ALEXANDER THE GREAT AND THE HELLENISTIC WORLD

Lecture 6: The Crisis at Babylon

Searching for Scholarly Material

- http://www.gnomon-online.de/

Babylon, June 10 323BC

The king is dead! Long live the king!

- Alexander the Great dies
- Successor?

  → The strongest? The best?
- Signet ring to Perdikkas(?)

Ancient Near East
empires from 700-300 BCE
PHRYGIA
CILICIA
CYPRUS
Sidon
Tyre
Jerusalem
MEDIA
Babylon
BABYLONIA
EGYPT
PERSIS

Macedonian Kingship

- The nature of Argead Monarchy?

  - absolutist

  - democratic

  - something in-between

- It seems the king could do whatever he could get away with, but relation with nobles
- Succession procedure? King, nobles, army?

A Problem of Interpretation

- we do not know what to expect
- it could not happen anyway

A Unique Situation

- On his accession Alexander had eliminated all his rivals for the throne
- except for his mentally ill half-brother Arrhidaios
- Children?

  - Herakles, considered illegitimate?

  - Rhoxane was pregnant (6 or 8 months)

- Very far from home without a clear leader

The contenders for the diadem

Herakles	Roxane's Child	Arrhidaios
•Child •Son of Barsine (Persian) •Un-recognised?	•Unborn •Male? •Half-Persian	•Mentally deficient? •Adult •Argead

And a Problem of Sources

- no contemporary sources preserved
- preserved sources are only relatively informative about the period 336-315.
- almost all the evidence concerns king and army away from home
- evidence from Antigonid Macedonia is not necessarily useful

Reliability of the speeches?

- Most are very short and factual
- fit the context and earlier and later events very well
- the case of Nearchos (married to Herakles half-sister)

A Radical Alternative

- Aristonous proposes to appoint Perdikkas king
- Perdikkas hesitates

  → too many nobles (present and absent) would not accept this

The Reaction of the People

- Meleagros stirs up the soldiers to seize their 'fair share' of the booty
- enthusiasm of the soldiers
- they want Arrhidaios on the throne

The Nobles Counteract

- they close the ranks against the nobles
- compromise:

  - Rhoxane's son king

  - Perdikkas and Leonnatos guardians of the king

  - Antipatros and Krateros viceroys of Europe

Civil War?

- The Infantry (led by Meleagros) does not accept this settlement => revolt
- The nobles and the cavalry flee from the city
- Perdikkas and some of his close collaborators stay to try to come to terms
- Meleagros sends hit squad to kill Perdikkas; he manages to escape

The compromise

Perdikkas manages to reach a compromise:

- Arrhidaios (Philippos III) and Rhoxane's child joint kings
- 3 regents:
    * Perdikkas: commands cavalry
    * Meleagros : commands infantry
    * Krateros: finances
- Antipatros: viceroy of Europe

Perdikkas' machinations

- Perdikkas had made concessions to reach compromise
- he had greater ambitions

  => plans to get rid of Meleagros
- wins Meleagros' confidence
- they organize ritual purification of the army
- Perdikkas seizes ringleaders of revolt
- Meleagros flees and is killed

The final settlement of the nobles

- no more resistance in council of regents
- infantry scared into submission
- nobles revisit the compromise:

  - Rhoxane's child and Philippos III Arrhidaios joint kings

  - Perdikkas sole regent

  - Antipatros and Krateros viceroys of Europe

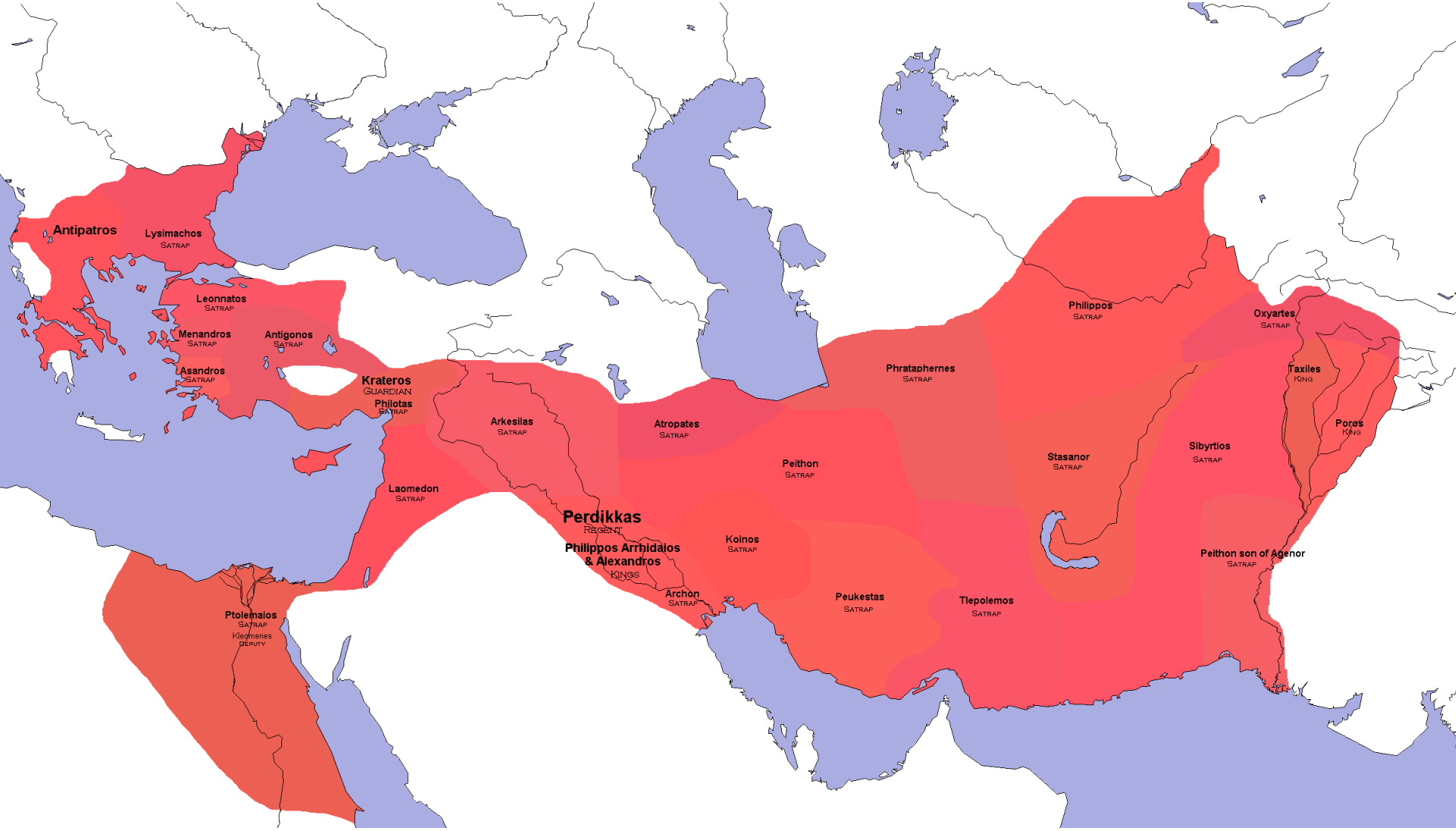
  - Alexander buried at Siwah

  - satrapy distribution

Division of the empire

- Perdikkas – regent
- Antipater – confirmed in Macedon
- Krateros – had been sent to Macedon to replace Antipater, now to share office with Antipater
  - "Protector of the Kings"
- New division of functions and satrapies
  - i.e. Ptolemy to Egypt, Antigonos remains in Phrygia

Satrapies after settlement of 323



Perdikkas' Problems

- What to do with the body of Alexander?
- Where to set up a power base? Macedon?
- Advantage: Time?
- Antipater?

The body of Alexander

- In Babylon
- Wants to be buried in Siwa
- Traditional burial for kings at Vergina (Aigai)

- Solution: build a grand procession carriage and delay

Alexander's body

First they prepared a coffin of the proper size for the body, made of hammered gold, and the space about the body they filled with spices such as could make the body sweet smelling and incorruptible. Upon this chest there had been placed a cover of gold, matching it to a nicety, and fitting about its upper rim. Over this was laid a magnificent purple robe embroidered with gold, beside which they placed the arms of the deceased, wishing the design of the whole to be in harmony with his accomplishments. Then they set up next to it the covered carriage that was to carry it. At the top of the carriage was built a vault of gold, eight cubits wide and twelve long, covered with overlapping scales set with precious stones. Beneath the roof all along the work was a rectangular cornice of gold, from which projected heads of goat-stags in high relief. Gold rings two palms broad were suspended from these, and through the rings there ran a festive garland beautifully decorated in bright colours of all kinds. At the ends there were tassels of network suspending large bells, so that any who were approaching heard the sound from a great distance. On each corner of the vault on each side was a golden figure of Victory holding a trophy. The colonnade that supported the vault was of gold with Ionic capitals. Within the colonnade was a golden net, made of cords the thickness of a finger, which carried four long painted tablets, their ends adjoining, each equal in length to a side of the colonnade….

Diodorus 18.26

A new alliance?

- Perdikkas proposes a marriage alliance to Antipater
- Recall Philip II's use of marriage as a political tool in establishing his rule.

Problems in Greece

- Athens, Aitolian League, a variety of states in northern and central Greece, and Thessaly revolt
- New alliance traps Antipater in Lamia by winter of 323/2
- Antipater needs Krateros' troops
- Athens opens dialogue with Perdikkas to undermine Antipater

The Lamian War

- Leonnatos arrives with an army from Asia, but is defeated (Spring 322)
- Summer 322: Krateros finally arrives
- Combined armies of Krateros and Antipater defeat the Greeks at Krannon

Results of the war

- Each individual state has a separate treaty
- Aitolians refuse and continue to fight
- Athens navy is destroyed in battle (Diodorus 18.8-17)
- Macedonian garrison in the Peiraieus
- New property qualification for citizenship
- Restoration of Samian exiles
- Hunting down and execution of Athenian leaders

Marriage alliances

- Perdikkas finally will receive Antipater's daughter Nikaia (2 years after he first asked)
- Krateros marries Antipater's daughter Phila
- Kleopatra (sister of Alexander) arrives at Sardis (where Perdikkas is to receive Nikaia) and offers herself and an alliance with Olympias to Perdikkas
- Perdikkas marries Nikaia

Growing Problems for Perdikkas

- Krateros wants part of Asia
- Marriage of Philip III to Adea (renamed Eurydice)
- Antigonos (in Phrygia) had refused to help Perikkas and Eumenes – now flees to Antipater and Krateros
- Punish Ptolemy for stealing the body?

Invasion of Egypt

- Winter 321/0
- Fails to cross the Nile near Memphis
  - ~2000 men drown
- Perdikkas assassinated by his commanding officers, who join Ptolemy
- Eumenes condemned to death
- Kings are sent to Antipater who is moving towards Syria

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

Eumenes and Krateros

- Krateros moves against Eumenes in Bithynia
- Krateros dies

Death of Antipater

- Appoints Polyperchon as regent
- Kassander appointed “Chiliarch” under Polyperchon
- Kassander seeks aid from Ptolemy and Antigonos
- Antiognos sends ships

Polyperchon

- Olympias
- Royal decree to restore all exiles to Greek cities
- Army to Greece to win support
- Athens goes over to him

Athens

Now certain Athenians who had been friends of Antipater, of whom Phocion was one, fearing the punishment due them in accordance with the laws, went to Alexander and, by showing him what was to his own advantage, persuaded him to hold the forts for himself and not deliver them to the Athenians until after the defeat of Cassander. Alexander, who had pitched his camp near the Piraeus, did not admit the Athenians to his parley with Nicanor; but by conferring with him in private and negotiating secretly, he made it evident that he did not intend to deal fairly with the Athenians. The people, coming together in an assembly, removed from office the existing magistrates, filling the offices with men from the extreme democrats and they condemned those who had held office under the oligarchy, decreeing the death penalty for some of them, exile and confiscation of property for others, among whom was Phocion, who had held supreme authority under Antipater.

Diodorus 18.65

Athens

- Demetrios of Phaleron
  - Student of Aristotle
  - Installed as governor by Kassander

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

Olympias' return

- Olympias now returns to Macedonia after the offer of support from Polyperchon
- Eurydike (Adea) and Philip III ask Cassander for help
- Eurydike raises her own army and marches against Olympias

Death of Philip III (Diodorus 19.11)

So, as soon as he heard that Eurydicê was at Euia in Macedonia with her army, he hastened against her with the intention of deciding the campaign in a single battle. When, however, the armies were drawn up facing each other, the Macedonians, out of respect for the position of Olympias and remembering the benefits that they had received from Alexander, changed their allegiance. King Philip with his court was captured at once, while Eurydicê was taken as she was making her way to Amphipolis with Polycles, one of her counsellors. But after Olympias had thus captured the royal persons and had seized the kingdom without a fight, she did not carry her good fortune as a human being should, but first she placed Eurydicê and her husband Philip under guard and began to maltreat them. Indeed she walled them up in a small space and supplied them with what was necessary through a single narrow opening. But after she had for many days unlawfully treated the unfortunate captives, she ordered certain Thracians to stab Philip to death, who had been king for six years and four months; but she judged that Eurydicê, who was expressing herself without restraint and declaring that the kingdom belonged to herself rather than to Olympias, was worthy of greater punishment. She therefore sent to her a sword, a noose, and some hemlock, and ordered her to employ whichever of these she pleased as a means of death, neither displaying any respect whatever for the former dignity of the victim whom she was unlawfully treating, nor moved to pity for the fate that is common to all.

Follow-up reading

- Anson, E.M. 1986. "Diodorus and the Date of Triparadeisus" *The American Journal of Philology* vol. 107, no. 2, pp. 208-217.
- Errington, R. M. 1970. "From Babylon to Triparadeisos: 323-320 B.C." *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* , Vol. 90, pp. 49-77.