesias" because he managed to be *basileus* for only the six-week duration of the Etesian winds. It is not certain why Antipater's bid for the *basileia* failed, but it seems likely to have been a consequence of the military success of Sosthenes, a local commander unrelated to any reigning dynasty (as far as we know). Sosthenes cobbled together some semblance of an army – we know

[352] Eusebius of Caesarea, *Chronography*, 109.8-113.32 (BJN 260 F3; FGH F3.10).

neither its origin nor its strength – and, as per Justin, managed to repulse the initial Gallic force under Belgius. According to Justin, some with Sosthenes declared him king, but he refused on account of his (comparatively) low birth and "made the soldiers take an oath to him, not as king, but as general." However, all of our other sources, including the surviving Macedonian king lists, include Sosthenes among the Macedonian *basileis*. For example, Georgius Syncellus' summary of Diodorus quoted above does not draw any distinction between Sosthenes and the other claimants during this period. Eusebius additionally suggests that Antipater was deposed by Sosthenes, writing, "When [Antipater] had ruled for 40/45 days, a certain Sosthenes put him to flight, as though he were not fit for command of the army."[353]

Unfortunately for Macedonia and also for Sosthenes, another Gallic force under the warlord Brennus arrived soon after Belgius was repulsed. This time, at least according to Justin, the god-kings did not intervene. The *Epitome of Pompeius Trogus* states that Sosthenes' army was mauled and Brennus "ravaged the lands throughout the whole of Macedonia."[354] However, the account given by Eusebius again contradicts Justin, "Now Sosthenes also expelled Brennus; and having held all affairs together for two years, he died." Justin and Eusebius are drawing here from divergent traditions. They cannot be easily reconciled. However, we can broadly state that, while the Gauls were active in Greece, after experiencing some successes in Macedonia against the Gauls, Sosthenes died. Despite the account of Justin, the preponderance of surviving evidence suggests that Sosthenes was something new in Macedonia – a person unrelated to a previous king who opportunistically became *basileus*, likely with the support of his army after he

[353] Eusebius of Caesarea, *Chronography*, 109.8-113.32 (BJN 260 F3; FGH F3.10).
[354] Justin, *Epitome of Trogus*, 24.5.

defeated the initial Gallic force that had killed Thunderbolt. If Eusebius is correct and Sosthenes also defeated Brennus and the main Gallic force, this cannot have been decisive as Brennus and his Gauls soon marched to the south, where they waged a large-scale invasion of mainland Greece. It seems likely that the Gauls simply chose to go south, possibly after encounter more resistance than they expected in Macedonia, and that some traditions attributed this departure from Macedonia to Sosthenes defeating them.

According to Eusebius, two sons of Lysimachus, the first named Ptolemy (probably the surviving son of Arsinoe) and the second named Alexander (mother unknown), next attempted to become king. However, it is unclear whether either ever had much support. The summary of Diodorus by Georgius Syncellus may suggest that others also attempted to become *basileus* beyond those explicitly named. Indeed, Eusebius briefly mentions an Arrhidaeus, who is otherwise unknown, along with Alexander and Ptolemy. It is possible to harmonize the fragments of Diodorus with Justin by hypothesizing that many claiming to be *basileis* following Ptolemy Thunderbolt sometimes had overlapping reigns as their powerbases expanded and contracted in response to their rivals and Gallic attacks. The exact duration of the reigns of those who followed Sosthenes are uncertain given the poor quality of the surviving source material, but Diodorus and Justin are clear that these men ruled only briefly. Probably some only ever had weak support. Eusebius implies that the remaining sons of Lysimachus were still relatively young and that those who wished to rule through them struggled unsuccessfully for supremacy, stating, "no one of them had overall control."[355] In at least one place in Macedonia, faced with military crises and a smorgasbord of royal claimants from several dynasties, the institution of monarchy

[355] Eusebius of Caesarea, *Chronography*, 109.8-113.32 (BJN 260 F3; FGH F3.10).

itself began to be questioned. Apollodorus, a citizen of Cassandreia, attempted to establish a tyranny in his native city. According to Diodorus, Apollodorus hired some of the Gauls as mercenaries with money he acquired by seizing the assets of the nobility. In their desperation, the population of Cassandreia was said to have even resorted to human sacrifice and cannibalism under his leadership.[356]

5.6 Antigonid Recovery

At this point, Antigonus Gonatas decided the moment was opportune for another attempt to install himself as *basileus* in Macedonia. Marching to meet the eighteen thousand Gauls that Brennus had left behind in Macedonia, Gonatas awed them with lavish displays of wealth and implied that he would pay them tribute. It is possible that Antigonus did intend to pay them to leave Macedonia. Whatever his intentions, the Gauls betrayed him and attempted to storm his camp at night. However, Antigonus had foreseen this possibility and set an ambush, annihilating the Gallic army. After this, the remnants of the Macedonian nobility quickly rallied around him and "such was the slaughter … that the report of this victory procured Antigonus peace, not only from the Gauls, but from his other barbarous neighbors."[357]

However, victory did not buy Antigonus peace from Pyrrhus, who had returned from his Italian adventure during the chaos of the Gallic invasion and was again attempting to extend his rule over Macedonia. The Epirote king marched into the Macedonian heartland seeking plunder to make up for his financial losses in Italy. At first this invasion went well for Pyrrhus, who

[356] Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History*, 22.5.2. The story of human sacrifice is questionable as it could easily reflect slanders told about Apollodorus by those whose property was seized. For a general discussion of the role of human sacrifice and cannibalism as an "othering" technique in ancient sources, see James B. Rives, "Human Sacrifice among Pagans and Christians," The Journal of Roman Studies. 85 (1995): 65.
[357] Justin, *Epitome of Trogus*, 25.2.

defeated Antigonus Gonatas in battle.[358] The Macedonians began to abandon Antigonus for Pyrrhus, much as they had once abandoned his father Demetrius for Pyrrhus. However, Pyrrhus unwisely allowed his Gallic mercenaries to sack the ancient Macedonian capital of Aegae without sufficient supervision. In their enthusiasm, the barbarians plundered the tombs of the Argead kings and desecrated their remains.[359] Despite this sacrilege, Pyrrhus did not punish his mercenaries as he needed their loyalty.[360] The Macedonians, however, were disgusted and many of his supporters turned against him. Pyrrhus, likely feeling that his position had become dangerous, withdrew from Macedonia and soon invaded the Peloponnese at the request of a Spartan pretender with the intent to "free the cities which were subject to Antigonus."[361]

For Pyrrhus, the Peloponnese proved to be a disaster. The Spartans resisted the invasion of their homeland tooth-and-nail, drafting old men, women, and young boys. Moreover, Antigonus leapt at the opportunity to face Pyrrhus with the help of motivated allies and sent mercenaries to aid Sparta. After bitter fighting, Pyrrhus was beaten off, and his eldest son and heir-apparent, yet another Ptolemy, was killed during the retreat.[362] Pyrrhus then attacked Argos, attempting to replace the ally of Antigonus who was in power there. Antigonus came south with what forces he could assemble to relieve the Argives, avoiding battle with Pyrrhus, presumably because his freshly raised army was too weak to face Pyrrhus directly. However, when Pyrrhus attempted to storm Argos, both Antigonus' son Halkyoneus and the Spartan king

[358] Plutarch, *Life of Pyrrhus*, 26.3-4.
[359] Plutarch, *Life of Pyrrhus*, 26.6-7.
[360] Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History*, 22.12.
[361] Plutarch, *Life of Pyrrhus*, 26.10.
[362] Plutarch, *Life of Pyrrhus*, 30.5-6. The description of Pyrrhus' reaction to losing his son is chilling. Joining the battle at the head of the Molossian cavalry, he "sated himself with Spartan blood," dismounting and personally slaughtering the Spartan picked troops who had defeated and killed his son. According to Plutarch, "unconquerable and terrible" (*amachos kai deinos*) was an insufficient description of Pyrrhus as he sought vengeance.

Areios were on hand leading contingents to help defend the city. During bitter street fighting, an old woman hit Pyrrhus on the head with a roof tile. While he was recovering, several of Antigonus' recruits closed in and, less than competently, decapitated him. Halkyoneus brought Pyrrhus' head back to his father, who, according to Plutarch, was so repulsed that he denounced his son as a barbarian and struck him, though Halkyoneus later found some favor in his father's eyes for his more humane treatment of Pyrrhus' surviving son Hellenus.[363] Antigonus' position as king of the Macedonians was finally secure.

To a large degree, Antigonus' control of Macedonia derived from the fact that he was the last man standing after the fifty-year succession crisis in Macedonia following the death of Alexander the Great played itself out. The families of Cassander and Lysimachus had been virtually exterminated. Ptolemy Thunderbolt still had surviving relatives, but they were in Egypt fighting over a different prize. Antigonus Gonatas himself had much younger half-brothers, e.g. Demetrius the Fair, who were still children when Pyrrhus died in 272 BCE. Gonatas was in his mid-forties.[364] Pyrrhus had living sons, but none of them would be in a position to challenge the new *basileus* for control of Macedonia for nearly a generation.

Superficially, the kingdom of Antigonus Gonatas looked much like that of Philip II. He ruled over all of the Macedonian ethnos in Europe and also dominated Thessaly and Greece. However, Antigonus ruled over a Macedonia that was more unified than it had been in the days of Philip II; as far as is known, Lynkestis, Orestis, Elimeia and the other highland regions did not try to break away even while the monarchy appeared weakest after the death of Ptolemy

[363] Plutarch, *Life of Pyrrhus*, 34.3-5.
[364] Gabbert, Janice J. *Antigonus II Gonatas: A Political Biography*. Routledge, 2002, p. 2. Gabbert has reconstructed family trees of the various dynasties of Macedonian *basileis* from the early third century BCE.

Thunderbolt. Like Philip II and Alexander the Great, the new *basileus* attempted to dominate the peoples of Greece and Thessaly. However, his strategy for doing so was different from that of his Argead predecessors. Antigonus did not rule as the "elected" representative of a league of Greek city states as Philip and Alexander had done. Indeed, he did not bother to directly dominate most of the Greek *poleis* at all. Like his father Demetrius had done during his later life, Antigonus controlled the rugged Greek mainland by garrisoning a handful of strategic cities in Greece and Thessaly, such as Corinth, Athens, Chalkis, and Megara. This strategy allowed Antigonus to prevent large alliances of lesser *poleis* from assembling united armies to fight against him. That such a strategy was possible had as much to do with the weakness of the mainland Greek *poleis* during the third century BCE as with the strength of Antigonus.

A century after Philip II rose to power, the greatest *poleis* of the Greek mainland, a subset of which had once defeated Achaemenid attempts to dominate Greece, were a shadow of what they had been only a century before. In the time of Philip, many of the Spartans would still have remembered their lost Aegean empire and Messenian helots. Many Thebans would have remembered their days of dominance under Epaminondas and Pelopidas. The second Athenian thalassocracy was at its height and the Athenian fleet was among the most powerful in the eastern Mediterranean. However, during the century after Philip's accession, Philip, Alexander, Antipater, Cassander, Demetrius, Pyrrhus, and Antigonus Gonatas had systematically broken the power of the great *poleis*. Philip destroyed Olynthus. Alexander razed Thebes and sold its citizens into slavery. Antipater depopulated Athens. Antipater and Demetrius both inflicted defeats on the Spartans. The crippling of the great cities of Greece made it possible for Antigonus to garrison and contain them in a way that the more powerful Philip II had been unable to do.

Perhaps in part because of the long-standing Macedonian presence in some Greek cities, Antigonus Gonatas ruled a Macedonia that was more integrated with Greece than had been true in the days of Philip II, particularly at the highest levels of society. Unlike Philip, Antigonus' commanders were not all Macedonians; many were ethnic Greeks.[365] He is also famously known to have been on intimate terms with some of the great philosophers of his day.[366] Some of these are even known to have had estates in Macedonia.[367]

However, perhaps the most consequential change that Antigonus Gonatas brought to Macedonia was that he permanently ended the endemic dynastic feuding that had been integral to Macedonian politics since time immemorial. After Antigonos Gonatas, there were no more civil wars. Never again was a child murdered by an older half-brother. Never again did a foreign army march into Macedonia to place a favored prince in power. Never again were cities threatened with siege if they did not give up a royal princeling. Never again did a royal mother watch as her child was seized and murdered. In moments of weakness or peril, no Antigonid pretenders ever arose to undermine a reigning *basileus*. Even the ancient death-dance between Macedonian child *basileis* and those seeking to rule on their behalf ended forever. The reasons for this will be explored in the conclusion.

5.7 From Antigonus Gonatas to the Romans

Despite being in his forties when he finally succeeded in taking control in Macedonia, Antigonus Gonatas reigned for nearly forty years, longer than any king of Macedonia since

[365] Gabbert, Antigonus II Gonatas, 38.
[366] This may not have been a break with the past. Philip II is said by Justin to have acquired an understanding of Pythagorean philosophy. Justin, *Epitome of Trogus*, 16.2.3.
[367] Gabbert, Janice J. *Antigonus II Gonatas: A Political Biography*. Routledge, 2002, 5. For example, the philosopher Zeno. Exactly how common this was is anyone's guess.

Alexander I, finally dying at the age of approximately eighty in 239 BCE, three years shy of the centennial of Alexander the Great's succession. Despite his long life, Antigonus fathered few known children. He is also not known to have been polygamous. One of his only two sons, Halkyoneus, was the child of an Athenian *hetaira* and was born relatively early in the life of Antigonus, perhaps around 290 BCE, as he was already old enough to command men in battle by the late 270s.[368] It is unknown when Halkyoneus died, but Aelian reports that a son of Antigonus predeceased his father, dying in battle, and no other possible sons are known.[369] There are few surviving references to Halkyoneus, but Diogenes Laertius describes what seems to be a remembrance of some kind to honor him, which was generously funded by Antigonus.[370] The other son of Antigonus, Demetrius, was much younger than Halkyoneus, born in approximately 275 BCE. His mother was the only known wife of the *basileus*, who was also his niece, being the daughter of Seleucus and Antigonus' full-sister Stratonice.

Demetrius II Aetolicus succeeded without challenge in 239 BCE. Unlike his father, he married numerous times. Initially, while Antigonus Gonatas was still alive, Demetrius wed a daughter of Antiochus, son of Seleucus, named Stratonice. Interestingly, this Stratonice is one of the clearest examples that survives of a wife leaving her husband over his decision to engage

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[368] Gabbert, Janice J. *Antigonus II Gonatas: A Political Biography*. Routledge, 2002, pp. 4, 15. The identification of this Halkyoneus as the son of Antigonus Gonatas and the courtesan Demo is not certain but is typically assumed given that there is a references to some Antigonus (it's not specified which one) and a Demo having a son of that name. Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistae*, 13.578a.

[369] Aelian, *Varia Historia*, 3.5. For discussion, see: Tarn, William Woodthorpe. *Antigonos Gonatas*. Clarendon Press, 1913, p. 248. More recently: Ogden, Daniel. *Polygamy, Prostitutes and Death: The Hellenistic Dynasties*. Classical Press of Wales, 1999, p. 194 n54.

[370] Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, 4.41. The passage is brief and is subject to different interpretations. Gabbert sees the event as merely a one-off birthday party, but this doesn't fit well with either the ὁπότε + optative construction, which implies a habitual event, or the language of the passage which is more compatible with the philosopher Arcesilaus bringing together his own friends rather than those of Halkyoneus. Gabbert, Janice J. *Antigonus II Gonatas: A Political Biography*. Routledge, 2002, p. 70.

in polygamy. Not only did she reject Demetrius, she evidently bore such a grudge that she attempted to convince the Seleucid monarch to declare war on Macedonia. It's unclear when Stratonice left Demetrius, but this likely occurred around the time Antigonus Gonatas died as Demetrius' second wife Phthia was the daughter of Alexander II of Epirus, who died shortly before Antigonus Gonatas. After the death of the Epirote king, his wife Olympias married their daughter to Demetrius to secure a protective alliance to help solidify her son's hold on Epirus.[371] Neither Stratonice nor Phthia had any surviving sons of whom we are aware, although both the existence and parentage of a possible Antigonid princess named Apama from this era are uncertain and, if she existed, she may be the daughter of Aetolicus and one of his first two wives.[372] The only known son of Demetrius, the future Philip V, was the child of a Thessalian war captive named Chryseis.[373] This was almost certainly not her original name as Chryseis is the

[371] Justin, *Epitome of Pompeius Trogus*, 28.1. The reliability of this passage can reasonably be questioned as Stratonice's brother Antiochus II Theos predeceased Antigonus Gonatas. However, this seems a minor mistake for a period in which royal relationships were particularly complex. While we cannot know for certain, the fact that Justin erred in naming the wrong Seleucid monarch during a period in which that was easy to do doesn't seriously undermine the overall account in my eyes. For this reason, I accept Justin's account despite the error. Carney acknowledges that this position is plausible but doesn't advocate for it. Carney, Elizabeth Donnelly. *Women and Monarchy in Macedonia*. University of Oklahoma Press, 2000, p. 186.

[372] Carney summarizes the evidence for the existence of this Apama and discusses her possible parents. Carney, Elizabeth Donnelly. *Women and Monarchy in Macedonia*. University of Oklahoma Press, 2000, p. 187. Ogden has argued that the silence of our sources about any children of Phthia is deafening as, unlike previous Antigonid monarchs, numerous Roman sources survive for the reign of Philip V and it is unlikely that any such children would not have been mentioned. Ogden, Daniel. *Polygamy, Prostitutes and Death: The Hellenistic Dynasties*. Classical Press of Wales, 1999, p. 181.

[373] There have been attempts to identify Chryseis with Phthia. E.g. Hammond, Nicholas Geoffrey Lemprière, and Frank William Walbank. *A History of Macedonia: 336-167 BC*. Vol. 3. Oxford University Press, 1988. 338 n1. As discussed by Hammond, this notion (which Hammond accepted virtually without comment) dates to Tarn. Carney summarizes the evidence, arguing that the ancient source material does not support this position well and that it better supports the view of Demetrius as having two simultaneous wives – Phthia and Chryseis – and attributes their identification to an earlier reluctance to accept that the Antigonids were sometimes polygamous. I agree with Carney's position. Carney, Elizabeth Donnelly. *Women and Monarchy in Macedonia*. University of Oklahoma Press, 2000, p. 191-192.

name of the Trojan concubine taken by Agamemnon at the beginning of the Illiad whom Apollo ultimately forced the high king to return to her father.[374]

Demetrius died around 229 BCE, shortly after being defeated in battle by the Thraco-Illyrian Dardanians, after reigning only a decade.[375] Philip V was still a child. As Aetolicus had no surviving brothers, a more distant relative had to be found to manage the *basileia* and address the Dardanian threat. The specific selection process is unknown, but the man eventually chosen was Antigonus III Doson, a son of Demetrius the Fair, himself a child of Demetrius Poliorchetes and Ptolemais, one of the daughters of Ptolemy I and Eurydice, who had been a daughter of Antipater.[376] Hence, this newest Antigonus was the half-first-cousin-once-removed of Philip. This was not a close family relationship and, in all proceeding generations in all Macedonian royal dynasties, the prospects of the child Philip living to adulthood would not have been good. That Philip's mother was essentially Thessalian war booty with no known relatives who could have intervened on the child's behalf seems as though it should only have diminished his already grim prospects for survival.

However, Philip was not poisoned, thrown down a well, cut to pieces in front of his mother, or murdered in any other way. Nor did he die young of disease or perish in battle. Instead, while Antigonus III Doson did eventually become *basileus* in his own right, marrying Chryseis in the process, the new *basileus* instead loyally stewarded the *basileia* for his ward.[377]

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[374] Homer, *Iliad*, 1.365-380.

[375] Wilkes, John. *The Illyrians*. Wiley-Blackwell, 1995, esp. pp. 84-85,148. Wilkes discusses the ethnic background of the Dardanians as their relationship with the Macedonians.

[376] Plutarch, *Life of Demetrius*, 46.3. Also see Porphyry via Eusebius, *FGH* 260 F31.6. Also: Worthington, Ian. *Ptolemy I: King and Pharaoh of Egypt*. Oxford University Press, 2016. 113, 175. Also: Ogden, *Polygamy, Prostitutes and Death: The Hellenistic Dynasties*, 183.

[377] Doson was initially appointed regent and general (*epitropos kai strategos)*. Plutarch, *Life of Aemilius Paullus*, 8.3.

Moreover, Philip's eventual succession was not an accident as Doson exposed the sons born of his union with Chryseis.[378] As far as we know, Antigonus also did not marry anyone else, instead remaining monogamously married to the Thessalian war captive Chryseis. The extent of this divergence between the behavior of Antigonus and his pre-Antigonid predecessors is difficult to overstate.

Doson was successful militarily, defeating the Dardanians at the beginning of his reign. He later invaded the Peloponnese and crushed the last serious attempt by the Spartans to reestablish local hegemony, severely defeating and forcing into exile the Spartan king Cleomenes, who had implemented anti-oligarchic reforms and greatly strengthen the Spartan army. The Romans first came to the Balkans to fight against the Illyrians during the reign of Doson, though he avoided becoming involved. Antigonus died suddenly after falling ill during a successful battle against the Illyrians in 221 BCE.[379]

As far as we know, the ascension of Philip V occurred without incident. Philip's reign was long and marked by several wars against the Romans. As a consequence, the grim state of the primary source material that begins before the Battle of Ipsus and becomes progressively worse throughout the Antigonid period finally ends as a result of increased Roman attention to Macedonia. Unfortunately, as Macedonia was a geopolitical competitor of Rome during the reign of Philip V, Roman attention to Macedonia came wrapped up in Roman suspicion and hostility. Many of the same bias problems that plague scholarship about the better-known

[378] Eusebius of Caesarea, *Chronography*, 109.8-113.32 (BJN 260 F3; FGH F3.10).

[379] Polybius, *Histories* 2.70.6. Hammond provides one of the few modern summaries of this period: Hammond, Nicholas Geoffrey Lemprière, and Frank William Walbank. *A History of Macedonia: 336-167 BC*. Vol. 3. Oxford University Press, 1988. 354-362.

Carthaginian general Hannibal also apply to his Macedonian contemporary and ally Philip V. In particular, while Polybius was generally among the more factually careful ancient historians, he made a conscious exception for political bias committed out of allegiance to one's native state.[380] Macedonia, as an enemy first of his native Megalopolis and later of his adopted state of Rome, where he was taken as a high-status hostage as a young man but then essentially went native, was sometimes harshly treated in the *Histories*.

Roman bias is a particularly serious problem when considering the succession of Philip V's son Perseus. After Philip V was defeated by the Romans in the Battle of Cynoscephalae in 197 BCE, his younger son Demetrius was taken to Rome, publicly displayed as part of Flaminius' triumph, and kept as a hostage to ensure that his father, who had been left in power but reduced to a Roman vassal, remained obedient to Rome.[381] Demetrius was released after five years in recognition of Philip's assistance against Antiochus the Great.[382] For a time, all seems to have been well, but Philip later came under accusation by his neighbors, essentially for attempting to reassert Macedonian control over regions it had traditionally dominated, and sent Demetrius back to Rome to present his defense to the Senate. The suspicious Senate accepted Philip's defense, dispatching inspectors to verify it, but they explicitly did so only as sign of their esteem for his second son Demetrius:

> The Senate fully believe that on all the points mentioned by Demetrius, or read by him from his paper of instructions, full justice was already done or would be done. But, in order that Philip might be made aware that the Senate paid this honor to

[380] Polybius, *Histories*, 16.14.6. Hammond summarizes the impact this had on Polybius' work. Hammond, Nicholas Geoffrey Lemprière, and Frank William Walbank. *A History of Macedonia: 336-167 BC*. Vol. 3. Oxford University Press, 1988. 367. For a more extensive and recent discussion of political bias in Polybius, see: Eckstein, Arthur M. "Polybius, Phylarchus, and Historiographical Criticism." *Classical Philology* 108, no. 4 (2013): 314-338.
[381] Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita Libri*, 32.52.9.
[382] Polybius, *Histories*, 21.3; Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita Libri*, 36.35.13.

> Demetrius, ambassadors would be sent to see that everything was being done in accordance with the will of the Senate, and at the same time to inform the king that he owed this grace to his son Demetrius.[383]

Polybius goes on to state that Titus Quinctius Flaminius, the Roman general who had defeated Philip V, made the situation still more flammable, flattering Demetrius "by suggesting that the Romans meant before long to invest him with the kingdom; while he irritated Philip and Perseus by sending a letter ordering the king to send Demetrius to Rome again, with as many friends of the highest character as possible."[384] Livy indicates that this did not just turn Perseus against Demetrius, it also created genuine support for Demetrius within Macedonia among those who were understandably concerned about avoiding another war with Rome.[385]

Our surviving sources stress the superiority of Demetrius, both in his personal characteristics and also in his breeding, which is the central argument wielded against the older prince. Daniel Ogden has summarized the relevant ancient source material and his summary is worth quoting:

> These reflections of Demetrian propaganda contain: the accusation the Perseus was a son of Philip, though born of a lower-status mother than Demetrius; that Perseus was a son of Philip, but that his mother was not married to Philip and was merely his concubine; and that Perseus was no son of Philip at all, being supposititious and born of an extremely low-status mother and no identifiable father.[386]

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[383] Polybius, *Histories*, 23.2. Translation taken from: Polybius. *The Histories of Polybius: Translated from the Text of F. Hultsch by Evelyn S. Shuckburgh*. Macmillan, 1889. According to Livy, the investigation found that while Philip had complied, he had followed the letter and not the spirit of the instructions and did not appear to intend to comply any longer than compelled. Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita Libri,* 40.3.

[384] Polybius, *Histories*, 23.3. Translation taken from: Polybius. *The Histories of Polybius: Translated from the Text of F. Hultsch by Evelyn S. Shuckburgh*. Macmillan, 1889.

[385] Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita Libri*, 40.5.2.

[386] Ogden, Daniel, *Polygamy, Prostitutes and Death: The Hellenistic Dynasties*, 185-186.

We are unfortunately, in part as a result of pro-Demetrius bias, in a poor position to evaluate these claims. Despite the relatively plentiful material that survives about his reign, little trace remains of the mothers of Philip's children. Strikingly, not even the name of Demetrius' mother survives. We know nothing about her other than that multiple ancient sources suggest she was of higher status than the mother of Perseus.

In contrast, it is likely, though not certain, that the mother of Perseus can be identified. She was probably an upper-class Argive woman named Polycratia, who was first married to Aratus the Younger, a *strategos* of the Achaean league, a frequent adversary and sometimes grudging ally of Macedonia. At some point relatively early in his reign, Philip enticed Polycratia to abandon her husband, and she went to Macedonia with him with his promise of marriage.[387] Though Polycratia is nowhere explicitly named as the mother of Perseus, the timing is compatible and, elsewhere, the mother of Perseus is said to have been an Argive woman.[388]

This picture is complicated somewhat by the fact that Plutarch twice names Perseus' mother as an Argive seamstress named Gnathainion.[389] Allegedly, and only according to Plutarch, a wife (unnamed) of Philip passed off the child of Gnathainion as her own. The slanderous implication is that Perseus was not only not the son of Polycratia, he may not have been the son of Philip either. Given that only Plutarch transmits it, I think this slander can be safely dismissed. While Antigonid *basileis* do seem to have allowed the children of lower-status women to inherit the diadem, e.g. Chryseis and Demo, there is no evidence that they ever brought the children of non-relatives into the royal family, nor any reason why they would do so.

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[387] Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita Libri*, 27.31.8, 32.21.23; Plutarch, *Life of Aratus*, 49.
[388] Aelian, *Varia Historia*, 12.43.
[389] Plutarch, *Life of Aemilius Paullus*, 8.7; Plutarch, *Life of Aratus*, 54.3.

Moreover, if such tales were true, it seems unlikely that Plutarch, writing two hundred and fifty years after the death of Philip, would know salacious truths about the birth of Perseus that were not well known at the time. The silence of Polybius, who was a contemporary of Perseus and, as we have seen, was generally hostile to him, is particularly deafening. Polybius says only that Perseus was inferior to Demetrius in "breeding and ability."[390]

Ultimately, Philip did not permit a civil war to break out after he died. The details of Demetrius' final months are preserved only by Livy, as the relevant portion of Polybius is unfortunately lost, and other sources do not go into detail. While Livy's account is searing in its hostility to Perseus, the basic facts can perhaps still be glimpsed through the voluminous defense of Demetrius. After he returned from Rome, the younger prince evidently became an outspoken Roman advocate in the Macedonian court. Ultimately, he stood accused of attempting to assassinate Perseus as well as conspiring with Flaminius. Philip conducted an investigation, judged Demetrius guilty, and condemned him to death.[391] Livy does his best to spin the events in a way that presents Perseus as a dishonest aggressor. However, the most likely explanation for the basic facts preserved by Livy is that Demetrius was guilty. Not only are the charges plausible, the contemporaneous Polybius explicitly says that Flaminius had reached out to the prince when he had been in Rome and told him Rome intended to make him *basileus*.[392] After such an outreach, Demetrius seems likely to have wished to seem worthy of the informal Roman promises made to him when he returned to Macedonia, likely in a way that allowed his true motives to be easily suspected by anyone inclined to be suspicious, which was likely many people

[390] Polybius, *Histories*, 23.7. Translation is mine.
[391] Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita Libri*, 40.5-25.
[392] Polybius, *Histories*, 23.3.

after the Senate went out of its way to present continued peace with Macedonia as a favor to Demetrius. Even the correspondence with Flaminius seems probable. It would be odd indeed if Demetrius had not sought to remain in touch with a powerful Roman who had praised him and essentially promised him a diadem.

After the execution of his brother, Perseus succeeded without incident. Early in his reign, he adopted Philip's third son, yet another Philip, who was much younger than his older brothers and likely had a different mother than either.[393] Perseus evidently made Philip his heir. The women associated with Perseus are better known than those of his father. Early in his life he married a wife who died. Livy, ever hostile, says there were rumors that Perseus had personally murdered her.[394] After his father died, Perseus married Laodice, the daughter of the contemporaneous Seleucid monarch, yet another Seleucus. With Laodice, he had a son named Alexander as well as a daughter, both of whom were displayed in the Roman triumph along with their father after his eventual defeat. After being defeated by Rome in the Battle of Pydna, Perseus was removed, and the Antigonid dynasty came to an end. Somewhat unusually, he escaped ritual murder at the end of his conqueror's triumph and was allowed to retain his personal wealth and at least some of his household, going into exile in Alba in northern Italy. His half-brother Philip and son Alexander accompanied him in exile. Perseus died within a few years, possibly by suicide, and Philip died two years later. However, Alexander prospered after a

[393] Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita Libri*, 42.53 alleges that Philip was a much younger (almost certainly) half-brother of Perseus who was adopted by Perseus. Other sources simply call him Perseus' son. I agree with Ogden that there is no reason to doubt the adoption; it's not obvious what anyone would have gained by lying about this. Ogden, Daniel. *Polygamy, Prostitutes and Death: The Hellenistic Dynasties*. Classical Press of Wales, 1999, p. 188. In this dissertation, I will follow Livy and assume Philip was a much younger half-brother adopted as a son by Perseus.

[394] Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita Libri*, 42.5.3.

fashion, becoming a skilled artisan and minor official.[395] So ended the line of Antigonid kings. With the exception of a single short-lived rebellion, so also ended the ancient kingdom of Macedonia.[396]

[395] Plutarch, *Life of Aemilius Paullus*, 37; Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita Libri*, 42.45.4; Polybius, *Histories*, 37.2.

[396] The rebellion of Pseudo-Philip, originally named Andriscus, was quickly defeated by Rome. Andriscus claimed to be the son of a concubine of Perseus. Almost all the source material stresses that he was a pretender, which I see no reason not to accept, so I will not consider him in this dissertation. However, there is a small amount of possibly supportive evidence, which Ogden discusses. While I think it unlikely that Perseus was the father of Andriscus, I agree with Ogden that, "if Andriscus was indeed a son of a hetaira of Perseus … he had good title to the Antigonid throne." Ogden, Daniel. *Polygamy, Prostitutes and Death: The Hellenistic Dynasties*. Classical Press of Wales, 1999. 189-192.

CHAPTER 6. ANTIGONID STABILITY

After Antigonus Gonatas vanquished Pyrrhus and seized Macedonia, the Antigonid dynasty remained in power until Roman expansion swept them away with the rest of the ancient states of the Mediterranean world. Daniel Ogden, who has written perhaps the most extensive and influential account of the stability of Antigonid Macedonia, argued that, "Although the dynasty was polygamous, it was preserved from amphimetric strife … by the combination of a relative paucity of sons and, more importantly, a strong code of internal loyalty."[397] While I agree with Ogden that both of these features of the Antigonid dynasty played a role in the stability of the Antigonids, I believe this view is incomplete. In particular, it is descriptive rather than explanatory. It does not explain how the internal loyalty of the dynasty came into being and, vitally, was sustained across generations. After all, the Antigonids married Seleucid and Ptolemaic princesses, who came from less stable dynasties in which amphimetric strife remained a recurring issue. Why did they not seek to arrange the succession of their sons? Why did no Antigonid princes before the intervention of Rome feud with their brothers or cousins? In this final chapter, I will expand the view of Ogden to answer these questions, propose a chain of historical events that may have resulted in the transition to dynastic stability, and briefly return to game theory to argue that the "game" of succession had changed from Argead to Antigonid Macedonia, creating conditions in which the emergence of a cooperative equilibrium was possible.

[397] Ogden, Daniel. *Polygamy, Prostitutes and Death: The Hellenistic Dynasties*. Classical Press of Wales, 1999. 171.

6.1 The Antigonid Engine of Dynastic Stability

There were several interrelated changes, none of which were consistently adopted by other successor dynasties, that permitted and helped sustain peaceful succession across generations in the Antigonid monarchy. The first of these was a switch from a system in which, effectively, all sons were potential heirs to a system of primogeniture within an amphimetric group. As discussed in Chapter II, the Argead kings could be succeeded by the sons of any of their wives, resulting in a system in which mother-son teams were in lethal competition. In contrast, the Antigonid diadem always passed to the eldest living son of the previous king. The only exception to this, Antigonus III Doson, gained power as a result of the unexpected death of his half-cousin in a context in which his predecessor had no sons old enough to lead the Macedonians in war. While claims about the legitimacy of Macedonian princes should generally be interpreted as propaganda in unstable Macedonian dynasties, it is important to note that even the Roman sources hostile to Perseus present him as the presumptive heir of Philip. When Perseus assumed succession should occur through primogeniture in his dispute with his half-brother Demetrius, this was not mere factional propaganda in the way it would have been in Argead times or in the Ptolemaic or Seleucid courts. Instead, the crown prince was accurately appealing to what had been normal for generations in the state over which he had been raised to rule.[398] In *dike*, because the Antigonids had long been in power and *dike* had consequently changed, Perseus was not just arguably the rightful heir, but actually the rightful heir, in a way and to an extent that few princes of other Macedonian dynasties had ever been able to claim.

[398] Polybius, *Histories*, 23.7.

The primary reason for the establishment and success of amphimetric primogeniture, seems to have been the consistent willingness of Antigonid *basileis* to consciously and proactively plan for the stability of the dynasty itself. They were not alone in doing this – in all major successor dynasties that long survived the deaths of their founders, the first new *basileus* was chosen and began to rule while the founding *basileus* still lived. Ptolemy I and Ptolemy II overlapped on the Egyptian throne for several years. Likewise, Seleucus transferred his second wife to Antiochus and appointed him to be king, with authority over the eastern part of the Seleucid empire, while the old king was still very much alive, capable, and active in the west. This elevation of Antiochus may have occurred in stages, with the son of Seleucus initially being assigned to rule Babylon, where Babylonian records refer to him as the crown prince (*mar sarri*) before he was raised to equivalence with his father.[399] It is possible that, despite their ultimate failure, Cassander and Lysimachus intended to do much the same thing. Philip, the eldest son and immediate successor of Cassander, initially succeeded his father uneventfully. It was only the death of Philip soon after Cassander that threw the dynasty into upheaval. Likewise, Lysimachus may have been undone by seeking to do, less effectively, the same thing that Ptolemy I successfully accomplished: manipulate the succession in favor of a younger but preferred mother-son team.

However, while at least some of the other Diadochi took care to secure a peaceful transition of power after they died, Antigonus Monophthalmus did this before the others at a time when, as far as we know, no previous Macedonian king had done so before. He is also the first known Macedonian ruler to have employed the specific method of designating his successor

[399] Grainger, John D. *The Rise of the Seleukid Empire (323-223 BC)*. Pen and Sword, 2014. 101-103.

as co-*basileus*. Demetrius showed similar care, abdicating – which no previous Macedonian ruler had done before – when faced with capture by Seleucus. Antigonus Gonatas continued this pattern, raising Demetrius II Aetolicus to royal rank during the final years of his life. When Antigonus III Doson became king and, alone among Macedonian regents, successfully and loyally stewarded the *basileia* for his ward, it was in a context in which his father, Demetrius the Fair, not only did not have a personal history of lethal political maneuvering against his half-brother Antigonus Gonatas, but also had lived his entire life in a family in which no Antigonid had ever waged war on or acted to murder another. As we have seen, Philip V also did what seems likely to have, by his time, been perceived as his duty and prevented strife from erupting after his death, going so far as to execute his second son. Perseus, who had experienced the first amphimetric strife in five generations of Antigonid kings, acted to correct and stabilize the dynasty, adopting his younger half-brother Philip, giving him precedence over his own biological son Alexander, and designating him as his heir early in his own reign.[400] While we cannot know if Philip would ultimately have succeeded Perseus had the Romans not intervened, the fact that we can plausibly wonder is perhaps among the greatest accomplishments of the Antigonid *basileis*.

To raise the status of the eldest son of a *basileus* meant simultaneously reducing the political importance of royal women, particularly those who were not the mother of the eldest son.[401] We do not even know the names (and likely of the existence) of some Antigonid

[400] While no ancient source says explicitly that Philip was the designated heir of Perseus, the Romans seem to have treated him as such, which suggests that he was. Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita Libri*, 45.28.11. It is not obvious why Philip would have been adopted if the intent was not for him to succeed. Rather, it seems likely that the purpose of the adoption was that he could succeed Perseus without dispute through amphimetric primogeniture.

[401] Carney notes the reduced status of Antigonid women but does not tie this to changes in succession practice.

daughters (e.g. an unnamed daughter of Perseus). We are also missing the identities of the mothers of several Antigonid princes (e.g. Demetrius). Moreover, no politically important actions of any Antigonid wife survive except for the rejection of Demetrius by the Seleucid princess Stratonice. Given that our ancient sources focus primarily on political and military events, the scant mention of Antigonid women in the surviving source material seems likely to be a direct consequence of their near political irrelevance as a result of the transition to amphimetric primogeniture. If they felt they knew who would succeed the current king and did not fear for their lives or the lives of their children, there was much less reason for mother-son teams to pair off against one another, seek foreign support, or otherwise attempt to dominate the kingdom.

The increasing tendency for Antigonid rulers to marry (or otherwise associate with) women of non-royal and even quite meagre social rank – e.g. *hetairai* and war captives – as the dynasty evolved simultaneously functioned to protect the heir-apparent by limiting half-brothers with powerful maternal relatives while also freeing the *basileus* to spend his private life with women whom he presumably chose based on genuine affection. That *basileis* were able to do this seems likely to have been a consequence of increased state-building across the Mediterranean world as, in comparison with the Argeads, there were ever fewer states possessing such power that an Antigonid ruler needed to fear them. In addition, those states that emerged as winners in the process of continued state-building in the Mediterranean world – e.g. Greek leagues, Epirus after it ceased to be a monarchy, Carthage, Rome – were often non-monarchical, which made lasting marriage alliances with them essentially impossible.

6.2 A Theory of Stability

Given the passage of time and the limited source material that remains, all historians of the ancient Mediterranean world must make assumptions in their work. Ancient history is essentially the art of constructing internally consistent models of the past which are compatible with as much of the often biased and contradictory primary source evidence as possible, with the understanding that these models are and can only ever be non-unique reconstructions of what may have been. At its core, ancient history is not just about events and evidence, it is about probabilities. In this spirit, I will speculate more than is often typical and suggest how I suspect Antigonid stability may have developed.

The founder of the dynasty, Antigonus Monophthalmus, was among the oldest of the Diadochi, being a contemporary of Philip II rather than Alexander the Great, having been born in the 380s BCE. Hence, he personally lived through the dynastic turbulence after the death of Amyntas III. He also experienced the assassination of Alexander II, the regency of Ptolemy of Aloros, his murder by Perdiccas III, and the death of Perdiccas in battle against the Illyrians, which Antigonus either missed or escaped from. His own father may have been among those slain, as his mother bore a son to a different husband soon afterwards.[402] Antigonus also saw the dynastic challenges Philip faced during a period of desperate uncertainty for Macedonia. He no doubt was well aware of, and likely participated in, Philip's efforts to eliminate his half-brothers, which culminated in the siege of Olynthus and the enslavement of its population. Antigonus was likely also present at the assassination of Philip II. None of the other Diadochi except Antipater and

[402] Heckel, Waldemar. *The Marshals of Alexander's Empire*. Routledge, 2005, p. 50. Billows has also speculated to this effect: Billows, Richard A. *Antigonos the One-eyed and the Creation of the Hellenistic State*. Vol. 4. Univ of California Press, 1997. 24.

Polyperchon had lived through a similar level of dynastic strife. So, it would not be surprising if Antigonus concluded quickly that conflict was inevitable once Alexander died young. In addition, Antigonus was already approximately sixty when Alexander died. As he gained ever more success and power at an ever more advanced age, it would not at all be surprising if his rich exposure to Argead dynastic feuding weighed heavily on his mind as he established his own domain knowing that death from old age could be close at hand.

The reason for the large age difference between Antigonus and his sons may have been that Antigonus did not originally intend to marry but, after one of his brothers died, eventually married the brother's widow late in life. The sources available to Plutarch were divided on whether Demetrius was Antigonus' son or nephew, some claiming that Stratonice was first married to Antigonus' brother, who died, and was then remarried to Antigonus. According to this tradition, which I am inclined to accept as it is most compatible with Antigonus' subsequent actions, Demetrius was adopted by Antigonus when still very young.[403] Demetrius and his (possibly adopted) father were said to have been personally close in a way that was atypical for royal children in antiquity. For example, Plutarch reports a story that Demetrius once returned from hunting and, while still fully armed, entered his father's presence while Antigonus was receiving ambassadors. Demetrius allegedly kissed his father and then sat down. Antigonus commanded the ambassadors to "carry back this report also about us, that this is the way we feel toward one another."[404] Antigonus later had a second son, Philip, who was approximately

[403] Plutarch, *Life of Demetrius*, 2.1.

[404] There are other personal anecdotes in Plutarch that also suggest a close relationship between Antigonus and Demetrius. Plutarch, *Life of Demetrius*, 3;14; and 19.

five years younger than Demetrius. Philip lived to be an adult, but died young, predeceasing Antigonus.

With experience derived from an unusually long life that had been marked by repeated rounds of Argead civil wars, the Antigonid founder would have had considerable context with which to evaluate the causes of the dynastic strife that began to develop within his own family as he gained ever more power as he progressed farther into old age. Without children who were old enough to command, he initially relied on his older nephews (from different brothers), Ptolemy and Telesphorus. Both of these nephews eventually rebelled against Antigonus after being eclipsed by other kin, Telesphorus by Ptolemy and Ptolemy subsequently by Demetrius. Telesphorus was ultimately forgiven, likely later serving Demetrius, but Ptolemy was executed by Ptolemy I Soter during his rebellion.[405] Hence, when Antigonus took the unprecedented step of raising Demetrius to coequal rank with himself late in life, he did so for an heir in whom, as we have seen, he had an uncommon level of personal trust. Antigonus may have feared that Demetrius had a potential challenger in Telesphorus, who had already once rebelled, as well as possibly in other nephews and great-nephews of whom knowledge no longer survives. Such concern would have been particularly sensible if Demetrius was in fact the adopted son of Antigonus rather than his biological son.

While Demetrius had numerous biological sons by different mothers, Antigonus Gonatas was by far the oldest, which made his status as heir-apparent relatively straightforward.

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[405] Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History*, 20.19.2; Billows, Richard A. *Antigonos the One-eyed and the Creation of the Hellenistic State*. Vol. 4. Univ of California Press, 1997, pp. 419-421. For what can be reconstructed about the life and careers of Telesphorus and Ptolemy, see: Billows, *Antigonos the One-Eyed*, 427-430, 435. Translation is from: Siculus, Diodorus, CH Oldfather, Charles L Sherman, Bradford C Welles, Russel M Geer, and Francis R Walton. *Library of History.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 2006.

However, as we have seen, Demetrius nonetheless went out of his way to designate Antigonus as his heir, going so far as to abdicate when facing capture, telling his garrison commanders to, "put no trust in letters or seal purporting to be his, but to treat him as dead, and to preserve for Antigonus his cities and the rest of his power."[406] As Demetrius was more useful to Seleucus, and thus more likely to remain alive if he did not abdicate, his decision to do so demonstrated unusual care for the succession of his son. The collapse of the Antipatrid house after its sons quarreled also seems likely to have been a lesson well-learned by Demetrius as he personally benefited more than anyone else from the quarreling of Cassander's sons.

The willingness to accept the children of *hetairai* and other less prestigious women as successors likely dates to the reign of Antigonus Gonatas, who ruled for many years over a principality comprised of mainland Greek cities and, as far as we know, did not marry during this time. Having had a polygamous father and initially ruling only minor possessions, we are left to wonder whether Antigonus may have had more biological sons with *hetairai* early in his life than we are now aware, perhaps not feeling the need to recognize every such son, needing only one, Halkyoneus. Viewed from this perspective, *hetairai* may have seemed particularly useful for producing heirs to a young man whose father had been polygamous and who was ruling over a principality whose family had fallen out of the first rank of Hellenistic dynasties. The children of such informal and low-status unions could be left unrecognized if not needed, without offending any dangerous maternal relatives. It would be fascinating to know under what circumstances Halkyoneus became important to his father. Was he the only son of Antigonus, the child of a

[406] Plutarch, *Life of Demetrius*, 52.4.

favorite *hetaira* whom his father wished to honor, or simply the oldest and most readily available among several low-status biological sons lost to history?

Antigonus Gonatas also lived through the collapse of the Antipatrid and Lysimachid houses and was in a particularly good position to watch and learn from their failures. He had observed his father gain Macedonia by exploiting Antipatrid dynastic strife and, later, personally seized control of Macedonia as a result of Lysimachid dynastic strife exacerbated by exported Ptolemaic dynastic strife, as discussed in Chapter V. It strains credulity that Antigonus Gonatas would not have dwelled long and carefully on the importance of dynastic stability after his family twice gained possession of Macedonia within twenty years by exploiting the dynastic collapse of other successor houses, most of whose members died violently as a consequence. It seems likely that Antigonus took care during his long life to pass these lessons on to his sons. As he entered old age, he followed the example of his grandfather and namesake, raising Demetrius II Aetolicus to royal rank before he died.

By the time Demetrius II died, the Antigonid dynasty had been stable and free of violent feuding for the lifetimes of all living Antigonids. It is in this context that the unprecedented stewardship of Antigonus III Doson should be interpreted. While the *basileus* could presumably have made a less generous choice, either eliminating Philip or choosing to rear his own children, there are several reasons why he may not have. Perhaps most importantly, the lesson that dynastic feuding often meant at best a fall from power and at worst violent death for the entire dynasty had been reinforced in the lifetime of Antigonus III Doson in a very personal way. His father, Demetrius the Fair, had been invited to become *basileus* of Cyrene. After a short time, he had attempted to sideline his Ptolemaic second wife, who retaliated and had him

murdered.[407] Soon after, Cyrene ceased to be independent and was seized by the Ptolemaic dynasty. Antigonus III Doson also had at least one full-brother, Echecrates, with children living in Macedonia.[408] Other cadet branches of the royal family also almost certainly existed, as Demetrius I had at least five sons by five different mothers.[409]

However, while the reign of Antigonus III Doson is perhaps the moment where the Antigonid dynasty seems most unlike other successor dynasties, it was also the moment when the major line of the Antigonid dynasty came closest to dying out and the dynasty as a whole was at greatest risk. Had the future Philip V perished of a childhood disease or accident, Antigonus III would have needed sons quickly and, as things turned out, he would – at best – have been able to leave behind merely another young child, as he died suddenly in his early forties. Had Antigonus III Doson followed the pattern of earlier Macedonian regents and murdered Philip, it seems likely that the multiple cadet branches of the Antigonid family may well have bickered over the throne. How close his family had come to having too few sons was likely not lost on Philip V, who had two sons – Demetrius and Perseus – early in his reign, as well as Philip later in life. Faced with the challenge of Rome, both Philip V and Perseus also sought marriage alliances with other Hellenistic states, likely feeling less secure than had their two predecessors.

As Philip V neared the end of his life, his dynasty was caught off guard by a new cause of amphimetric strife that the Antigonids had not previously encountered – an attempt to undermine the carefully preserved dynastic harmony which had become a cornerstone of the

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[407] This assassination and its implications are discussed at length throughout the following book: Clayman, Dee L. *Berenice II and the Golden Age of Ptolemaic Egypt*. Oxford University Press, 2014.
[408] Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita Libri*, 40.55.
[409] Ogden, Daniel, ed. Polygamy, Prostitutes and Death: The Hellenistic Dynasties. Classical Press of Wales, 1999, p. 173-177.

Antigonid dynasty for the political advantage of a foreign power. Previously, Macedonian dynastic strife had been largely internal in origin. Macedonian dynasties ended because they either died out or, more typically, because their members didn't get along amongst themselves, encouraging opportunistic external intervention. After Alexander the Great spread Macedonian power across the Near East, that external intervention was no longer from Thracian or Illyrian tribal rulers or Greek *poleis,* but rather from increasingly well-organized and powerful external polities with the capacity to permanently seize control, which made the costs of failing to get along potentially much higher than they had been in Argead times. The Antigonids understood this, exploited it to twice-seize a kingdom, and went to unusual and successful lengths to protect themselves from falling victim to the same tactic. However, by being forced to surrender his younger son as a Roman hostage, Philip lost the ability to control how Demetrius was raised and what values he adopted. Ultimately, Philip was forced to execute him to preserve dynastic peace. This most extreme effort by an Antigonid king to preserve harmony in his family was successful and, as we have seen, Perseus followed the example of his ancestors, going to unusual lengths to preserve tranquility in the ruling family. Perhaps the greatest legacy of Antigonus Monophthalmus was that, in the end, alone among the successor dynasties of Alexander, his descendants fell from power together, loyal to one another to the end.

6.3 Return to Game Theory

As discussed in Chapter II, having players with memories of many iterations of an iterative game aids in the emergence of cooperative strategies. The long exposure of Antigonus Monophthalmus to Argead succession disputes created a situation in which he had observed

more iterations of the Argead succession game than most of his peers among the Diadochi. He took steps to protect his heir and, essentially, rig the game in his favor.

> In addition to a near-universal desire to cooperate among the players, an additional feature is important for enabling the emergence of stable cooperative strategies in many iterative games, including iterative versions of the Prisoner's Dilemma. In general, environments in which the players have more experience with previous iterations of the game (longer memories) are conducive to the evolution of cooperative strategies not just in the Prisoner's Dilemma, but in iterative games more generally.[410] Experience enables cooperation by allowing players to better perceive what is in their own best interests as well as by giving them more time to judge the intentions and character of their opponents and to adjust their own strategies accordingly over time.[411]

Having benefited from the foresight of their predecessor, Demetrius and Antigonus Gonatas both also rigged the game in favor of their intended heirs, which, even after they lost much of their territory and revenues, helped put them in a position to opportunistically benefit from the dynastic disputes of their neighbors, which provided additional experience for them and their descendants to draw upon which further highlighted the advantages of mutual cooperation.

Given the collapse of the Antipatrid and Lysimachid dynasties as a result of internal feuding, which was visible to all, why did the other successor dynasties not learn from this and avoid amphimetric strife? Game theory provides a hint for the Ptolemaic dynasty. As discussed in Chapter II:

> For successful cooperative strategies to emerge among a population of players over multiple iterations, several things are required. In particular, the population has to be willing to allow cooperation to emerge.[412] In iterative versions of the Prisoner's Dilemma, "Equilibrium is completely determined by any group of N-1

[410] Jurišić, Marko, Dragutin Kermek, and Mladen Konecki. "A review of iterated prisoner's dilemma strategies." In MIPRO, 2012 Proceedings of the 35th International Convention, pp. 1093-1097. IEEE, 2012.
[411] Kraines, David P., and Vivian Y. Kraines. "Natural selection of memory-one strategies for the iterated prisoner's dilemma." Journal of Theoretical Biology 203, no. 4 (2000): 335-355.
[412] Kalai, Ehud, and William Stanford. "Finite rationality and interpersonal complexity in repeated games." Econometrica: Journal of the Econometric Society (1988): 397-410.

> players." In other words, there can be no cooperative equilibrium if there is not a near consensus that cooperation is the goal, as a small number of adverse actors have the ability to destroy a cooperative equilibrium even when there are many players; it is impossible to move to an effective cooperative strategy if other players do not wish to do so.

As can be seen from Rome's manipulation of Demetrius, a single non-cooperative player was sufficient to force non-cooperative strategies on the other players in one round of the Antigonid succession game, after which Perseus took the unusual step of adopting his remaining half-brother, likely to prevent another round of such discord. Based on this, we can guess why the Ptolemaic dynasty was never free from amphimetric strife: unlike the Antigonid dynasty, Ptolemy changed his heir from his eldest to his youngest son, preserving the view that anyone, or at least anyone with a high-born mother, could potentially be king. In other words, unlike the Antigonids, who sought to create a game in which there was only one player, the Ptolemies sometimes, and only sometimes, attempted to rig a game in which everyone had reason to think there were always multiple and sometimes many players.

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