

ALEXANDER THE GREAT AND THE HELLENISTIC WORLD

Lecture 23: Antigonids and Macedon

Return of Eumenes

- Polyperchon re-affirms royal support for Eumenes
- Eumenes leaves Cappadocia and goes into Iran to get money and troops
- Antigonos must follow him

Settlement at Triparadeisos

- Antigonos now “*Strategos* of Asia”
 - Marriage of Phila to Demetrios
 - War against Eumenes
- Assassins of Perdikkas
 - ▣ Seleucus – satrap of Babylon
 - ▣ Antigenes – satrap of Susiana

Antigonos and Eumenes

Silence was made, and standing on an eminence he stretched forth his hands, bound as they were, and said: "What trophy, O ye basest of Macedonians, could Antigonos have so much desired to set up over your defeat, as this which ye yourselves are now erecting by delivering up your general as a prisoner? It is not a dreadful thing, then, that in the hour of your victory ye should acknowledge yourselves defeated for the sake of your baggage, implying that victory lies in your possessions and not in your arms, but ye must also send your leader as a ransom for that baggage. As for me, then, ye lead me away undefeated, a victor over my enemies, a victim of my fellow-soldiers; but as for you, by Zeus the god of armies and by the gods who hallow oaths, I bid you slay me here with your own hands. Even should I be slain yonder, it will be wholly your work. Nor will Antigonos find any fault; for he wants a dead and not a living Eumenes. And if ye would spare your own hands, one of mine, if released, will suffice to do the business. And if ye cannot trust me with a sword, cast me under the feet of your elephants, all bound as I am. If ye do this, I will absolve you from your guilt towards me, holding that ye have shown yourselves most just and righteous in your dealings with your own general."

As Eumenes said this, the rest of the throng was overwhelmed with sorrow, and some wept, but the Silver-shields shouted to lead him along and pay no attention to his babbling; for it was not so dreadful a thing, they said, that a pest from the Chersonesus should come to grief for having harassed Macedonians with infinite wars, as that the best of the soldiers of Philip and Alexander, after all their toils, should in their old age be robbed of their rewards and get their support from others, and that their wives should be spending the third night now in the arms of their enemies. At the same time they led him along at a quickened pace.

Plutarch *Life of Eumenes* 17-18

Antigonos in Asia

When this year had passed, Praxibulus was archon at Athens and in Rome Nautius Spurius and Marcus Poplius were consuls. While these held office Antigonos left Aspisas, a native, as satrap of Susianê, while he himself, having decided to convey all the money to the sea, prepared wagons and camels and, taking the treasure, set out for Babylonia with the army. In twenty-two days he arrived in Babylon, and Seleucus, the satrap of the country, honoured him with gifts suitable for a king and feasted the whole army. When Antigonos, however, demanded an accounting for the revenues, Seleucus answered that he was not bound to undergo a public investigation of his administration of this country which the Macedonians had given him in recognition of his services rendered while Alexander was alive. As the dispute grew more serious each day, Seleucus, reasoning from the fate of Pithon, feared that Antigonos would some day seize a pretext and undertake to destroy him; for Antigonos seemed eager to put out of the way all of his associates who were of high rank and were capable of claiming a share in the government. Therefore to avoid this, he escaped with fifty horsemen, intending to retire into Egypt to Ptolemy; for word had spread abroad of Ptolemy's kindness and of his cordiality and friendliness toward those who fled to him.

Diodorus 19.55

New Situation in Greece

Antigonus, after Polyperchon's son Alexander had come to him, made a pact of friendship with him, and then, calling a general assembly of the soldiers and of the aliens who were dwelling there, laid charges against Cassander, bringing forward the murder of Olympias and the treatment of Roxanê and the king. Moreover, he said that Cassander had married Thessalonicê by force, and was clearly trying to establish his own claim to the Macedonian throne; and also that, although the Olynthians were very bitter enemies of the Macedonians, Cassander had re-established them in a city called by his own name and had rebuilt Thebes, which had been razed by the Macedonians. When the crowd showed that it shared his wrath, he introduced a decree according to the terms of which it was voted that Cassander was to be an enemy unless he destroyed these cities again, released the king and his mother Roxanê from imprisonment and restored them to the Macedonians, and, in general, yielded obedience to Antigonus the duly established general who had succeeded to the guardianship of the throne.

Freedom of the Greeks

It was also stated that all the Greeks were free, not subject to foreign garrisons, and autonomous. When the soldiers had voted in favour of these measures, Antigonus sent men in every direction to carry the decree, for he believed that through their hope of freedom he would gain the Greeks as eager participants with him in the war, and that the generals and satraps in the upper satrapies, who had suspected that he was determined to depose the kings who inherited from Alexander, would, if he publicly took upon himself the war in their behalf, all change their minds and promptly obey his orders.

Diodorus 19.61

Syria and Babylon

- Demetrius is defeated by Ptolemy and Seleucus at the battle of Gaza (312)
- Ptolemy gives Seleucus 1,000 troops and money
- Seleucus retakes Babylon

In Asia, after the defeat of Demetrius at Gaza in Syria, Seleucus, receiving from Ptolemy no more than eight hundred foot soldiers and about two hundred horse, set out for Babylon.

Diodorus 19.90

Demetrius

Moreover, he was outstanding both in beauty and in stature, and also when clad in royal armour he had great distinction and struck men with awe, whereby he created great expectations in the multitude. Furthermore, there was in him a certain gentleness becoming to a youthful king, which won for him the devotion of all, so that even those outside the ranks ran together to hear him, feeling sympathetic anxiety on account of his youth and the critical struggle that impended. For he was about to fight a decisive battle not only against more numerous forces, but also against generals who were almost the greatest, Ptolemy and Seleucus. Indeed, these generals, who had taken part with Alexander in all his wars and had often led armies independently, were unconquered up to this time. At all events, Demetrius, after encouraging the crowd with words suitable to the occasion and promising to give gifts to them as they were deserved and to yield the booty to the soldiers, drew up his army for the battle.

Re-conquest of Syria

Antigonus chanced to be in Celaenae in Phrygia; and, on receiving the letter, he rejoiced greatly that his son, young as he was, seemed to have got out of his difficulties by himself and to have shown himself worthy to be a king. He himself with his army set out from Phrygia, crossed the Taurus, and within a few days joined Demetrius. Ptolemy, however, on hearing of the arrival of Antigonus, called together his leaders and friends and took counsel with them whether it was better to remain and reach a final decision in Syria or to withdraw to Egypt and carry on the war from there as he had formerly done against Perdiccas. Now all advised him not to risk a battle against an army that was many times stronger and had a larger number of elephants as well as against an unconquered general; for, they said, it would be much easier for him to settle the war in Egypt where he had plenty of supplies and could trust to the difficulty of the terrain. Deciding, therefore, to leave Syria, he razed the most noteworthy of the cities that he had captured: Akê in Phoenician Syria, and Ioppê, Samaria, and Gaza in Syria; then he himself, taking the army and what of the booty it was possible to drive or carry, returned into Egypt. Now that Antigonus without a fight had gained possession of all Syria and Phoenicia, he desired to make a campaign against the land of the Arabs who are called Nabataeans

A new peace

While these held office, Cassander, Ptolemy, and Lysimachus came to terms with Antigonus and made a treaty. In this it was provided that Cassander be general of Europe until Alexander, the son of Roxanê, should come of age; that Lysimachus rule Thrace, and that Ptolemy rule Egypt and the cities adjacent thereto in Libya and Arabia; that Antigonus have first place in all Asia; and that the Greeks be autonomous. However, they did not abide by these agreements but each of them, putting forward plausible excuses, kept seeking to increase his own power.

Diodorus 19.105

The end of the Argeads

Now Cassander perceived that Alexander, the son of Roxanê, was growing up and that word was being spread throughout Macedonia by certain men that it was fitting to release the boy from custody and give him his father's kingdom; and, fearing for himself, he instructed Glaucias, who was in command of the guard over the child, to murder Roxanê and the king and conceal their bodies, but to disclose to no one else what had been done. When Glaucias had carried out the instructions, Cassander, Lysimachus, and Ptolemy, and Antigonos as well, were relieved of their anticipated danger from the king; for henceforth, there being no longer anyone to inherit the realm, each of those who had rule over nations or cities entertained hopes of royal power and held the territory that had been placed under his authority as if it were a kingdom won by the spear.

War in Asia

- Fighting in Babylon between Seleucus and Antigonus (310/09)
- By 309 Antigonus is defeated and withdraws to Northern Syria
- Foundation of Antigoneia on the Orontes

Athens

- 307: Demetrius liberated Athens from Cassander
- Chains across the harbour had been withdrawn thinking it was Ptolemy's fleet
- Saviour Gods
- Two new Athenian phylai: Antigonis and Demetrias

New Gods

Accordingly Demochares, in the twenty-first book of his Histories, says- "And the Athenians received Demetrius when he came from Leucas and Corcyra to Athens, not only with frankincense, and crowns, and libations of wine, but they even went out to meet him with hymns, and choruses, and ithyphallic mummers, and dancing and singing, and they stood in front of him in multitudes, dancing and singing, and saying that he was the only true god, and that all the rest of the gods were either asleep, or gone away to a distance, or were no gods at all. And they called him the son of Poseidon and Aphrodite, for he was eminent for beauty, and affable to all men with a natural courtesy and gentleness of manner. And they fell at his feet and addressed supplications and prayers to him."

Athen. 253 b-c

Cyprus

- Ptolemy's brother Menelaos is in charge
- Demetrius lands on north of island then sieges Salamis
- Ptolemy sends aid
- Demetrius defeats the Ptolemaic navy off Salamis

Kings!

Upon this, the multitude for the first time saluted Antigonus and Demetrius as kings. Antigonus, accordingly, was immediately crowned by his friends, and Demetrius received a diadem from his father, with a letter in which he was addressed as King. The followers of Ptolemy in Egypt on their part also, when these things were reported to them, gave him the title of King, that they might not appear to lose spirit on account of their defeat. And thus their emulation carried the practice among the other successors of Alexander. For Lysimachus began to wear a diadem, and Seleucus also in his interviews with the Greeks; with the Barbarians he had before this dealt as king. Cassander, however, although the others gave him the royal title in their letters and addresses, wrote his letters in his own untitled name, as he had been wont to do.

Plutarch *Life of Demetrius* 18

Rhodes

- ❑ Demetrius sieged the city of Rhodes (305/4)
- ❑ Receives the title Poliorketes (Beiseger) from this failed siege



A new league

- Demetrius organises the “freed” cities into a new league and leads them against Kassander and Polyperchon in southern Greece

Ipsus

At this time, moreover, bad omens also subdued their spirits. For Demetrius dreamed that Alexander, in brilliant array of armour, asked him what watchword they were going to give for the battle; and when he replied, "Zeus and Victory," also said: "Then I will go away and join your adversaries; they surely will receive me." Moreover, Antigonus, when his phalanx was already forming and he was leaving his tent, stumbled and fell prone upon his face, injuring himself severely; but he rose to his feet, and stretching out his hands towards heaven prayed that the gods would grant him victory, or a painless death before his defeat.

Plutarch *Life of Demetrius* 29

Battle of Ipsus

- Alliance of Lysimachus, Seleucus and Ptolemy
 - ▣ Ptolemy is not at the battle, occupies coast of Syria
 - ▣ Demetrios escapes: Keeps control of his navy and Cyprus and his position in Greece
- New division of the empire
 - ▣ Lysimachos: Thrace + Anatolia as far as the Taurus (except Cilicia and areas under Ptolemaic control)
 - ▣ Seleukos: East + All of Syria from the Euphrates to the Mediterranean (Root of conflict with Ptolemy)
 - ▣ Ptolemy: Egypt + his coastal possessions + refuses to give up control of Syria which he has taken (Root of conflict with Seleucus)

Demetrius and the Fleet

- King without a country
- Naval base at Ephesus, Tyre, Sidon and Cyprus
- Corinth, Island League are loyal
- Demetrius sails to Athens
- Athens rejects him

Demetrius and Seleucus

- Demetrius marries his daughter Stratonice (by Phila, sister of Cassander and daughter of Antipater) to Seleucus
- Alliance with Seleucus?

Demetrius in Macedon

- 297: Cassander dies and so does his oldest son
- Civil war between Cassander's sons
- 295: Demetrius regains Athens
- Demetrius supports Alexandros, but gets there after Alexandros has one
- Kills Alexandros and proclaimed king of Macedon

Losses

- Ptolemy retakes Sidon, Tyre and Cyprus sometime after 294, sends fleet into Aegean
- Pyrrhus attacks from the east
- Lysimachus from the west
- Demetrius flees
- Athens rebels (Austin 55 = SEG 28, 60)

Return to Asia Minor

- Lands with a fleet at Miletus in 286
- Sardis is taken (or goes over to him)

But when Agathocles, the son of Lysimachus, came against him with an army, Demetrius retired into Phrygia; he had determined, if once he could reach Armenia, to bring Media to revolt and attempt the upper provinces, which afforded an ejected commander many refuges and retreats. Agathocles followed him, and though Demetrius had the advantage in their engagements, he was shut off from getting provisions and forage, and was in great straits; besides, his soldiers were suspicious that he was trying to make his way towards Armenia and Media. And not only did famine press them harder, but also some mistake was made in crossing the river Lycus, and a large number of men were carried away by the current and lost.

Plutarch *Life of Demetrius* 46

End of the adventure

But Demetrius, who in the beginning bore up under the misfortune that had come upon him, and presently grew accustomed to it and endured his situation with a better grace, at first, in one way or another, exercised his body, resorting to hunting, so far as he could, or riding; then, little by little, he came to have the greatest indifference and aversion to these sports, took eagerly to drinking and dice, and spent most of his time at these. This was either because he thought escape from the thoughts on his present condition which tormented him when he was sober, and tried to smother his reflections in drunkenness; or because he had convinced himself that this was the real life, which he had long desired and striven to attain, but had foolishly missed it through folly and empty ambition, thereby bringing many troubles upon himself, and many upon others; he had sought in arms and fleets and armies to find the highest good, but now, to his surprise, had discovered it in idleness and leisure and repose. For what other end than this can worthless kings seek to attain by their wars and perils? Wicked and foolish indeed are they, not only because they seek after luxury and pleasure instead of virtue and honour, but also because they do not even know how to enjoy real pleasure or true luxury.

So, then, Demetrius, after an imprisonment of three years in the Syrian Chersonese, through inactivity and surfeit of food and wine, fell sick and died, in the fifty-fifth year of his life. Seleucus was in ill repute for this, and repented him bitterly for having cherished such suspicions against Demetrius, and for allowing himself to be outdone even by Dromichaetes, a barbarous Thracian, who had given Lysimachus, his captive, a treatment so humane and royal.

Follow-up Reading

- Anson, E.M., '[Antigonos, the Satrap of Phrygia](#)', *Historia* 37(1988): 471-477.
- Seager, Robin. "[The Freedom of the Greeks of Asia: From Alexander to Antiochos.](#)" *The Classical Quarterly* 31, no. 1 (1981): 106-12.
- Scott, K. "[The Deification of Demetrius Poliorcetes: Part I.](#)" *American Journal of Philology* 49, no. 2 (1928): 137-166.
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- Billows, R.A. *Antigonos the One-Eyed and the Creation of the Hellenistic State*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990.
- Boiy, T. *Between High and Low. A Chronology of the Early Hellenistic Period* (Oikoumene. Studien zur antiken Weltgeschichte 5), Frankfurt am Main, 2007.