The Creation of New Dynasties after the Death of Alexander the Great

It is commonly argued that military success was the basis on which a claim to be a king over Macedonians could be made.¹ This is correct, but it is not the whole truth, as we can see by an examination of what happened on the extinction of one Macedonian dynasty and the eventual establishment of successor dynasties.

The kings of the Macedonians were drawn from a single house, the Temenids (also known as the Argeads), not according to a strictly defined law, but with preference often going to a son (sometimes a brother) of the late king, and an adult often, but not always, being preferred.² With the

---


² N.G.L. Hammond, The Macedonian State: Origins, Institutions and History (Oxford, 1989), 75 argues that a son, but not necessarily the eldest, was preferred. M.B. Hatzopoulos, ‘Succession and Regency in Classical Macedonia’ Archaia Makedonia IV (Thessaloniki, 1986), 279-92 believes a son ‘born in the purple’ had precedence. A more chaotic system is supported by E. Carney, ‘Regicide in Macedonia’ Past and Present 38 (1984), 260-72; W. Greenwalt, ‘Polygamy and Succession in Argead Macedonia’ Arethusa 22 (1989), 31-5 argues that there was no concise, all-encompassing formula, but
death of Alexander the Great there were no competent adult male Temenids left, but the Macedonians remained firmly attached to the royal house, though quarrelling over whether Alexander’s unborn son by Roxane or his mentally defective brother Arrhidaeus should be the nominal king.\footnote{Diodorus 18.2; Arrian Successors = Felix Jacoby, Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker (Leiden, 1950-99; hereafter FGrH), 159F1.3.} Even after their deaths support could be gathered for Alexander’s son Heracles, whom our sources describe as a bastard, until he was murdered in his turn.\footnote{W.W. Tarn, ‘Heracles son of Barsine’ JHS 41 (1921), 18-28, argued that Heracles was an impostor, but P.A. Brunt, ‘Alexander, Barsine and Heracles’ Rivista di Filologia 103 (1975), 22-34, shows that he was probably Alexander’s son. D. Ogden, Polygamy, Prostitutes and Death (London, 1999), xv and 42-7, shows that bastardy is a difficult concept to define in a polygamous society. All of a king’s offspring were legitimate, though some sons had a greater claim to the throne (Greenwalt, ‘Polygamy and Succession’ [as in n.2], 37).}

The Macedonian monarchy did not come to an end with the deaths of the last male Temenids. Instead new dynasties arose, with similar loose rules of succession and equally strong loyalty in the presence of members of the royal house. Polybius 15.25-33 shows the Ptolemies were regarded as the legitimate Macedonian dynasty in Egypt in 204 BC, while for the Seleucid dynasty we may note the defection of the troops of the rebel Molon, when they saw Antiochus III was present, the welcome granted to Antiochus IV against his brother’s murderer, and the overthrow of the usurper Tryphon by Antiochus VII Sidetes and his welcome in the areas conquered by the Parthians.\footnote{Polybius 5.54.2; Appian Syrian War 45; Josephus Jewish Antiquities 13.222; Justin 38.10.5; E.R. Bevan, The House of Seleucus I (London, 1902), 308; cf.} In Macedonia, the Antigonid dynasty gained

before the death of Alexander IV a candidate had to be an Argead. R.M. Errington, ‘The Nature of the Macedonian State under the Monarchy’ Chiron 8 (1978), 100, concludes that a consensus of nobles chose the king from the eligible candidates.
so much popular support that it was only overthrown by the Romans, and even then the Macedonians gave powerful support to the so-called false Philip.6

The question arises, how were these new dynasties able to establish themselves in the place of the now extinct Temenids? What criteria made the new kings acceptable to their Macedonian (and other) subjects?

Each of the three dynasties which succeeded in establishing themselves, the Ptolemies, the Seleucids and the Antigonids, can be shown to have claimed a connection to the old ruling house. In each case the connection is highly dubious, and the claims do not always make the kings of male descent in the Temenid line, and so would not have made them legitimate claimants to the kingship under the original rules.

The Ptolemies advanced two successive claims: first that Ptolemy was an illegitimate son of Philip II (which is chronologically implausible), and then that his mother was a Temenid collateral. The first claim is unlikely to have been advanced if the second had been true, and the second fails to make Ptolemy a male Temenid.7 The Ptolemies also claimed divine descent, like the Temenids. Ptolemy II claimed to be a descendant of Heracles (which probably was part of the claim to Temenid descent) and Ptolemy IV extended this claim to include Dionysus.8 Ptolemy’s claims to


8 Theocritus 17-26; Satyrus FGrH 631F1; P.M. Fraser, Ptolemaic Alexandria I (Oxford, 1972), 45.
obscure birth probably represent another strategy, presenting himself as the favourite of fortune.\(^9\)

The existence of similar claims to Temenid descent can be shown for the other two dynasties, although the details are not clear, and again they seem to be dubious.\(^10\) Seleucus also claimed divine descent—in his case from Apollo (Justin 15.4.3). In this case, the claim was made at the time when Seleucus was making himself into a king, and it does not seem related to a claim to Temenid descent.

It should be noted that in the context of the discussions after Alexander’s death, none of these later dynasts was named as kinsman of the dead king. Instead Q. Curtius Rufus (10.7.8) says that two other Macedonians, Perdiccas and Leonnatus, were appointed as guardians of Roxane’s unborn child, as they were born of royal stock.

None of our sources gives a full account of the royal descent of these two men, but neither of them seems to have been a male Temenid. Perdiccas came from Orestis, and if he were a member of its old royal house, as seems likely, he would be related to the Temenids through the female line.\(^11\) Suda sv Leonnatos tells us that Leonnatus was a relative of

---

\(^9\) Ogden, *Polygamy, Prostitutes and Death* (as in n.4), 68.


Philip’s mother, that is, like Perdiccas, Leonnatus was connected to the royal house through the female line.

Though these royal kinsmen were not eligible to become kings, since they were not Temenids, these two were the first to try to make themselves king, even while there were still male Temenids living. Both hoped to bolster their claim by a further connection to the Temenids in the female line, by marrying Alexander’s full sister Cleopatra.

Leonnatus was the first to make a move, returning to Greece to help Antipater in the Lamian war, and planning to marry Cleopatra on his return to Macedon. But his death at Lamia put an end to these plans. After this, Cleopatra left Macedon, planning to marry Perdiccas, who hoped to gain the rule of the empire by this means. However Perdiccas decided to marry Antipater’s daughter Nicaea instead (at least in the short term), and Cleopatra had only reached Sardis, where she encouraged Eumenes to retreat before Antipater’s advance. By then Perdiccas was dead and his chance to marry Cleopatra had passed.

Cleopatra continued to be an attractive marriage partner for those aspiring to make themselves king of the Macedonians. Diodorus (20.37) tells us that in 308 BC all the dynasts, Cassander, Lysimachus, Antigonus and Ptolemy, hoped to marry Cleopatra because of her distinguished ancestry. She decided to marry Ptolemy, but when Antigonus learnt of her plans he had her murdered before she could leave Sardis.

Cassander had already married another daughter of Philip. Diodorus tells us that after his defeat of Olympias in 316 BC, Cassander had hopes of becoming king of the Macedonians (19.52.1). So he married Thessalonice (19.52.1; she was a daughter of Philip, whom Olympias had

---

12 Plutarch Eumenes 3.

13 Diodorus 18.23; Justin 13.6.4; Arrian Successors = FGrH 159F11.40; Plutarch Eumenes 8.7; cf. Gruen, ‘Coronation of the Diadochi’ (as in n.1), 254.
The Creation of New Dynasties

kept unmarried), founded Cassandreia (19.52.2; this functioned as a replacement for Olynthus, destroyed by Philip II—the foundation of Thessalonica probably occurred at the same time\textsuperscript{14}). Cassander also deprived Alexander IV and his mother Roxane of their royal attendants (19.52.4) and gave royal burials to Adea-Eurydice and Philip-Arrhidaeus, as well as to Eurydice’s mother Cynane (herself a daughter of Philip II [19.52.6]).

By marrying Thessalonice Cassander gave his régime a sort of legitimacy.\textsuperscript{15} He also performed acts which were normally the province of a king, naming a city after himself\textsuperscript{16} and carrying out a royal funeral.\textsuperscript{17} This adoption of royal behaviour, combined with his denial of royal prerogatives to Alexander, would give the impression that it was Cassander who held the royal position and strengthen his claim to be king when he eventually made it. At Tyre in 315 BC, Antigonus cited all these actions as evidence that Cassander was aspiring to the kingship (Diodorus 19.61.2).

A similar use of the royal funeral had already been made by Ptolemy. His diversion of the body of Alexander to Egypt, where he would be responsible for its burial, and not Perdiccas (or someone else) at Aegae, had

\textsuperscript{14} G.M. Cohen, The Hellenistic Settlements in Europe, the Islands and Asia Minor (Berkeley, 1995), 101.

\textsuperscript{15} Hammond, Macedonian State (as in n.2), 31.

\textsuperscript{16} This could be regarded as an act of royalty: J.D. Grainger, Seleukos Nikator (London, 1990), 102. Cassander seems to have been the only dynast to have named a city after himself while there were still Temenids alive. Alexander founded a city, Alexandropolis, while regent for his father in 340 BC (Plutarch Alexander 9) when he was not yet king, but he was still a royal personage at the time.

\textsuperscript{17} Normally the duty of the next king; Hammond, Macedonian State (as in n.2), 24-8.
made a clear claim to personal authority.\textsuperscript{18} Perdiccas made his first priority the recovery of Alexander’s body, ahead of meeting the more serious military threat from Antipater and Craterus. Perdiccas’ failure and death can only have strengthened Ptolemy’s position in the eyes of the Macedonians, both in Egypt and elsewhere.

Thus positioning for an eventual bid for kingship started well before the death of the last male Temenid, but it was not for several years afterwards that any of the future dynasts adopted the title of king. They had been kings in all but name,\textsuperscript{19} and did not seek to risk their real power base. They lacked only one aspect of royal power which the Temenids had enjoyed: the strong loyalty of their subjects. Other Macedonians, including close kin of the rising dynasts, did not feel such loyalty towards someone who was, in origin, of the same status as themselves. Antigonus, who controlled the largest territory, suffered most frequently from such disloyalty.\textsuperscript{20}

Greek cities and native peoples did give the royal title to various dynasts in this period. For example, the Persians conferred the royal title on Antigonus in 316 BC (Diodorus 19.48.1), while the Athenians declared both Antigonus and Demetrius kings in 307 BC, in thanks for the latter’s liberation of their city.\textsuperscript{21} The Athenians had a need, at this time, to ensure


\textsuperscript{19} Gruen, ‘Coronation of the Diadochi’ (as in n.1), 253; R.A. Billows, \textit{Antigonos the One-Eyed} (Berkeley and London, 1990), 155.

\textsuperscript{20} Peithon, an ally against Eumenes, plotted against Antigonus: Diodorus 19.46. Telesphorus, his general in Greece in 312 BC, revolted (Diodorus 19.87), as did Antigonus’ nephew Polemaeus: see Diodorus 20.19.2 on the revolt, IG II\textsuperscript{2} 469 for the correct form of the name; and cf. C. Wehrli, \textit{Antigone et Demetrios} (Geneva, 1968), 97.

\textsuperscript{21} Plutarch \textit{Demetrius} 10.3; Billows, \textit{Antigonos} (as in n.19), 156.
the help of Demetrius and his associates in securing their independence from Cassander, and grants of honours were a way of achieving this. But none of this meant that the dynasts had adopted the royal title in their own usage.

Plutarch Demetrius 17-18 tells the story of how that happened in 306 BC. In what was clearly a pre-arranged set piece, Aristodemus of Miletus, one of Antigonus’ most trusted advisers, came to Antigoneia with the news of Demetrius’ victory at sea over Ptolemy at the Cypriot Salamis. He had his ship anchored off shore, and refused to tell anyone what had happened, arousing anticipation to fever pitch, until he reached the presence of Antigonus himself. Then he announced, ‘King, we have defeated Ptolemy in a sea-battle.’ Antigonus’ friends then produced a diadem and bound it around Antigonus’ head. In turn, the new king produced another diadem and gave it to Aristodemus to crown Demetrius as king.

This has been seen as an election by the Macedonian army, but we should note that Demetrius was made king solely on his father’s appointment, and that a majority of cases of accession of a hellenistic king have no evidence of popular acclamation. The popular acclamation strengthened Antigonus’ position, but it did not create it. We may note that Antigonus had already commenced the building of a city named after himself, although Antigonus did not do so while there was still a living

---


23 Gruen, ‘Coronation of the Diadochi’ (as in n.1), 254; Billows, Antigonos (as in n.19) 155. Diodorus 20.53.2 and Appian Syrian War 54 (271) tell the story with much less detail.

24 F. Granier, Die makedonische Heeresversammlung (Munich, 1931), 99.

25 Gruen, ‘Coronation of the Diadochi’ (as in n.1), 256; Briant, Antigone le Borgne (as in n.10), 314, n.325.
Temenid king, as Cassander had done.

The role of the victory is also significant. Royal power, both for the Temenids and their Hellenistic successors, was closely associated with the idea of military victory. However, the final part of Plutarch’s story, the adoption of the royal title by the other dynasts, shows that a notable victory was not absolutely essential for the adoption of kingship.

Plutarch tells us that Ptolemy adopted the kingly title at once, to avoid the appearance of admitting defeat. However papyrus evidence shows that Ptolemy adopted the title ‘king’ between the first and the eleventh months in 304 BC. This date matches the one given by the Marmor Parium (FGrH 239F B23) of 305/4 BC. This means that Ptolemy’s defeat of the Antigonid invasion of Egypt in 305 BC was too early to have been the occasion of his assumption of the royal title, even though this victory was notable enough for Ptolemy to be thought to have won Egypt by the spear

26 Diodorus 20.47.5 (cf. 21.1.6); Billows, Antigonos (as in n.19), 152 and 296. See also Strabo 13.1.33 and 1.52, on Antigoneia in the Troad.

27 Hammond, Macedonian State (as in n.2), 22; Billows, Antigonos (as in n.19), 244, and Kings and Colonists (Leiden, 1995), 21; Sherwin-White and Kuhrt, Samarkhand to Sardis (as in n.5), 129; Gruen, ‘Coronation of the Diadochi’ (as in n.1), 253.

28 Diodorus 20.53.2 also says that the other dynasts took the royal title promptly. Appian Syrian War 54 mentions Ptolemy. They clearly depend on a common source: see Gruen, ‘Coronation of the Diadochi’ (as in n.1), 257.

29 M.L. Strack, Die Dynastie der Ptolemäer (Berlin, 1897), 181. Gruen (‘Coronation of the Diadochi’ [as in n.1], 257) says between January and June 304; Bevan (House of Seleucus [as in n.5], 28), says demotic papyri show it was not earlier than November 305. Volkmann, RE 23 (1959) s.v Ptolemaios (18), 1621, and E. Will, Histoire Politique du Monde Hellenistique (Nancy, 1972), 75, give the date as 305/4.
for a second time. The Rhodian defeat, with considerable Ptolemaic help, of Demetrius’ siege, which led the Rhodians to declare Ptolemy a god for his part in the victory, is a possible occasion, but it was hardly a decisive victory for Ptolemy himself. Unlike Demetrius’ naval success at Salamis, both Ptolemy’s battles were defensive victories, and did not extend his control over new territories. But why should he have waited until a lesser victory to proclaim himself king?

Cassander did have a decisive victory at this time: his defeat of the Athenian navy at Salamis in 304 BC. Plutarch says that Cassander did not adopt the royal title himself, but was addressed by it by his fellow kings. However, the evidence of Cassander’s bronze coinage and inscriptions shows that he did use the royal title himself—Cassander coined in his own name in bronze, but continued minting silver in Alexander’s name. We can see that Plutarch’s account was again in error. Gruen suggests that Cassander’s adoption of the royal title fell as late as 303/2 BC, but this seems based on the fact that both Plutarch and Diodorus name Cassander last in their lists of the dynasts who adopted the

30 Diodorus 20.76.7 (The first occasion was his defeat of Perdiccas in 322: Diodorus 18.39.5). W.W. Tarn (Cambridge Ancient History VI [Cambridge, 1927], 499) thought the victory in 305 was the occasion Ptolemy became king.


32 Polyaenus 4.11.1; Pausanias 1.35.2; W.S. Ferguson, Hellenistic Athens (London, 1911), 116.

Seleucus' title is said to be a result of his conquest of the Upper Satrapies.\(^{35}\) His conquest of Bactria can well have occurred as late as 306 BC, since cuneiform evidence shows Seleucus was still engaged in a savage war with Antigonus over Babylon as late as 308 BC.\(^{36}\) Now Seleucus' war with Chandragupta ended in the surrender of several provinces in exchange for elephants,\(^{37}\) and was probably too late, even if it were called a victory, to be the basis of Seleucus' calling himself king. So the Indian war is unlikely to have been the occasion of Seleucus' adoption of the royal title. His foundation of the city of Seleuceia-on-the-Tigris probably occurred around this time,\(^{38}\) but we do not know if it was before or after he called himself king.

Cuneiform documents show that Alexander IV was still regarded as king in Babylon in 306 (even though he had been dead for four years),

---

\(^{34}\) Gruen, 'Coronation of the Diadochi' (as in n.1), 259. Diodorus (20.54) names Agathocles, tyrant of Syracuse, after even Cassander, but his adoption of the royal title was associated with the capture of Utica, and cannot be later than 306. Klaus Meister, in Simon Hornblower and Antony Spawforth (eds.), *Oxford Classical Dictionary* (Oxford, 1996), *sv* Agathocles, cites this passage of Diodorus for a date of 305 BC, but gives no reason for placing it after the peace with the Carthaginians in Diodorus 20.79.5, which Diodorus places a year after the adoption of the royal title.

\(^{35}\) Diodorus 20.53.4 mentions the upper satrapies. Justin 15.4.1 refers to a victory over the Bactrians after Seleucus' acquisition of Babylon.


\(^{37}\) Strabo 15.2.9 (724); cf. *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum* 20.326 for Asoka in Arachosia; Gruen, 'Coronation of the Diadochi' (as in n.1), 258; Grainger, *Seleukos Nikator* (as in n.16), 105-9.

\(^{38}\) Grainger, *Seleukos Nikator* (as in n.16), 100.
while 305, the seventh year of Seleucus’ rule was the first in which he was king. This shows further errors in Plutarch’s account: not only was Seleucus not regarded as king among the barbarians before he was by the Greeks, but his adoption of the royal title was apparently earlier than Ptolemy’s. His conquest of the upper satrapies was an even more impressive achievement than Demetrius’ victory at Salamis, putting Seleucus in the same league as Alexander. It would seem that Ptolemy did not feel the need to respond to the first adoption of the royal title by one of his dynastic rivals, but once a second claim was made, Ptolemy needed to follow suit, even though this meant that he made use of a less brilliant victory as the occasion for his royal title.

Finally, Lysimachus does not seem to have been at war at all in this period, much less won any outstanding victory; but none the less he adopted the royal title. He may have been preparing for a war with Dromochaites (the king of the Getae north of the Danube), or just conserving his forces for a favourable opportunity to intervene in the wars of the Successors. Of course, Lysimachus had earlier won notable victories over the Thracian king Seuthes and the Greek cities of the western Pontus (Diodorus 18.14; 19.73; cf. Pausanius 1.9.6). This reputation must have been sufficient basis for Lysimachus to claim the royal title, since otherwise he would have been the only dynast not calling himself

---


40 Grainger, Seleukos Nikator (as in n.16), 105; cf. Gruen, ‘Coronation of the Diadochi’ (as in n.1), 258.


42 Billows, Kings and Colonists (as in n.1), 89.
king. The foundation of Lysimacheia, a capital located for his ambitions of conquest in Asia Minor, is dated by the *Marmor Parium* to 309/8 BC, well before Lysimachus’ assumption of the royal title.\(^43\)

Winning a brilliant victory was not absolutely essential for the new dynasts to proclaim themselves kings, but it did create the opportunities for the first dynasts to do so. Other dynasts, who already had military reputations and did not want to be surpassed by rivals already calling themselves kings, then followed suit. The rivalry between the dynasts and their need to assert their status meant that once some started to call themselves kings, all of them needed to do the same.

Demetrius’ victory in the seabattle at Cypriot Salamis may not have been the most important reason for Antigonus’ proclaiming himself king. He was already an old man in his seventies and needed to pass on the power he held to his chosen heir.\(^44\)

Demetrius had a weakness in any claim to power. Most of the successors drew authority and prestige from the fact that they had served with Alexander,\(^45\) or even with Philip. Demetrius had not served with either and so needed some strong claim if he were to succeed his father in the position which had its origin in a satrapal appointment made by Alexander.

Cassander had had a similar problem, since he had not served with Alexander but stayed in Macedon with his father. In fact, Cassander had


\(^{44}\) Billows, *Antigonos* (as in n.19), 157; Errington, ‘Nature of the Macedonian State’ (as in n.2), 125.

\(^{45}\) Arrian 5.13.1; Briant, *Antigone le Borgne* (as in n.10), 95 and 130; Berve, *Alexanderreich* (as in n.11), nos 480, 668 and 700.
not been able to succeed his father Antipater as regent directly on the latter's death in 319 BC. Instead, Antipater had nominated Polyperchon, the oldest of the companions of Alexander, to succeed him as regent.\(^4\) Tarn argued that this shows Antipater was solely concerned with the welfare of the house of Alexander,\(^4\) and not with advancing the career of his eldest son.

However, Antipater had revived the Persian office of chiliarch and twice appointed Cassander to it, when making arrangements for the succession to his own power in the empire.\(^4\) It seems that Antipater was anxious to pass on his power to Cassander, but did not think he could get away with making him his direct successor. Cassander's lack of any contact with the great achievements of the kings of the old dynasty seems the most likely explanation of his father's hesitation to make his son regent in his place.

In 319 BC, when there were still male Temenids alive and the memory of Alexander was still fresh, Antipater could not do what Antigonus later did in 306 BC, since there were still kings of the Macedonians, even though these kings could not act for themselves. By 306 Antigonus could call himself king without making himself appear to be a usurper, and even present himself as the champion of the now extinct dynasty.\(^4\)

\(^4\) Diodorus 18.48; R.H. Simpson, 'Antigonus, Polyperchon and the Macedonian Regency' Historia 6 (1957), 371-73. Polyperchon's membership in the royal house of Tymphaca (Scholia on Lycophron Alexandra 801) may also have helped make him a more plausible candidate to be regent: cf. L.L. Gunderson, 'The Tymphacans in Curtius' Historia Alexandri' Archaia Makedonia IV (Thessaloniki, 1986), 235. Polyperchon may also have been helped by an image as a champion of ancient Macedonian ways.

\(^4\) W.W. Tarn at Cambridge Ancient History VI\(^1\) (Cambridge, 1927), 471, and Antigonos Gonatas (Oxford, 1913), 6.

\(^4\) Diodorus 18.39 and 47; cf. Arrian Successors = FGrH 156F9.3. The chiliarchy as a Persian office: Diodorus 18.48.5.

\(^4\) Cf. Briant, Antigone le Borgne (as in n.10), 302.
As the Suda says (συ βασιλεία), Alexander’s successors did not become rulers of the world by right of kinship, but by military ability. But once new dynasties were established, their right to kingship became rapidly accepted. When the house of Cassander became extinct in 294 BC, the kingship of Macedon passed to those who were already recognised as kings elsewhere: first Demetrius (Plutarch Demetrius 37), then Pyrrhus of Epirus and Lysimachus (Plutarch Pyrrhus 11.14; 12.1).

The new dynasts did not neglect their resemblance to Alexander. Plutarch tells us (Alexander 4.2) that the successors imitated the appearance of Alexander, with his neck tilted to the left. Pyrrhus, however, had an advantage over the others: he actually looked like Alexander (Plutarch Pyrrhus 8.1). Pyrrhus was, in fact, related to Alexander, being the great-nephew of Alexander’s mother Olympias. But the resemblance was not enough to make Pyrrhus secure on the throne of Macedon—Lysimachus used his non-Macedonian birth against Pyrrhus to expel him from the country (Plutarch Pyrrhus 12.10). A non-Macedonian origin was also held against Eumenes of Cardia (even though he was one of the best generals among the successors, and was able to demonstrate his ties to Alexander), and it helped destroy him in the end.

In 281 BC, after the death of all the diadochi, Ptolemy Ceraunus made himself king of the Macedonians. We have only brief accounts of this event, but there does seem to be enough detail to see the factors which helped him win acceptance. Justin says that Ceraunus’ sister was married

---

50 Cf. Billows, Kings and Colonists (as in n.1), 90.


52 Plutarch Eumenes 13.5 and 8; 14.4; 18.2. Cf. Heckel, Marshals (as in n.11), 346, and Holt, Thundering Zeus (as in n.18), 8.
to Lysimachus, and he was popular, both because of his father’s reputation and because he was the avenger of Lysimachus. Trogus (Justin 17.2.7) names the sister as Arsinoe, while Pausanias 1.16.2 mentions his full sister Lysandra (who had been the wife of Lysimachus’ eldest son and one-time heir, Agathocles). Appian (Syriake 62) mentions that he was the son of Ptolemy Soter and of Antipater’s daughter Eurydice. It seems Ceraunus’ claim to the throne rested on his royal descent and his ties to earlier kings and rulers of Macedon (not to overlook his possession of overwhelming force\(^5\)), and not any success in battle.

A similar situation to what happened after Alexander’s death recurred when Ptolemy Ceraunus was overwhelmed by the Gallic invasion of 279 BC and the Macedonian kingdom collapsed. Two relatives of previous kings were enthroned, and then deposed for inadequacy.\(^5\) Following them, according to Justin 24.5.12, a certain Sosthenes, one of the leading Macedonians, organised resistance and expelled the Gauls. His army wished to proclaim him king, but he refused, as he was ignobilis, making them swear loyalty to him as commander instead.\(^5\) Justin may simply be confused here, but it seems likely that Trogus, or his source, was saying that Sosthenes was a Macedonian of distinguished family, but lacked the connection to either the Temenids or any of the newer dynasties which would make his rule as king acceptable to other leading Macedonians.\(^6\)

\(^5\) Errington, ‘Nature of the Macedonian State’ (as in n.2), 159.

\(^4\) Diodorus 22.3: They were Meleager, brother of Ceraunus, and Antipater, presumably a nephew of Cassander’s—cf. Tarn, Antigonus Gonatas (as in n.47), 147, and Hammond and Walbank, History of Macedonian III (as in n.51), 253.

\(^5\) Tarn, Antigonus Gonatas (as in n.47), 142, renders this as ‘of humble birth.’

We cannot be sure whether Sosthenes might not have been able to make himself king if his victories had continued, but Justin 24.6.2 tells us that Brennus returned, defeated the Macedonians, and drove them back behind their walls. A single victory was clearly insufficient to give a man without connections to the older royal families a claim to become king himself.

Two years later, in 277 BC, Antigonus Gonatas, who was already king,57 but held authority over a most limited kingdom, was able to return to Macedon as its king as a result of the prestige of his defeat of the Gauls at Lysimachia.58 Antigonus had tried to occupy Macedon after the assassination of Seleucus, but was defeated in a sea battle by Ptolemy Ceraunus and forced to retire.59 Only a victory could restore his prestige and make him a plausible candidate as king of the Macedonians. Unlike Sosthenes, Antigonus shared the charisma, not only of his own forebears the Antigonid kings, but also, through his mother Phila, of the house of Antipater,60 and so was able to make himself king of the Macedonians on the strength of the one victory.


58 Diogenes Laertius 2.141, which indicates that the victory preceded the return, seems more reliable than Justin 25.1.

59 Memnon FGrH 434F8.4-6; cf. Justin 24.1.8.

60 His marriage to Phila had helped Demetrius' acceptance by the Macedonians: Plutarch Demetrius 37. Diodorus (19.59.4) tells us about Phila's exemplary qualities; this praise for her goes back to Hieronymus of Cardia (R. Schubert, Die Quellen zur Geschichte der Diadochenzeit [Leipzig, 1914], 56, and J. Hornblower, Hieronymus of Cardia [Oxford, 1981], 229). Phila had also enjoyed respect, and divine status, in Athens in the late 300s: cf. Alexis at Athenaeus Deipnosophists 6.254A.
No further dynasties were able to establish themselves as the legitimate kings over Macedonians or their descendants, but a parallel may be seen in the circumstances in which the Attalids became kings. In his obituary for Attalus I, Polybius (18.41.7) says that Attalus became king after defeating the Galatians in battle, and this is confirmed by Strabo 13.4.2. But Polybius also mentions that Attalus had used his wealth to benefit his friends, so it seems that Attalus had also behaved in a kingly fashion before winning the victory which enabled him to take the royal title.

While Macedonians are recorded in the Pergamene kingdom, for example, Macedonians were given citizenship under Attalus III's will [OGIS 338.14], and there was a Macedonian colony at Thyateira. Macedonians do not seem to have formed a large part of the original Attalid army, but are either Seleucid settlers, or relatively late immigrants. So, the case of Pergamum makes an interesting parallel to the Macedonian kingdoms, but is not itself evidence for Macedonian practice.

New dynasties were also established in Bactria, with at least three being attested, but they were not able to establish their power securely, as Alexander's successors had done. No historian records how the Indo-Bactrians established their claims to be kings. But since Euthydemus is known to have been a Greek from Magnesia (Polybius 11.34.1), and the known hostility of the Greek settlers in Bactria towards Macedonian leaders

---

61 Wilhelm Dittenberger, *Orientis Graecae Inscriptiones Selectae* (Leipzig, 1903) [hereafter OGIS], no.338.

62 Strabo 13.4.4.


seems to have discouraged Macedonians from governing the satrapy; it seems that Bactrian history tells us even less about Macedonian kingship than does Pergamum.

Even so, there are some parallels to be seen. Frank L. Holt has shown that the coinage of the Diodotids, the first new dynasts of Bactria, shows signs of royalty before they called themselves kings. They then advertised a major victory on their coinage (presumably the victory over Arsaces, the later king of Parthia, recorded at Strabo 11.9.3), and, some time later, adopted the royal title. In spite of the non-Macedonian nature of their kingdom in Bactria, it seems that the Diodotids followed the Macedonian pattern to establish themselves as kings. But unlike other successor dynasties, they did not establish lasting loyalty to their dynasty.

There is no single factor which enabled the new dynasties to establish themselves as kings. For the leaders of an army which was Macedonian in origin, some connection with the Temenids was vital if they were to do so. Both service with Alexander (or Philip) and marriage to a Temenid princess were valuable. More distant kinship in the female line did not help Leonnatus or Perdiccas become king, though the later dynasties falsely claimed such a relationship, and were no doubt believed by many.

Behaving in a royal manner, including founding cities and burying the late king, and especially military prowess helped establish an image which supported a claim to be king. A notable victory would assist such a claim, but by itself it was not enough to make a general into a king. The earliest dynasts to claim the royal title, the two Antigonids and Seleucus, did so on the basis of victories which had increased their territory; Ptolemy and Cassander followed suit for lesser victories, and it would seem that Lysimachus called himself king on the strength of his earlier military

---

65 Diodorus 18.7, cf. 18.39.6; Bevan, *House of Seleucus I* (as in n.5), 277, and Woodcock, *Greeks in India* (as in n.64), 62.

66 Holt, *Thundering Zeus* (as in n.18), 97-103.
achievements. Within the space of two years, five new Macedonian dynasties were created, but then no further dynasties were created in areas controlled by Macedonians.

With the extinction of the Temenid family, the Macedonians could find no solution to the problem of ruling their empire but to create new dynasties, similar in nature to the old one. These new dynasties needed to have some connection to the old, charismatic, Temenid dynasty before they could be accepted by the Macedonians and establish their own family charisma and claim to rule, but only the royal attribute of military victory could turn this contact with the older dynasty into a sufficient basis to be accepted as kings.

So, military success was a key element in establishing a claim to be regarded as a king by Macedonians, but royal behaviour in other respects was also an important factor. The Greek historians provide sufficient information to demonstrate this, but they can be shown to make a number of errors: most notably, it was Seleucus, not Ptolemy, who was the second Macedonian dynast to adopt the royal title. At first, a victory which increased the dynast’s power was needed for a ruler of non-royal descent to call himself king. Subsequently, rivalry between the dynasts meant that a defensive victory, or even an established military reputation, were used to claim the royal title.

James L. O’Neil
University of Sydney