

V

Ritual and Ceremonial

*And what have kings, that privates have not too
Save ceremony, save general ceremony ...
Creating awe and fear in other men?*

Shakespeare, *Henry V*

*In their outward show of majesty, they were
like actors on a stage.*

Plutarch, *Life of Demetrios* 41.3

5.1 The theatre of kingship

Already in their own time, the magnificence of Hellenistic kings was prodigious.¹ Two thousand years later romanticists still marvelled at the splendours of the Hellenistic Orient.² In

¹ See for instance App., *Intr.* x; Ath. 48f; 49a; 138b-c; Theopomp., FHG I 311 *ap.* Ath. 145a; Sokrates of Rhodes, FHG III 96 *ap.* Ath. 148a; Plin., *NH* 9.119-21. Hellenistic kings, including Alexander, are often accused of over-indulgence, e.g. Arr., *Anab.* 4.8.2; App. 11.3.16.

² Most popular themes in nineteenth century art and literature are the Salomé motif, especially in Late Romantic painting and writing, and the ever popular Kleopatra. The image of Kleopatra as an oriental Queen of the Nile continues to affect popular representations and even serious scholarship (Strootman 2002). Literature about the modern reception of Kleopatra is as abundant as about the historical Kleopatra; see esp. L. Hughes-Hallett, *Cleopatra. Histories, Dreams, and Distortions* (New York 1990), D. Wenzel, *Kleopatra im Film. Eine Königin Ägyptens als Sinnbild für orientalische Kultur*

1902 Edwyn Bevan evoked the court of the Seleukids as some scene from Arabian Nights in *The House of Seleucus*:

There was the army of chamberlains and cooks and eunuchs. There was the display of crimson and gold, the soft raiment, the stringed instruments, the odours of myrrh, aloes, and cassia. ... [But] as we cast round our eyes, we should have observed that while material and colour were of an Oriental splendour, the form was Greek.³

Bevan was convinced that the extravagant ‘oriental’ splendour of the Seleukid court was anathema to the spirit of Hellenic *c.q.* ‘European’ civilisation: like Alexander before them, the Seleukids—originally the champions of Hellenism—eventually degenerated and became decadent Orientals. Although nowadays no historian applies such clichés to the Ancient Near East, the notion that Greece belongs culturally to ‘Europe’, as opposed to the Orient, still dominates the debate.⁴ The ‘East’, however, was far less alien to Greeks and Macedonians than most present-day scholars are willing to admit.

(Remscheid 2005), and the last chapters in P.J. Jones, *Cleopatra. A Sourcebook* (Norman, OK, 2006). F.T. Royster, *Becoming Cleopatra. The Shifting Image of an Icon* (New York 2003), is a postcolonial critique of a supposed ‘europianisation’ of Kleopatra in American cinema, overlooking the fact that the author’s own conception of Kleopatra as an Egyptian *c.q.* African queen is essentially a European ‘orientalistic’ image. Literature about Salomé’s *Nachleben* is comparatively limited; T. Rohde ed., *Mythos Salomé* (Leipzig 2000) offers an anthology of her appearance in literature from the New Testament to the present; see further B. Dijkstra, *Idols of Perversity. Fantasies of Feminine Evil in Fin-de-Siècle Culture* (New York en Oxford 1986), esp. pp. 352-401, and of course Mario Praz’ *Romantic Agony*. The court of Alexander the Great, too, is often depicted as ‘oriental’ and thus decadent, for instance in Gustave Moreau’s tragic representation of ‘Alexander’s Triumph’ of *c.*1885, or Louis Couperus’ *Iskander* (1920). In Oliver Stone’s film *Alexander* (2004) blonde, blue-eyed Macedonians invade Iraq to bring freedom and ‘change’, but fail because they are infected with oriental decadence. On proto-orientalist attitudes towards eastern kings in Greek and Roman writing see Alföldi 1970, 9-25, and M. Gambato, ‘The female kings. Some aspects of the representation of the eastern kings in the Deipnosophistae’, in: D. Braund and J. Wilkins eds., *Athenaeus and his World. Reading Greek Culture in the Roman Empire* (Exeter 2001) 227-30.

³ Bevan 1902 II, 273-4.

⁴ Thus, Hammond 1989,68, contrasts the splendour and ostentation of the ‘oriental’ Achaimenid and Hellenistic courts with the Macedonian royal household of the fifth and fourth centuries: ‘The everyday style of the royal family was modest. The women of the family cooked the food and worked at the loom. When Alexander overthrew the Persian Empire, he was wearing homespun garments

A 'western' bias can of course be recognised in Roman sources, which often turn Hellenistic kings into effeminate despots, using the same stereotypes that Classical Greek writers employed to turn Achaimenid kings into 'others'. But the fantastic wealth and splendour in the sources sprang not from imagination but were based on the images that were actually conveyed by royal pomp and ceremonial. Court ritual and ceremonial were the basic constituents of monarchic representation. Court ritual served to make the charisma of kingship and the ideology of empire substantial, in order to convince both onlookers and participants of its existence. It created a mythic and heroic image of kingship, and presented the king as an epic warrior, a living *heros* or divine saviour who protected the *oikoumene* like a good shepherd takes care of his herd. At the same time ritual, as a controllable and orderly pattern of collective action,⁵ was instrumental in structuring and maintaining power relations within court society, and could be performed to resolve or disguise ambiguity or conflict about social relations by referring to some common goal, interest or belief.⁶

Whenever a Seleukid or Ptolemaic king appeared in public he came both as a man and as the incarnation of royalty, with all the signs of his power and authority. Clothing, weapons, objects, and iconography represented aspects of kingship. Kings were permanently accompanied by a retinue of *philoï*, guards and other members of the royal entourage.⁷ Plutarch says that in the Hellenistic kingdoms it was quintessentially royal to be surrounded

which had been woven at home by his sister and half-sisters.' Not that Argead court culture was immodest, but its apparent modesty was due mainly to its unpretentious scale at that time, which changed with Alexander's world empire; Hammond seems ignorant of the fact that the Persian king too dressed in 'homespun garments', woven by the queen mother and the queen: Hdt. 9.109; for the historicity of the customs described in this Herodotean tale: H.W.A.M. Sancisi-Weerdenburg, 'Περσικὸν δὲ κάρα οὐ στρατός δῶρον: A typically Persian gift (Hdt. IX 109)', *Historia* 37.3 (1988) 372-4. The production of clothing was part of the women's responsibilities for the household, at the same time a (ceremonial) obligation and a privilege; presumably, the custom survived at the courts of the Hellenistic kingdoms.

⁵ T. Turner, 'Groping for the elephant: Ritual as process, as model, and as hierarchical system', in idem, *Secular Rituals Considered. Prolegomena Towards a Theory of Ritual, Ceremonial and Formality* (unpublished, 1974) 19, cited after Lane 1981, 12.

⁶ Lane 1981, 11-2.

⁷ Inseparability of king and *philoï* in public: Polyb. 5.20.8, 43.3; 7.21.1; 8.20.8; Diod. 29.29.1; Liv. 32.39.8; 36.11; 42.15.10, 51.2; Plut., *Pyrrh.* 16.10; Ath. 253b.

‘by a profusion of purple robes and mantles, [and] a throng of messengers and door-keepers.’⁸ ‘His friends surround him’, sang the Athenians when welcoming Demetrios Poliorketes, ‘like stars around the sun’ (below, section 5.3). The number of *philoï* flocking around the king, each with his own status and reputation, showed how much the king was held in esteem by great men, and thus was indicative of his status; conversely, the prestige of the king reflected on those who stood by his side.⁹ When king Perseus went to negotiate with Rome during the Third Macedonian War, ‘a large crowd of friends and bodyguards [was] thronging about him’, a retinue so large that the Roman delegation feared for its own reputation; they demanded that the king came accompanied by only three *philoï*, but Perseus considered this insulting and provocative and refused to come, even though he had himself requested the talks. Tension built up quickly until it was agreed that Perseus would bring his entire retinue provided that he would first deliver hostages.¹⁰

Most behaviour of the *philoï* at court was to some extent regulated, including ‘courtly conduct’, as well as participation in regulated forms of social conduct such as symposia and hunting. Internally, such behaviour was related to the negotiation of status and hierarchy, and

⁸ Plut., *Cleom.* 13.1-2.

⁹ In order to look kingly, the slave leader Tryphon not only wore a royal robe and diadem, but ‘picked out a sufficient number of men endowed with superior intelligence, whom he appointed his counsellors (συνβουλοὶ) and employed as his *sunedrion*.’ The presence of a large crowd surrounding the ruler to ‘strike awe’ in visitors, as Shakespeare says, is encountered at many courts in history. Grand viziers of the Ottoman sultans received foreign ambassadors on Fridays, when the palace personnel received its salary and the central court of Topkapı Palace was crowded with people. In 1526 an ambassador of the Habsburg emperor wrote of the court of Vassili III: ‘The presence of so many people on such a day arises from two causes: so that foreigners may note the size of the crowd and the mightiness of its lord and also that vassals may note the respect in which their master is held.’ B. Picard ed., *Sigmund von Herberstein: Description of Moscow and Muscovy* (London 1969) 61-2. Also ancient sources sometimes acknowledge that the pomp and ostentation surrounding a Hellenistic king was intended to intimidate guests, cf. e.g. Plut., *Luc.* 21.6.

¹⁰ Liv. 42.39.2-7. Cf. Diod. 31.17c, where a Ptolemaic king is deposed in 163 ‘by taking from him his royal retinue’ (θεραπείαν τὴν βασιλικήν); so also Diod. 33.4a, where Diodotos (Tryphon), makes Antiochos, the son of Alexander Balas, king: ‘Binding a diadem about his head and providing him with the retinue (θεραπεία) appropriate to a king, he restored the child to his father’s kingship’ (145). For some further examples see Diod. 32.15.6-7 and 33.5a.

the creation of group coherence.¹¹ Externally, collective ritual action emphasised the unity of the court by conveying images of harmony and solidarity among the *philoï*, and a strong bond between the *philoï* and the king. At the same time, collective ritual behaviour functioned as a means to control access to the court society and keep away outsiders.¹²

Ritual and Ceremonial

Defining royal ritual is a hazardous task. Many modern discussions of ritual start with quoting Edmund Leach's maxim that there is 'the widest possible disagreement as to how the word ritual should be understood.'¹³ Definitions of 'ritual' vary from Roy Rappaport's claim that ritual is 'the basic social act' to Frits Staal's assertion that ritual is 'pure activity, without

¹¹ C. Geertz, 'Centers, kings, and charisma: Reflections on the symbolics of power', in: J. Ben-David and T.N. Clark eds., *Culture and its Creators. Essays in Honor of Edward Shils* (Chicago 1977) 150-71, rightly states that: 'No matter ... how deeply divided among themselves [the members of the elite] may be (usually much more than outsiders imagine), they justify their existence and order their actions in terms of a collection of stories, ceremonies, insignia, formalities, and appurtenances that they have either inherited or ... invented' (p. 152). As a consequence, it is often difficult to tell if public court ceremonial is an expression of the norms and values of its participants, its audience, or both. Moreover, shared values are not necessarily needed for the creation of group solidarity, cf. Kertzer 1988, 76: 'The common reading of Durkheim, that he identified solidarity with value consensus in his interpretation of ritual, misses the strength of his argument. His genius lies in having recognized that ritual builds solidarity *without* requiring the sharing of beliefs. Solidarity is produced by people acting together, not by people thinking together.' In the same vein also the classic interpretation of modern British inauguration rites by E. Shils and M. Young, 'The meaning of the coronation', *Sociological Review* n.s. 1 (1953) 63-81; and C. Geertz, 'Ideology as a cultural system', in: D.E. Apter ed., *Ideology and Discontent* (New York 1964) 47-76, who goes one step further by acknowledging that an (ideal) image of social relations can become a model for (real) social relations.

¹² Cf. H. Ragotzky and H. Wenzel, 'Einführung', in: *id.* eds., *Höfische Repräsentation. Das Zeremoniell und die Zeichen* (Tübingen 1990) 1-16, at 7-8: '[Höfische Repräsentation ist:] Formen der Darstellung, die rituellen Charakter haben und durch die Herstellung bzw. Bestätigung von Gruppenidentität integrierend nach innen und abgrenzend nach aussen wirken.'

¹³ E.R. Leach, 'Ritual', in: D.L. Sills ed., *The International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences* 13 (New York 1968) 521-3.

meaning or goal'.¹⁴ For the social scientist David Kertzer (political) ritual is basically 'an analytic category that helps us deal with the chaos of human experience and put it into a coherent framework'.¹⁵ Ritual can have multiple functions; its meaning cannot be pinned down to one exclusive explanation. The underlying meaning of ritual is not more relevant than the ritual act itself. Royal ritual usually appeals to tradition—which can be both 'real' and invented—and to the divine. Mainly in the 1970's and 1980's efforts have been made to distinguish a separate category of secular political ritual, or 'ceremonial', as opposed to magico-religious 'ritual'. This is not helpful for the study of Hellenistic kingship.¹⁶ More

¹⁴ R.A. Rappaport, *Ecology, Meaning and Religion* (Richmond, Cal., 1979) 174; F. Staal, 'The meaninglessness of ritual', *Numen* 26.1 (1975) 9; both cited after C. Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* (New York and Oxford 1992).

¹⁵ D.I. Kertzer, *Ritual, Politics and Power* (New Haven and London 1988) 9, cf. *idem*, 'Politics and ritual', *Anthropological Quarterly* 47 (1974) 374-89. For a critical discussion of the history of the scholarship devoted to ritual see Bell 1992, 19-66; cf. the papers collected in D. de Coppet ed., *Understanding Ritual* (London and New York 1992). The study of political ritual as *secular* ritual was *en vogue* among sociologists in the 1970's and 1980's; see e.g. R.E. Goodin, 'Rites of rulers', *British Journal of Sociology* 29.3 (1978) 281-99; C. Lane, *The Rites of Rulers. Ritual in Industrial Society: The Soviet Case* (Cambridge 1981); S. Wilentz, *Rites of Power* (Philadelphia 1985). A different approach to the symbolics of power, integrating history, sociology and anthropology, was proposed by Edward Shils and Clifford Geertz (see below). The standard textbook for the modern historical and anthropological approach of political ritual is Kertzer 1988, *op. cit.* above. The main thrust of his argument is that rituals and symbols provide a way of understanding the world, and that political reality is in part created through symbolic means: 'political rites are important in all societies, because political power relations are everywhere expressed and modified through symbolic means of communication' (178). Of importance are also the papers collected in D. Cannadine and S.R.F. Price eds., *Rituals of Royalty. Power and Ceremonial in Traditional Societies* (Cambridge 1987), particularly Cannadine's introduction 'Divine rites of kings' at pp. 1-19.

¹⁶ Going beyond Durkheim's belief that even religious ritual pertains as much to society as to the supernatural, scholars studying political ritual have been at pains to erase the religious aspect rigorously from the definition. For example Goodin 1978 is concerned with developing a typology of political ritual of which the 'most striking feature [is] the exceedingly limited role accorded to religious aspects of ritual behaviour' (p. 282); Goodin holds that 'ritual' appeals to the supernatural and 'ceremonial' does not, citing Evans-Pritchard and other anthropologists who define 'ritual' as magico-religious ritual (p. 282 n. 4). Also S. Lukes, 'Political ritual and social integration', *Sociology* 9 (1975) 289-308, distinguishes religious ritual and secular ceremonial. Others, like Christel Lane, see

useful is Victor Turner's typology: 'ceremonial' *indicates* while 'ritual' *transforms*.¹⁷ This understanding will be applied in what follows: ceremonial communicates royal ideology to on-lookers; ritual does the same but also has the power to turn men into kings, or gods, elevating them above the others.

The significance of royal ritual

Why is royal ritual crucial for monarchy? In *Rituals, Politics, and Power*, David Kertzer summarises the importance of court ritual and ceremonial thus:

Where the gap between rulers and ruled is greatest, rites of rulers are most highly developed. The logical outcome of the sacralisation of power is the divinisation of the ruler, who reigns not by force, still less by illusion, but by supernatural powers vested in him. Such an ideology cannot take hold without a powerful ritual through which the ruler's supernatural power is made visible to the population.¹⁸

According to David Cannadine there are two basic questions historians and anthropologists should ask when studying political ritual, the first being 'what is the connection between divine and terrestrial order?', and the other 'what is the relationship between power and pomp?'.¹⁹

no distinction between the two words (Lane 1981, 14-5). Lane's definition of 'ritual' is durkheimian: 'a stylised, repetitive social activity which ... expresses and defines social relations' (p. 11). On Durkheim's views of religion and ritual as means of social control see Bell 1992, 23-5, 171-9, 217-8. The element of repetition, characteristic of many rituals, does not mean that ritual is static or conservative; on the dynamic nature of (monarchic) ritual: M. Gilbert, 'Aesthetic Strategies: The Politics of a Royal Ritual', *Africa* 64.1 (1994) 99-125, at 98 with n. 1 at p. 119; cf. id., 'The Cracked Pot and the Missing Sheep', *American Ethnologist* (1988) 213-29, where an account is given of a royal ritual being modified while being enacted. This said, it ought to be added that there may also be some sense in the approach of MacCormack 1981, *passim*, who uses 'ritual', 'ceremonial', and 'liturgy' indiscriminately.

¹⁷ V. Turner, *The Ritual Process. Structure and Anti-Structure* (Chicago 1966; 2nd edn. Harmondsworth 1969); for his influence on Ancient History: H.S. Versnel, 'Een klassieke antropoloog in de klassieke wereld', *Antropologische verkenningen* 13.4 (1994) 46-55.

¹⁸ Kertzer 1988, 52.

¹⁹ Cannadine 1987, 6.

The first constituent of Cannadine's twofold central question betrays the influence of Clifford Geertz. In his classic paper 'Centers, kings, and charisma' (1977), Geertz reconsiders the weberian concept of charisma by stressing the *symbolic* value individuals possess in relation to the central values of a given society. Thus, charisma is not understood as merely the appealing personality of a popular individual, but, contrarily, as a phenomenon that is part of the social order.²⁰ In Geertz's view, charisma can only exist 'in the point or points in a society where its leading ideas come together with its leading institutions to create an arena in which the events which most vitally affects its members' lives take place. ... It is a sign, not of popular appeal or inventive craziness, but of being near the heart of things.'²¹ Drawing on earlier work of the sociologist Edward Shils,²² Geertz encourages us...

... to look for the vast universality of the will of kings ... in the same place as we look for that of gods: in the rites and images through which it is exerted. More exactly, if charisma is a sign of involvement with the animating centers of society, and if such centers are cultural phenomena and thus historically constructed, investigations into the symbolics of power and into its nature are very similar endeavors. The easy distinction between the trappings of rule

²⁰ This of course implies that symbols are not static: their significance depends substantially on context; unfortunately, the scarcity and unevenness of sources for Hellenistic royal ritual thwarts any attempt to contrast the use of symbols in a significant number of, say, coronation rituals. An example of a successful attempt at doing so for a better documented era is Å. Boholm, *The Doge of Venice. The Symbolism of State Power in the Renaissance* (Gothenburg 1990).

²¹ Geertz 1977, 151. Geertz in his turn has been influenced by the work of especially Edward Shils. In their classic discussion of the British coronation (1953), Edward Shils and Michael Young, conclude that public monarchic ritual is instrumental in holding the society together by reaffirming the 'sacred' moral standards which constitute it as a society and renewing its devotion to those standards: 'In an inchoate, dimly perceived and seldom explicit manner, the central authority of an orderly society, whether it be secular or ecclesiastical, is acknowledged to be the avenue of communication with the realm of the sacred values' (p. 80). This interpretation of the coronation as an act of communion is based, as Shils and Young are prone to emphasise (p. 67), on Durkheim's belief that (religious) ritual is a means of expressing and dramatising the 'system of ideas with which the individuals represent to themselves the society of which they are members': E. Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*. Translated by J.W. Swain (London 1915) 225; cf. Lukes 1975, 292. The interpretation is also akin to Frazer's idea that (sacred) kings symbolised the totality of the society, and were symbolic mediator between the domain of the supernatural and the domain of mortal human beings.

²² E. Shils, *Center and Periphery. Essays in Macrosociology* (Chicago 1975).

and its substance becomes less sharp, even less real; what counts is the manner in which, a bit like mass and energy, they are transformed into each other.²³

Here Geertz challenges the conventional claim that political ideology functions as a means to conceal the ‘actual’ (unequal and exploitative) realities of power. In fact, Geertz turns this notion upside down:

The intense focus on the figure of the king and the frank construction of a cult, at times a whole religion, around him make the symbolic character of domination too palpable for even Hobbesians and Utilitarians to ignore. The very thing that the elaborate mystique of court ceremonial is supposed to conceal—that majesty is made, not born—is demonstrated by it.²⁴

Geertz has been criticised for making the ritual act itself secondary to its implicit message.²⁵ Although such criticism is certainly justified, Geertz’s understanding of royal ritual as symbolic remains useful. Royal ritual and court ceremonial went beyond simply propagating or explaining ideology: it turned the ideal of kingship into tangible reality for both spectators and participants, or, as Geertz puts it: ‘In ritual, the world as lived and the world as imagined ... turn out to be the same world.’²⁶

Monarchy on stage

Part of the act of exercising power, was its display. Palace architecture, public spectacle, luxurious ostentation, solemn ritual, ruler portraits and court poetry – it all added up to the presentation of power as something tangible. The grandeur, wealth and beauty of the court

²³ Geertz 1977, 152. cf. idem, *Negara. The Theatre State in Nineteenth Century Bali* (Princeton 1980), in which Geertz suggests that at this Balinese court, ‘pomp was not in the service of power, but power was in the service of pomp’.

²⁴ Geertz 1977, 153.

²⁵ Bell 1992; P.H.H. Vries, ‘Clifford Geertz en de interpretatieve antropologie’, in: id, *Verhaal en Betoog. Geschiedbeoefening tussen postmoderne vertelling en sociaal-wetenschappelijke analyse* (Leiden 1995) 121-34.

²⁶ C. Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York 1973) 112. Cf. E. Will, *Rev.Phil.* (1960) 76-85, who suggests that royal ritual incorporates ‘une pensée informulée’. Kertzer 1988, 101, states that: ‘Successful [political] ritual ... creates an emotional state that makes the message uncontested because it is framed in such a way as to be seen as inherent in the way things are. It presents a picture of the world that is so emotionally compelling that it is beyond debate.’

gave the impression that it was desirable and beneficial to be part of the monarchic system. It was contrasted to the barbarity and cruelty of the monarchy's adversaries, and the nasty fate of 'traitors'.

The court as the stage for the theatre of kingship – it is one of the principal functions in Jürgen von Kruedener's model for the study of the court.²⁷ In the Hellenistic age, the similarity of royal ceremonial to theatrical performance was recognised, and often the two were equated.²⁸ When Antiochos IV celebrated games and a festival at Daphne in Syria (166 or 165), Diodoros comments that:

Antiochos brought together the most distinguished men from virtually the whole world, adorned all parts of his palace in magnificent fashion, and having assembled it in one spot, as it were, put his entire kingdom upon a stage.²⁹

Equation of kingship with theatrical performance is also apparent from Plutarch's account of the assumption of the diadem by the Successors, which

... did not mean the mere addition of a name or a change of fashion, but it stirred the spirit of the men, lifted their thoughts high, and introduced into their lives and dealings with others

²⁷ Kruedener 1973, 21-5.

²⁸ The *locus classicus* is Plut., *Demetr.* 41.3: '[The Diadochs] imitated Alexander in the pomp and outward show of majesty, like actors on a stage'. H. von Hesberg, 'The king on stage', in: B. Bergmann and C. Kondoleon eds., *The Art of Ancient Spectacle* (Washington 1999) 65-75, has collected more examples of Greek tyrants and Hellenistic kings performing as actors in and outside the theatre; I find it difficult to agree with Hesberg's claim there was 'widespread aversion to [the kings'] theatrical excess, which in the eyes of the spectator, was associated with overblown pretence and inauthenticity' (p. 70). On the widespread Hellenistic notion that public ritual was a similar to drama see A. Chaniotis, 'Theatricality beyond the theatre: Staging public life in the Hellenistic world', in: B. le Guen ed., *De la scène au gradin. Théâtre et représentations dramatiques après Alexandre le Grand dans les cités hellénistiques. Actes du colloque, Toulouse 1997*. Pallas 41 (Toulouse 1997) 219-59. M.H. Wikander, *Princes to Act. Royal Audience and Royal Performance, 1578-1792* (Baltimore 1993) 4: writing about early modern kings playing themselves in dramatical performances, Wikander comments that 'playing the king and being the king are not essentially different activities, for the thing itself is as much an imagined construct as any part a playwright might sketch out for an actor. The king is a type.' In modern anthropological literature, the compelling analogy between drama and ritual is also recognised, cf. Gilbert 1994, 119 n. 2 with further literature.

²⁹ Diod. 31.16.1.

pomposity and ostentation, just as tragic actors adapt to their costume their gait, voice posture at table, and manner of addressing others.³⁰

Moreover, kingship was also literally put on a stage, as the public appearances of kings frequently took place in theatres. For instance in 297 Demetrios Poliorketes addressed the Athenians while standing on a theatrical stage:

He ordered all the citizens to assemble in the theatre. He surrounded the rear and sides with troops and lined up his personal guard at the back of the stage. Then he himself, like a tragic actor, made his appearance down one of the stairways at the side.³¹

The stage for the theatre of royalty was first of all the palace, specifically its public extensions: theatres and other structures where great crowds could assemble were consciously built near royal palaces, or even integrated in the palatial complex. This was taken over by the Roman emperors: the Circus Maximus was joint to the Palatine comparably as e.g. the integration of *basileia* and theatre in Pergamon or Aigai, and in Constantinople the great hippodrome, where the emperor appeared in front of the people, was a buffer zone between city and palace.³² During major festivities whole cities became the stage for the theatre of kingship, as processions moved along the main streets, passing by the principal sanctuaries and monuments, and guests of honour watched from temporarily erected tribunes.³³

³⁰ Plut., *Demetr.* 18.3.

³¹ Plut., *Demetr.* 34.3. The presence of so many soldiers, Plutarch adds, 'frightened the Athenians like never before, but with the very first words that Demetrios spoke, their fears disappeared'. Plutarch's reconstruction of the event leaves no doubt that the soldiers surrounding the theatre were *meant* to strike fear into the Athenians: in 297 Demetrios was at war with Athens and had starved the city into surrender; but in his speech Demetrios' presented himself as a saviour and a benefactor of the Athenians (typically, the first benefaction announced by Demetrios was the presentation of a hundred thousand bushels of wheat to end the famine that he himself had caused). The soldiers therefore conveyed a twofold message: that the king's authority was based on armed force, and that his military power qualified him as an able protector of Athens, so that the Athenians 'could hardly find words to express their joy'.

³² In the Byzantine Empire the ritual of coronation was still conceived as a piece of theatre: R. Till, 'Die Kaiserproklamation des Usurpators Procopius', *Jahrbücher für fränkische Landesforschung* 34/35 (1974/1975) 75-83.

³³ On the significance of the temporary platform (βῆμα): Nielsen 1994, 18, 131.

5.2 Accession rites

If we accept Turner's assertion that ritual transforms and ceremonial indicates, then the inauguration of the king is the central ritual of monarchy. In this chapter, not only accession rites but also death rituals and burial will be discussed. The installation of the new king and the burial of his predecessor were two sides of the same ritual event: the transmission of *basileia*, preferably from father to son. Succession also meant that the son became the new master of the household. The obligation of the successor to pay the last honours to his predecessor—and, if necessary and possible, to revenge his death—was an integral part of the coronation. Thus, in 336 Alexander, 'succeeding to the kingship, first inflicted due punishment on his father's murderers, and then devoted himself to the funeral of his father.'³⁴ In many respects, burial and inauguration, *i.e.* the public transportation of the body or urn to its final resting place and the presentation of the new king before the army and the populace, are akin to the ceremonial entry.

From death to burial: ritual mourning and anomy

Between the death of the king and the rites of burial and inauguration, time elapsed. The interval between death and burial was ritualised as a period of mourning, during which the (embalmed) body was expected to lie in state. Sometimes the body was cremated before the accession of the successor took place, in which case the urn and the regalia were used a substitute for the body (see also the section on the 'empty throne', below). This allowed time for the burial and inauguration to be prepared, the army to be assembled and its allegiance secured, and the succession to be managed. The presence of the army was imperative for the inauguration of the new king.³⁵ When the king had died in the field, the ashes or the embalmed body had to be brought to the royal tombs. Time was also needed for foreign embassies and dignitaries to be able to travel to the court. When Antiochos, the favourite son and intended successor son of Antiochos the Great, died, relations between the Seleukid court and the outside world were formally brought to a standstill during the period of mourning, as if time itself had stopped for a while:

³⁴ Diod. 17.2.1.

³⁵ The necessity to draw the army together before a new king could be installed already existed in the pre-hellenistic Macedonia, and was also customary in the Molossian kingdom in Epeiros: Walbank 1984, 226.

There was a great sorrow at the court ... [and] grave mourning filled the palace for several days; and the Roman ambassador, who did not want to be an untimely guest at such an inconvenient moment, retired to Pergamon ... [for] the court was closed during the mourning.³⁶

Thus the kinsmen of the deceased king lock themselves up in the palace as if in a grave; this in turn may mean that they were symbolically dead during the interregnum.³⁷ This concerned mostly the prince, who consequently may have been considered 'reborn' at his accession to the throne.

In early states, also outside the Near East, the interregnum between death and coronation was often considered a period of *anomia*, 'lawlessness'. Because the king personified, and was believed to guarantee, law and order, the absence of a king necessarily resulted in a temporary breakdown of civilisation.³⁸ In many ancient cultures the period of anomy between the old and the new was enacted on a regular basis in the new year ritual, often including some sort of accession rite, and sometimes connected with myths of creation. In addition to these rituals, a genuine belief seems to have existed that in periods of transition, especially before the accession of a new king, the world was struck by 'real' anomy. Indeed, this expectation often was all too real, since a king's death frequently resulted in actual anarchy, *c.q.* armed conflict over the succession and rebellions of vassals and cities.³⁹ The

³⁶ Livy 35.15.3-7, after Polybios; cf. Bickerman 1938, 32. A variant expression of the court being 'closed' is in Plut., *Mor.* 184a: when Antiochos heard of the death of his brother (and rival) Seleukos, '[he] laid down his purple and assumed a dark robe', *i.e.* was no longer king during the mourning.

³⁷ Thus concludes Boholm 1990, 266-71, discussing a remarkably similar ritual of a 'closed palace' during the mourning for the Venetian doge.

³⁸ Claessen, 1970, 13, 38ff. 71, 108. When Hephaistion died, Alexander 'proclaimed to all the peoples of Asia that they should sedulously quench what the Persians call the sacred fire, until such time as the funeral should be ended. This was the custom of the Persians when their kings died, and people thought that the order was an ill omen, and that heaven was foretelling the king's own death' (Diod. 17.114-115). For an exhaustive survey of *anomia* following the death of a ruler see H.S. Versnel, 'Destruction, *devotio* and despair in a situation of anomy: The mourning for Germanicus in triple perspective', in: G. Piccaluga ed., *Perennitas. Studi in onore di Angelo Brelich* (Rome 1980) 514-618, esp. the theoretical discussion at 577-605.

³⁹ P. Skalník, 'Early states in the Voltaic basin', in: H.J.M. Claessen and P. Skalník eds., *The Early State* (The Hague 1978) 485; cf. Claessen 1978, 556.

eventual installation of the new king was consequently presented as the restoration of Law, as a victory of order over chaos. Evidence on the Hellenistic kingdoms offers many signs of the belief that during mourning the world was in the grip of chaos. The famous decree of Ilion of perhaps *c.* 278, records how the new Seleukid king Antiochos I restored peace by suppressing uprisings in Syria and the East, which had broken out after the death of his father Seleukos Nikator:

King Antiochos, the son of king Seleukos, at the beginning of his reign, pursued a wise and glorious policy in re-establishing the peace and the former prosperity of the cities of the Seleukis which were suffering misfortune due to the rebels against the king's cause; and in addition he launched campaigns against those who were threatening his affairs and regained his ancestral kingship; and thus, engaging in a glorious and just undertaking, with his friends and his army, he was avid to come to battle; with divine favour and aid he has restored the ancestral arrangements. Now arriving at this side of the Tauros Mountains, he has with all enthusiasm and zeal restored peace to the cities and has gloriously enhanced his affairs and his kingship, mostly through his personal excellence, and with the support of his friends and army.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ OGIS 219. Definite proof of Antiochos' legitimacy was the crushing defeat he inflicted on the Celts in the so-called Battle of the Elephants. In *c.* 277 Celtic tribes had crossed the Hellespont, spreading terror in Mysia, Lydia and Bithynia; the Greek *poleis* together with Seleukid provincial forces resisted the invaders but were not able to defeat them; for a detailed account of these events see M. Launey, 'Un épisode oublié de l'invasion galate en Asie Mineur', *RÉA* 46 (1944) 217-234; cf. Will 1982 I, 142-4. After Antiochos' victory over the rebels in the Seleukis he marched to western Asia Minor with his main force and after a brief campaign routed the Celts in a pitched battle: Bevan 1902, 142-4; Kuhrt & Sherwin-White 1993, 32-4; B. Bar-Kochva, 'On the sources and chronology of Antiochus I's battle against the Galatians,' *PCPhS* 199 (1973) 1-8; M. Wörrle, 'Antiochos I., Achaïos der Ältere und die Galater,' *Chiron* 5 (1975) 59-87. Because of this victory, Antiochos took the title of *sōtēr*, apparently in a ritual on the battlefield in which he was crowned victor by his troops: App., *Syr.* 65; Lucian, *Zeuxis* 9. Antiochos consequently used this victory to put himself on a par with his ancestor Apollo, who had saved Delphi from the Celts in 279: Strootman 2005a, 115-7. He established a cult of Apollo Soter in Seleukeia, the royal city where he had buried his father, and promoted a dynastic cult of Apollo throughout the empire, replacing Zeus with Apollo on the obverse of Seleukid coins: Kuhrt & Sherwin-White 1993, 28; Bevan 1902, 143.

A similar restoration of peace and order, this time with reference to Egyptian religion, is described in the Memphite decree commemorating the reinstatement of Ptolemaios VI:

[King Ptolemaios on his accession] took all care to send soldiers, horsemen, and ships against those who came by the shore and by the sea to make an attack on Egypt; he spent a great amount in money and grain against these [enemies], in order to ensure that the temples and the people who were in Egypt should be secure; he went to the fortress [which had] been fortified by the rebels with all kinds of work, there being much gear and all kinds of equipment within it; ... the king took that fortress by storm in a short time; he overcame the rebels who were within it, and slaughtered them in accordance with what Pre and Horus son of Isis did to those who had rebelled against them in those places in the Beginning; [as for] the rebels who had gathered armies and led them to disturb the *nomes*, harming the temples and abandoning the way of the king and his father, the gods let him overcome them [and] at Memphis during the festival of the Reception of the Rulership ... he had them slain on the wood.⁴¹

The death of Ptolemaios V Epiphanes

An important piece of evidence for the rites of transmission of kingship is Polybios' account of the inauguration of the infant king Ptolemaios V. His parents, Ptolemaios IV and Arsinoë III had been murdered in *c.* 204. Polybios describes how the death of the ruling couple was made public by the leading men of the *sunedrion* by means of a formal announcement to the members of the court, the palace guards, and representatives of the army:

After four or five days, erecting a tribune in the largest colonnade of the palace (*aulē*), they summoned a meeting of the hypaspists, the courtiers (*therapeia*), as well as of the commanders of the infantry and cavalry. When all these had assembled, Agathokles and Sosibios mounted the tribune, and in the first place acknowledged the death of the king and queen and ordered the audience to go into mourning accordance with custom. After this they gave the diadem to the boy and proclaimed him king. Then they read a forged will, in which it was written that the king appointed Agathokles and Sosibios guardians of his son. They beseeched the army officers to remain loyal and maintain the boy in his rule (*archē*). Afterwards they brought in

⁴¹ OGIS 90. Translation of the demotic text by R.S. Simpson, *Demotic Grammar in the Ptolemaic Sacerdotal Decrees* (Oxford 1996) 258-71; cp. the Amnesty Decree of Ptolemaios VIII (*PTeb.* 5). Note the equation of the king's restoration of order with a primordial victory of the gods over chaos. Another portion of this text is quoted further on. On priestly honorific decrees for the Ptolemies see Hölbl 2001, 162-9.

two silver urns, the one said to contain the remains of the king and the other those of Arsinoë. ... Hereupon they at once celebrated the funeral. ... The people fell into such a state of distraction and affliction that the city was full of groans, tears, and ceaseless lamentation, a testimony, in the opinion of those who judged correctly, not so much of affection for Arsinoë as of hatred of Agathokles. The latter, after depositing the urns in the vault of the Royal House, ordered the public mourning to cease, and as a first step granted two month's pay to the troops, feeling sure of taking the edge off their hatred by appealing to the soldier's spirit of avarice, and in the next place imposed on them the oath they were accustomed to take on the proclamation of a new king.⁴² ... The courtiers began to occupy themselves with the celebration of the proclamation (*anaklētēria*) of the king. ... After preparations had been made on a grand scale they carried out the ritual in a manner worthy of the kingship.⁴³

In this text the rites of inauguration and burial are integrated. Both are divided into two distinct parts. First, the former monarch is cremated and his death announced, and at the same time the new king is adorned with the diadem. Next the period of mourning begins. Polybios rationalises the mourning as an expression of dissatisfaction on the part of the populace; this contradicts his statement that the mourning rites were performed 'according to custom'. Polybios' probably misinterprets a contemporary source, as his description of the mourning among the citizens of Alexandria hints at ritualised anomy: 'The people fell into such a state of distraction and affliction that the city was full of groans, tears, and ceaseless lamentation.' Similar behaviour of the citizens of a royal city is described by Diodoros concerning the death of the Antiochos Sidetes in 129 BCE: 'When Antioch received the news of Antiochos' death, not only did the city go into public mourning, but every public house as well was dejected and filled with lamentation.'⁴⁴ The period of mourning was also expressed by the wearing of dark

⁴² Polyb. 15.25.3-19.

⁴³ Polyb. 18.55.3-4.

⁴⁴ Diod. 34.17.1. Sidetes fell in battle against the Parthians, and the people of Antioch, Diodoros explains, also lamented relatives and fellow-citizens who were killed with him; it is strange however that Diodoros mentions only such public grief for the royal capital Antioch, where only a small part of the army came from. Cf. Polyb. 8.21.6-7: when a messenger of Antiochos III brought news of the death of Achaïos, who had proclaimed himself king in Asia Minor, to his soldiers in Sardis, demanding also their immediate surrender, 'there was at first no answer from those in the citadel but loud wailing and extravagant lamentation. ... After this outburst the garrison continued in great perplexity and hesitation.'

clothing.⁴⁵ Mourning garments were worn by members of the royal family, and probably by the rest of the court as well, perhaps also by common subjects. Finally the mourning was ended at the command of Agathokles, *c.q.* of the new king, since Agathokles as Ptolemaios V's *epitropos* acted on behalf of the king.⁴⁶ Then part two of the burial-*cum*-inauguration ritual took place: the silver urns containing the ashes of the deceased monarchs were placed in their tombs near the Sema, and the new king was proclaimed king (ἀναδείξις τῶν βασιλέων) in a rite of acclamation, performed by the army. Through this last ritual the situation returned to normality. The successor emerged from the mourning as if reborn, signified by his putting off of the mourning clothes and the assumption of the diadem and royal robe.⁴⁷

Royal burials

Burial was an important royal pageant. The transportation of the urn, or the coffin containing the king's embalmed body, to its final resting place was attended by the army and the court. Accounts of such processions show that the last progress of the king was spectacularly staged, the king's body being now even more sacral than before. The funeral procession of Demetrios Poliorketes, whose urn was transported on board the royal flagship from Syria to Greece, escorted by the entire Antigonid fleet, was a mournful but magnificent show of royal splendour and military power, with Demetrios' successor Antigonos Gonatas centre stage:

Moreover, there was something dramatic and theatrical even in the funeral ceremonies of Demetrios. For his son Antigonos, when he learned that his remains had been sent home, put to sea with his entire fleet and met them off the islands. They were given to him in a golden urn, and he placed them in the largest of his admiral's ships. Of the cities where the fleet touched in its passage, some brought garlands to adorn the urn, others sent men in funeral

⁴⁵ Plut., *Mor.* 184a; Jos., *AJ* 16.266; Liv. 14.7.4; 45.7.4; Diod. 34.14.

⁴⁶ The infant Ptolemaios V was inaugurated the same year that his parents died: Polyb. 18.55.3-4. Polybios supposes that the inauguration of the child could have been postponed until his coming of age, but he confuses the ritual of inauguration with the right to exercise real power. It is unthinkable that the Ptolemaic kingdom could have existed without a king being present at least formally.

⁴⁷ Cf. Plut., *Demetr.* 18.3, on the fundamental change of character of the Diadochs when they became kings. It is also a *topos* in Polybios that one's character changes (but often for the worse) upon becoming king. Comparable is Dio 37.10.4, on the abdication of Ariobarzanes I of Kappadokia, a variant of the Damokles motif: 'Happy was he who lay down the kingship, sad he to whom it was given.' Cf. Sullivan 1990, 58.

attire to assist in escorting it home and burying it. When the fleet put in at Corinth, the vase was conspicuous on the vessel's poop, adorned with royal purple and a diadem and young men (νεανίσκοί) stood around it in arms as a bodyguard. Moreover, the most celebrated flute-player then living, Xenophantes, sat near, and with the most solemn melody upon his flute accompanied the rowers; to his melody the oars kept perfect time, and their splashing, like funeral beatings of the breast, answered to the cadences of the flute-tones. But most pity and lamentation among those who had come in throngs to the sea-shore was awakened by the sight of Antigonos himself, who was bowed down in tears. After garlands and other honours had been bestowed upon the remains at Corinth, they were brought by Antigonos to Demetrias for burial, a city named after his father, who had settled it from the small villages around Iolkos.⁴⁸

The remains of Demetrios were treated as if the king were still alive, adorned with a diadem and a royal robe, and later crowned with victory wreaths. Before being interred in Demetrias, Demetrios' royal city which was at that time also Gonatas' power base, the urn was disembarked in Corinth. Demetrios had restored the Corinthian League in 302, and Corinth could still be considered the symbolic heart of a politically united Greek world, whose *dēmokratia*, *autonomia* and *eleutheria* had been first proclaimed by the Antigonids. Thus, the honours bestowed on Demetrios in Corinth signified that he was honoured on behalf of the entire Greek world, and consequently that all the Greeks accepted the leadership of Demetrios' successor Gonatas.⁴⁹

The transportation of the coffin, made of gold or silver, from palace to tomb was a public procession, attended by army and subjects. Burning of the body probably took place at the tomb. To this end Alexander's embalmed body should have been brought back to Macedonia in 323. After the death of Antiochos Sidetes in 129, the Parthian king treated his body with all possible honour and sent him back to his family 'for burial in a silver coffin'.⁵⁰ Written and material information attesting to the burial of Hellenistic kings is however in

⁴⁸ Plut., *Demetr.* 53.1-3; trans. B. Perrin. Cp. Plutarch's account of Kleopatra's advent to Tarsos, discussed below, section 5.3.

⁴⁹ To be sure, Gonatas was in reality not accepted as the universal leader of the Greek world—cp. Ptolemaios Philadelphos's rival use of Corinth as a symbol of Greek unity under *his* patronage in the Grand Procession, below section 5.4—and Antigonid influence in Greece even had reached its lowest point at that time. On Gonatas' relations with the Greeks in this period see Gabbert 1997, 21-8.

⁵⁰ Just. 100.42.

short supply,⁵¹ but Josephus' description of the burial of Herod the Great in 4 BCE may give some idea of a regular Hellenistic royal burial. Apart from a single reference to Yahweh, and of course the fact that Herod was buried instead of cremated, the ritual has a generic Hellenistic flavour, including the fact that the burial was a component of the accession of Herod's principal successor, Archelaos.

Vociferous congratulations were at once heaped upon Archelaos, and the soldiers came forward in companies with the citizens, pledged their loyalty, and joined in prayer for the blessing of God. Then they turned to the task of the king's burial. Everything possible was done by Archelaos to add to the magnificence: he brought out all the royal ornaments to be carried in procession in honour of the dead monarch. There was a solid gold bier, adorned with precious stones and draped with the richest purple. On it lay the body wrapped in royal purple, with a diadem resting on the head and above that a golden victory wreath, and the sceptre by the right hand. The bier was escorted by Herod's sons and the whole body of his kinsmen, followed by his bodyguards and the Thracian Guard, and the Germans and Celts, all in full battle array. The rest of the army led the way, fully armed and in perfect order, headed by their commanders and all the officers, and followed by five hundred household servants and freedmen carrying spices. The body was borne twenty-four miles to Herodion, where by the late king's command it was buried.⁵²

Hellenistic royal tombs have only rarely been discovered, and seldom intact. The Argead kings were buried in the cultic centre of Aigai (Vergina) in Macedonia, but the findings in Vergina cannot be used as evidence for burial practices in Egypt and the Near East. Several kings were buried in cities they themselves had (re)founded, receiving cult as *hērōs ktistēs* at their *heroon*: Alexander at Alexandria, Demetrios Poliorketes at Demetrias, Lysimachos at

⁵¹ An exception is Alexander's funerary catafalque, described by Diod. 18.26; cp. Curt. 10.6.4; 10.7.13; 10.8.20; Just. 7.2.2-4. Cf. K.F. Müller, *Der Leichwagen Alexanders des Grossen* (Leipzig 1905), and Fraser, II 31-3, for a critical evaluation of the sources.

⁵² Jos., *BJ* 1.671; trans. G.A. Williamson, with minor adjustments. Cp. Diod. 31.21; 17.115.4 (burial of Hephaestion); App., *Syr.*, 63 (Seleukos I); Just. 100.42N (Antiochos VII). For Roman monarchic burials, influenced in part by Hellenistic traditions, see P.J.E. Davies, *Death and the Emperor. Roman Imperial Funerary Monuments, from Augustus to Marcus Aurelius* (Cambridge 2000), a comprehensive study of imperial funerary monuments and their meaning, in which it is argued that these monuments served a dual role as memorials of the dead and as accession monuments that would guarantee dynastic continuity.

Lysimacheia, Seleukos Nikator at Seleukeia, Antiochos Epiphanes at Antioch. At least since the reign of Ptolemaios IV the Ptolemies were buried in the same *temenos* where also the Sema, the heroon of the city's deified founder Alexander, was located, suggesting a link with Alexander and dynastic continuity; Kleopatra VII broke with this tradition and built a mausoleum for herself and Antonius as a sign that a new era had begun.⁵³ Royal burial ground was sacred space. Not all kings were deified after death, but when this was the case, the placing of the remains inside the *heroon* probably involved some ritual marking the apotheosis. The sources only hint at such rites. In a fragment of a poem of Kallimachos, written for the occasion of the apotheosis of Arsinoë Philadelphos and perhaps performed during a public ritual of deification, the deified queen is taken to Heaven by the Dioskouroi, where she is given a place in 'the circle of the god'; in Alexandria she received a *temenos* and altar near the Emporion Harbour.⁵⁴

The inauguration ritual

Hellenistic coronations are often assumed to have been unpretentious and consequently unimportant. For example, R.R.R. Smith states that 'the diadem ... was not like a crown and there was no coronation.'⁵⁵ This opinion is due to the lack of sources describing a ritual of assuming the diadem. Even Polybios in his relatively detailed account of the inauguration of Ptolemaios V mentions the diadem only in passing. This is surprising: Greek historiography is packed with men 'assuming the diadem', the standard phrase for the transition of man to king.⁵⁶ There can be no doubt that the diadem was the key signifier of royal status in

⁵³ Strabo 794; Plut., *Ant.* 86; cf. Fraser II, 33-4 n. 81. The Golden Age of Kleopatra: Volkmann 1953, 117-7; Grant 1972, 171-5; Schrapel 1996, 209-23.

⁵⁴ Call., fr. 228. Even in Renaissance Italy a contemporary handbook for arranging princely burials describes the funeral as an apotheosis, deifying the dead ruler and confirming his heir's right to the succession: E. Borsook, 'Art and politics at the Medici court I: The funeral of Cosimo I de' Medici', *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorisches Istituts in Florenz* 12 (1965) 30-54, at 48.

⁵⁵ Smith 1988, 36-7. Evidence for the diadem is collected in H.W. Ritter, *Diadem und Königsherrschaft. Untersuchungen zu Zeremonien und Rechtsgrundlagen des Herrschaftsantritt bei den Persen, bei Alexander dem Grossen und im Hellenismus* (Munich and Berlin 1965), who argues for an Eastern origin of the diadem, cf. id., 'Die Bedeutung des Diadems', *Historia* 36.3 (1987) 290-301.

⁵⁶ E.g. Polyb. 4.48.12; 5.42.7, 57.2, 57.5; I *Macc.* 1; 11.13; Diod. 31.15.3; 40.1a; Plut., *Demetr.* 17-18; *Pyrrh.* 11; Diod. 20.53; 33.28; App., *Syr.* 54; Polyb. 1.8-9.

iconography and writing. It does not necessarily follow, however, that the act of binding a diadem around the head was also the central ritual of inauguration in the Hellenistic kingdoms. When ancient authors mention the act of binding the diadem this always happens following a military victory.⁵⁷ Especially non-royal warlords are said to assume the diadem following a major victory: first of all the Diadochs, but also such rebels as Attalos, Achaios, Molon, and Diodotos Tryphon. Success in battle was believed to prove that one was worthy of kingship; with military prestige would-be kings were able to rally the support of citizens and soldiers. Achaios, who rebelled in Asia Minor against Antiochos III in 226 and ‘was eagerly urged by the army to assume the diadem’, at first he remained reluctant to do so, ‘but when he met with a success that surpassed his expectations, having confined Attalos to Pergamon and made himself master of all the rest of the country, he was so elated by his good fortune [that he] assumed the diadem and styled himself king, [since] he was at this moment the most imposing and formidable king on this side of the Taurus.’⁵⁸ Likewise, Achaios’ enemy Attalos of Pergamon first assumed the diadem and styled himself king after having defeated the Galatian Celts in battle; Attalos’ claim that with this victory he had saved the Greeks of Asia Minor from the barbarians instantly turned him into a *sōtēr*, and hence a king.⁵⁹ But when ancient authors write about dynastic succession, assumption of the diadem is *not* the preferred expression. Rather they speak of ‘succession’ or ‘accession to the [ancestral] kingship (*basileia*)’, usually translated as ‘succession to the throne’.⁶⁰ It follows that ‘assumption of the diadem’ is not the principal *terminus technicus* for the inauguration of a king. Perhaps we need to look elsewhere for a Hellenistic coronation rite.

Let us return to Polybios’ account of the inauguration of Ptolemaios V:

The courtiers began to occupy themselves with the celebration of the proclamation (*anaktētēria*) of the king. ... After preparations had been taken on a grand scale they carried out the ceremonies in a manner worthy of the kingship.⁶¹

⁵⁷ Plut., *Demetr.* 17-18; *Pyrrh.* 11; Diod. 20.53; App., *Syr.* 54; Polyb. 1.8-9.

⁵⁸ Polyb. 4.48.10-12; cf. Strabo 13.4.2.

⁵⁹ Strabo 13.4.2.

⁶⁰ E.g. Polyb. 7.11.4: μετα το παραλαβν την βασιλείαν and τῶν πρόρερον βασιλέων (Philippos V); Plut., *Demetr.* 18.1: Antigonos Monophthalmos ‘proclaimed king by his *philoí*’: Αντίγονον μὲν οὖν εὐθὺς ἀνέδησαν.

⁶¹ Polyb. 18.55.3-4.

Other sources also mention the proclamation of the new king, usually by the army.⁶² Given the conspicuous lack in the sources of descriptions of acts of binding the diadem, new kings probably presented themselves before the army and the populace with the diadem already fastened. It remains possible that some ritual took place in seclusion, in the presence of a select group of spectators, or only the gods as witnesses, but this we may never know.⁶³ The king performed the act himself.⁶⁴ In a later stage of the inauguration of Ptolemaios V, the Alexandrian people, who were assembled in the stadion, shouted ‘the cry of the king’ (or: ‘bring the king’), after which the king was brought out of the palace and presented to the populace.⁶⁵ Diodoros describes a similar sequence of events when relating the affirmation of Ptolemaios Euergetes and Ptolemaios Philometor as joint kings between 169 and 164 : ‘both of them, donning on their royal robes, went out [from the palace and into the stadion] and appeared before the populace, making it manifest to everybody that they were in harmony.’⁶⁶ Thus the modern word ‘coronation’ is strictly speaking an inappropriate term to denote Hellenistic inauguration ritual.⁶⁷ Instead, it may be maintained that not the binding of the

⁶² Acclamations by the army: Plut., *Demetr.* 18.1 (Antigonids); App., *Syr.* 54 (Seleukids).

⁶³ A ‘hidden’ coronation is not unusual; for example in the Ashante kingdom of Akuapem, Ghana, the king’s enthronement on the sacred Black Stool takes place in secret; only after the enthronement the king is carried outside on his throne, where the principal ritual takes place: acclamation by the people: M. Gilbert, *Rituals of Kingship in a Ghanaian State* (diss. 1981), cf. *idem*, ‘The person of the King: Ritual and Power in a Ghanaian state’, in Cannadine & Price 1987, 298-330, and ‘Aesthetic Strategies: The Politics of a Royal Ritual’, *Africa* 64.1 (1994) 99-125. Cf. Plut., *Luc.* 18.3; *Demetr.* 17.2-18.1.

⁶⁴ Polyb. 4.48.10; Diod. 31.15.3; 1 *Macc.* 11.13. When ancient authors write that someone else ties a diadem around a king’s head, this indicates that (illegal) kingmakers or rivals are putting a pretender on the throne, e.g. in Diod. 40.1a, where the Arab ruler Aziz makes Philippos II the ‘Heavy-Footed’ a Seleukid king in opposition to Antiochos XIII Asiatikos in 67/6 B.C.E.: ‘[Aziz] gave him a ready welcome, bound a diadem around his head, and restored him to the kingship’. This rare passage emphasizes the powerlessness of the later Seleukids is designedly at odds with normal practice. So also the central source in the present discussion, Polyb. 15.25.5: Agathokles and Sosibios put the infant Ptolemaios V on the throne to serve their own purposes: ‘they crowned the boy with a diadem and proclaimed him king’.

⁶⁵ Polyb. 15.31.2, cf. 3-4.

⁶⁶ Diod. 31.15.2-3.

⁶⁷ H. Everett, ‘The English coronation rite: From the Middle Ages to the Stuarts’, in: P. Bradshaw ed., *Coronations. Past, Present and Future* (Cambridge 1997) 5-21, at 7, has suggested that a better term than coronation is ‘consecration’, ‘because that is without question what the rite is about, whereas

diadem, but the public *acclamation* of the already diademed king by the army was the central rite of inauguration in the Hellenistic kingdoms.

Acclamation by the army was a Macedonian tradition, but it could have developed independently in any state. The question whether the Macedonian army assembly in the Argead kingdom had the right to elect the new king, has been exhaustively but indeterminately discussed.⁶⁸ This controversy should not concern us here. Acclamation is not election. No successor could ever have become king without assuring himself of the allegiance of the army, let alone against the army's wishes. In monarchies where succession was not ruled by primogeniture, and where the king was first of all the head of the army, this is to be expected. The importance of the Macedonian element in the armed forces of the Ptolemies and Seleukids is often underestimated. But Macedonian guard infantry and military settlers constituted the core of any Hellenistic royal army, the heavy-armed phalanx; they received regular payment directly from the king's treasury, or were given royal land; thus these common soldiers and their families were the recipients of benefactions coming directly from the king, and stood closer to the king than the average subject, closer even members of rural and civic elites.⁶⁹ It is not surprising therefore that the Macedonian troops played a central role in the inauguration, and that their role was reminiscent of that of the Macedonian army assembly under Philippos and Alexander.⁷⁰ When Agathokles in 203 BCE sought

“coronation” refers specifically to a small part of the rite, and by no means the most important. The medieval liturgical books refer always to *consecratio regis* of *benedictio regis*.’

⁶⁸ During the reign of Alexander the Argead army had the right to acclaim the king's verdicts in cases of treason, e.g. Arr., *Anab.* 3.26; 4.14.3; Plut., *Alex.* 55.3; Curt. 6.8.25. Alexander used the army assembly as a court in order to sideline his council in trials against members of the old aristocracy. For continuation of the Macedonian army assembly in the Hellenistic kingdoms see Plut., *Eum.* 8.3; Diod. 18.37.2; 19.51.1; Polyb. 5.27.5. Judgment and acclamation ought not to be confused, as e.g. in Grainger 1992, 44-5 with regard to the execution of Eumenes of Kardia by Antigonos Monophthalmos: ‘The story of “the Macedonians” demanding Eumenes’ death is propaganda. ... If any soldiers were consulted it was ... a council of officers.’ However, it is very well possible that the *sunedrion* passed the judgment while the (Macedonian) troops acclaimed (or rejected) the legitimacy of the decision. Acclamation of a new king see also App., *Syr.* 54; Plut., *Demetr.* 18.

⁶⁹ J.J. Jansen, ‘Het geschenk des konings’, in: H.J.M. Claessen ed., *Macht en majesteit. Idee en werkelijkheid van het vroege koningschap* (Utrecht 1984) 51-9.

⁷⁰ P. Bradshaw, ‘Coronations from the eighteenth to the twentieth centuries’, in: idem ed., *Coronations. Past, Present and Future* (Cambridge 1997) 22-33, shows how the English coronation rite has been altered at virtually every occasion to meet with the specific demands of the time, but that

acceptance for his status as regent in the name of the child Ptolemaios V, the first thing he did was summoning a meeting of the Macedonian household troops (*Makedones*), and appearing before them together with the young king and his sister Agothokleia he addressed them, saying: “Take the child whom his father on his death-bed placed in the arms of this woman, ... and confided to your faith, o you Macedonian men.”⁷¹

Two more elements of the accession rite described in Polybios’ account of the inauguration of Ptolemaios V should be emphasised here: the army swearing allegiance to the new king by taking oaths, and the distribution of lavish gifts, first of all among the army. The oaths taken by the army apparently were part of the inauguration, as had it already been in Macedonia under Philippos and Alexander, a practice that was continued under the Antigonids.⁷² Oaths were taken by the standing units and military settlers, who were, if possible, drawn together for the occasion.⁷³ The soldiers also received extra payment and gifts. Incidental gratuities could also be promised to cities and temples, along with the granting of amnesties. The latter was often also necessary to pacify the kingdom after a discordant succession.⁷⁴ At his accession in 179 BCE Perseus’ first act was to proclaim redemption of all debts to the crown and a general pardon for the *philoï* who had fled the court during the succession struggle between him and his brother Demetrios; Polybios comments that Perseus’ conduct was ‘truly royal’ and created great expectations.⁷⁵ In his account of the accession of Ariarathes V of Kappadokia in c. 163, Diodoros gives some interesting sequences for the actions to be taken:

the one indispensable and recurrent characteristic of the coronation rite was that the coronation was believed to be traditional. The dynamic character of ritual is also evident in M. Gilbert, ‘The Cracked Pot and the Missing Sheep’, *American Ethnologist* (1988) 213-29, a case-study of a royal ritual in Ghana which was altered to solve specific problems even during the performance.

⁷¹ Polyb. 15.26.1-3.

⁷² F. Walbank, ‘Macedonia and Greece’, CAH 7.1 (1984) 226.

⁷³ Jos., AJ 12.1 claims that the already at the beginning of the Hellenistic Age, Jewish soldiers in the service of Ptolemaios Soter took the same oath as the Macedonians; this suggests that a Macedonian tradition was modified to include the entire army, although Josephus may have ascribed a practice from the later Ptolemaic empire to the reign of Ptolemaios I. For army oaths in the Greek world see W.K. Pritchett, ‘Military vows’, in: idem, *The Greek State At War. Part III: Religion* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London 1979) 230-9.

⁷⁴ Bevan 1927, 291.

⁷⁵ Polyb. 25.3.3-5, cf. 7.11.4.

Ariarathes, surnamed Philopator, on succeeding to his ancestral kingship, first of all gave his father a magnificent burial. Then, when he had duly attended to the interests of his *philoï*, of the military commanders and lesser officials, he succeeded in winning great favour with the populace.⁷⁶

In the Memphite Decree in honour of Ptolemaios V, gifts to the army and the temples, as well as amnesties and acquittance of debts, are summed up in a fascinating mix of Egyptian and Greek-Macedonian terminology; the proclamation, made by the synod of priests, is dated to the 18th day after the inauguration of the new king in 196 . Below is a translation of the relevant passage in this long text:

Whereas King Ptolemaios, living forever, the Manifest God, ... son of King Ptolemaios [and Queen] Arsinoë, the Father-loving Gods, is wont to do many favours for the temples of Egypt and for all those who are subject to his kingship, he being a god, the son of a god and a goddess, and being like Horus son of Isis and Osiris, who protects his father Osiris, and his heart being beneficent concerning the gods, since he has given much money and much grain to the temples of Egypt, [he having undertaken great expenses] in order to create peace in Egypt and to establish the temples, and having rewarded all the forces that are subject to his rulership; and of the revenues and taxes that were in force in Egypt he had reduced some or had renounced them completely, in order to cause the army and all the other people to be prosperous in his time as [king; the arrear]s which were due to the king from the people who are in Egypt and all those who are subject to his kingship, and (which) amounted to a large total, he renounced; the people who were in prison and those against whom there had been charges for a long time, he released; he ordered concerning the endowments of the gods, and the money and the grain that are given as allowances to their [temples] each year, and the shares that belong to the gods from the vineyards, the orchards, and all the rest of the property which they possessed under his father, that they should remain in their possession; moreover, he ordered concerning the priests that they should not pay their tax on becoming priests above what they used to pay up to Year 1 under his father; he released the people [who hold] the offices of the temples from the voyage they used to make to the Residence of Alexander each year; he ordered that no rower should be impressed into service; he renounced the two-thirds share of the fine linen that used to be made in the temples for the Treasury, he bringing into its [correct] state everything that had abandoned its [proper] condition for a long time, and taking

⁷⁶ Diod. 31.21; cf. Polyb. 31.3 and 7.

all care to have done in a correct manner what is customarily done for the gods, likewise causing justice to be done for the people in accordance with what Thoth the Twice-great did; moreover, he ordered concerning those who will return from the fighting men and the rest of the people who had gone astray (*lit.* been on other ways) in the disturbance that had occurred in Egypt that [they] should [be returned] to their homes, and their possessions should be restored to them.⁷⁷

Acclamation was followed by the presentation of the new king before the people in a stadion, hippodrome or theatre,⁷⁸ where a temporary tribune (*bēma*) was erected for this purpose:

The Macedonians took the king and once setting him on a horse conducted him to the stadion. His appearance was greeted with loud cheers and clapping of hands, and they now stopped the horse, took him off, and leading him forward placed him in the royal seat.⁷⁹

After the initial inauguration new kings often embarked on a ceremonial journey, showing himself to his subjects and taking possession of the land.⁸⁰ The inauguration ceremonies could be repeated during such journeys, or when new territories had been conquered. When Ptolemaios VI invaded Syria in 145, ‘he put on his head two royal diadems, one of Asia and one of Egypt’.⁸¹ Another reason why inaugurations were repeated was the necessity to

⁷⁷ R.S. Simpson, *Demotic Grammar in the Ptolemaic Sacerdotal Decrees* (Oxford, Griffith Institute, 1996) 258-71.

⁷⁸ Polyb. 15.31.2; Diod. 31.15a.1-3. This custom was continued well into Byzantine time; in early Byzantine Constantinople, coronation and other royal spectacle took place in the hippodrome, which was built adjacent to the imperial palace. Cf. M. Meier, *Justinian. Herrschaft, Reich und Religion* (Munich 2004), who explains that when Justinian changed the location of the coronation from the hippodrome, ‘the central meeting point of emperor and people’, to the palace, thereby excluding the citizens, was an indication of his politics. Byzantine court ritual and ceremonial: B. Hendrickx, *Het kroningsceremonieel van de keizers in Byzantium. Met onderzoek naar de oorsprong van de kroningselementen in de teksten van Suetonius en de Scriptorum Historiae Augustae* (Brussels 1962), and A. Cameron, A., ‘The construction of court ritual. The Byzantine Book of Ceremonies’, in: D. Cannadine and S. Price eds., *Rituals of Royalty* (1987) 106-36, both stressing continuity from Rome to Constantinople.

⁷⁹ Polyb. 15.32.1-5. For the importance of the βῆμα see Nielsen 1994, 18 and 131.

⁸⁰ Cf. Clarysse 2000, 35.

⁸¹ 1 *Macc.* 11.13.

conform to expectations of ‘indigenous’ subjects. At least since the reign of Ptolemaios IV, but probably earlier, the Ptolemies were enthroned as pharaohs in the central hall of the great temple of Ptah at Memphis, in accordance with Egyptian custom.⁸² The enthronisation ritual at Memphis was of secondary importance, performed for the sake of the Egyptians and, most importantly, to appease the Memphite priests, the dynasty’s principal allies in the province. Also when absent the Ptolemies took responsibility for the cults of Memphis.⁸³ The high priest of Ptah had a crucial part in the ritual. Due to the loss of their Mediterranean empire after *c.* 200, the Egyptian ‘face’ of the Ptolemies became more important, especially in the first century BCE. Still, the ritual at Alexandria remained the principal Ptolemaic coronation until the end of the kingdom in 30.

⁸² The pharaonic ritual was a rite of enthronization, cf. Diod. 33.13 (144 BC): Ptolemaios VIII in 144 BCE ‘was enthroned as king in Memphis in accordance with Egyptian custom (κατὰ τοὺς Αἰγυπτίων νόμους)’; Ptolemaios IX celebrated a Sed Festival, *i.e.* an Egyptian thirty-year jubilee, in Memphis in 86. Installation of the Ptolemies as pharaohs in Memphis see Thompson 1988, 146-54. Relations between the Ptolemies and the priestly elite of Memphis: Thompson 1988, 106-125, concentrating on the first century BCE, and Hölbl 2001, 77-90. For Egyptian rituals connected with kingship and their survival in Ptolemaic times see H.W. Fairman, ‘The kingship rituals of Egypt’, in S.H. Hooke ed., *Myth, Ritual and Kingship. Essays on the Theory and Practice of Kingship in the Ancient Near East and in Israel* (Oxford 1958) 74-104. L. Koenen, *Eine agonistische Inschrift aus Ägypten und frühptolemäische Königsfeste* (Meisenheim and Glan 1977) 58-62, argues that the Ptolemies were enthroned as pharaohs at least since Ptolemaios II and perhaps since Alexander; cf. Clarysse 2000, 35. Alexander made a ceremonial advent into Memphis and sacrificed to the Apis (Arr., *Anab.* 3.1.4, 5.2; Iul. Val. 1.33; Diod. 17.49.2; Curt. 4.7.1); S.M. Burstein, ‘Alexander in Egypt’, in: *AchHist* 8 (1994) 381-7, esp. 382, argues that it is not likely that Alexander was installed as pharaoh. However, if Burstein even is right, *sc.* that the formal ceremony of enthronisation had not taken place, it does not follow that Alexander was not accepted as the legitimate ruler *c.q.* as pharaoh by the Egyptian populace; cf. id., ‘Pharaoh Alexander: A scholarly myth’, *AncSoc* 22 (1991) 139-45. For Alexander and Egypt in general see Hölbl 2001, 9-14. For the pharaonic coronation ritual see Henri Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods. A Study of Ancient Near Eastern Religion as the Integration of Society and Nature* (Chicago 1948) 101-39; K. Sethe, *Der dramatische Ramesseumpapyrus: Ein Spiel zur Thronbesteigung des Königs*, in *Dramatische Texte zu altägyptischen Mysterienspielen* (Leipzig 1928) 81-264.

⁸³ Ptolemaic concern for Memphite cults: D.J. Crawford, ‘Ptolemy, Ptah and Apis in Hellenistic Memphis’, in: Crawford *et al.* 1980, 1-42.

The Seleukids likewise performed the ancient rites in the non-Greek cities of their empire. They were involved in the Babylonian new year festival Akitu, sometimes even taking part themselves in the ritual. This is evidenced by a fragmentary astronomical diary that was first published in 1989; it is dated to April 6, 205 BCE:

That [month,] on the 8th, King Antiochos (III) and the [...] went out [from] the palace to the gate ... of Esagila ... [...] of Esagila he made before them. Offerings to (?) [...] Marduk-etir ... [...] of their descendants (?) were set, entered the Akitu Temple [...]made [sacrifices for] Ishtar of Babylon and the life of King Antiochos [...].⁸⁴

Akitu, the yearly ritual of purification in honour of (notably) Marduk was also a sort of coronation ritual, in which the king temporarily abdicated and then was reinstated again by Nabû.⁸⁵ The Greeks equated Marduk with Herakles. The festival survived during the Achaemenid period, and was still performed under Seleukid rule.⁸⁶ The Seleukids' concern with this Babylonian cult is also apparent from their taking responsibility for the maintenance and restoration of the Ezida and Esagila, the temples that marked the beginning and the end of the Akitu procession, as is apparent from the cuneiform building inscription of Antiochos I

⁸⁴ Sachs-Hunger II, no. 204, C. rev. 14-18; cf. Kuhrt & Sherwin-White 1993, 130-1. For other evidence see S.M. Sherwin-White, 'Ritual for a Seleucid king at Babylon', *JHS* 103 (1983) 156-9.

⁸⁵ Akitu took place in various Mesopotamian cities from the early period to the Parthian period, but most evidence comes from Babylon and Uruk; see in general M.E. Cohen, *The Cultic Calendars of the Ancient Near East* (Bethesda 1993) 400-53, 130-2. For the continuity of the Akitu Festival through the Achaemenid to the Hellenistic period: R.J. van der Spek, 'The šatammus of Esagila in the Seleucid and Parthian periods', in: J. Marzahn and H. Neumann eds., *Festschrift Joachim Oelsner* (Berlin 1999); M.J.H. Linssen, *The Cults of Uruk and Babylon. The Temple Ritual Texts as Evidence for Hellenistic Cult Practice* (Leiden 2004) 71-79. For archaeological evidence for the continuation—'or perhaps more accurately the revival'—of Babylonian religion and the rituals associated with it under Seleukid rule see also S.B. Downey, *Mesopotamian Religious Architecture. Alexander through the Parthians* (Princeton 1988), esp. pp. 7-15 (Babylon) and 15-47 (Uruk). See in general also P. Briant, 'The Seleucid Kingdom, the Achaemenid Empire and the history of the Near East in the first millennium BC', in: P. Bilde *et al.* eds., *Religion and Religious Practice in the Seleucid Kingdom* (Aarhus 1990) 40-65. On the meaning of Akitu as a ritual of reversal see the discussion in Versnel 1993, 32-7, cf. Versnel 1970, 220-8.

⁸⁶ ABC no. 13b, 224 BCE.

(268 BCE).⁸⁷ Seleukid kings presumably were not present each year. Amélie Kuhrt has shown that the absence of the king did not affect his legitimacy as king of Babylon: he could be represented by his son and co-ruler, as Kambyzes probably had done for Cyrus and as Antiochos I did for Seleukos I. If neither the king nor his son were present, a curtailed ritual could be enacted, in which perhaps a royal robe served as substitute for the king's physical presence.⁸⁸

The ancient city of Babylon held a special place of honour in the Seleukid empire. But the Seleukids were involved in the rites of royalty of other indigenous cities as well. At the beginning of II *Maccabees* it is related, as something quite ordinary, that Antiochos III or IV entered a temple of Anahita-Inanna because he wished to enter into a sacred marriage with the goddess.⁸⁹ And when Antiochos Epiphanes invaded Egypt, he was enthroned as pharaoh in Memphis;⁹⁰ this was in part a continuation of Ptolemaic practice, but he did so first of all in accordance with the cultural flexibility and ideological versatility that characterised his own dynasty.

The coronation of Antigonos Monophthalmos

The best known, and most discussed, Hellenistic inauguration is the coronation of Antigonos Monophthalmos. In 306 BCE Antigonos and his son Demetrios took the diadem and presented themselves as kings for the first time to Greeks and the Macedonians. Seleukos, Lysimachos and Ptolemaios followed their example in the same or the next year. This ended a chaotic period of interregnum that had lasted four years. It is usually believed that the Diadochs waited so long out of respect for the extinct Argead dynasty. But the assumption of kingship

⁸⁷ ANET 317; Austin 189. On this document see Kuhrt & Sherwin-White 1991 and 1993, 36-7; on Babylonian building inscriptions in general see Linssen 2004, 103-11, and C. Ambos, *Mesopotamische Baurituale aus dem 1. Jahrtausend v. Chr.* (Dresden 2004).

⁸⁸ Kuhrt 1987, 49-50.

⁸⁹ II *Macc.* 1.13-17, cf. I *Macc.* 3.31, 37; 6.1-3; II *Macc.* 9.1; Polyb. 31.9; Diod. 31.18a. According to II *Maccabees*, the king also wished to take the temple treasure with him as a 'bridal gift', much to the displeasure of the priests, who kill him. On the confusion in the sources between the deaths of Antiochos III and Antiochos IV see Holleaux 1942, 255-79. Ritual enactments of the *hieros gamos* of the city's main god and goddess normally took place in many Mesopotamian cities, normally in the temple of the female deity on new year's day, in order to assure the fertility of the land in the coming year; cf. Versnel 1970, 218-20.

⁹⁰ Thompson 1988, 16.

by the Diadochs was not an attempt at becoming successors of the Argeads.⁹¹ Already before 306 several Diadochs had taken the title of king *vis-à-vis* indigenous people: Antigonos in Iran, Seleukos in Babylonia, and perhaps Ptolemaios in Egypt.⁹² Also, Antigonos had been hailed as ‘king’ by the Persians in 307.⁹³ Still, 306/5 BCE, the so-called ‘Year of the Kings’, was a milestone in the evolution of Hellenistic kingship.⁹⁴

The world-wide proclamation of Antigonos’ and Demetrios’ kingship was legitimised by military success, *viz.* the latter’s naval victory over the Ptolemaic fleet off Salamis (Cyprus), and the subsequent surrender of Cyprus to the Antigonids.⁹⁵ It was a complete victory: some hundred Ptolemaic war ships were captured undamaged, Ptolemaios’ brother Menelaos and son Leontiskos were taken prisoner, and over 16,000 Ptolemaic soldiers surrendered and could be enlisted in the Antigonid army.⁹⁶ The victory off Salamis demonstrated to the world that Antigonos and Demetrios were the strongest and most able warlords. To boost Antigonid prestige even more, Demetrios arranged the burial of the enemy dead, released prisoners of war without ransom, and made rich dedications to the Greek gods, including a magnificent gift of twelve hundred suits of armour to Athena in Athens.⁹⁷ Since

⁹¹ To be sure, the Argead house had *not* died out: Kassandros son of Antipatros had married Thessalonike, daughter of Philippos II, and through her the line of the Argeads was continued. It is not surprising therefore, that we are told that ‘Kassandros, although the others gave him the royal title in their letters and addresses, himself wrote his letters in his own untitled name, as he had been wont to do’ (Plut., *Demetr.* 18.3): by not claiming the kingship for himself Kassandros emphasised that his sons with Thessalonike, the later kings Alexandros V, Philippos IV, and Antipatros I, were the legitimate heirs of Philippos II; Kassandros had ordered the execution of Alexander’s son Alexandros IV presumably to make his own sons the only legitimate heirs of the Argead house.

⁹² Plut., *Demetr.* 18.2 (Seleukos). Diod. 19.48.1; 55.2; Plut., *Demetr.* 10.3 (Antigonos).

⁹³ Plut., *Demetr.* 10.3.

⁹⁴ Modern discussions of the Year of the Kings: O. Müller, *Antigonos Monophthalmos und das ‘Jahr der Könige’* (Bonn 1973); E.S. Gruen, ‘The coronation of the Diadochoi’, in: J. Eadie and J. Ober eds., *The Craft of the Ancient Historian. Essays in Honor of Chester G. Starr* (Lanham 1985) 253-71; R.A. Billows, *Antigonos the One-Eyed and the Creation of the Hellenistic State* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London 1990; 2nd edn. 1997) 155-60.

⁹⁵ Plut., *Demetr.* 16.1-4.

⁹⁶ Diod. 20.53,1; Plut., *Demetr.* 16.4; cf. Billows 1990, 155 n. 40. For the military aspects of Demetrios’ campaign: P.V. Wheatly, ‘The Antigonid Campaign in Cyprus, 306 BC’, *AncSoc* 31 (2001) 133-56.

⁹⁷ Plut., *Demetr.* 17.1.

the Diadochs were kings already in the eyes of several peoples in the east who were accustomed to autocratic kingship, the victory off Salamis and subsequent assumption of kingship were advertised mainly among the Greeks of the Mediterranean. The ‘new’ kingship of Demetrios and Antigonos was panhellenic and imperial, embracing traditional Macedonian kingship, Near Eastern regional forms of monarchy, and existing Greek notions of autocratic rule. The title of *basileus* now meant, not ‘king’, but ‘Great King’. The principal symbol of this new monarchy was the diadem, the victory emblem which had already been introduced by Alexander as a symbol of imperial monarchy.

The proclamation of Antigonos was so arranged as to make it appear spontaneous, with Antigonos acting as if surprised by the honour, and only dutifully accepting it – as if not he himself, but Fate and the Gods had designated him to become the ruler of the world. Plutarch accounts how immediately after the Battle of Salamis, Demetrios dispatched a courier, a *philos* called Aristodemos of Miletos, in his own flagship to bring the news to Antigonos, who was in his new capital Antigoneia in Syria:

After [Aristodemos] had crossed over from Cyprus, he did not bring his ship onto the land, but ordered the crew to cast anchor and remain quietly on board, all of them, while he himself got into the ship’s small boat, landed alone, and proceeded towards Antigonos, who was anxiously awaiting news of the battle. ... Indeed, when he heard that Aristodemos was coming, he was more disturbed than before, and, with difficulty keeping himself indoors, sent servants and friends, one after the other, to learn from Aristodemos what had happened. Aristodemos, however, would make no answer to anybody, but step by step and with a solemn face approached in perfect silence. Antigonos, therefore, thoroughly frightened, and no longer able to restrain himself, came to the door to meet Aristodemos, who was now escorted by a large throng which was hurrying to the palace. Accordingly, when he had come near, he stretched out his hand and cried with a loud voice: ‘Hail, King Antigonos, we have conquered Ptolemaios in a sea-battle, and we have Cyprus, with twelve thousand eight hundred soldiers as prisoners of war.’ ... Upon this the multitude for the first time saluted Antigonos and Demetrios as kings. Antigonos was immediately proclaimed king by his *philoï*, and Demetrios received a diadem from his father, with a letter in which he was addressed as *basileus*.⁹⁸

⁹⁸ Plut., *Demetr.* 17.2-18.1. Cf. Diod. 20.53.1; Justin 15.2.7. For the historicity of this passage see Gruen 1985, 255-7, and Billows 1990, 157-8. Plutarch characterizes Aristodemos as an ‘arch-flatterer’, who acted on his own initiative; however, Aristodemos was in reality among Antigonos’ oldest and most trusted *philoï*. For a full account of his long and distinguished career see Billows 1990, 371-4, who describes him as ‘the most important diplomat in Antigonos’ service.’ Müller 1973,

This ‘spontaneous’ ritual was certainly pre-arranged. Antigonos no doubt had received the news of the victory by a real courier, well in advance of the arrival of the official messenger Aristodemos.⁹⁹ The proclamation was a theatrical performance: only after an anxious multitude of men had assembled on the square before the palace, Antigonos came out of the gates. The moment that he stepped outside, Aristodemos hailed him as *basileus*, followed by a general acclamation by the army and the *philoï*. Again, the account does not mention the binding of a diadem, which means that Antigonos was already wearing a diadem when he came out of the palace to confront the crowd. Note also the fact that Antigonos simply sent a diadem to Demetrios;¹⁰⁰ apparently, a diadem became a unique ‘sacred’ object only after a king had worn it, *c.q.* after his death. The proclamation was followed by the distribution of gifts, granting of amnesties and privileges.

The ritual drama performed by Antigonos and his *philoï* in front of the army is strikingly similar to Vespasianus’ elevation to emperor more than three centuries later. Vespasianus assumed royal status when he was in Alexandria with his troops in 69 CE, and apparently made use of Hellenistic routines when preparing the performance. As in the case of Antigonos, a messenger bringing word of military triumph played a key role. If Suetonius’ account is genuine, this is what happened. First, Vespasian entered the temple of Sarapis, the Ptolemaic god of kingship, to perform sacrifice and consult the auspices, while his retinue and troops waited outside. Then, when he came out again, he told that a strange thing had happened to him inside the temple: when he had turned away from the altar, he had suddenly stood eye to eye with a freedman of his, appropriately named Basilides, ‘although he was well aware that no one had admitted Basilides, who had, furthermore, for a long time been nearly crippled by rheumatism and was, moreover, far away’. The apparition of Basilides had offered sacrifices to Vespasian—sacred branches, garlands, and bread—as if he himself were the god.

80-1, assumes that Plutarch’s source is Douris of Samos, mainly on the ground that Plutarch’s text is theatrical, which is typical for Douris’ writing. Douris may of course have been the source, but Müller misses the point: the event was deliberately theatrical, and subsequently the written testimony as well. On drama in Plutarch’s *Life of Demetrios* see P. DeLacy, ‘Biography and Tragedy in Plutarch’, *AJP* 73 (1952) 159-71.

⁹⁹ Cf. Billows 1990, 155, who demonstrates that Demetrios waited to secure full control of Cyprus before sending Aristodemos to Antigoneia.

¹⁰⁰ Cp. Plut., *Luc.* 18.3: before Mithradates Eupator married Monime, a Milesian woman, ‘he sent her a diadem and greeted her as *basilissa*’.

Vespasian had hardly stopped speaking when messengers arrived, bringing word of his army's victory at the Battle of Cremona in Italy, and the death of the emperor Vitellius at Rome. Suetonius says that Vespasian was 'rather astonished at suddenly being an emperor' and felt unsure about his new role, thus conveying the message that it was not he but the gods who wanted him to become an emperor. His reluctance, however, did not stop him from seating himself on a *bēma* to be acclaimed as ruler:

As he sat on the tribune, two common men, one blind and the other lame, approached him together, begging him to heal them. They said that in a dream Sarapis had promised them that if Vespasian would only spit on the blind man's eye and touch the lame man's leg with his heel, both would be cured. Vespasian at first could not believe that he had such powers and showed great reluctance in doing as he was asked; but his friends persuaded him to try it, even in the presence of such a large audience. And it worked.¹⁰¹

Because of the wondrous healings the story is usually discarded as fictitious; but if we allow for some acting, and consider the resemblance with Antigonos' assumption of kingship as well as the fact that also Pyrrhos of Epeiros disposed of thaumaturgic powers,¹⁰² it is safe to assume that Suetonius describes an actual incident. As in the case of Antigonos, the news of the victory at Cremona must have been known to Vespasian beforehand, not to mention the fact that a tribune had been already erected.

Kleopatra VII and the Donations of Alexandria

A special case is the extravagant coronation ritual known as the Donations of Alexandria, a Ptolemaic royal ceremony of 34 BCE, of which relatively detailed accounts survive in Plutarch's biography of Marcus Antonius and Dio Cassius' *Roman History*. It took place in the *gymnasion* of Alexandria as part of a series of celebrations that had started with Antonius' entry into Alexandria as *Neos Dionysos*, discussed above. Before a large audience Kleopatra

¹⁰¹ The whole story is related in Suet., *Vesp.* 7.

¹⁰² Plut., *Pyrrh.* 3. On Pyrrhos' supernatural healing skills and their relation with monarchy: G. Nenci, 'Il segno regale e la taumaturgia di Pirro', in: *Miscellanea di Studi Alessandrini. In Memoria di Augusto Rostagni* (Torino 1963) 152-161. On miraculous healings performed by emperors see U. Riemer, 'Wundergeschichten und ihre Erzählabsicht im Kontext antiker Herrscherverehrung', *Klio* 86.1 (2004) 218-34, who argues that the miracle stories of Christ were inspired by pagan traditions rather than being derived from the Hebrew Bible, in which healing stories are uncommon.

VII Philopator and her infant children were proclaimed rulers of the entire east, from Kyrene and the Hellespont to India. Kleopatra and her eldest son Ptolemaios XV Caesar ('Caesarion'), with whom she shared the kingship, received the titles of Queen of Kings and King of Kings. This is Dio's account of the ceremonial:

Next Antonius organised sumptuous celebrations for the population of Alexandria. He appeared before the assembled people with Kleopatra and her children seated at his side. In his speech to the people he ordered them to call Kleopatra Queen of Kings, and the Ptolemaios, whom they named Caesarion, King of Kings. He then made a new distribution of countries and gave them Egypt and Cyprus. ... Besides these donations he gave to his own children by Kleopatra the following lands: to Ptolemaios Syria and the whole region to the west of the Euphrates as far as the Hellespont; to Kleopatra [Selene] the country of Kyrene in Libya; to her brother Alexandros [Helios] Armenia and all of the other lands east of the Euphrates as far India; and he bestowed these regions as if they were already in his possession.¹⁰³

In the account of Plutarch, who used a different or additional source, more details are preserved:

[Antonius] assembled a great crowd in the gymnasium, where he had erected a stage covered with silver, whereupon he had placed two golden thrones, one for himself and one for Kleopatra, as well as two lower thrones for the children. First he proclaimed Kleopatra queen of Egypt, Cyprus, Libya and Koile Syria and named Caesarion her co-ruler. ... Next he gave his own sons by Kleopatra royal titles. To Alexandros he gave Armenia, Media and Parthia, as soon as should have conquered it, and to Ptolemaios Phoenicia, Syria and Kilikia. At the same time he presented Alexandros, dressed in a Median garb with a *tiara* and a *kitaris*, and Ptolemaios in *krepides*, *chlamys*, and a *kausia* encircled with a diadem. For the latter was the attire of the kings who had come after Alexander and the former that of the kings of Media and Armenia. And after the children had embraced their parents, one was given a guard of Armenians, the other of Macedonians. Kleopatra was on this occasion, as indeed she always was when she appeared in public, dressed in a robe sacred to Isis and she was hailed as the New Isis.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰³ Dio Cass. 49.40.2-41.3.

¹⁰⁴ Plut., *Ant.* 54.3-6; cf. Fraser II, 219 n. 223. Plutarch's statement that Antonius' sons were Kings of Kings is evidently a mistake.

Kleopatra and Caesarion were given the over-overlordship of all named countries.¹⁰⁵ The Donations claimed for Kleopatra and her children the diadem of the Seleukid house, which had recently become extinct. Thus the new imperial system inaugurated here, was in fact a revival of Hellenistic practice, be it now under Roman hegemony.¹⁰⁶ The amalgamated Ptolemaic and Seleukid empires were in turn amalgamated with Roman rule by means of Caesar's paternity of Caesarion and Antonius' paternity of Kleopatra's other children, as was much emphasised both at Antioch in 37/6 and Alexandria in 34.¹⁰⁷ Indeed, Antonius possessed not only the authority of a father over his own children, but as Kleopatra's consort also was the *kyrios* of Caesar's son, as was visualised by the fact that the throne of Caesarion, the King of Kings, was placed lower than Antonius'.

¹⁰⁵ This empire—combining the territories of the Ptolemaic and Seleukid empires at their greatest extent—seems ephemeral (half of it was Parthian, some parts remained in Roman hands), but the claims were in accordance with universalist pretensions that were common in eastern royal propaganda. Hölbl 2001, 244, believes that the Donations of Alexandria 'did not make any fundamental changes to the *status quo* of the administration. The area under Cleopatra's control remained just as it was in 36. The vassal-rulers retained their positions. ... The Roman proconsul continued to administer Syria while Armenia and Cyrene remained garrisoned by Roman legions.'

¹⁰⁶ See Strootman in Facella & Kaizer, forthcoming. T. Schrapel, *Das Reich der Kleopatra. Quellenkritische Untersuchungen zu den 'Landschenkungen' Mark Antons* (Trier 1996), using a wide range of numismatic, epigraphic and papyrologic sources, shows Antonius' grants of lands and cities were to Kleopatra were part of an ongoing Roman strategy to employ the Ptolemies as allies in the re-arrangement; this policy was initiated by Caesar and continued by Antonius, initially with the consent of Octavianus (!). For Antonius' reorganization of the east in general: H. Buchheim, *Die Orientpolitik des Triumvirn M. Antonius. Ihre Voraussetzungen, Entwicklung und Zusammenhang mit den politischen Ereignissen in Italien* (Heidelberg 1960).

¹⁰⁷ Dio Cass. 49.41.4 significantly adds that afterwards '[Antonius] sent a despatch to Rome in order that it might secure ratification also from the people there'. At 49.41.2, Dio also explicitly states that Antonius made Caesarion King of Kings because of his descent from Caesar, 'and that he had arranged all this for the sake of Caesar'. Furthermore, Caesarion's full cult title *Theos Philopatōr kai Philomētōr* not only reflected his mother's *Thea Philopatōr*, but also emphasised Caesar's paternity; cf. Hölbl p. 239. The place of the revived Ptolemaic empire in a wider Roman system was expressed by the presentation of Kleopatra on official Roman coinage; the well-known coins proclaiming the conquest of Armenia, issued at the time of the Donations, bore the portrait of Kleopatra with the Latin (!) legend CLEOPATRAE REGINAE REGUM FILIORUM REGUM ('to Kleopatra, the Queen of Kings, whose sons are kings').

It is crucial to see the Donations ceremony in relation to an earlier royal ritual two years before. In the winter of 37/6 Kleopatra had visited Antonius in Antioch in Syria, where he had taken up residence in order to re-arrange power relations in the Near East and make preparations for war against the Parthians.¹⁰⁸ During a ritual performance, presumably of comparable magnitude as the Donations of Alexandria (no details of the ritual itself have been preserved), Kleopatra received the city of Kyrene in Libya, estates on Crete, and various strongholds in the Levant.¹⁰⁹ Also, Antonius acknowledged paternity of Kleopatra's twins Alexandros and Kleopatra, who were given the epithets Helios and Selene. A new era in history was announced, with 37/6 BCE as year 1, meant to replace the Seleukid Era.¹¹⁰ To emphasise the coming of an everlasting Golden Age, Antonius and Kleopatra made abundant use of solar symbolism. In the Hellenistic east the sun was the principal symbol of the expectation of a Golden Age, and this it would remain. The twins Alexandros and Kleopatra received the epithets Helios and Selene as a reference to the eternal power exercised in the universe by the sun and the moon.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁸ Plut., *Ant.* 36.3-4; Dio Cass. 49.32-1-5.

¹⁰⁹ Jos., *AJ* 15.4.88 and 92, at 15.4.96 Josephus dryly remarks that Sidon and Tyre were the only coastal cities *not* given to Kleopatra, but that she claimed them nonetheless. On these land grants see Hölbl (2001), p. 242 with n. 102.

¹¹⁰ Evidence for this new era (which, as it turned out, lasted less than ten years) is found on coins from Syria and elsewhere, as far as the city of Chersonesos at the northern Black Sea; the era is also attested on Egyptian papyri and inscriptions, and confirmed by Porphyry FGrH 260 F 2.17; cf. Volkmann 1953, 116-22; Schrapel 1996, 209-23. Hazzard 2000, 25-46, argues that the Grand Procession of Ptolemaios II Philadelphos also marked the beginning of a new era, a '*Sotēr* Era'; if so, this makes it indeed more possible that the names chosen for Kleopatra's youngest child, Ptolemaios Philadelphos, indeed referred to the prosperous days of Ptolemaios II, as is suggested by Volkmann 1953, 117. On her way back to Alexandria, Kleopatra, instead of taking the short route over sea, made a royal progress through the Levant, in order to ritually mark the area as hers, visiting *i.a.* Apameia, Damascus, and Jericho, where she met her new vassal Herod (Joseph., *AJ* 15.4.96). Antonius meanwhile set out for his campaign of 36 against the Parthians.

¹¹¹ The Ptolemaic-Roman New Era as a Golden Age: Grant 1972, 171-5; W.W. Tarn, 'Alexander Helios and the Golden Age', *JRS* 22 (1932) 135-60. On Kleopatra's solar propaganda in general see Grant 1972, 142-4, and S. Śnieżewski, 'Divine connections of Marcus Antonius in the years 43-30 BC', *Grazer Beiträge* 22 (1998) 129-44, esp. 135-8. Volkmann (1953), p. 117, suggests that the names Helios and Selene were chosen to rival the Parthian king's title 'Brother of the Sun and the Moon'. On

Unfortunately, neither Dio nor Plutarch describe the attire and regalia worn by Caesarion. As the Donations took place in Alexandria he was certainly not dressed as an Egyptian pharaoh, but as an Hellenistic king. Likewise, Kleopatra in her ‘robe sacred to Isis’ appeared as a culturally neutral, Hellenized Isis rather than a purely Egyptian goddess.¹¹² For the same reason, Ptolemaios Philopator wore the costume of a Ptolemaic or Seleukid king, and also his Macedonian bodyguard presented him as such. Caesarion probably wore a similar dress as his half-brother. The Iranian attire of Alexandros Helios, on the other hand, was culturally specific. It was not, however, a reference to Achaimenid, but to Armenian kingship: it first of all had the immediate relevance of his being inaugurated as the successor of the captive Armenian king Artavasdes, whose own son had fled to the Parthians, in addition to his overlordship over the larger area he had received.¹¹³ Armenia was important. Antonius needed the country as a supply base for his plans for new conquests in the east. Antonius himself may again have been dressed as Dionysos, the god of light.

The titles Queen of Kings and King of Kings signified that Kleopatra and Caesarion were the rulers of the kingdoms in the Near East, most of which were former vassals of the Seleukids. By then, the east had come under Roman hegemony, but republican Rome lacked the monarchic prestige and legitimacy needed to unite the east. The titles both replaced, and capitalised upon the Seleukids’ prestige as Great Kings and Kings of Asia, and challenged

the walls of the Hathor temple at Dendera, *i.e.* in an Egyptian context, Kleopatra had already presented herself as the mother of the sun-god Ra when Caesarion was born: Grant 1972, 99.

¹¹² The ritual is commonly understood as a pharaonic ritual, e.g. Hölbl 2001, 291, ignoring *krepides*, *chlamys*, *kausia* and Macedonian personal names, erases anything Hellenistic from the ritual by stating that the Donations expressed the wish to ‘[create] a kingdom which would unite Achaemenid and ancient pharaonic traditions’. It is of course inconceivable that the Donations referred only to a remote past, and not to the past three hundred years of Ptolemaic rule; rather, the Donations mixed up past, present and future in an image of eternal and limitless empire, for which the model was provided by Hellenistic traditions of kingship; besides, explicit use of Egyptian idiom would have given the impression that the east had come under the hegemony of Egypt – unacceptable for non-Egyptian elites and rulers, including the Greeks of Alexandria. Instead, the Donations were meant to convey the message that the east had been *united*, in accordance with royal traditions acceptable to all eastern peoples.

¹¹³ Grant 1972, 164.

Parthian rule in Mesopotamia and the Upper Satrapies.¹¹⁴ Kleopatra's status as 'Empress of the World'¹¹⁵ was not only apparent from her new title but also inherent in her presentation as the New Isis. Identification with Isis had already been crucial for Kleopatra's rule in Egypt. Now she elevated this powerful image to a wider Mediterranean context by linking it to the popular cult of the Hellenistic Isis, the supreme heavenly queen, 'the ruler of all countries ... [who] showed the stars their path [and] ordered the course of the sun and the moon.'¹¹⁶ She had already appeared as an imperial 'universal' goddess at Tarsos in 41, and perhaps she had done so more often, as Plutarch also seems to imply.¹¹⁷ After the Donations of Alexandria, and perhaps already after the ceremonial in Antioch in 37/6, Kleopatra appeared as *Thea Neōtera*, the 'Younger Goddess'—a reference to both Isis and Levantine universal goddesses—on coins minted in Cyrenaïca and the Levant, and also presented herself as *Nea Isis*.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁴ See Strootman in Facella & Kaizer, forthcoming. *Great King, King of Kings and King of Asia* all had the same meaning of imperial overlordship; on these titles see E.R. Bevan, 'Antiochus III and his Title "Great-King"', *JHS* 22 (1902) 241-44; E.A. Fredricksmeyer 'Alexander the Great and the Kingdom of Asia', in: A.B. Bosworth and E.J. Baynham eds., *Alexander the Great in Fact and Fiction* (Oxford 2000) 96-135; M. Brosius 'Alexander and the Persians', in: J. Roisman ed., *Brills' Companion to Alexander the Great* (Leiden 2003) 169-93, n. 9 at p. 174; J. Wiesehöfer, "'King of Kings" and "Philhellēn": Kingship in Arsacid Iran', in: P. Bilde *et al.* eds., *Aspects of Hellenistic Kingship* (Aarhus 1996) 55-66.

¹¹⁵ Bevan (1927), p. 377.

¹¹⁶ From the Kyme Aretology (1st Century CE), Burstein (1985), no. 112; for the relevance of the Hellenistic Isis for Hellenistic kingship see first of all Versnel (1990).

¹¹⁷ On Kleopatra's appearance as the Goddess at Tarsos see below, section 5.3. Perhaps related is the placing of a gold statue of Kleopatra in the temple of Venus Genetrix on the Forum Iulium during her stay in Rome, and her being proclaimed *Isis Regina* by Caesar: *Cic. Att.* 14.8.1; 15.17.2; cf. Hölbl 2001, 290.

¹¹⁸ A.D. Nock, 'Neotera: Queen or Goddess?', *Aegyptus* 33 (1953) 283-96; L. Moretti, 'Note egittologiche. A proposito di Neotera', *Aegyptus* 38 (1958) 199-209. The new cult title *Basilissa Kleopatra Thea Neōtera* also emphasized her claims to the Seleukid diadem.

5.3 The ceremonial entry

The ritual of entry of a king into a city was of prime importance, strengthening the bond between monarchy and city. Royal parades through cities took place on various occasions: the arrival of a travelling king, the presentation of a new king to the populace, the arrival of a royal bride, the return of a victorious king from war, or the arrival of the king for the celebration of a festival. Ceremonies of entry varied depending on local religious and cultural traditions. In all monarchies however this public pageant had the same basic structure, consisting of three stages: an official welcome before the main gate, a ceremonial passage of the king along the city's main artery, and offerings by the king in the principal sanctuary.

The official welcome of a king normally took place outside the city. This seems to have been the case both in Greek cities and in non-Greek cities. A procession of citizens, headed by the magistrates and priests, left the city clothed in festive garments, to meet the king, their patron and protector. Often the entire population was present for this joyful event, but the only interaction was between the royal entourage and members of the city's elite, the most prominent of whom were usually linked to the royal *oikos* by means of *philia*. Ties between a city and a monarchy were personal bonds between civic oligarchs and the royal court. When a Ptolemaic king returned to Alexandria by sea, the entire fleet would leave the harbour to meet him 'in resplendent array'.¹¹⁹ After a king had been welcomed, he was taken into the city by the people. There was a solemn procession, culminating in an offering by the king to the city gods, and honours from the citizens for the visiting king.

The meaning of the welcoming ceremony outside the city was twofold. On the one hand, the fact that the king was ushered in by the citizens emphasised the city's autonomy. On the other hand, the citizens' vulnerable position outside the protection of the city walls, paradoxically amounted to a formal capitulation as well, a ceremonial opening of the gates.¹²⁰

¹¹⁹ Plut., *Luc.* 2.5; *Pomp.* 78.2.

¹²⁰ Cf. the elaborate reception of Ptolemaios III at Antioch during the Third Syrian War (246-241) as reported in the Gourob Papyrus, published by M. Holleaux, 'Un prétendu décret d'Antioche sur l'Oronte', REG 13 (1900) 258-80, repr. in *id.*, *Études d'épigraphie et d'histoire grecques III: Lagides et Séleucides* (Paris 1968) 281-316; cf. Bevan 1927, 198-200. In Renaissance Italy, princely entries also had a prelude *extra moenia*—outside the city walls—where the city fathers symbolically surrendered the town by proffering the keys; cf. E. Garbero Zorzi, 'Court spectacle', in S. Bertelli, F. Cardini, E. Garbero Zorzi eds., *The Courts of the Italian Renaissance* (Milan 1986) 127-87, at 160. If a king stayed in a city without such ceremonial, this was considered remarkable enough to be recorded

Both aspects are present in Josephus' account of Alexander the Great's visit to Jerusalem in 332.¹²¹ The story is presumably a fable, although a visit to Jerusalem by representatives of Alexander in that same year is very likely.¹²² Still, the passage provides valuable information, as the ceremony of welcome that Josephus describes is based on Ptolemaic or Seleukid practice, and may even go back to actual visits of Hellenistic kings or governors to Jerusalem. In Josephus' narrative the ruler of Jerusalem, the high priest Iaddous (Yaddua), is fearful at the approach of the conqueror and makes offerings to Yahweh in the Temple. That night the god appears before the high priest in a dream,

... telling him to take courage and adorn the city with wreaths, open the gates and go out to meet him, and that the people should dress in white garments, and only himself and the priests in the robes prescribed by the law, and that they should not look to suffer any harm, for God was watching over them. ... When he learned that Alexander was not far from the city, he went out with the priests and the citizens, and, making the reception sacred in character and different from other nations, met him at a certain place called Sapheïn.¹²³

in the sources: Polyb. 5.27.3 says that when Philippos V arrived at Sikyon in 218 he declined an invitation of the archonts and instead stayed as a private guest in the house of Aratos (although of course this was a political statement as well).

¹²¹ Jos., *AJ* 11.326-39.

¹²² There are also several Talmudic stories relating to the encounter; in the Talmudic version, the high-priest is named Shimon the Just, cf. E.S. Gruen, 'Kings and Jews', in: id., *Heritage and* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London 1998) 189-245, esp. p. 190 with n. 2. A. Belenkiy, 'Der Ausgang des Canopus, die Septuaginta und die Begegnung zwischen Simon dem Gerechten und Antiochos dem Grossen', *Judaica* 61.1 (2005) 42-54, tries to show that the story relates the surrender of Jerusalem to Antiochos the Great in 199 by the high priest Shimon II, after a suggestion of Solomon Zeitlin in 1924. Belenkiy holds that 'the question of whether Alexander possibly could have entered Jerusalem remains open'. Gruen 1998, 189, dismisses the story as *entirely* fictitious and advocates the traditional view that '[the] Jews wrote themselves into the campaign of Alexander the Great'. Cf. the claim in *AJ* 11.342, that Alexander also visited the Samaritans at Samaria. The notion that Alexander requested from the Judeans the same honours as they had previously given to Darius, and moreover demanded supplies for his army, must be genuine; on Alexander's methods of collecting supplies, esp. the work of scouts and embassies in the vicinity of his campaigns, see D.W. Engels, *Alexander the Great and the Logistics of the Macedonian Army* (Berkeley 1978).

¹²³ Jos., *AJ* 11.326-8; cf. 11.342.

When Alexander approached Babylon a few years later, he was met outside the city by the Babylonian governor and a procession of citizens, and was led into the city along a road strewn with aromatic branches and flowers, accompanied by musicians.¹²⁴ Amélie Kuhrt, who draws attention to similarities with the entry of Cyrus into Babylon in 539, comments that Alexander modelled his entry on typical Mesopotamian *c.q.* Assyrian tradition.¹²⁵ However, the Hellenistic royal advent was neither Babylonian nor Greek, but a generic ceremonial of which the details varied according to local tradition. Typically Greek, however, may have been the reception of the king as if he were a god. An early example of this is Dion's entry in Syracuse in 357, after the Syracuseans had awarded him with 'absolute power' in return for his restoration of *dēmokratia* and *eleutheria*:

Meanwhile Dion drew near the city and was presently seen, leading the way in brilliant armour, with his brother Megakles on one side of him, and on the other, Kallippos the Athenian, both crowned with wreaths. A hundred of his mercenaries followed Dion as a body-guard, and his officers led the rest in good order, the Syracuseans looking on and welcoming *as if it were a sacred religious procession for the return of liberty and democracy into the city*. ... After Dion had entered the city by the Temenid Gate, he stopped the noise of the people by a blast of the trumpet, and made proclamation that Dion and Megakles, who were come to overthrow the tyranny, declared the Syracuseans and the rest of the Sicilians free from the tyrant [Dionysios II]. Then ... the Syracuseans set out tables and sacrificial meats and mixing-bowls, and all, as he came to them, pelted him with flowers, and addressed him with vows and prayers as if he were a god.¹²⁶

¹²⁴ Curt. 5.1.19-23; cf. Arr., *Anab.* 3.16. During civic religious festivals in present-day Andalucia aromatic branches are strewn on the ground before processions; after being trod upon the branches become intensely aromatic.

¹²⁵ A. Kuhrt, 'Usurpation, conquest and ceremonial: from Babylon to Persia', in: D. Cannadine and S. Price eds., *Rituals of Royalty. Power and Ceremonial in Traditional Societies* (Cambridge 1987) 20-55, esp. 48-9; cf. *id.*, 'Alexander in Babylon', *AchHist* 5 (1990) 121-30. Entry of Cyrus: ANET p. 306, no. 13.

¹²⁶ Plut., Dion 18.3-19.1, trans. B. Perrin; cf. Diod. 16.20.6, 16.11. For the historicity of this passage see L.J. Sanders, 'Dionysius of Syracuse and the origins of the ruler cult in the Greek world', *Historia* 40 (1991) 275-87; cf. Habicht 1970, 8. Louis Robert collected many examples of the Greek ritual of welcome (*apantesis*) in BCH 108 (1984) 479-86 = *Documents d'Asie Mineure*, p. 467-74.

After having defeated Philippos V in a naval battle off Chios (201), Attalos I Soter was offered a similar reception in Athens. When the Athenians heard that the king was approaching their city, they sent out ambassadors who congratulated him with his victory and invited him to enter into Athens:

The Athenians, hearing that he would soon arrive, made a most generous grant for the reception and the entertainment of the king, [who] went up to Athens in great state accompanied by ... the Athenian archonts. For not only all the archonts and the knights, but all the citizens with their wives and children went out to meet him. As he entered the Dipylon, they drew up the priests and priestesses on either side of the road. After this they threw all the temples open, brought offerings to all the altars, and begged him to perform sacrifice. Lastly they voted him such honours as they had never readily paid to any former benefactors. For in addition to other distinctions they named one of the tribes Attalis after him and they added his name to the list of the eponymous heroes of the tribes. [Then] they summoned the council and invited the king to attend.¹²⁷

The king's presence at the city council—giving a speech to, and perhaps presiding over, the meeting—seems to have been a standard element in the reception of a king by a Greek *polis* or *koinon*. In 220 Philippos V presided over the annual meeting of the council of the Aitolian League, and addressed the council at length, after which the council voted to renew, through Philip, 'their friendly relations with the kings, his ancestors'.¹²⁸

A public ceremony of acclamation of the visiting monarch by the populace normally took place in the theatre shortly after the king's entry. One of the most fascinating accounts of such an event is the reception of Mithradates the Great in Pergamon. The king, at that time at the height of his power, sat enthroned on the stage of the theatre, watched by the entire people. By means of some theatrical mechanism a huge statue of a winged Nike was lowered towards the king, holding a *stephanos* in her outstretched hand, as if descending from the heavens to crown Mithradates victor. The statue however—and this is why this narration has been

¹²⁷ Polyb. 16.25.3-26.1. The summoning of the council presumably means that the king will give a speech, as Philippos V speaking in person before the council of the Aitolian League (Polyb. 4.14.6-7 and 4.25.8) and Antiochos III in Thebes (Polyb. 11.3.13).

¹²⁸ Polyb. 4.14.6-7, and 25.8; cp. App., *Syr.* 11.3.13: Antiochos III giving a speech at Thebes in Greece. When Philippos visited the Achaian League at Sikyon in 218, he and his *philoï* were invited to stay in the houses of the archonts: Polyb. 5.27.3.

preserved—‘broke to pieces just as she was about to touch his head, and the crown went tumbling from her hand to the ground in the midst of the theatre, and was shattered, whereas the people shuddered and Mithradates was greatly dejected.’¹²⁹

Another important piece of evidence for the royal advent is the Gourob Papyrus, a piece of official propaganda of Ptolemaios III Euergetes’ military exploits in Kilikia in 246 during the Laodikean War. The best preserved part describes the triumphal arrival of the king at Seleukeia in Pieria and subsequently Antioch:

Embarking on as many ships as the harbour of Seleukeia was likely to hold, we sailed to the fortress called Poseideion and anchored about the eighth hour of the day. Then we weighed anchor at dawn and entered Seleukeia. The priests, magistrates and the general citizenry, the commanders and the soldiers, wearing crowns met us on the [road] to the harbour. [No excess of] goodwill and [friendliness towards us was missing. When we entered] the city, [the ordinary people invited us to sacrifice] the animals provided [at the altars which they had built before their houses].¹³⁰

From Seleukeia the king went on to Antioch, where he was met outside the gates by a procession of priests, magistrates and commanders, accompanied by the populace and the ‘youths from the gymnasium’,¹³¹ all wearing festive garments and wreaths: ‘They brought all the animals for sacrifice to the road outside the gate; some shook our hands, and some greeted us with clapping and shouts of acclamation’ (μετὰ κρότου καὶ κραυγῆς). Discussing *i.a.* this document, C.P. Jones was able to show that a passage in Chariton’s romance *Chaereas and Callirhoe*, dated variously to the first century BCE and first and second century CE, and describing the arrival of Callirhoe as a bride in Miletos, is in fact a genuine Hellenistic ritual

¹²⁹ Plut., *Sulla* 11.1.

¹³⁰ P.Gourob = Petrie II 45 = FGrH II b no. 160; M. Holleaux, *Études d’épigraphie et d’histoire grecque III: Lagides et Séleucides* (Paris 1942) 281-31; cf. Lehmann 1988; Downey 1963, 51; Bevan 1927, 198-200; Bevan 1902 I, 184-6; H. Hauben, ‘L’expédition de Ptolémée III en Orient et la sédition domestique de 245 av. J.-C.’, *ArchPF* 36 (1990) 29-37. This translation C.P. Jones, ‘Hellenistic history in Chariton of Aphrodisias’, *Chiron* 22 (1992) 91-102.

¹³¹ Cf. OGIS 332 = *I.Pergamon* 246, describing the entry of Attalos III in Pergamon by the priests and priestesses, the civic magistrates (*stratēgoi* and archonts), *hieronikai* (victors), ephebes and *neoi* led by the gymnasiarch, *paides* led by a *paidonomos*, and *politai*.

of welcome (*parantesis*) and may have been modelled on the historical marriage of Demetrios Poliorketes and Ptolemaïs, daughter of Ptolemaios Soter, in Miletos in 286 :¹³²

At daybreak the whole town was already decorated with garlands of flowers. Every man offered sacrifice in front of his own house, and not just in the temples. ... All had but one desire – to see Callirhoe; and the crowd gathered round the temple of Concord, where by tradition bridegrooms received their brides. [Callirhoe] put on a Milesian dress and bridal wreath and faced the crowd; they all cried “The bride is Aphrodite!” They spread purple cloth and scattered roses and violets in her path; they sprinkled her with perfume as she passed; not a child nor an old man remained in the houses, [but] the crowd packed tight, and people even climbed on the roofs of houses.¹³³

In Josephus’ story about Alexander’s visit to Jerusalem, the king is struck with awe for Yahweh, whose name is written on the high priest’s head-dress. He consequently grants the city its freedom and reinstalls the high-priest. Then ‘the priests led the king into the city; and he entered the Temple and made a sacrifice to God, at the instruction of the priests.’¹³⁴ This is not so fabulous as Josephus wants it to be. The story reflects the normal practice of conferring favours on cities that co-operate voluntarily with a king, notably in the context of a war; also, paying homage to a city’s deities was a vital feature of the policy of Hellenistic kings *vis-à-vis* cities. Alexander bows before the name of God, whilst the Judeans bow for Alexander. There are also several generally accepted historical visits of Hellenistic kings to Jerusalem. Agartharchides of Knidos reports the people of Jerusalem opened the gates for Ptolemaios Soter, because he wished to perform sacrifice in the Temple.¹³⁵ Antiochos IV Epiphanes’ entering of the Temple together with the Judean high-priest Menelaos—presented as sacrilege

¹³² Jones 1992, 91-102; for the marriage of Demetrios and Ptolemaïs see Plut., *Demetr.* 46.5. For the ritual of *παράστασις ἱερῶν* see L. Robert in *Hellenica* 11-12 (Paris 1960) 126-31.

¹³³ Chariton of Aphrodisias, *Chaereas and Callirhoe* 3.2.14-17, cited after Jones 1992, 101.

¹³⁴ Jos., *AJ* 11.329-6.

¹³⁵ Jos., *AJ* 12.4. It turned out to be a cunning plan to capture the city, Josephus says; this is hardly possible, as by opening the gates for Ptolemaios and allowing him into the Temple, the Jerusalemites had already acknowledged Ptolemaios’ overlordship *c.q.* surrendered the city. It is also a cliché: the same strategem is attributed to Philippos V (Polyb. 7.12.1) and Antiochos III or IV (2 *Macc.* 1.14).

in the hostile *Maccabees* and *Daniel*—was a sacrifice to Yahweh, performed by Antiochos in accordance with his role as king and with the consent of the priests.¹³⁶

Sacrificing to local deities was a standard obligation of Hellenistic kings. It presented the king not only as one who respected local traditions, but even as ‘one of us’; indeed, when the king performed sacrifice to a city’s patron deity, surpassing the local (high) priest, this marked him as the most important citizen of all.¹³⁷ The typically Hellenistic integration of local religion in the representation of kingship is already apparent in the reign of Alexander. Curtius tells how Alexander in 333 ascended a mountain during the night before the Battle of Issos, and performed sacrificial rites to local gods ‘in accordance with local traditions’.¹³⁸ Alexander also offered sacrificed to Ister, the god of the Danube, to the Apis at Memphis, and to ‘Minerva’ at Magarsos in Kilikia, though the latter may be simply Athena instead of Anat or a similar goddess.¹³⁹

¹³⁶ 2 *Macc.* 5.11-6; cf. 1 *Macc.* 1.20-5; R. Strootman, ‘Van wetsgetrouwen en afvalligen: religieus geweld en culturele verandering in de tijd der Makkabeeën’, in: B. Becking and G. Rouwhorst eds., *Religies in interactie. Jodendom en Christendom in de Oudheid* (Zoetermeer and Utrecht 2006) 79-97. That Seleukid kings paid for offerings or the upkeep of the Temple in their absence was as usual in Jerusalem as it was elsewhere in the Near East, cf. 2 *Macc.* 3.2-3, 5.16. According to the same source, Antiochos Epiphanes on an earlier occasion, in 172, also had made his entry into Jerusalem, likewise on the invitation of the high-priest; he had been ‘splendidly received and held his advent under torch-light and shouts of acclamation’ (2 *Macc.* 4.21-22).

¹³⁷ One’s place in civic cult usually defined citizenship, with participation in the final offering ritual being a marker of high social status; on this aspect of citizenship in Classical Athenian thought: J.H. Blok, ‘Oude en nieuwe burgers’, *Lampas* 36 (2003) 5-26.

¹³⁸ Curt. 3.8.22: *Ipse in iugum editi montis escendit multisque collucentibus facibus patrio more sacrificium dis praesidibus loci fecit*. After the battle, Alexander erected altars dedicated to Zeus, Athena and Herakles: Curt. 3.12.27; J.D. Bing, ‘Alexander’s sacrifice *dis praesidibus loci* before the Battle of Issus’, *JHS* 111 (1991) 161-5, connects the altars to the preceding sacrifice, and identifies Curtius’ *Iovis*, *Minerva*, and *Hercules* as Latin representations of the Syrian deities Ba‘al, Nergal and Anat. However, even if this identification is correct, it is improbable that we have here merely a misunderstood translation of Syrian names, as it is simply too coincidental that the ‘resident spirits at Issus’ just happen to be identical to the three Hellenistic gods of battle *par excellence*, who in the context of war often appear as a trinity, and whose help Alexander could have asked for at any place.

¹³⁹ Diod. 17.49.1; Curt. 3.7.3; 4.7.5; Arr., *Anab.* 1.4.5; 3.1.4; 2.5.8, 6.4, 24.6; 3.5.2; Plut., *Alex.* 29. Cf. Atkinson 1980, 467; Bing 1991, 161 n. 2.

In addition to the relatively well-documented behaviour of the Seleukids in Jerusalem and the many sources recording Hellenistic kings making offerings to local deities in Greek cities, several contemporary documents from Babylonia attest to the same. For example a cuneiform chronicle from the early third century relates a visit of Antiochos I, at that time co-ruler of his father Seleukos Nikator, who makes sacrifice for the moon-god Sin:

That month, the 20th day, Antiochos, the [crown] prince [entered Babylon. ... [Month ... , the ...] the [day], the crown prince at the instruction of a certain Bab[ylonian] [performed] regular [offerings] for Sin of Egišnugal and Sin of Enit[enna]. [Antiocho]s, the son of the king, [entered] the temple of Sin of Egišnugal and in the tem[ple of Sin of Enitenna] [and the s]on of the king aforementioned prostrated himself. The son of the king [provided] one sheep for the offering [of Sin and he bo]wed down in the temple of Sin, Egišnugal, and in the temple of Sin, En[itenna].¹⁴⁰

Another cuneiform document from Babylon describes how an unnamed Seleukid co-ruler (here called *mar šarri*, ‘crown prince’) makes offerings at the Esagila, the temple of Marduk, and personally oversees the restoration of the building. Several bad omens take place: the king falls while sacrificing and a stroke of lightning hits the top of a ziggurat:

[...] to Babylon wi[th ...] of Bēl to the Bab[ylon]ians (of) [the assembly of Esa]gila he [gav]e and an offering on the ruin of Esagila they [arran]ged. On the ruin of Esagila he fell. Oxen [and] an offering in the Greek fashion he made. The son of the king, his [troop]s, his wagons, [and his] elephants removed the debris of Esagila. [...] on the empty lot of Esagila they ate. That [month], the 17th (?) day, a stroke of lightning within Eridu against the [building] in the middle of its roof took place.¹⁴¹

Likewise Philippos V performed sacrifice in Messene:

¹⁴⁰ Glassner 32; ABC 11; ANET 317; Austin 189; BHP 5; translation R.J. van der Spek. Cf. BHP 5 (below). Van der Spek comments that the temple had been in state of delapidation since the Persian period, perhaps since Xerxes. Alexander the Great ordered the removal of the remnants of the temple tower in order to restore it; the work continued after his death.

¹⁴¹ BHP 6, lines 2-10.

He told the magistrates of that city that he wished to visit the citadel and sacrifice to Zeus. He went up with his following (*therapeia*) and sacrificed, and [then], *as is the custom*, the entrails of the slaughtered victim were offered to him [and] he received them in his hands.¹⁴²

In Egypt, the Ptolemies visited first of all Memphis – for the occasion of their enthronisation as pharaoh but also after returning victoriously from a campaign.¹⁴³ Sometimes they also visited cities in southern parts of the country, making a ceremonial boat journey up and down the Nile.¹⁴⁴ In Upper Egypt, in the heart of the unruly Thebaid, the city of Ptolemaïs was closely tied to the monarchy. The only major city foundation in Egypt proper, Ptolemaïs was the main Ptolemaic stronghold in the south and perhaps served as end station for royal progresses up the Nile. Ptolemaïs, a *polis* with *boulē* and *ekklēsia*, had a mainly Greek or Hellenized population, as well as a Macedonian garrison. The citizens and soldiers maintained an overwhelming variety of royal cults, including an imperial ruler cult with a sanctuary called Ptolemaion, a civic *hērōs ktistēs* cult for Ptolemaios Soter in the Temple of the Divine Saviour, a festival in honour of ‘Dionysos and the Brother-Sister Gods’, celebrated yearly in the theatre, and many private cults.¹⁴⁵ But close by Ptolemaïs was Thebes, where the Ptolemaic king was supposed to be a pharaoh again. The situation was even more complex in the city of Babylon, where along with the indigenous Babylonian population there existed a Greek or Hellenized community of *politai* that maintained a cult and *pompē* with games in Greek style for the Seleukids;¹⁴⁶ the most important evidence for this is a Greek inscription

¹⁴² Polyb. 7.12.1.

¹⁴³ See W. Clarysse, ‘A Royal Visit to Memphis and the End of the Second Syrian War’, in: Crawford *et al.* 1980, 83-9, on a victorious entry into Memphis in July 253.

¹⁴⁴ W. Clarysse, ‘The Ptolemies visiting the Egyptian Chora’, in: L. Mooren ed., *Politics, Administration and Society in the Hellenistic and Roman World* (Louvain 2000) 29-43, with an appendix at 44-53 listing evidence for royal visits to Egyptian towns and temples.

¹⁴⁵ G. Plaumann, *Ptolemais in Oberägypten. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Hellenismus in Ägypten* (Leipzig 1910), esp. 39-63.

¹⁴⁶ Van der Spek 1986, 71-8, esp. 72-5; Van der Spek 2005, esp. 204-10; and idem, ‘Ethnicity in Hellenistic Babylonia’, in: W.H. van Soldt ed., *Ethnicity in Ancient Mesopotamia. Proceedings of the 48e Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale, Leiden 2002* (Leiden 2005). A Greek theatre from c. 300 BCE has been found at Babylon, and is also mentioned in cuneiform texts; cf. R.J. van der Spek, ‘The theatre of Babylon in cuneiform’ in: W.H. van Soldt *et al.* eds., *Studies presented to Klaas R. Veenhof on the occasion of his sixty-fifth Birthday* (Leiden 2001) 445-56.

from Babylonia mentioning a ritual in which Antiochos IV was hailed, perhaps annually, as the Saviour of Asia.¹⁴⁷

Demetrios Poliorketes in Athens

As we have seen, the ritual entry the king into a city was shaped like a divine epiphany, a *parousia*. Particularly in Greek cities the king could actually be hailed as a god manifest. When Demetrios Poliorketes visited Athens for the first time in 306, the spot where he descended from his chariot and touched Athenian soil for the first time was declared sacred ground, and an altar dedicated to *Demetrios Kataibatos*, ‘Demetrios the Descended [God]’—an epitheton of Zeus—was erected on it.¹⁴⁸ In June 304 Demetrios made an entry

¹⁴⁷ OGIS 253. The Babylonian origin of the inscription has been doubted by U. Köhler, ‘Zwei Inschriften aus der Zeit Antiochos’ IV Epifanes’, *Sitzungsberichte der Akademie der Wissenschaften Berlin* 51 (1900) 1100-1108, at 1105, and S.M. Sherwin-White, ‘A Greek ostrakon from Babylon of the early third century B.C.’, *ZPE* 47 (1982) 51-70, but was defended by Van der Spek 1986, 72. For restorations and discussion of the document see M. Zambelli, ‘L’ascesa al trono di Antioco IV Epifane di Siria’, *Riv.Fil.*88 (1960), 378; Bunge 1976, 63 n. 60; F. Piejko, ‘Antiochus Epiphanes Savior of Asia’, *Riv.Fil.*114 (1986) 425-36. Cf. Mørkholm 1966, 100.

¹⁴⁸ Plut., *Demetr.* 10.4: καθιερώσαντες καὶ βωμός ἐπιθέντες Δημητρίου Καταβάτου προσηγόρευσαν. The altar’s location is unknown. Demetrios visited Athens at least four times. The remarkable honors he received on these occasions are described in detail by Plutarch (*Demetr.* 10.1-4; cf. 12.1-4 and 13.1-2) and confirmed by other sources. On Demetrios and Athens in general see G. Dimitrakos, *Demetrios Poliorketes und Athen* (Hamburg 1937); C. Habicht, *Athens From Alexander to Antony* (orig. German; trans. Cambridge and London 1997) 87-97; I. Kralli, ‘Athens and the Hellenistic Kings (338-261 B.C.): The language of the decrees’, *CQ* 50 (2000) 113-32; A.G. Woodhead, ‘Athens and Demetrios Poliorketes at the end of the fourth century B.C.’, in: H.J. Dell ed., *Ancient Macedonian Studies in Honor of Charles F. Edson* (Thessaloniki 1981) 357-67. For the honours for Antigonos Monophthalmos and Demetrios Poliorketes in Athens see esp. Habicht 1970, 44-48, and further R.A. Billows, *Antigonos the One-Eyed and the Creation of the Hellenistic State* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London 1990; 2nd edn. 1997) 149-50; B. Dreyer, ‘The *hierous* of the *soteres*: Plut., *Dem.* 10.4, 46.2’, *Greek Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 39 (1998) 23-38 (discussing Antigonid influences on Athenian offices); L. Kertész, ‘Religionsgeschichtliche Voraussetzungen zur Herausbildung des Herrscherkultes in Athen’, *Oikoumene* 4 (1983) 61-9; F. Landucci Gattinoni, ‘La divinizzazione di Demetrio e la coscienza ateniese’, *Contributi dell’Istituto di Storia antica dell’Università del Sacro Cuore, Milan* 7 (1981) 115-23. T.M. Brogan, ‘Liberation honors: Athenian monuments from Antigonid victories in their immediate and broader contexts’, in: O. Palagia and S.V.

into Athens for the second time. Because he had relieved the city from a siege by Kassandros—whose army he had defeated in a pitched battle at Thermopylai—and had declared Athens to be henceforth autonomous and free, the Athenians bestowed upon him an even more grandiose and unique honour than the first time: they offered him the *opisthodomos*, the back room of the Parthenon, for his quarters,¹⁴⁹ as if, being a god, he could only be Athena's *xenos*.¹⁵⁰ The frieze above the back entrance—depicting the contest between Athena and Poseidon for the rule over Attika—could now be taken to symbolise Demetrios' struggle with Kassandros. Indeed, Demetrios actually associated himself with Athena—he

Tracy eds., *The Macedonians in Athens, 322-229 BC* (Oxford 2003) 194-205, argues that location, form and function of public portraits of Antigonos and Demetrios in Athens resembled earlier Athenian liberation monuments, and that this was meant to link the two 'Antigonid superheroes' (p. 203) to the traditional saving heroes of Athens. For literature about the Ithyphallic Hymn for Demetrios see below.

¹⁴⁹ The episode of Demetrios' stay in the Parthenon is recorded in Plut., *Demetr.* 23 and 24, cf. 26.3 and Diod. 20.100.5-6. Much uncertainty remains regarding the location and function of the various *opisthodomoi* mentioned in the sources as e.g. the sacred 'private' room of the goddess, treasure house, or even lumber shed; cf. J.M. Hurwit, *The Athenian Acropolis. History, Mythology, and Archaeology From the Neolithic Era to the Present* (Cambridge, 1999) 143-4 with fig. 128 on p. 163, and M.B. Hollinshead, "'Adyton," "opisthodomos," and the inner room of the Greek temple', *Hesperia* 68.2 (1999) 189-218. Plutarch states that the *opisthodomos* in which Demetrios was lodged was 'the back room of the Parthenon', and that this was a sacred place. Demetrios' stay in the Parthenon is of central importance in the *Life of Demetrios*, since it reveals how low the Athenians had sunk since the glorious days of Perikles; the Athenians' eagerness to please autocrats is a Leitmotiv in the *Life of Demetrios*. Typically, Plutarch proceeds to say that Demetrios and his entourage abused the Parthenon in a most scandalous manner, 'not quite behaving with the decorum due to a virgin goddess', but does not go into detail 'for the sake of the city's good name'. The Athenians, Plutarch implies, should have known better than to let in this wolf in purple clothing (cf. 24.5). Such judgments are of course more revealing of Plutarch than of Demetrios. The same topos is found in 2 *Macc.* 6.4.

¹⁵⁰ When Alexander offered to pay for the completion of the temple of Artemis at Ephesos on condition that his name be inscribed on the building, a citizen suggested to him 'that it was not fitting for one god to make gifts to another', cf. B.L. Trell, 'The Temple of Artemis at Ephesos', in: P.A. Clayton and M.J. Price eds., *The Seven Wonders of the Ancient World* (London and New York 1988; 2nd edn. 1989) 78-99, at 83.

called her his ‘elder sister’, Plutarch says—because of their identical roles as *sōtēres* of Athens.¹⁵¹

The staging of the royal entry as a divine *parousia* is especially apparent from the so-called Ithyphallic Hymn of the poet Hermokles, with which the Athenians welcomed Demetrios Poliorketes at his third ceremonial entry in 291/90 BC:

See how the greatest and the most beloved gods
in our city are present.
For here Demeter and Demetrios
one lucky moment brought us.
She has come to celebrate the holy
mysteries of Kore.
Joyous, as the god befits, beautiful and
laughing, he is present.
An august picture is revealed. All friends around him
and he is in the centre.
Just as the friends are like the stars,
He resembles the sun.
O son of mighty god Poseidon and
Aphrodite, hail you!
Now, know that other gods are far away,
or have no ears or
don't exist or do not care about us.
But thee, we see here present.
not wood, nor stone but real to the bone,
to thee we send our prayer.
So first of all make peace, o most beloved,
For thou hast the power.¹⁵²

¹⁵¹ It is possible that the same honour was once offered to Pyrrhos, who reclined: Plut., *Pyrrh.* 12.4.

¹⁵² Douris *FGrH* 76 F 13, *ap.* Ath. 6.253b-f; cf. Demochares *FGrH* 75 F 2, after the (literal) translation by H.S. Versnel. Recent discussions of the hymn include J.D. Mikalson, *Religion in Hellenistic Athens*. Hellenistic Culture and Society 29 (Berkeley and Los Angeles 1998) 94-7; M. Bergmann, ‘Hymnos der Athener auf Demetrios Poliorketes’, in W. Barner ed., *Querlektüren. Weltliteratur zwischen den Disziplinen* (Göttingen 1997) 25-47; M. Marcovich, ‘Hermocles’ Ithyphallus for Demetrius’, in: id. *Studies in Graeco-Roman Religions and Gnosticism*. Studies in Greek and Roman

The hymn continues with an explication of the *sotēria* expected from Demetrios to save the city and ‘make peace’: the king is asked to make war against the Aitolians, and destroy them. The Aitolian League had at that time begun its political expansion in Central Greece, and is therefore compared with the Sphinx lurking in the vicinity of Delphi; thus Demetrios was implicitly put on a par with the heroic saviour Oidipous. But despite its overtly political intentions, the hymn is thoroughly religious. The association with Demeter follows from the fact that Demetrios arrived at Athens in concurrence with the celebration of the Mysteries of Kore, for which occasion also Demeter was supposed to visit the city. Another interesting aspect is the comparison of Demetrios and his *philoï* with the sun and the stars. Solar symbolism was a central feature of Hellenistic royal propaganda. Demetrios himself is said to have owned a magnificent mantle in which representations of the *kosmos* and the heavenly bodies were woven; it is difficult to believe that this really was an extravagancy of Demetrios only, as Plutarch maintains.¹⁵³ This elaborate mantle (*chlamus*) was still unfinished when Demetrios died; it probably was intended to be worn by the king during processions, not unlike the sacred robes used to adorn cult statues during festivals.¹⁵⁴ In the meanwhile the message is clear: the kingship of Demetrios mirrored the rule of the sun in the heavens.

The image of the king as a manifested god whose presence struck the people with awe and joy at the same time is also present in other descriptions of royal entries, where we will also see the association of monarchs with saviour gods such as Apollo and Isis, but most of all with Dionysos.¹⁵⁵

Religion 4 (Leiden, New York, Copenhagen, Cologne 1988) 8-19. Hermokles also wrote paeans in praise of Antigonos Monophthalmos (Sachs-Hunger 491 and 492). I was not able to consult P. Thonemann, ‘The Tragic King: Demetrios Poliorketes and the City of Athens’, in: O. Hekster and R. Fowler eds, *Imaginary Kings. Royal Images in the Ancient Near East, Greece and Rome*. Oriens et Occidens 11 (Stuttgart 2005) 63-86.

¹⁵³ Plut., *Demetr.* 41.6; Douris *ap.* Athen. 12.535F.

¹⁵⁴ Conversely, images of Antigonos and Demetrios were woven in the sacred peplos of Athena Polias for the Panathenaic Festival of 306 BC, depicting the two kings fighting Giants together with Zeus and Athena (Plut., *Demetr.* 10.4; 11.2). On the gigantomachy as an emblem of monarchy see Strootman 2005.

¹⁵⁵ Association with Dionysos is particularly evident in the Ptolemaic dynasty, and has been elucidated notably J. Tondriau, ‘Le thiasés dionysiaques royaux de la cour ptolémaïque’, *CE* 41 (1946) 160-7; ‘Rois lagides comparés ou identifiés à des divinités’, *CE* 45/46 (1948) 127-46; ‘La dynastie ptolémaïque et la religion dionysiaque’, *CE* 50 (1950) 282-316; ‘Dionysos, dieu royale. Du Bacchos

The meeting of Kleopatra and Marcus Antonius

We are particularly well-informed about the sacred wardrobe of Kleopatra VII Philopator, the New Isis. The official presentation of Kleopatra as a queen-goddess was the culmination of three-hundred years of Hellenistic (Ptolemaic as well as Seleukid) monarchic propaganda. Plutarch reports how Kleopatra in 41 sailed to Tarsos in a magnificent barge, dressed as Aphrodite, for her first meeting with Marcus Antonius:

She sailed up the river Kydnos in a barge with gilded poop and purple sails, its rowers urging it on with silver oars to the sound of the flute blended with pipes and lutes. She herself reclined beneath a canopy spangled with gold, adorned like Aphrodite in a painting, while boys like Cupids in paintings stood on either side and fanned her. Likewise, also the fairest of her ladies in waiting, attired like Nereïds and Graces were stationed at the rudder-sweeps, and others at the reefing-ropes. Wondrous odours from countless incense-offerings diffused themselves along the river-banks. Of the inhabitants, some accompanied her on either bank of the river from its very mouth, while others went down from the city to behold the sight ... And a rumour spread on every hand that Aphrodite had come to revel with Dionysos for the benefit of Asia.¹⁵⁶

And when Antonius went on board to attend a banquet in his honour, Plutarch writes that:

tauomorphe primitif aux souverains hellénistiques Neoi Dionysoi', in: *Mélanges H. Grégoire* (Brussel 1953) 441-66; cf. Cerfaux & Tondriau 1957, 189-227.

¹⁵⁶ Plut., *Ant.* 26.1-3; trans. B. Perrin 1959 (Loeb), with adjustments. On the *hieros gamos*: Śnieżewski 1998, 134; cf. Hölbl 2001, 244 with n. 110. This marriage, otherwise unknown in extant Greek mythology, was perhaps based on the Greeks' equation of Aphrodite with Isis and Dionysos with her divine consort Osiris (Dio Cass. 50.5.3). Hölbl 2001, 244, suggests that they celebrated a marriage in the autumn of 34 BCE with the ceremony known as the Donations of Alexandria (and the suggestion she received land as a wedding-present is of course not *per se* absurd); Volkmann 1953, 117, on the other hand, dates the marriage to the meeting of Kleopatra and Antonius at Antioch in 37/6, where Antonius acknowledged Kleopatra's children Alexandros Helios and Kleopatra Selene as his. As the twins were already born in 37 this, too, seems improbable. It is perhaps best to accept that concerning Antonius and Kleopatra the distinction between a symbolic and a real marriage is anachronistic and the whole matter irrelevant. In the Greek east, there was no formal, let alone unified definition of marriage, no certificates or registers, only communally witnessed rituals; see C.B. Patterson, *The Family in Greek History* (Cambridge, Mass., and London 1998).

What he found there was beautiful beyond compare, but he was most amazed at the multitude of lights. For, as we are told, so many of these were let down and displayed on all sides at once, and they were arranged and ordered with so many inclinations and adjustments to each other in the form of rectangles and circles, that few sights were so beautiful or so worthy to be seen as this.¹⁵⁷

Kleopatra did not dress up as Aphrodite in order to seduce an unprepared Antonius. The coming together of queen and *triumvir* was carefully pre-arranged celebration of a marriage of Dionysos and Aphrodite, the beginning of a golden age of peace and prosperity in Asia. Antonius had earlier that same year appeared as the New Dionysos in Athens and Ephesos. The representation of Kleopatra as Aphrodite, attended by Nereïds, Graces and Cupids, was a Ptolemaic tradition which had equated the queen with Aphrodite since the days of Arsinoë II Philadelphos. Kleopatra also associated herself with Isis in Egypt, and later associated Isis with Aphrodite.¹⁵⁸ But Kleopatra's 'Aphrodite' was a deity designed for a wide audience, *viz.* a universal goddess who could be equated with the Hellenistic Isis—popular especially among the Greek upper classes—as well as with Asian supreme goddesses such as Atargatis, Astarte and Ishtar. The image of a divine *parousia* was enhanced by the incense spreading from her barge towards the onlookers on the riverbanks, the flute music, and the abundant use of lights at nightfall.¹⁵⁹

Antonius' entry into Alexandria

How at that same period a male Ptolemaic ruler would enter a city as a god, is shown in the surviving accounts of the entry of the *triumvir* Marcus Antonius into Alexandria in 34.¹⁶⁰ Hoping to pacify the Hellenistic world, Antonius—who as the representative of Rome in the East between 40 and 30—faced the task of imposing republican rule over a monarchic

¹⁵⁷ Plut., *Ant.* 26.4; trans. Perrin.

¹⁵⁸ For the association of Aphrodite with Isis in this context see Grant 1972, 117-20.

¹⁵⁹ In Greek religious cult, notably of Artemis, Dionysos and the Eleusinian deities, torches were associated with the cleansing of pollution, and the victory of light over darkness. On the significance of lights, lamps and torches in Greek religion see Eva Parisinou, *The Light of the Gods: The Role of Light in Archaic and Classical Greek Cult* (London 2000).

¹⁶⁰ Precisely because it was a *Roman* who entered Alexandria as if he were a king and a god, the event was described, pejoratively, by Dio Cass. 49.40.2-3 and Vell. Pat. 2.82 in relative detail, and mentioned by Plut., *Ant.* 50.4.

world—styled himself *basileus* in all but title. Crucial for his ‘monarchic’ representation were his association with Kleopatra VII, *Thea Neōtera*, the New Goddess Isis-Aphrodite, and his self-presentation as her hierogamous consort *Neos Dionysos*. Already in 41 he had entered Ephesos in a bacchanal procession, dressed as the victorious Dionysos.¹⁶¹ After his conquest of Armenia in 34, Antonius, leaving his legions behind, went to Alexandria to celebrate the victory and propagate—in the public ceremony later known as the Donations of Alexandria, discussed below—his far-stretching designs for a united Ptolemaic Near East under Roman hegemony. He entered the city in a spectacular *pompē*, adorned as Dionysos incarnate, riding a carriage and carrying a thyrsos wand and all other Dionysian paraphernalia,¹⁶² and parading the spoils of Asia, including the captured Armenian king Artavasdes and his family:

[Antonius] made them walk at the head of a kind of triumphal entry into Alexandria, together with the other captives, while he himself entered the city upon a chariot. And he presented to Kleopatra not only all the spoils that he had won, but even led the Armenian together with his wife and children before her, bound in chains of gold. She herself was seated upon a golden throne on a stage plated with silver, amidst a great multitude.¹⁶³

The procession ended with offerings in the great temple of Sarapis, the Ptolemaic god of kingship, who could be identified with both Dionysos-Osiris.¹⁶⁴ Antonius probably also received divine honours on this occasion.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶¹ Plut., *Ant.* 24.4. Antonius had already received cultic honors as *Neos Dionysos* in Athens (Sokrates of Rhodes, FGrH 192 F 2; Sen., *Suas.* 1.6.7), and later also in Alexandria, see below. When Antonius and Kleopatra prepared for the war against Octavianus on Samos, they held many celebrations in honour of Dionysos: Plut., *Ant.* 56.6-10. It is customary to see Antonius’ association with Dionysos as a claim to be the new Alexander the Great; however, the epithet *Neos Dionysos* indicated first of all that he wished to be looked at as a new Dionysos, following the example of several Ptolemaic and Seleukid kings; the identification with Dionysos, the conqueror of the east, foreshadowed his invasion of the Parthian Empire. Whether Alexander posed as νέος Διόνυσος during his campaigns remains an open question; see Versnel 1970, 251-2 for an overview of the debate up until 1970. On the epithet see Tondriau 1953.

¹⁶² Vell. Pat. 2.82.

¹⁶³ Dio Cass. 49.40.2-3.

¹⁶⁴ Vell. Pat. 2.82; Plut., *De Is. et Os.* 28.

¹⁶⁵ Hölbl 2001, 291; cf. Śnieżewski 1998.

Later, Antonius' enemies accused him of having celebrated a *triumphus* outside Rome, an allegation that is usually accepted as true in modern scholarship.¹⁶⁶ But this state entry was an entirely Hellenistic affair, designed to impress the eastern Mediterranean and Hellenistic Near East.

5.4 Royal processions

The basic form of the royal progress was the religious procession: a festive pageant with cult images and cultic attributes, following a prescribed route through the city, culminating in a sacrificial ritual in a major sanctuary, and followed by athletic and artistic competition. Statues of the king and members of his family were added to the images of the gods, but centre stage was the living king. In many cities in the East and in Egypt processions with the monarch as focal point pre-existed; but the divine honours awarded to the living king was an important innovation of Hellenistic royal pomp. Earlier Greek examples, such as the divine honours awarded to Pausanias and Lysander, had probably influenced Hellenistic practice. An important benefit of combining royal progress and religious festival was the fact that 'great numbers of people flocked together from all directions'.¹⁶⁷ Monarchies attempted to upgrade festivals to, or create new festivals with, panhellenic status, for example the Ptolemaia at Alexandria and the Nikephoria at Pergamon.¹⁶⁸ Such expressions of monarchic ideology were

¹⁶⁶ Symptomatic is Bradford 1971, 196-8: 'a unique spectacle, even in that ostentatious city ... designed to infuriate the Romans and to proclaim that theirs was only a second-rate city', almost literally following Plutarch's denigrating statement that Antonius 'gave offence to the Romans, since he bestowed the honourable and solemn rites of his native country upon the Egyptians for the sake of Kleopatra' (Plut., *Ant.* 50.4); in the same vein also Volkmann 1953, 141-2, and recently Southern 2000, 113-5, and Weill Goudchaux 2001, 139. It is obvious, however, that Antonius' entry was a bacchic procession and not a Roman *triumphus*; moreover, Antonius certainly would not have committed such a sacrilegious deed, only to antagonize Roman public opinion and offend the Alexandrians to boot.

¹⁶⁷ Diod. 16.91.1, on the royal festival celebrated in Aigai in 336, discussed below. Eratosthenes in his treatise dedicated to queen Arsinoë says that Ptolemaios Philadelphos 'founded all kinds of festivals and sacrifices, particularly those connected with Dionysos' (Ath. 27b).

¹⁶⁸ For an exhaustive list of Hellenistic royal *pompai* see F. Bömer, s.v. 'Pompa', in: *RE* 21 (1952) 1878-1994, esp. *infra* 1954-1974.

not intended to be lasting; these were ephemeral events, *i.e.* lasting for the duration of one day. They were, in the words of M. Moevs ‘the expression of an ideal of happy transience, similar to the state the Cyrenaic School defined as μονόχρονος εὐδαιμονία (Ath. 12.544a) [and] this “pleasure of the ideal now” became spectacularly evident in the festivities of the Ptolemaic court.’¹⁶⁹ Such lavishness was not only meant to impress those who were present but to stun the entire world for generations to come. The more sumptuous a procession was, the more it would be talked about, and persist in memory or commemorated in writing.

The first recorded royal procession that may be called typically Hellenistic took place under Philippos II in Aigai, Macedonia, as part of the Macedonian Games of 336. On this occasion—a celebration of the marriage of Philip’s daughter Kleopatra to the Molossian king—an impressive spectacle was staged in the theatre at Aigai. The procession was held before an audience of notables from Philippos’ Balkan Empire, representatives of the Greek *poleis*, and leading Macedonians.¹⁷⁰ Interestingly, the spectators had taken their seats while it was still dark, so that the coming of the king would coincide with the rise of the sun. Philippos was the last and most important element of a *pompē* that was led through the theatre:

Along with various other riches, Philippos included in the procession statues of the Twelve Gods, made with great skill and richly adorned, so that this show of dazzling wealth would strike awe in the beholder; and together with these came a thirteenth statue, fit for a god, that of Philippos himself, so that the king presented himself as enthroned among the Twelve Gods.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁹ Moevs 1993, 123; cf. H. von Hesberg, ‘Temporäre Bilder oder die Grenzen der Kunst’, *JdI* 104 (1989) 61-82.

¹⁷⁰ Diod. 16.92.5-93.1-2; Just. 9.6.3-4. For the political circumstances: Hammond 1994, 176.

¹⁷¹ Diod. 16.92.5; cf. Ath. 6.25.1b; Neoptol. *ap.* Stob. 4.34.70. Diodoros’ source for Philip’s self-presentation as *sunthronos* of the great gods is unknown: Hornblower 1991, 298-9 with n. 55. The procession was, and still is, controversial: Versnel 1974, 140-1; Cerfaux & Tondriau 1957, 123-5; Habicht 1970, 14 n. 3. It cannot be denied, however, that Philippos was in some fashion presenting himself as a thirteenth Olympian, though this put him on a par with his ancestor Herakles rather than directly with Zeus or Apollo: Strootman 2005a, 133-4 with n. 120; cp. Antiochos I of Kommagene’s self-presentation as the equal of Herakles *and* as *sunthronos* of the gods. At 16.95.1. Diodoros comments that Philippos made himself the companion of the gods ‘because of the extent of his kingdom’.

Then the king himself entered the stage of the theatre, wearing a white cloak. He was accompanied by his son Alexander and his son-in-law Alexander the Molossian, while the royal bodyguards fanned out at the back of the stage. At that very moment, Philippos was killed by Pausanias, so no further description of the festivities survive. Because of the monarchic character of this procession, a military parade was probably part of the cortège, as was the case in the reign of Alexander and remained standard practice in the following centuries.¹⁷² Hellenistic royal festivals revealed the relation between the earthly, royal order, and the divine order of the gods. The inclusion of army troops and symbols of royal power in processions did not make them any less solemn.

A special relation existed between civic religion and the *Reisekönigtum* of especially Seleukids and Antigonids. Kings regularly attended religious festivals in various cities, and the sequence of festivals partly determined the king's route.¹⁷³ Festivals drew people to cities, offering opportunities for the enactment of royal ritual, audiences and diplomatic exchange. Some major cults and sanctuaries connected with kingship were located in royal cities.

¹⁷² In 333 Alexander staged a procession of his army in honour of Asklepios at Soli in Kilikia: Arr., *Anab.* 2.5.8; cf. 2.24.6; 3.5.2; Plut., *Alex.* 29. Pace Rice 1983, 26-7, who proposes on the basis of the Soli procession that the participation of the army was an innovation of Alexander caused by the fact that no other Macedonians were present. But among the *Makedones*, 'army' and 'people' were one and the same. Already in Argead Macedonia, the Companion cavalry paraded in full armour for ceremonial occasions; during the Xanthika, the Macedonian Spring Festival, the Companions used to demonstrate their horsemanship by performing a series of complicated manoeuvres: Hammond 1989a, 55 with n. 19. Lane Fox 1979, 62-3 brilliantly evocates the 'Homeric' atmosphere at the Argead court, 'where single combat was the recurrent business [of the aristocracy], who wrestled, jostled and speared in duels worthy of any Homeric hero.' The belief that the Hellenistic tradition of public processions like the Grand Procession began with Alexander goes back to F. Caspari in *Hermes* 68 (1933) 400-14, cf. S. Barbantani in *BMCR* 2003-06, 43 n. 8. For an overview of the evidence for religious festivities at Alexander's court see Berve 1926 I, 89-90.

¹⁷³ E.g. Polyb. 5.101.5: in 217, in the middle of the Social War, Philippos V left his troops, 'and with his *philoï* hastened to Argos to be present at the celebration of the Nemean Festival'; Polyb. 10.26.1: Philippos returns from the games to continue the war. Ath. 3.101f and 4.128b: Antigonos organizes a banquet for the occasion of the celebration of a festival of Aphrodite.

Notably the Ptolemies created many new festivals.¹⁷⁴ The Attalids created the panhellenic festival of Nikephoria in Pergamon, modelled on the Soteria of Delphi.¹⁷⁵

Two comprehensive accounts of royal processions have been preserved. One is Ptolemaic and dates to the early third century, the other is Seleukid and about a hundred years later. The two processions are strikingly similar. Both combined royal and divine symbolism, and both contained whole armies: the parade mounted by Antiochos Epiphanes during the Apollo Festival at Daphne near Antioch in 166 or 165, and the so-called Grand Procession of Ptolemaios Philadelphos at Alexandria, somewhere in the first half of the third century.

The procession of Antiochos Epiphanes at Daphne

The grand procession mounted by Antiochos IV Epiphanes at Daphne in 166 or 165, near Antioch, was part of a festival of Apollo.¹⁷⁶ The festival was celebrated also before and after

¹⁷⁴ Ath. 27b.

¹⁷⁵ The Nikephoria was the great festival in Pergamon. It was originally held under unknown name in honour of Pergamon's main deity, Athena. Attalos I or Eumenes II transformed it into a festival of Athena Nikephoros, the Bestower of Victory, to become a celebration of Attalid kingship with panhellenic pretensions. The cortège went from the sanctuary called Nikephorion, along a winding procession avenue to the akropolis where the royal palace and the main shrines of ruler cult were situated. Cf. Allen 1983, 121-9. For an extensive account of Attalid ruler cult in Pergamon see Hansen 1946 / 1972, p. 453-70.

¹⁷⁶ The festival has aroused remarkably little scholarship, and what little there is, is principally concerned with the date. The occasion for the *pompē* of Antiochos Epiphanes has been variously explained as either a celebration of his military successes in Egypt or the start of his *anabasis* to the East; varying dates have been proposed for the *pompē*, depending on the occasion that one prefers. For O. Mørkholm, *Antiochus IV of Syria* (Copenhagen 1966) 97-8, it was a victory parade connected with the Sixth Syrian War, a view that has been defended at greater length by J.G. Bunge, 'Die Feiern Antiochus' IV. Epiphanes in Daphne 166 v.Chr.', *Chiron* 6 (1976) 53-71, who dates the festival to September/October 166. This is rejected by B. Bar-Kochva, 'The chronology of Antiochus Epiphanes' expedition to the eastern satrapies', in: idem, *Judas Maccabaeus. The Jewish Struggle Against the Seleucids* (Cambridge 1989) 466-73, who argues that the *pompē* was a prologue to the expedition to the Upper Satrapies, and should be dated to August 165. Neither of the two arguments, with their exact dates, are convincing. However, like the Grand Procession of Ptolemaios Philadelphos, which will be discussed below, the *pompē* of Antiochos Epiphanes was most likely not a unique event, but part of a recurrent festival, only much more sumptuous on this occasion than in other years. The enlargement of the festival fits well with Antiochos' refounding and rebuilding of Antioch as, perhaps, his principal

the reign of Antiochos Epiphanes, who merely increased its importance and size.¹⁷⁷ Daphne then became a central cult place and oracle of the dynasty's tutelary deity Apollo. However, the Apollo festival at Daphne may have originally been an indigenous religious festival, perhaps a new year festival, the temples of Apollo and Artemis that stood inside the temenos of Artemis replacing or being similar to temples of indigenous gods of sun and moon.¹⁷⁸ Livy states that the festival took place in *medio aetate*, and adds it was very hot. In other words: midsummer, a convenient date to honour a sun god, but also for a new year festival. If so, it might account by some peculiar actions on account of the king: 'He rode on an inferior horse by the side of the procession, ordering one part to advance, and another to halt, as occasion required; so that, if his diadem had been removed, no one would have believed that he was the king and the

capital. By comparing Epiphanes' *pompē* with the Grand Procession of Ptolemaios Philadelphos a century earlier, S. Raup Johnson, 'Antiochus IV's Procession at Daphne (166 B.C.)', *JAGNES* 4.1 (1993), has evidenced the obvious, *sc.* that the parade at Daphne is fully intelligible as purely Hellenistic ceremonial, making short work with the fable that Epiphanes was a 'romanizer'. Cf. Green 1990, 432, who is averse to sneer that the Daphne Festival 'was quintessentially Hellenistic: it made a vast impression at the time, cost a great deal of money, and substantially altered nothing'. For the traditional view see *e.g.* J.C. Edmondson, 'The cultural politics of public spectacle in Rome and the Greek East, 167-166', in: B. Bergmann and C. Kondoleon eds., *The Art of Ancient Spectacle* (Washington 1999) 77-95, esp. 84-8, where it is taken for granted that with his grand procession Antiochos imported the Roman *triumphus* to the East. Edmondson seems unaware that the Roman triumph had eastern antecedents rather than the other way round (Versnel 1970).

¹⁷⁷ Evidence for a repetitive festival in honour of Apollo at Daphne is provided by Livy 33.48.4-6 and 33.49.6 on 195 BCE; cf. Ath. 12.540a; *OGIS* 248 l. 52-3.

¹⁷⁸ The area of Daphne—modern Harbiye in the Turkish Hatay, a canyon area of exceptional beauty, covered with laurel trees and boasting an abundance of clear water—was the site of an oracle to Apollo, tutelary deity of the Seleukid family (see also above, chapter 2.1). The large temenos contained a temple of Apollo and Artemis, as well as other sacral buildings; inside the temenos a tree was worshipped, supposedly the original laurel in which the nymph Daphne had been transformed according to myth. It is unknown if Daphne was a sacred place already before the Hellenistic age. Lib. *Or.* 11.94-99 and Sozomen 5.19, claim that Seleukos Nikator had first founded the sanctuary at Daphne, but according to Malalas 204.9-16 the temple already existed when Seleukos planted a tree in front of it (I owe these references to Lucinda Dirven). The Seleukids had a palace there since at least the days of Antiochos I. Today, the laurel trees and springs are still there in abundance, but of the Seleukid royal and sacral architecture nothing has been recovered.

master of all.¹⁷⁹ A ritual of reversal? Also during the sacrificial meals after the procession, Antiochos behaved in a manner unworthy of a king, but the evidence is inconclusive.¹⁸⁰ To complicate matters a little, Antiochos' riding to and fro on his 'inferior horse', disturbing the order of the column, is reminiscent of Dionysos, but to assume that the king was impersonating the god is, again, not supported by other evidence.¹⁸¹

Whatever the exact religious background and meaning of the festival, Epiphanes transformed it into a most imposing monarchic spectacle. He did so in all likelihood because he wished to transform the festival into an event of panhellenic significance. The promotion of the Syrian Apollo cult at Daphne to international status probably was an attempt to substitute Didyma, which had been lost to the Seleukids after the Treaty of Apameia (188), as a central cult place for the dynasty's tutelary deity.¹⁸²

Antiochos, writes Polybios, 'in putting on these lavish and stupendous games outdid all his rivals.'¹⁸³ The confident presentation of Seleukid strength—a military parade of more than 50,000 soldiers was part of the parade—was intended to advertise his strength, and to impress his unruly vassals and the Parthian king. It also cannot have been but a challenge to

¹⁷⁹ Polyb. 30.25; cf. Liv. 36.1: 'it was not really clear either to himself or to others what kind of person he was'.

¹⁸⁰ On role-reversal of the king as a typical element in new year celebrations: H.S. Versnel, 'What is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander: Myth and ritual, old and new', in: idem, *Inconsistencies in Greek and Roman Religion II: Transition and Reversal in Myth and Ritual*. Studies in Greek and Roman Religion 6 (Leiden 1993) 16-88. On (new year) festivals in the (western) Near East consult M.E. Cohen, *The Cultic Calendars of the Ancient Near East* (Bethesda 1993), and J.A. Wagenaar, *Origin and Transformation of the Ancient Israelite Festival Calendar. Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für Altorientalische und Biblische Rechtsgeschichte* (Wiesbaden 2005). Note that Nabû and Nanaia, the central deities in the Babylonian Akitu new year ritual, revered by the Seleukids as well, were identified with Apollo and Artemis, as other Mesopotamian deities similar to these two Babylonian gods.

¹⁸¹ Köhler 1996, 156, explains Epiphanes' riding around from the king's sense of responsibility, inducing him to personally direct the progress of the parade.

¹⁸² Perhaps it is no coincidence that the earliest irrefutable evidence for Seleukid veneration of Daphne is a letter in which Antiochos III appoints priests of the joint cult of Apollo and Artemis, dated to 189, the year of the Battle of Magnesia (Welles no. 44). Daphne, like Didyma, had an oracle of Apollo.

¹⁸³ Polyb. 31.16.1.

Roman hegemony.¹⁸⁴ Antiochos sent envoys and sacred ambassadors to the Greek cities to announce the festival, and, as Polybios reports, the Greeks were eager to send delegations and offerings to Antioch.¹⁸⁵ Antiochos had reformed his army in response to the defeat of his father at the Battle of Magnesia, introducing 10,000 elite infantry equipped as Roman legionaries.¹⁸⁶ He was clearly determined on avenging the dishonour and restore Seleukid dominance in the west. Before he could take on the Romans, however, Antiochos needed to restore Seleukid authority in the eastern empire but this undertaking ended in failure because of his early death in 164.

The procession is described in detail by Polybios.¹⁸⁷ A splendidly outfitted army of more than 40,000 infantry and about 10,000 cavalry marched at the head.¹⁸⁸ These were mainly heavy armed troops and guard regiments. More than half of the infantry consisted of Macedonian shock troops, including the elite regiments of the Bronze Shields and the Silver Shields, both numbering 5,000 men, another 10,000 regular phalangites, and 5,000 soldiers wearing breast-plates and chain armour ‘after the Roman fashion’.¹⁸⁹ The remainder were light infantry from Kilikia and Mysia, and Celtic mercenaries from Galatia. There also marched 600 *basilikoi paides* and 250 pairs of *μονομάχοι*. The latter are usually understood to be ‘Roman’ gladiators but that is improbable.¹⁹⁰ The cavalry included such guard regiments as the Royal Companions, the Royal Agema, and the Kataphrakts—all of them wearing parade dresses adorned with purple—as well as citizens from the Syrian *poleis*, wearing gold

¹⁸⁴ Polyb. 30.25.1 links the festival with the games celebrated by Aemilius Paullus in Macedonia and claims that Antiochos ‘[was] ambitious of surpassing Paullus in magnificence’. Cf. Diod. 31.16 and Polyb. 31.16.1. Note the presence of war elephants in the processions, forbidden by the Treaty of Apameia (below).

¹⁸⁵ Polyb. 30.25.1.

¹⁸⁶ For Antiochos’ military reforms see N. Sekunda, *Ptolemaic and Seleucid Reformed Armies, 168-145 BC. Volume 1: The Seleucid Army under Antiochus IV Epiphanes* (London 1997).

¹⁸⁷ Polyb. 30.25-26 *ap.* Ath. 5.194 and 10.439.

¹⁸⁸ Polyb. 30.25.1-11.

¹⁸⁹ Although the introduction of ‘legionaries’ into the Seleukid army is usually taken as evidence for Epiphanes’ admiration for the Romans, I rather think that the objective of this innovation was to be better able to fight them.

¹⁹⁰ Perhaps they were an elite unit of the army. M. Carter, ‘The Roman spectacles of Antiochus IV Epiphanes’, *Nikephoros* 14 (2001) 45-62, suggest they were athletes.

crowns.¹⁹¹ Next came a thousand Central Asian horse archers.¹⁹² A thousand *philoï*, wearing purple mantles with gold embroideries, followed on horseback. Behind the *philoï* were a thousand ‘picked horsemen’.¹⁹³ At the end of the military parade came a hundred and forty horse-drawn chariots, two chariots drawn by elephants, and finally sixty-four fully armoured war elephants. The conspicuous presence of mercenaries from Asia Minor (*sc.* Mysians and Galatians) and elephants is remarkable. The Treaty of Apameia, concluded with the Romans in 188 by Epiphanes’ father Antiochos the Great, had forced the Seleukids to give up their claims to Asia Minor and forbade them the possession of elephants. Antiochos Epiphanes thus made it clear that he had no intention to comply with the treaty.¹⁹⁴ With the army parade of the Daphne procession, Antiochos overtly showed his imperial pretensions. Although Seleukid armies during great battles normally contained troops from all over the kingdom, here only a few selected ‘ethnic’ contingents are mentioned: Mysians, Galatians, and

¹⁹¹ Polyb. 30.25.6: χίλιοι πολιτικοὶ δὲ τρισχίλιοι; these 3,000 men probably must have come primarily from Antioch and the other cities of the Syrian Seleukis, and perhaps also from Seleukeia in Mesopotamia.

¹⁹² Polybios (30.25.6) does not specify the ethnicity of these horsemen, but describes them as ἰππεῖς Νισσαῖοι, *i.e.* coming from the country east of the Caspian Sea; they may have been either Parthian horse archers or horsemen equipped in a similar fashion as the Parthians (Saka or Skythian horsemen).

¹⁹³ Polyb. 30.25.8: ἐπίλεκτοι χίλιοι.

¹⁹⁴ Other sources, too, show that, in spite of the Treaty of Apameia, the Seleukids still had war elephants at their disposal as well as a Mediterranean fleet, but the prominent presence of elephants on such an international stage was a straightforward rejection of Roman supremacy. The importance of Apameia as a cause for Seleukid decline has been questioned most fervently by Kuhrt & Sherwin-White 1993, 215-6, who argue that although the loss of Asia Minor was a major blow for Seleukid power and prestige, the Seleukids still commanded the enormous resources of capital and manpower of their Asian empire east of the Tauros Mountains. Their view has recently been supported by J.D. Grainger, *The Roman War of Antiochos the Great* (Leiden 2002) 350-1—albeit without reference to preceding literature—who even states that Antiochos III could have continued the war against the Romans after the Battle of Magnesia, and only complied with the harsh peace terms offered by the Romans because the Ptolemies threatened to attack him in the south. Habicht, *CAH* 8 (1989) 324-87, argues that the expansion of the Parthian Empire was a result rather than a cause of Seleukid decline, cf. J.D. Lerner, *The Impact of Seleucid Decline on the Eastern Iranian Plateau* (Stuttgart 1999), for a more detailed discussion.

Nisaians.¹⁹⁵ The conspicuous presence of horsemen from the steppes of Central Asia—*i.e.* from the eastern fringe of the world itself—is particularly interesting. Combined with the troops from western Anatolia, they conveyed an image of an emperor, described in an inscription as the Saviour of Asia, whose power encompasses the whole of Asia.¹⁹⁶

Behind soldiers came an impressive number of sacrificial victims: about a thousand fat oxen and nearly three hundred cows, provided by the various sacred embassies of the Greek cities, as well as eight hundred ivory tusks and other rich gifts to the god. The offerings were brought by eight hundred ephebes wearing gold crowns.¹⁹⁷ The third and last part of the procession consisted of a parade of gods:

The vast quantity of images of the gods is impossible to enumerate. For representations of every god or demigod or hero known or worshipped by mankind were carried along, some gilded and others adorned with gold-embroidered robes; and there were representations of all the myths, belonging to each according to accepted tradition, made with precious materials.¹⁹⁸

The participation of the entire divine world in the procession mirrored the image of pervasive earthly power that was noticeable in the military section of the procession. The universalistic pretensions of Seleukid kingship were made even more clear with the image of Earth and

¹⁹⁵ The military contingents mentioned by Polybios represent only part of the enormous and diverse manpower resources available to Antiochos. As Polybios mentions only troops in large numbers, it is possible that small, symbolic units from other parts of the empire were present at Daphne as well; cf. P. Briant, 'The Achaemenid Empire', in: K. Raaflaub and N. Rosenstein eds., *War and Society in the Ancient and Medieval Worlds* (Cambridge 1999) 105-28, at 118-120, who has convincingly argued that the catalogue in Hdt. 7.61-100, listing the various exotic ethnic contingents serving in the expeditionary army of Xerxes in 480, most of whom did not take part in the actual fighting—Hyrkanians, Skythians, Indians, Ethiopians *et cetera*—were in reality small units that came along mainly for propaganda reasons, to symbolize the universality of Achaemenid royal power. The presence of soldiers from Kilikia is unsurprising as they came from the region where the procession took place.

¹⁹⁶ *OGIS* 253.

¹⁹⁷ Polyb. 30.25.12. The 'ephebes' may have been royal pages; but as they went on foot, were not included in the military parade, and wore gold crowns like the citizen cavalry, it is more likely that they were ephebes from Antioch. Also, eight hundred would be a peculiar number for *basilikoi paides* (given the fact that the other contingents all have ideal numbers).

¹⁹⁸ Polyb. 30.25.13-6.

Heaven, which was carried at the end of the procession, together with representations of Night and Day and of Dawn and Noon.¹⁹⁹ The latter imagery, embodying the course of the day, can be easily associated with the sun god Apollo and the moon goddess Artemis—both of whom were worshipped at Daphne—but also with Antiochos IV Theos Epiphanes, the God Manifest himself, who equated his kingship with the Sun, the all-powerful centre of the universe.²⁰⁰

The Grand Procession of Ptolemaios Philadelphos

The most detailed account of an Hellenistic royal progress, is the stunning description of the so-called Grand Procession organised by Ptolemaios II Philadelphos in Alexandria. This *pompē*—in actuality a whole series of lesser processions in honour of various gods—is described in rich detail by Kallixeinos of Rhodes in the fourth book of his *Alexandria*, written in the late third century; lengthy excerpts from this now lost report are preserved in the fifth book of Athenaios' *Deipnosophistai*, of the late second century BCE.²⁰¹ Kallixeinos in turn

¹⁹⁹ Polyb. 30.25.16.

²⁰⁰ J.G. Bunge, “‘Antiochos-Helios’”. Methoden und Ergebnisse der Reichspolitik Antiochos' IV. Epiphanes von Syrien im Spiegel seiner Münzen’, *Historia* 24 (1975) 164-88, esp. 174, explains Antiochos’ solar propaganda as merely a campaign to legitimize his usurpation of the throne—taking the place of his brother’s young son, whose guardian Antiochos was and whom, it was said, Antiochos had murdered, cf. Mørkholm 1966, 44-50—and reduces its symbolic meaning to the down-to-earth claim that Antiochos was the unchallenged sole ruler of the Seleukid Empire despite his dubious claims to the throne; cf. *idem*, “‘Theos Epiphanes’” in den ersten fünf Regierungsjahren des Antiochos IV. Epiphanes’, *Historia* 23 (1974) 57-85. However, as we have seen above (chapter 3.2), Antiochos’ claims to the throne were not illegitimate; furthermore, comparison of kingship with the *hēgemonia* of the Divine Sun occurred more often, e.g. Call., *Hymn* 4.168-70.

²⁰¹ Kallixeinos, *FHG* III 58 = *FGrH* 627 F 2 *ap.* Ath. 5.196-203. The most valuable study of this text is E.E. Rice, *The Grand Procession of Ptolemy Philadelphus* (Oxford 1983), concentrating on political meanings of the procession’s imagery and its relation with political reality, but underrating cultic and ideological aspects. Other discussions of Philadelphos’ *pompē*: H.S. Versnel, *Triumphus. An Inquiry into the Origin, Development and Meaning of the Roman Triumph* (Leiden 1970) 250-4; H. Heinen, ‘Aspects et problèmes de la monarchie ptolemaïque’, *Ktéma* 3 (1978) 177-99; F. Dunand, ‘Fête et propagande à Alexandrie sous les Lagides’ in: *idem*, *La fête. Partique et discours* (Paris 1981) 13-41, esp. 21-6; F. Dunand, ‘Les associations dionysiaques au service du pouvoir lagide (IIIe s. av. J.-C.)’, in: *l’Association dionysiaque dans les sociétés anciennes. Actes de la Table Ronde 1984* (Rome 1986) 85-104; J. Köhler, *Pompai. Untersuchungen zur hellenistischen Festkultur* (Frankfurt am Main 1996); M.T.M. Moevs, ‘Ephemeral Alexandria. The pageantry of the Ptolemaic court and its

cites from official records: γραφὰ τῶν πεντετηρίδων, illustrated accounts of the four-year festivals, commissioned by the king to keep the memory of these events alive.²⁰² These were the forerunners of the *descrizioni* of Renaissance Italy, detailed descriptions of ceremonies and *fêtes* at princely courts, made public, and even divulged to rival courts, on orders of the monarch.²⁰³ Another citation from Ptolemaic *descrizioni*, in Appianos' introduction to his *Syrian Wars*, reveals how royal processions were meant to impress the world with images of unlimited wealth and military might:

The empire of Alexander was splendid in its magnitude, in its armies, in the success and rapidity of his conquests, and it wanted little of being boundless and unexampled, yet in its shortness of duration it was like a brilliant flash of lightning. Although broken into several satrapies even the parts were splendid. The kings of my own country alone had an army consisting of 200,000 foot, 40,000 horse, 300 war elephants, and 2,000 armed chariots, and arms in reserve for 300,000 soldiers more. ... They had money in their treasuries to the amount of 740,000 Egyptian talents. Such was the state of preparedness for war shown by the royal accounts as recorded and left by the king.²⁰⁴

documentations', in: R.T. Scott and A.R. Scott eds., *Eius Virtutis Studiosi. Classical and Postclassical Studies in Memory of Frank Edward Brown (1908-1988)* (Washington 1993) 123-48; F.W. Walbank, 'Two Hellenistic processions: A matter of self-definition', *SCI* 15 (1996) 119-30; C. Wikander, 'Pomp and circumstance: The procession of Ptolemaios II', *Oath* 19.12 (1992) 143-50; D.J. Thompson, 'Philadelphus' procession. Dynastic power in a Mediterranean context', in: L. Mooren ed., *Politics, Administration and Society in the Hellenistic and Roman World*. *Studia Hellenistica* 36 (Louvain 2000) 365-88; R.A. Hazzard, *Imagination of a Monarchy. Studies in Ptolemaic Propaganda* (Toronto, Buffalo, London 2000) 59-79; Hölbl 2000, 39-40; A. Bell, *Spectacular Power in the Greek and Roman City* (Oxford and New York 2004).

²⁰² Ath. 197d. Reconstructing these hypothetical documents, and their Egyptian antecedents, is the main concern of Moevs 2000, who argues that 'the narrative style used by Kallixeinos [which] reflected at one and the same time the precision of an accountant and an uninhibited propensity to astonish ... was already implicit in the original documents in keeping with the intent, which was celebratory as well as documentary' (p. 125). Cf. H. von Hesberg, 'Temporäre Bilder oder die Grenzen der Kunst', *Jdl* 104 (1989) 61-82. On the (un)reliability of Athenaios' own view of Ptolemaic Egypt see D. Thompson, 'Athenaeus in his Egyptian context', in: D. Braund and J. Wilkins eds., *Athenaeus and his World. Reading Greek Culture in the Roman Empire* (Exeter 2001) 77-86.

²⁰³ Garbero Zorzi 1986, 155.

²⁰⁴ App., *Syr.* x.

The report of Ptolemaios Philadelphos' Grand Procession as preserved in Athenaios is far from complete. Athenaios only cites Kallixeinos' description of a procession in honour of Dionysos *verbatim*—one of several processions constituting the entire *pompē*—and paraphrases some other parts. No context is given anywhere, only abundant detail. Kallixeinos' account is genuine *ekphrasis*, concentrating on the vast quantities of precious materials, valuable incense, purple dye, the enormous sizes of the statues, the vast numbers of people participating. 'I have selected for mention only those things which contained gold and silver', Athenaios writes.²⁰⁵ The number of gold and silver mixing-bowls, libation goblets, pitchers, drinking-cups, shown as evidence of the inexhaustible resources of Ptolemaios Philadelphos, is indeed astounding. According to Peter Green, the 'ultramontane extravagance' of the procession foreshadowed the decadence and corruption of the later Ptolemies,²⁰⁶ but to dismiss the procession as meaningless spendthrift of a megalomaniac monarch is beside the point. It was at the least an exhibition of royal *tryphē*, the ostentatious display of luxury and wealth as an expression of power.²⁰⁷

The religious calendar of Alexandria contained many festivals pertinent to the monarchy.²⁰⁸ It is usually believed that the occasion for the Grand Procession of Ptolemaios Philadelphos was the Ptolemaia, the principal four-year festival celebrated in honour of the dynasty.²⁰⁹ Kallixeinos repeatedly shows that this *pompē* was held especially in commemoration of the first two Ptolemies, the deified saviour gods Ptolemaios I Soter and Berenike I, parents of the brother-sister gods Ptolemaios II Philadelphos and Arsinoë II Philadelphos. For this occasion Ptolemaios Soter and Berenike were also honoured with sanctuaries at Dodona.²¹⁰ R.A. Hazzard, who dates the procession relatively late (262), argues

²⁰⁵ Ath. 201f.

²⁰⁶ Green 1990, 158-60.

²⁰⁷ The importance of this aspect is stressed by Dunand 1981, 25-6. For the display of τρυφή by the Ptolemies in general see H. Heinen, 'Die Tryphè des Ptolemaios VIII. Euergetes II. Beobachtungen zum ptolemäischen Herrscherideals und zu einer römischen Gesandtschaft in Ägypten, 140/39 v.Chr.', in: id *et al.* eds., *Althistorische Studien. Hermann Bengtson zum 70. Geburtstag dargebracht von Kollegen und Schülern* (Wiesbaden 1983) 116-27.

²⁰⁸ Fraser I, 230-3; Weber 1993, 165-82.

²⁰⁹ The conventional date for the first celebration of the Ptolemaia is winter 279/8, see Hölbl 2000, 94; this date is debated (below).

²¹⁰ Ath. 203a.

that the procession was so exceptionally spectacular because it was meant to announce a new era, which he names the Soter Era.²¹¹ Both date and occasion, however, remain elusive.²¹²

A festival like the Ptolemaia was *qualitate qua* an international event; in Greece, friends of the Ptolemaic family endeavoured to have the Ptolemaia accepted as a panhellenic festival, of equal status as the Olympic Games.²¹³ People flocked to Alexandria from far and near, and many guests, including foreign ambassadors, were personally invited by the king and the queen; they were feasted in the palace gardens in the grand banqueting pavilion mentioned earlier in this chapter. No doubt also people from the Egyptian countryside, perhaps also from Cyrenaica and the Levant, came to Alexandria to witness the festivities, to participate in the games, to do business, *et cetera*. Thus, the festival linked the various parts of the Mediterranean Ptolemaic empire with the imperial centre, Alexandria.

The route of the procession is unknown. All that is sure, is that the processions passed through the royal district, as at least the procession in honour of Dionysos started in the stadion (near the palace) and passed by or ended at the tombs of Ptolemaios Soter and Berenike,²¹⁴ near the Sema, the heroon of Alexander. In the stadion, the processions were shown to a large audience. Whether the king and the queen took part in the procession or were among the audience has not been recorded. *Philoï* will naturally have marched *en masse*, at least in the army parade at the conclusion of the festival.

²¹¹ Hazzard 2000, 18-46. The start of this new era coincided with the posthumous styling of Ptolemaios I as 'Ptolemaios Soter' by his son, which Hazzard also re-dates to 263/2. W. Huss, *Aegypten in hellenistischer Zeit (332-30 v. Chr.)* (Munich 2001) 320-3, rejects Hazzard conclusions, cf. P.C. Nadig in BMCR 2002-09, 2.

²¹² The earliest possible date is the first celebration of the Ptolemaia in 282 or 279. Fraser, I 513 and II 738, dates the procession to the winter of 271-270, following a hypothesis of W.W. Tarn that the Grand Procession was a victory celebration at the end of the First Syrian War; so also recently S.L. Ager, 'An uneasy balance: From the death of Seleukos to the Battle of Raphia', in: A. Erskine ed., *A Companion to the Hellenistic World* (Oxford 2003) 35-50, at 38. Using astronomical data, V. Foertmeyer, 'The dating of the pompe of Ptolemy II Philadelphus', *Historia* 37 (1988) 90-104, has set the date at winter 275-274, and today this is usually accepted; however, new dates for both the first celebration of the Ptolemaia and the Grand Procession, *viz.* 282 and 262 respectively, has been proposed, also on the basis of astronomical calculations, by R.A. Hazzard and M.P.V. FitzGerald, 'The regulation of the Ptolemaia: A hypothesis explored', *Journal of the Astronomical Society of Canada* 85 (1991) 6-23; cf. Hazzard 2000, 25-46.

²¹³ Hölbl 2000, 94; cf. Austin no. 218, with n. 4.

²¹⁴ Kallixeinos *ap.* Ath. 5.202d.

The *pompē* was divided into several separate processions. The first of these was called Procession of the Morning Star, and the last Procession of the Evening Star. This implies that the *pompē* lasted from sunrise to sunset, though not necessarily of the same day.²¹⁵ As Athenaios cites only Kallixeinos' account of one division, viz. the procession in honour of Dionysos, and refers to others rather sporadically, the organisation and duration are unclear, but may be reconstructed thus:

1. Procession of the Morning Star
2. Procession in honour of Ptolemaios and Berenike
3. Procession of Zeus
4. Processions of Dionysos
5. Procession of the [other] gods
6. Procession of the Evening Star

Each of these may have lasted a full day; the Dionysiac procession began with Satyrs bearing torches, symbolising the transition from night to day, from darkness to light. There were separate processions of Zeus and Dionysos. The procession in honour of 'other gods in great number' honoured also the city's founder, Alexander. Rich offerings were made. The Procession of Zeus was preceded by *hekatombai* of two thousand bulls, 'all of the same colour and with gilded horns, having gold stars on their foreheads, wreaths between the horns, and necklaces with aegises on their breasts.'²¹⁶ An *agōn* was also held. The first of twenty persons to be crowned victor with golden wreaths were statues of Ptolemaios Soter and Berenike. The last *pompē* was a military parade of *c.* 80,000 men, elephants and more than 23,000 horses.

It really *was* a grand procession. In the Dionysiac procession alone there marched more than ten thousand people,²¹⁷ all wreathed and dressed in festive attire, or dressed up as mythic persona. Between large carts walked satyrs, silenoi and maenads, clad in purple and crowned with gold and silver garlands in the shape of ivy, pine or wine leaves. There were men carrying precious things, simply displaying these to the spectators, and several male and

²¹⁵ W. Clarysse, 'De grote processie van Ptolemaios Philadelphos', *Hermeneus* 57 (1985) 204-6, at 204.

²¹⁶ Ath. 5.202a.

²¹⁷ Although Athenaios does not give the number of all the groups he describes, he still mentions 8,170 persons, including 2,240 men pulling a total of six carts; of five other carts no number is given (Clarysse 1985, 205).

female age groups, including a group of 120 *basilikoi paides*. The numbers of these age groups varied, but always a multiple of twenty. Hundreds of men pulled along large four-wheel carts. On three of these carts, drawn by respectively 300, 600 and 600 men, the process of wine-making was demonstrated by satyrs, supervised by silenoi – ‘and the new wine streamed through the whole line of march.’ Next came carts with tableaux showing various scenes from the life of Dionysos; they resembled Christmas *chrèches* in Roman Catholic churches, notably the one showing the god as a new-born before the grotto on the mountain Nysa, where he was raised by the nymphs Makris, Erato, Bromie, Bakche and Nysa:

A four-wheeled cart, ten meters long and six meters wide, drawn by six hundred men; on it stood a deep cavern that was profusely overgrown with ivy and yew. Out of it pigeons, ring-doves and turtle-doves flew forth along the whole route, with ribbons tied to their feet so that the spectators could more easily catch them. And from it also gushed forth two springs: one of milk, the other of wine. And all the nymphs standing round him were crowned with wreaths of gold, and Hermes held a gold staff, and they were dressed in rich garments.²¹⁸

Although it was decreed, supervised and paid for by the court, the *pompē* was a meaningful event for the entire Alexandrian population rather than only a theatrical show to legitimise the ruling power. The number of participants indicates that large parts of the citizenry were involved, as is also suggested by the chance mentioning of the guild of Dionysos (artists and actors) marching along in the Dionysiac procession, led by the poet, royal *philos* and priest of Dionysos Philiskos. Why were all the processional carts drawn by so many hundreds of men instead of mules or oxen? Because these men—like the members of Andalusian brotherhoods during *Semana Santa*, proudly carrying around their own cult images on *pasos* laden with silver and gold, jewels, flowers, expensive perfumes, embroidered robes and other riches—were personally involved. They really were participants, and the *pompē* of Dionysos was a genuine procession, the fundamental medium of group formation, as the active participants, as Burkert summarises, ‘separate themselves from the crowd ... and move towards a common goal [*viz.* sacrifice at a sanctuary], though the demonstration, the interaction with the onlookers, is scarcely less important than the goal itself.’²¹⁹ The Grand

²¹⁸ Ath. 5.200c. The other tableaux described in Athenaios are ‘the bridal chamber of Semele’—*i.e.* the first birth of the god at the death of his mother—and Dionysos’ purification at the altar of Rhea, which ended his wanderings through the east.

²¹⁹ Burkert 1985, 99.

Procession was a celebration of monarchy and empire, and established Alexandria as the heart of empire. By their participation in the processions and festivities, the citizens of Alexandria expressed their central place in the imperial system—which at that time was still a Mediterranean thalassocracy—and celebrated their sharing in the wealth, power and prestige of the monarchy.²²⁰

Dionysos appeared as an emblem of monarchy, as the procession emphasised in particular his prestige as a civiliser and conqueror. Here he was the triumphant hero who had defeated the forces of chaos and bestowed peace upon the *oikoumene*.²²¹ The procession began at dawn with a *thiasos* of Satyrs, their naked skins smeared with purple dye, who chased away the darkness of night with torches and ivy branches. The coming of Dionysos was heralded by 120 *paides* burning incense on gold trenchers. The god was preceded by an unspecified number of life ‘victories’, Νῆκαι, with golden wings, and also by women dressed as personifications of the New Year and the four year period between the festivals—carrying a gold horn of plenty and a palm branch respectively—and as personifications of the seasons, carrying the produce appropriate to each of them, thus promising the spectators a prosperous future.²²² The god then appeared in the shape of a 4.5 meters high statue, clad in a purple *chitōn*, holding a mixing-bowl and pouring wine from a libation goblet. Dionysos was followed by a cart with the statue of the nymph Nysa, one of his nurses, who made a libation of milk. The prominent role of Nysa, the nymph, emphasised that the mountain Nysa where Dionysos was raised and where he invented wine was...

... a certain mountain, very high and with verdant forests, far from Phoenicia, near the streams of Egypt’.²²³

²²⁰ On the strong emotional ties between the Alexandrian citizens and the royal family see P.F. Mittag, ‘Die Rolle der hauptstädtischen Bevölkerung bei den Ptolemäern und Seleukiden im 3. Jahrhundert’, *Klio* 82 (2000) 409-25.

²²¹ G. López Monteagudo, ‘The triumph of Dionysus in two mosaics in Spain’, *Assaph. Studies in Art History* 4 (1999) 35-60, esp. 40.

²²² Ath. 198a-b: Ἐνιαυτος, Πεντεετής, Ὠραί. Moevs 1993, 143, points out the resemblance with Dionysos’ triumphal entrance in Athens during the Anthesteria Festival as a celebration of the coming of the new year; the association of the Grand Procession with pharaonic coronation ritual (p. 124) is less compelling.

²²³ The mountain is variously located in Greek tradition; the *Homeric Hymn to Dionysos* (1) *ap.* Diod 3.66.2 speaks of ‘a certain mountain, Nysa, very high and with verdant forests, far from Phoenicia,

The apex of the association of Dionysos with monarchy was the last division of the procession, which focussed on the god's triumphant return from the east. In this triumphal march the enormous wealth and vast power of the Ptolemies was presented. Dionysos led the march from the back of a huge statue of an elephant, clad in royal purple. He was accompanied by an army of (life) satyrs, equipped as heavy infantrymen, or riding on asses outfitted as war horses. Behind these came a cart drawn by mules on which were 'barbaric tents, under which sat Indian and other women dressed as captives', followed by African tribute-bearers carrying 600 ivory tusks, 200 ebony logs, and 60 mixing-bowls filled with gold dust and silver.²²⁴ A train of camels brought frankincense, myrrh, saffron, cassia, and cinnamon from Arabia and Yemen, attesting that the Ptolemies controlled the caravan routes through Arabia. Three flocks of 300 sheep each were driven, specimen of three different breeds in the royal herd. The three herds represented the three continents Europe, Asia and Africa. Also the royal hunting dogs were paraded, totalling 2,400. But these were merely a foretaste of what was yet to come: a spectacular display of exotic animals, symbols of vast imperial power. There were parrots, zebus and antelopes from India; bears, deer and antelopes from the Levant; goats and cows from the lands along the southern Nile; wild asses and

near the streams of Egypt'. There were various myths linking Dionysos to Egypt and even Alexandria. Dionysos departed for his conquest of the east from the isle of Pharos, where he had been the guest of the primordial civilizer and lawgiver Kekrops; Dionysos' first victory was in Egypt, against Titans, in defense of a deposed king called Ammon, after which Dionysos founded the oracle at Siwah. Like the Egyptian-Libyan god Ammon (and Alexander as well), Dionysos is described or depicted as 'horned', especially having ram's or goat's horns when appearing in the guise of an infant, as Hermes brought him to Nysa in the shape of a ram or a goat: Apollod., *Bibl.* 3.4.3, 5.1; Diod. 3.68-71; Hyg., *Fab.* 182. Cf. Hölbl 2000, n. 86 on p. 117, and *figure 3.4* on p. 97, showing a portrait of Ptolemaios III with a diadem and small horns which liken him to Dionysos, cf. Kyrieleis 1975, 32. For the significance of the isle of Pharos in Dionysian mythology see M El-Abbadi, 'The island of Pharos in myth and history', in: W.V. Harris and G. Ruffini eds., *Ancient Alexandria Between Egypt and Greece* (Leiden 2004), discussing *i.a.* the evolution of the varied myths of Pharos and the primordial civilizer and lawgiver Kekrops, and their links with the foundation of Alexandria and royal propaganda; on Kekrops' links with Egypt: L. Gourmelen, *Kékrops, le Roi Serpent* (Paris 2005) 75-80.

²²⁴ Ath. 200f. The exposition of captives after victory is of course standard imagery, as is the depiction of tribute-bearers for ancient empires; it is not typically Egyptian; *pace* e.g. Hölbl 2000, 39. The scene in which women from conquered lands, sitting in their native dwellings, were shown to the public seems to prefigure the colonial exhibitions popular in Europe in the first part of the twentieth century.

antelopes from the Libyan desert. From equatorial Africa and the Near East came leopards, lions, ostriches, and various exotic birds, and even a rhinoceros and a giraffe.

The triumphal march was concluded with a tableau depicting the purification of Dionysos in Phrygia with three statues: Hera, Dionysos, and Priapos. Directly after this came a tableau on which Ptolemaios Philadelphos was the central figure; the king appeared as a statue, like the other gods; like Dionysos he was crowned with an ivy wreath made of gold. Next to him stood Alexander, also with an ivy wreath. Priapos was also present, linking Alexander and Ptolemaios with Dionysos, thus creating a kind of trinity like the triad Alexander-Ptolemaios-Herakles in Theokritos' encomium for Philadelphos.²²⁵ Also on this cart were statues representing Arete and the city of Corinth. Next walked (life) women personifying cities, 'some from Ionia, while all the rest were the Greek cities which occupied Asia and the islands and had been under the rule of the Persians.'²²⁶ The personification of Corinth, wearing a gold royal diadem and standing near Alexander and Ptolemaios, symbolised Ptolemaic claims to the Greek mainland and presented the Ptolemies—in defiance of Antigonos Gonatas—as the successor of Alexander as *hēgemon* of the Greeks.²²⁷ The personifications of cities 'that were once under the rule of the Persians' likewise presented the Ptolemies—in defiance of Antiochos Soter—as Alexander's successor as liberator of the Greeks in Asia Minor. *Aretē* was a typical royal virtue and figures prominently in panegyric for Ptolemaios Philadelphos.²²⁸

The visual climax was a group of (solid) golden statues in golden chariots set atop golden columns: Ptolemaios Philadelphos and his sister-consort Arsinoë Philadelphos, as well as their deified parents, Ptolemaios I Soter and Berenike I, together with the deified Alexander, to whose cult the cult of the ruling couple was linked, Philadelphos and Arsinoë being its high priests. In the rear part of the procession in honour of 'various gods' was a chariot drawn by elephants with another gold statue of Alexander, seconded by Athena and crowned victor by Nike. The triumphant Alexander was followed by carts carrying thrones made of ivory and gold:

²²⁵ Theocr., *Id.* 18.18-23; cf. above, chapter 4.5.

²²⁶ Ath. 5.201e.

²²⁷ Rice 1983, 106-9. Ptolemaios Soter had indeed attempted to formally restore the Corinthian League in 309/8.

²²⁸ Call., *Hymn* 1.94-96; Theocr., *Id.* 17.135. Cf. Rice 1983, 110.

On one of these lay a gold diadem [στεφάνη], on another a gilded horn [κέρας], on still another a gold wreath [στεφάνος] and on another a horn of solid gold. Upon the throne of Ptolemaios the Saviour lay a crown made of ten thousand gold coins.²²⁹

All kinds of enormously enlarged royal paraphernalia were displayed, including diadems and suits of armour, as well as enormous gold eagles, a gilded thunderbolt, and horns of plenty. Kallixeinos also mentions a ‘mystic’ (μυστικὸς) *stephanos*. It was 3,5 meters in circumference, made of gold and adorned with precious stones, and hung round the portal of the Berenikeion, the shrine of the deified Berenike; ‘and,’ Kallixeinos adds, ‘there was similarly a gold aegis.’²³⁰

The last, and perhaps most monarchic, procession, was a military parade, which lasted perhaps a whole day.²³¹ There marched 57,600 infantry and 23,200 cavalry. These are the numbers of a campaigning army at full strength, larger even than the Ptolemaic army at the Battle of Raphia in 217, and far too large to have been troops permanently stationed at Alexandria (or at any place):²³² this was the complete military force available to the Ptolemies for campaigns at that time, brought together in Alexandria from all corners of the North African empire. It included first of all cleruchs, the Macedonian military settlers who constituted the royal phalanxes, as well as the household troops and guard regiments which formed the permanent core of the Ptolemaic army. Their presence at the Ptolemaia was not only intended to impress the spectators, but also strengthened their own ties with the king.

²²⁹ Ath. 5.202a-b. The other three thrones belonged perhaps to Berenike, Arsinoë, and Ptolemaios Philadelphos.

²³⁰ Ath. 202d.

²³¹ Rice 1983, 125.

²³² *Pace* Rice 1983, 125, who identifies these troops as the ‘Army of Alexandria’, consisting of the Household Cavalry and Royal Bodyguard distinguished by Fraser I, 69 and II, 152-3, with the addition perhaps of the city garrison. Tarn 1948 II, 229, supposes it was an army returning from war, and renders the whole of the Grand Procession in essence a triumphal parade; Hölbl 2000, 39, supposes it was the parade of the army directly before the beginning of the First Syrian War, dating it to 275/4. Rice 1983, 126, rightly states that there is no ground for such speculations; according to her the most important is ‘that such a deliberate display of military strength could not have failed to make a lasting impression upon the large number of official—and foreign—guests attending the festival in Alexandria. Note that the number of cavalrymen, 23,200, is unusually large for a Ptolemaic army; at the Battle of Raphia the Ptolemies disposed of 68,000 infantry and only 4,700 cavalry.’

The rank and file of the common soldiers were closer to the king than all other subjects.²³³ For these Macedonians living in Egypt, by then including young men with Egyptian mothers, the main focus for identity was the empire *c.q.* the king, who had granted them farmland and relatively high social status in Egypt, giving them incidental gratuities—at least on the occasion of the coronation but perhaps also at coronation anniversaries—and in whose name they were expected to fight. At Raphia, Macedonian cleruchs numbered 25,000, and the infantry guard 3,000. The rest of the army consisted of allied units, mercenaries, and light troops levied notably in Libya; such regiments probably have been also present at the Grand Parade, strengthening their (more indirect) ties with the king as well. Besides all these troops (and many horses and elephants), the Ptolemies' resources to wage war, and bind men with gifts, were displayed:

There were 400 cartloads of silver vessels, 20 of gold vessels, and 800 of spices. ... Beside the arms and equipment worn by all the troops, there were many others stored in chests, of which it is not easy to set down even the number.²³⁴

The panhellenic Ptolemaia Festival with its international attraction established Alexandria as the heart of the Ptolemaic Empire, and the centre of Greek civilisation. The imagery of the Grand Procession attests how far-reaching the imperial claims of the Ptolemies were at that time. Personifications of *poleis* presented the Ptolemies as the protectors and liberators of all the Greeks; exotic animals and objects, notably those from peripheral areas such as Ethiopia and India, amounted to a symbolic claim to almost the whole world.²³⁵ The inclusion of an army of more than 80,000 men underlined the violent and heroic nature of the monarchy.

²³³ For the direct (and often emotional) ties between king and common soldier in pre-industrial monarchies: J.J. Jansen, 'Het geschenk des konings', in: H.J.M. Claessen ed., *Macht en majesteit. Idee en werkelijkheid van het vroege koningschap* (Utrecht 1984) 51-9, at 56.

²³⁴ Ath. 5.202f and 203a.

²³⁵ As in the ceremonial known as the Donations of Alexandria, it is not useful to ask how far such claims were realistic. Regarding the Greek cities around the Aegean, where the Antigonids and Seleukids challenged Ptolemaic hegemony, Rice 1983, 109, tries to solve this paradox (*i.e.* of ideology not being in accordance with political reality) by stating that the imperial imagery represented '*past* [my italics] Ptolemaic interest in the mainland' and *perhaps* referred to future political aims; this is no doubt true, but claims to world power were not only made by kings of the stature of Ptolemaios II Philadelphos, but as easily by more humble monarchs such as Antiochos of Kommagene.

These soldiers were a living promise that also the Ptolemies were capable of what in the Athenian ithyphallic hymn for Demetrios Poliorketes was presented as the ultimate proof of godlike status: to *really* ‘have the power to bring peace’.

5.5 Court ceremonial

Many aspects of daily court life were regulated. So, for instance, we hear that Antiochos III was awoken each morning at the same time by his *philoï*.²³⁶ Being present when the king got dressed gave a courtier much influence, and was, precisely like being a king’s companion in the hunt or a guest at his dinners and drinking bouts, a privilege indicative of relative status. From the same source we hear, however, that manipulating aulic hierarchy was not at all a simple task for the king; in this specific instance it proved impossible to change the persons whose prerogative it was to be present, as Antiochos had to feint illness to be able to talk in private with one of his trusted courtiers. Thus, the selection of men attending the royal dressing room could be both a means of the king to manipulate access to his person, or a reflection of actual power relations at court, *i.e.* a prerogative beyond the grasp of the king. Although details of the daily life at the various Hellenistic courts are in short supply in the sources, the existence of a high degree of court protocol, regulating access to the king, is certain. A passage in Plutarch’s biography of Kleomenes contrasts the modesty of the Spartan king to his Antigonid, Ptolemaic and Seleukid contemporaries:

When men came to Kleomenes, who was a real as well as a titled king, they saw no profusion of purple robes or mantles about him, and no array of couches and litters; [and] they saw, too, that he did not make the work of his petitioners grievous and slow by employing a throng of messengers and door-keepers or by requiring written memorials.²³⁷

²³⁶ Polyb. 8.21.1; so also Curt. 8.6.13 (Alexander) and Plut., *Pomp.* 32.4 (Mithradates). The custom is similar to that at the French court of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, where it was an important privilege for courtiers to be present during the ‘lever du roi’: Strootman 1993, 58; for the French ceremony see e.g. I. Mieck, *Die Entstehung des modernen Frankreichs 1450-1610. Strukturen, Institutionen, Entwicklungen* (Stuttgart, Berlin, Cologne, Mainz 1982) 163. In preellenistic Egypt and the Near East it was customary to ritually awake gods at the dawn of day with food and gifts. Cf. Ath. 48e.

²³⁷ Plut., *Cleom.* 13.2.

Likewise, Polybios says of Antiochos III in early years that the king was ‘beset and preoccupied by court etiquette and by a host of guards (*phulakai*) and courtiers (*therapeia*), he was not his own master’.²³⁸

Beside daily ceremonial, opportunities for incidental celebrations were provided by the religious calendar, the odd wedding and birth, and private cults of the royal household.²³⁹ In the Ptolemaic kingdom, the birth of a prince or princess was celebrated with a festival called *paidogonia*.²⁴⁰ Several of the many festivals celebrated in Alexandria were organised entirely by the court, such as the Ptolemaia, discussed above, and the Adonis festival described in Theokritos’ fifteenth Idyll.²⁴¹ Also anniversaries—birthdays of kings and queens,²⁴² as well as anniversaries of the coronation—were occasions for religious celebration, involving the distribution of gifts and privileges, the reception of ambassadors and petitioners, and the demonstration of royal pomp and circumstance.

Banqueting

Symposia and banquets were central to Hellenistic court life. Already in the time of the Argeads the *sunposion* was ‘the key meeting place of king and court’.²⁴³ It was said that

²³⁸ Polyb. 5.50.2-3.

²³⁹ Cf. Plut., *Cleom.* 33.2, for cults for Dionysos and Kybele performed at the court of Ptolemaios IV.

²⁴⁰ Diod. 33.13, cf. Jos., *AJ* 12.4.7: when Ptolemaios VIII ‘had a son just born, ... all the principal men of Syria and the other countries subject to him, were to keep a festival, on account of the child’s birthday.’

²⁴¹ On Alexandrian festivals in general see C.E. Visser, *Götter und Kulte im ptolemäischen Alexandrien* (Amsterdam 1938); on the Adonis Festival see Hölbl 2001, 98-99; F. Perpillou-Thomas, *Fêtes d’Égypte ptolémaïque et romaine d’après la documentation papyrologique grecque*. *Studia Hellenistica* 31 (Louvain 1993).

²⁴² See e.g. Diod. 34.15 on the celebration of the birthday of Kleopatra II in the *basileion* at Alexandria, in 126.

²⁴³ Cameron 1995, 73. On the symposium at the Macedonian court under the Argeads: E.N. Borza, ‘The symposium at Alexander’s court’, in: *Ancient Macedonia* 3 (Thessaloniki 1983) 45-55; Borza 1992, 241-2; Lane Fox 1986, 63. On the drinking habits of Hellenistic kings see the amusing overview in Ath. 10.438d-440b; specially on Alexander’s excessive drinking: Plut., *Mor.* 623d-624a, cf. J.M. O’Brien, *Alexander the Great. The Invisible Enemy* (London and New York 1992). It was said that Mithradates VI ‘put up prizes for the greatest eater and the greatest drinker. ... He himself won the prizes for both’ (Plut., *Mor.* 624a; cf. Nikolaos of Damascus, FHG II fr. 73 ap. Ath. 415e; Ath. 212d).

Alexander dined among sixty or seventy companions almost every day.²⁴⁴ As we have seen in the chapter on palaces, *andrones* were fundamental in palaces. In Greek domestic architecture, the *andron* was the central part of the house. In this room the male members of the family dined and gave banquets and symposia for their guests. Hellenistic palaces normally had many such rooms; the first floor of the palace of Aigai consisted almost entirely of *andrones*.

The many attestations of semi-private banquets and symposia taking place at royal courts, as well as archaeological evidence for the central place of *andrones* in palaces, confirm their importance for communication at the court. Notably the symposium was a formalised occasion for communication between courtiers and guests, and between courtiers among each other. As we have seen, the Antigonid palace at Vergina consisted mainly of sympotic rooms around a large open square. Also in other palaces, rooms for banqueting, feasting and receptions formed the core of the architectural complex.

Symposia were at the heart of the court life, the place where king and courtiers met, where political matters were discussed, where poets, scientists and technicians presented their work, where courtiers entered in erudite competition in the field of literature and philosophy. Symposia were an institutionalised part of the court life, taking place often, if not on a daily basis. State banquets on the other hand, taking place more irregularly on specific festive occasions, were meant to entertain the court as much as guests from outside, although smaller ‘everyday’ sacrifices provided meals for only the courtiers and military commanders.²⁴⁵

Lavish banquets for a multitude of guests served the purpose of advertising the wealth of the king and demonstrating the typical royal virtues of hospitality and generosity. By feeding many guests, a king acted as a nourisher of the people, which added to his superhuman status.²⁴⁶ These banquets, too, could be sacrificial banquets. As mentioned above,

²⁴⁴ Ephippos FGrH 126 F 2.

²⁴⁵ Cf. Polyb. 5.14.8: in 218 BCE, ‘having pitched his camp early in the day, [Philippos V] sacrificed a thank-offering to the gods for the success of his late enterprise and invited all his commanding officers to a banquet.’

²⁴⁶ In various Near Eastern religions, the principal god had the task of feeding gods and humans; in a document from ancient Ugarit Ba’al says: ‘I alone am the one who can be king over the gods, who can fatten gods and men, who can satisfy the multitudes of the earth’ (CAT/KTU 1.4, vii, lines 49-52; cited after Paul Sanders at *RBL* 06-2006); cf. H.J. Marsman, *Women in Ugarit and Israel* (Leiden 2003), 405, 419-20, 425; M. Korpel, *A Rift in the Clouds* (Münster 1990), 407-8, 411-3. Of course, like among the Greeks, the eastern gods were at the same time dependent on the food that mortals offered

the Apollo Procession of Antiochos Epiphanes ended in Daphne with the sacrifice of 1,000 oxen and 300 cows; the participants and the king's guests ate most of the meat. During banquets the guests were entertained in various ways,²⁴⁷ poets and philosophers read from their work, engineers demonstrated automata. Some of the 'entertainment' apparently was of a more serious, devout nature: Demetrios of Skepsis writes that at the court of Antiochos III 'it was the habit not merely of the royal *philoï* but also of the king himself to dance in arms at dinner',²⁴⁸ and Antiochos IV danced naked before his guests during the sacrificial meal of the Apollo Festival of Daphne.²⁴⁹ At the party's end, gifts were distributed, first of all the tableware.²⁵⁰ After having feasted his guests in a great banquet, Ptolemaios Philadelphos 'gave to everyone of them three garments of the best sort, and two talents of gold, and a cup worth one talent, and the furniture of the room in which they were feasted.'²⁵¹ It was a special honour to be allowed to eat from the food provided for the king's own table.²⁵² This practice may have been taken over from the Achaimenids.²⁵³

them as sacrifice. Specially on Yahweh, the best known divine nourisher in the Levant: L.J.M. Claassens, *The God Who Provides. Biblical Images of Divine Nourishment* (Nashville 2004), who discusses the ways the Bible speaks about God as the giver of food to the people in linguistic terms.

²⁴⁷ See for instance Jos., *AJ* 12.4.6 (187); Ath. 13.607c-d.

²⁴⁸ Ath. 4.155b; cf. 12.550b on Ptolemaios X Alexandros: 'when it came to the rounds of dancing at a symposion he would jump from a high couch barefoot as he was, and perform figures in a livelier fashion than those who had practised them (*sc.* in spite of his enormous weight)'.

²⁴⁹ Ath. 5.195e-f.

²⁵⁰ Sokrates of Rhodes, *FHG* III 96 *ap.* Ath. 148a; Poseidonios, *FHG* III 257 *ap.* Ath. 210d-e; 1 *Macc.* 11.58; Jos., *AJ* 12.2.14; Plut., *Ant.*, 25.4; *Mor.* 179f; *Esther* 2.18.

²⁵¹ Jos., *AJ* 12.2.14 (116). According to Poseidonios, *op cit.* above, Antiochos Grypos gave his guests after banquet live geese, hares, and antelopes, as well as horses, camels and slaves. Normally it was tableware that was distributed among the guests, cf. e.g. Jos., *AJ* 12.2.13; Sokrates of Rhodes, *FHG* III 326 *ap.* Ath. 147f; Poseidonios *FGH* III 257 and 263 *ap.* Ath. 210d-e; Ath. 540c. See also Plut., *Ant.*, 25.4, for the distributions of gifts during Kleopatra's banquet for Antonius at Tarsos. The importance of gift exchange at the Hellenistic courts has been discussed in chapter 3.4. On Hellenistic royal tableware see G. Zimmer, 'Prunkgeschirr hellenistischer Herrscher, in: G. Brands and W. Hoepfner eds., *Basileia. Die Paläste der hellenistischen Könige* (Mainz am Rhein 1996) 130-5.

²⁵² Jos., *AJ* 12.2.13 (105).

²⁵³ In the Achaimenid Empire symbolic gift exchange developed from a system of semi-economic redistribution of goods (Sancisi 1980, 145-73). On banqueting and the distribution of tableware and food at the Achaimenid court see the classic article by P. Briant, 'Table du roi, tribut et redistribution

In Roman and western Greek sources, the meaning of Hellenistic table manners was not always properly understood. Livy, who as a champion of Roman moral values was supposed to speak about eastern royal courts pejoratively, writes that Antiochos Epiphanes made a fool of himself with his weird behaviour at banquets: ‘He used to ignore his friends but smiled most amiably to unimportant people, and he was so inconsistent in his benefactions that he made laughingstock of both himself as well as beneficiaries.’²⁵⁴ Polybios, perhaps Livy’s source, also accuses Epiphanes of distributing gifts without any apparent system.²⁵⁵ The king’s inconsistency in giving presents is explicated by other Greek authors. During banquets he gave to the one a large amount of gold coins but to the other worthless things such as figs.²⁵⁶ It is not difficult to see what really lay behind Epiphanes’ bad manners: the king used symbolic gifts to publicly bestow his favour *and* disfavour. This of course can not be attributed to Epiphanes’ weakness of mind but is typical of court culture in general.

Concerning ceremonial banquets at the Achaimenid court, Heleen Sancisi-Weerdenburg speaks of the distribution of ‘negative gifts’ by the king, *sc.* plain pottery instead of gold and silver.²⁵⁷ Seen in this light, Livy’s remark that the king ignored his *philoï* may be taken to mean that he attempted to favour men from outside the existing *clique* of courtiers. Apparently, Livy understood smiling at people in public as a means of signalling royal favour, implying that *not* being smiled at meant the opposite.²⁵⁸

chez les Achéménides’, in: P. Briant and C. Herrens Schmidt eds., *Le tribut dans l’empire perse* (Paris 1989) 35-44; cf. Sancisi 1980, 154-5 and Briant 2002, 286-96. See further D.M. Lewis, ‘The King’s dinner (Polyaenus IV 3,32)’, *AchHist* 2 (1987) 79-87; H.W.A.M. Sancisi-Weerdenburg with W. Henkelman, ‘Crumbs from the royal table. Foodnotes on Briant’, *Topoi Supplement* 1 (1998) 333-45; P. Briant, ‘L’eau du Grand Roi’, in: L. Milano ed., *Drinking in Ancient societies. History and Culture of Drinks in the Ancient Near-East* (Padova 1994) 45-65; J.M. Sasson, ‘The King’s Table: Food and Fealty in Old Babylonian Mari’, in: Grottanelli & Milano 2004, and S. Parpola, ‘The Leftovers of God and King. On the Distribution of Meat at the Assyrian and Achaemenid Imperial Courts’, in Grottanelli & Milano 2004.

²⁵⁴ Liv. 41.20.3.

²⁵⁵ Polyb. 16.1.

²⁵⁶ Diod. 29.32.1; Ath. 194a.

²⁵⁷ Sancisi 1980, 156; Ath. 464a (*FGrH* 688 F 40).

²⁵⁸ Some *philoï* received dice from Antiochos; we can only guess at what *that* may have meant.

Holding court

In the time of the Roman Emperors, Greek writers and their readers indulged in the opulence of Hellenistic court spectacle. In the writings of authors such as Plutarch and, particularly, Athenaios, the decadence and *hubris* of Hellenistic rulers is a recurrent topos which had supplanted the classic theme of Persian luxury.²⁵⁹ Fortunately, Athenaios often cites writers who were less far removed from the Hellenistic courts than he himself. For instance, this colourful description by Phylarchos of a public audience at the court of Alexander:

His tent was furnished with one hundred couches and was supported by fifty gilded pillars. The roof was covered with carpets embroidered with gold thread and sumptuously ornamented. Inside first five hundred Persian *mēlophoroi* stood, dressed in colourful robes of purple and yellow; behind them no less than one thousand archers were standing, some in flame-coloured clothing and many in dark blue clothes. In front of these were five hundred Macedonian *arguraspides*. In the centre of the pavilion stood a golden throne on which Alexander was seated, giving audience; at either side [of the throne] were his *sōmatophulakes*, standing close by him. Outside the pavilion the elephant contingent was arrayed in a circle, fully equipped, and also a thousand Macedonians in Macedonian costume, besides ten thousand Persians and a large company of five hundred who were all clad in purple, as Alexander had granted them permission to wear such clothes. And the number of friends (*philoï*) and guards²⁶⁰ was so large that nobody dared to approach Alexander; such was the majesty of his presence.²⁶¹

Phylarchos' source is Douris, who in turn drew upon the *Histories of Alexander* of Chares of Mytilene, Alexander's chamberlain.²⁶² Douris describes the setting as if it were a theatre décor. The men put on a stage here, are a mixture of Persians and Macedonians (and apparently no Greeks), as well as a mixture of guardsmen and courtiers. The pavilion in which Alexander sits enthroned is reminiscent of the canopy under which the Achaimenid king was seated when giving audience.²⁶³ Phylarchos' use of the words *arguraspides* and *philoï* instead of *hypaspistai* and *hetairoi* respectively is congruent with conventions at the courts of his own

²⁵⁹ 'Oriental' luxury of hellenistic kings: Poseidonios *FHG* 3 fr. 30 and 31 *ap. Arr., Anab.* 4.8.2.

²⁶⁰ Or 'attendants', 'courtiers': (θερραπειδόντοιοι).

²⁶¹ Phylarchos, *FGrH* 81 F 41 *ap. Ath.* 539e-f.

²⁶² Douris *FGrH* 125 F 4; F.L.V.M. Lissone, *De fragmenten van de geschiedschrijver Phylarchos* (Nijmegen 1969) 141.

²⁶³ On the canopy as signifier of majesty in the Achaimenid kingdom see Paspalas 2005, 73-4.

time, the late third century. Note that Alexander's closest confidants were gathered around his throne. Outside the tent were five hundred 'friends' dressed in purple as a sign of their close proximity to the king. The Persian *mēlophoroi*, 'apple-bearers'—so-called after the apple-shaped counter-weight at the bottom of their spears—come straight out of the Achaimenid world. They are similar to, or part of, the better-known company of *doruphoroi*, 'lance-bearers'. These men appear on the reliefs in the Great Apadana in Persepolis and also figure in Persian royal texts, in particular the so-called Persepolis Fortification archive, besides their being mentioned in various Greek sources such as Xenophon. In the Achaimenid Empire lance-bearers acted as the king's bodyguards—they are sometimes called 'guards' or 'protectors' in Persian sources—but were in fact high-ranking courtiers whose presence beside the throne was ceremonial, not unlike the Macedonian *sōmatophulakes*.²⁶⁴ The 'archers' (τοξόται) standing behind the *mēlophoroi* are either members of the Persian nobility, equipped with bows and quivers as befits their character as warrior-horsemen, or a detachment of the elite regiment of 10,000 'Immortals'.²⁶⁵ The presence of so many Persians near the throne of Alexander is neither surprising nor unhistorical. This fragment of Phylarchos has been taken to reveal Alexander's attempt to replace Macedonian custom with Persian court ceremonial, or even his desire to mix Macedonians and Persians. It would be mistaken, however, to ascribe the presence of Persian nobles at this ceremonial occasion simply to the reportedly unique personality of Alexander. This ceremony to all likelihood took place in Persia before a largely Persian audience. By presenting himself as a Persian

²⁶⁴ Lance-bearers and apple-bearers probably did not form part of the elite regiment of 10,000 'Immortals', as Ath. 514b wrongly claims. On *μηλοφόροι* and *δορυφόροι* at the Achaimenid court see W. Henkelman, 'Exit der Posaunenbläser: On lance-guards and lance-bearers in the Persepolis Fortification archive', *Arta* 7 (2002) 1-35. Besides establishing that both designations were in effect honorific titles, Henkelman mentions two interesting tablets (PF 11A and C) in which the king issues lances to his 'bodyguards'. The Achaimenid evidence mentions lance-bearers as members of royal travel parties and as such as the inspectors of the king's workmen, the royal sheepfold, and the royal road. The Fortification archive has been partly published by R.T. Hallock, *Persepolis Fortification Tablets* (Chicago 1969), and *idem*, 'Selected Fortification texts', *CDAFI* I8 (1978) 109-36. Also in the Greek *Ester*, 2.21 and 6.2, *δορυφόροι* are high-ranking courtiers rather than guardsmen; Ath. 514c says that the *mēlophoroi* were noblemen.

²⁶⁵ On the warlike nature and military honour of the Persian aristocracy see P. Briant, 'The Achaemenid Empire', in: K. Raaflaub and N. Rosenstein eds., *War and Society in the Ancient and Medieval Worlds* (Cambridge 1999) 105-28.

king—also the golden throne and the forest of pillars are reminiscent of the Achaimenid court—Alexander aimed at gaining acceptance as the new ruler of the Persians. On the other hand, he also had to reckon with his Macedonian following – hence the apparent ‘mixture’ of Macedonians and Persians (note, however, that both groups are strictly separated from each other). Comparable pageantry presumably also took place at the court of Seleukos Nikator, who relied on co-operation with Iranian aristocrats for his control of the east as much as Alexander did.

In this context also the issue of the *proskynēsis* should be mentioned. *Proskynēsis* is a rather inappropriate Greek umbrella term for a disparate variety of ritualised greetings performed at the former Achaimenid court. Depending on his status, a man seeking audience would prostrate himself, kneel, bow, or blow a kiss towards the monarch.²⁶⁶ Alexander naturally took over this ceremonial in his dealings with Persians after his assumption of the title of Great King. In 327 he went too far, perhaps deliberately, by demanding such obeisance from Macedonian aristocrats as well (albeit certainly not in the form of prostration or bowing), thus violating the fiction of equality between king and *hetairoi* – a far more plausible reason for their resistance than the Greeks’ and Macedonians’ association of this ceremonial with an act of worship.²⁶⁷ Alexander’s successors in the east must have continued the ceremony when playing the role of Great King before Iranians, but presumably exempted the closest of their *philoï* from the obligation to publicly humiliate themselves.

One interesting aspect of the Phylarchos fragment remains to be mentioned. This is the image of the king as distanced from the rest of the world, apparent in the last sentence, ‘the number of courtiers and guards was so large that nobody dared to approach Alexander’. But Alexander was holding court! This ambiguity apparently was crucial for Hellenistic kingship. Even a more reliable historian like Polybios chastises Ptolemaios Philopator because

... he began to conduct himself as if his chief concern were the idle pomp of royalty, showing himself as regards the members of his court (περὶ τὴν αὐλήν) and those who administered Egypt inattentive to business, and difficult to approach, and treating with entire negligence and

²⁶⁶ Hdt. 1.134.

²⁶⁷ Arr., *Anab.* 4.10.5-12.5; Plut., *Alex.* 54. Whether Alexander *also* intended to profit from the Greeks’ and Macedonians’ association of this ceremonial with obeisance for the gods, remains an open question.

indifference those charged with the empire outside Egypt, to which the former king had paid much more attention than to the government of Egypt itself.²⁶⁸

This amounts to a paradox: kings were distanced from everybody and at the same time were expected to be accessible and amenable – a paradox that is akin to the one encountered when discussing the society of courtiers, namely that the king was elevated above all others and at the same time a *primus inter pares* among the members of the *sunedrion*. Likewise, a king was supposed to give audience to his subjects, hearing their requests and grievances. Anyone who presented a gift or petition to the king, would as a matter of course receive whatever he wished from the benevolent lord. But access to the king was not easily granted.

Thus the evidence attesting to a ritualised, ‘oriental’ distancing of Hellenistic kings—dehumanising them almost as much as Kafka’s Chinese Emperor—shows only one of two distinct faces of monarchic representation. For, on the other hand, we also hear about a strong moral obligation on the part of kings to be *easily* accessible, especially for common people and the rank and file of the army. This is best illustrated by two Hellenistic moral tales about kingship, which were later attributed to Demetrios Poliorketes and therefore have survived as anecdote in Plutarch’s biography:

One day when Demetrios was riding abroad and appeared to be in a more obliging mood than usual, and more willing to converse with his subjects, a large crowd gathered to present him with written petitions, all of which he accepted and placed in the fold of his cloak. The people were delighted and followed him on his way, but when he came to the bridge over the Axios River, he shook out the fold and emptied all the petitions in the water. This infuriated the Macedonians, who felt that Demetrios was insulting them, not governing them, and they recalled or listened to those who were old enough to remember the accessibility (κοινός) of Philippos and how considerate he had been in such matters. On another occasion an old woman accosted Demetrios and kept asking him to give her an audience. Demetrios replied that he could not spare the time, whereupon the old woman screamed at him, ‘Then don’t be king!’ This rebuke stung Demetrios to the quick. He went back to his house, put off all other business and for several days gave audience to everybody who asked for it, beginning with the old woman.²⁶⁹

²⁶⁸ Polyb. 5.34.2-5.

²⁶⁹ Plut., *Demetr.* 42; transl I. Scott-Kilvert. Cf. Plut. *Mor.* 173f; *Artax.* 5.

Also other anecdotes attest to a public image of the king who should lend an ear to even his humblest subjects at any time, publicly accepting petitions *en route* from people standing at the side of the road.²⁷⁰

The reception of ambassadors

As head of the *oikos*, the king was expected to maintain relations with the outside world, negotiating with other royal houses, with cities, and the odd republic. We are told that at official receptions Kleopatra VII addressed foreign ambassadors in their native tongues:

She also had a very pleasant voice; and her tongue was like a many-stringed instrument, for she could readily speak in whatever language she wished, so that in her dealings with barbarians she seldom had need of an interpreter. She replied to most of them herself and unassisted, for instance in interviews with Ethiopians, Troglodytes, Hebrews, Arabians, Syrians, Medes and Parthians. They say that she knew the languages of many other peoples as well, although the kings before her had not even bothered to learn Egyptian and some of them even had given up their own Macedonian language.²⁷¹

This catalogue of languages spoken by Kleopatra amounted to a ‘spoken map’ of her imperial claims, including her claims to the territory of the former Seleukid kingdom.²⁷² It is possible that Kleopatra, and her predecessors on the Ptolemaic throne, in a ritual welcome actually greeted ambassadors in their native languages.

²⁷⁰ Seleukos Nikator ‘constantly repeated that if people would know what a task it was merely to read and write so many letters, they would not even pick up a diadem that had been thrown away’ (Plut., *Mor.* 790a). And Antiochos Sidetes ‘held daily receptions to great crowds’, distributing food to all (Poseidonios FHG III 257 *ap.* Ath. 210d).

²⁷¹ Plut., *Ant.* 27.3-4.

²⁷² Plutarch states that Kleopatra ‘could readily speak in whatever language she wished’, and that beside the ones specifically mentioned ‘she knew the languages of many other peoples as well’. Of significance is Kleopatra’s reportedly being master of the languages of the ‘Troglodytes’—ultra-barbaric ‘others’ who dwelled beside the Red Sea in the southernmost part of Arabia—and the Ethiopians, as a symbolic attainment of the world border. Of course, Parthian, Judean or Syrian ambassadors at the Ptolemaic court spoke readily Greek; the reason why Latin is so conspicuously absent from the list, is that Italy and the Roman west could naturally not be part of Kleopatra’s official imperial aspirations, as these aspirations were authorised by Rome through Marcus Antonius.

Like individual petitioners, official ambassadors often found it hard to gain an audience with the king. For cities, too, the acceptance by the king of a gift, *e.g.* a golden crown or cultic honours, implied the granting of the accompanying request (withdrawal of a garrison, exemption of taxes *et cetera*). Official embassies had to petition the king with written memorials through court officials.²⁷³ Hellenistic court protocol is mocked in an anecdote, recorded by Plutarch, about Sparta dispatching a single envoy to negotiate with Demetrios Poliorketes. ‘What is this supposed to mean?’ the king cried out. ‘Did the Spartans send one man only?’ To which the ambassador replied: ‘Yes, o king, to one man.’²⁷⁴ The anecdote shows what was not normal – in reality, even the Spartans would show the respect that was due to a king, sending an embassy of ten envoys to Philippos V according to a more serious historical authority.²⁷⁵

Foreign embassies, until being led before the king and the *sunedrion*,²⁷⁶ were entertained and feasted according to their rank. Formal receptions provided an opportunity to demonstrate wealth and military strength; when a Roman embassy, led by Scipio Africanus, arrived at Alexandria, ‘Ptolemaios [VIII] welcomed the men with a great reception and much pomp, held costly banquets for them, and conducting them about, showing them the *basileia* and all of the royal treasures.’²⁷⁷ In the palace in Alexandria, in the second century, public receptions took place in a large audience hall or gate, located in between the semi-public ‘Palaces’ district and the palace proper on the Lochias Peninsula.²⁷⁸ As a rule, envoys also had to wait before being granted an audience, and sometimes also afterwards had to wait for an answer. Nor did the first official welcome always offer an opportunity for actual negotiating, as in the case of Popilius Laenas’ embassy to Antiochos Epiphanes on the so-called Day of Eleusis in 168, notorious for the former’s *violation* of protocol:

²⁷³ Plut., *Cleom.* 13.1-2.

²⁷⁴ Plut., *Demetr.* 42.2.

²⁷⁵ Polyb. 4.23.5.

²⁷⁶ *E.g.* Diod. 28.12 (commissioners of Flamininus before Antiochos III in 196); Polyb. 2.50.1-2, cf. 2.47.5 (Aratos before Antigonos III in 225); Polyb. 4.23.4-5 (Lakedaimonian envoys before Philippos V in 221).

²⁷⁷ Diod. 33.28b.1; cf. Polyb. 5.67.2: during the Fourth Syrian War, ‘the chief object of Antiochos [III] was to prove himself in his interviews with the embassies coming from Alexandria decidedly superior both in military strength and in the justice of his cause.’

²⁷⁸ Polyb. 15.31.2-3.

When Antiochos had advanced against Ptolemaios in order to take control of Pelousion, he was met by the Roman commander Popilius. The king greeted him by voice from a distance and offered to him his right hand, but Popilius presented to him the tablet he had in his hand which contained the Senate's decree, and asked Antiochos to read it first. In my opinion he did not want to display any mark of friendship before finding out the intentions of the recipient, whether he was a friend or an enemy. When the king had read it, he said he wanted to consult with his friends on these new developments, but Popilius in reply did something which seemed insolent and arrogant to the highest degree. With a vine stick which he had in his hand he drew a circle around Antiochos and told him to give his reply to the message before he stepped out of that circle. The king was astounded at this arrogance and after hesitating for a moment said he would do everything the Romans asked from him. Thereupon Popilius and his colleagues shook him by the hand and all welcomed him graciously.²⁷⁹

During the Social War, an Achaian embassy was sent to Philippos V to ask for military aid: 'The king, after listening to them, kept the envoys with him [at his court], saying that he would give their request consideration'.²⁸⁰ Such 'time for consideration' was not simply a means to win time or to 'distance' the king, although it was certainly used to those ends. The

²⁷⁹ Polyb. 29.27, trans. Austin 1981, cf. Liv. 45.12.3-8; App., *Syr.* 66; Just. 34.3.1-4; Vell.Pat. 1.10.1. For the historical context and consequences of the Day of Eleusis see generally: Mørkholm 1966, 64-101; Gruen 1984, 647; Sherwin-White 1984, 36. The episode is usually taken as evidence for Roman supremacy in the East already at this time; it has even been argued that Antiochos welcomed the official order (*senatus consultum*) of the Senate as an excuse to leave Egypt, which he was not able to hold anyway: Tarn 1951, 192; M. Gwyn Morgan, 'The Perils of Schematism: Polybius, Antiochus Epiphanes, and the "Day of Eleusis"', *Historia*. 39 (1990) 37-76; however, as Green 1993, 432, comments, 'the humiliation was real and palpable.' Yet it is doubtful that the Seleukid king, after achieving spectacular military victories against the Ptolemies, would simply obey a Roman order; rather, I think that Epiphanes complied with the Roman demands because his position in the eastern satrapies was too instable to risk a war with Rome at that time, but certainly planned and prepared for a second Romano-Seleukid conflict, after his return from his eastern Anabasis, which started some years later and ended with the king's untimely death in 164. For the historical context and consequences of the 'Day of Eleusis' see generally: Mørkholm 1966, 64-101; Gruen 1984, 647; Sherwin-White 1984, 36. Almost exactly the same story is told about Sulla's meeting with Mithradates: Plut., *Sulla* 24.

²⁸⁰ Polyb. 4.64.2-3; cf. 10.41.8 '[Philippos V] dismissed all the embassies after promising each to do what was in his power and devoted his whole attention to the war [against the Romans, the Aitolians, and king Attalos].

necessity for official consultation of the *sunedrion* before an answer was given, was a matter of protocol, in accordance with the status of the *sunedrion* as the honoured advisory board of the king, and as such part of kingship itself.²⁸¹ Protocol, together with the common sense to give matters ample consideration in a meeting behind closed doors, was the reason why Antiochos Epiphanes refused to answer Popilius Laenas before he had consulted his council, and not indecisiveness.

A glimpse of how receptions were normally conducted is given by Josephus, when emphasising the abnormal honours that were given to the seventy or seventy-two representatives of Jerusalem, who were invited to Ptolemaios Philadelphos' court to translate the Tora. This is part of the legend surrounding the genesis of the Septuaginta, that is true, but to make the tale really legendary, Josephus has to contrast the reception of the translators with standard court etiquette. To begin with, Josephus claims that the translators were given the exceptional honour of being granted audience without any other guests and the royal entourage and royal guards present; neither did they have to wait: '[the king] ordered that all people who were normally present should be sent away, which was a surprising thing, something that was unusual for him to do. For those who were received there for such occasions used to come to him on the fifth day, but ambassadors always on the last day of the month.'²⁸² The guests were further taken care of by a high ranking courtier called Nikanor, 'who was appointed to take care of the reception of guests (ξένοι)'; Nikanor instantly called upon a lesser court official, a certain Dorotheos, 'whose duty it was to make provisions for [guests]'. The guests were then given food and other provisions 'for a large part from what was provided for the king himself.'²⁸³

²⁸¹ Polybios contrasts the success of Laenas' straightforward approach with the failure of Achaian ambassadors, who had come the Seleukid court some time earlier with a diplomatic peace proposal; when the Achaians are admitted to the *sunedrion* some time after their arrival—in which time the king the discusses matters with the *sunedrion*—they are first politely heard, then receive from the king a pre-arranged refusal: Polyb. 28.20.1-9; cf. Plut., *Pyrrh.*, 20, for a similar reception of Fabricius at the court of Pyrrhos.

²⁸² Jos., *AJ* 12.2.11 (87-8).

²⁸³ Jos., *AJ* 12.2.12 (94) and 13 (105). Cf. *Sel. Pap.* II.416, a royal order concerning a Roman ambassador visiting the Egyptona countryside (112): 'Lucius Memmius, a Roman senator, who occupies a position of great dignity and honour, is making the journey from Alexandria to the Arsinoite nome to see the sights. Let him be received with special magnificence and take care that at the proper spots the guest-chambers be prepared and the landing-places to them be got ready with

Thrones

A Kings were seated on a throne (*thronos*) during audiences. The meaning of the Hellenistic throne remains elusive. The throne was no doubt linked with the royal stool in Achaimenid court ritual, but can also be associated with the *thronos* of Zeus.²⁸⁴

Sometimes we hear of two or three thrones placed next to each other. Apparently, just like a king could be *sunthronos* of a god, other mortals could be *sunthronos* of a king, such as his favourite son or (at the Ptolemaic court) the sister-wife, thus visualising the entanglement of the titles of *basileus* ('king' and 'co-ruler'/'successor'), and *basilissa* ('female king'). Also others could sit next to the king, especially honoured guests and ambassadors who were received in the king's house. The throne in the middle was of course reserved for the one with the highest status. Plutarch reports how Sulla in Asia Minor assumed monarchic pretensions by ordering three chairs to be set – one for his protégé Ariobarzanes, king of Kappadokia, one for the Parthian ambassador Orobarzes, and one for himself; 'and he sat between them both and gave them audience. For this the king of the Parthians later put Orobarzes to death.'²⁸⁵ The harmonious image of the threefold throne is also in Theokritos' encomium for Ptolemaios Philadelphos, where Herakles and the deified Alexander and Ptolemaios Soter are seated on Mount Olympos on divine, chryselephantine thrones.²⁸⁶ Absence of a king, notably in the

great care, and that the gifts of hospitality mentioned below be presented to him at the landing places. ... In general take the utmost pains in everything that the visitor may be satisfied.'

²⁸⁴ In Classical Greek writing *θρόνος* is used as in the context of oriental kingship, but mostly to designate the seat of a god; notably Zeus in his capacity as heavenly king was imagined as being enthroned, e.g. in Pind., *Ol.* 2.141; Eur., *Heracl.* 753; Ar., *Ran.*, 765, and in art. On the eastern section of the fries of the Parthenon, Zeus sits on a throne while the other gods sit on couches; also in Homer Zeus is the only god who sits on a throne – the others on *κλισμοί*. Sometimes writers use *θρόνος* as a *pars pro toto* for 'heaven', as in e.g. Aesch., *Eum.* 229 and Theocr., *Id.* 7.93 (*Διὸς θρόνος*). Cf. E. Honigmann, s.v. 'Θρόνος', in: *RE* 2.6, pp. 613-8. For a well-balanced examination of the extent to which the Achaimenid throne and canopy were integrated in Macedonian court ceremonial see S.A. Paspalas, 'Philip Arrhidaios at Court – An ill-advised persianism? Macedonian royal display in the wake of Alexander', *Klio* 87.1 (2005) 72-101.

²⁸⁵ Plut., *Sulla* 5.4-5; more positive is Plut., *Pomp.* 33, where Pompey sits in between the defeated Tigranes the Great and his son, and confers on them kingship in the name of Rome.

²⁸⁶ Theocr., *Id.* 17.17-27. Ptolemaios' *χρύσεος θρόνος* may be understood as a divine chryselephantine throne (Hunter 2003, 113); a chryselephantine throne of Ptolemaios Soter was also part of the Grand Procession (see above).

transitional period after his death, could be compensated by exposing his regalia on a throne. One instance we already encountered in Kallixeinos' account of the Grand Procession of Ptolemaios Philadelphos:

After the chariot with Alexander, Nike and Athena there followed thrones made of ivory and gold; on one of these lay a gold diadem (στεφάνη), on another a gilded horn, on still another a gold wreath (στεφάνος), and another a horn of solid gold. Upon the throne of Ptolemaios the Saviour lay a crown made of ten thousand gold coins.²⁸⁷

Thus thrones appear to be personalised possessions of individual kings, as had also been the custom in the Achaimenid kingdom, instead of being ancestral relics symbolising inheritable royal power as is in many other cultures.²⁸⁸ The throne, like the personal regalia, was thought to remain invested with the king's charisma after his death. There are several more examples from the Hellenistic period. The earliest is connected with the upheavals after the death of Alexander in Babylon: 'Then Perdikkas, having put in view of the public the royal throne, on which were the diadem and the robe of Alexander together with his armour and weapons, placed on the throne the ring which had been handed to him the day before by the king.'²⁸⁹ The *locus classicus* however is Diodoros' account of the 'empty throne' set up by Eumenes of Kardia for Alexander in an army camp in Kilikia in 318:

He said that in his sleep it had been as if he had seen king Alexander, as if alive, and clad in his royal dress he was presiding over a council, giving orders to the commanders and conducting all the other affairs of his kingship. 'Therefore', Eumenes said, 'I think that we must make ready a throne from the royal treasure, and that after the diadem, the sceptre, the victory wreath, and the rest of the regalia have been placed on it, all the commanders must at daybreak offer incense to Alexander before it, and hold the meeting of the council in its presence and receive orders as if he were alive and at the head of his own monarchy.' As all agreed to his proposal, everything needed was quickly made ready, for the royal treasure was rich in gold. And after a magnificent pavilion had been set up the throne was placed therein,

²⁸⁷ Kallixeinos FHG III 58 *ap.* Ath. 5.202b; trans. C.B. Gulick 1928. On Ptolemaios' chryselephantine throne see Rice 1983, 116-7; cf. Theocr., *Id.* 17.124.

²⁸⁸ Cf. Gilbert 1987, arguing that the Black Stool of the Ashanti symbolises both the individual authority of a ruling king *and* the ancestral authority from which he derives his legitimacy.

²⁸⁹ Curt. 10.6.4. The ring is here the sign of the regency, which Perdikkas claims had been given to him by Alexander shortly before he died.

and Alexander's diadem, sceptre and armour were placed on it. An altar with a fire was placed before it, and all the commanders made sacrifice from a golden casket, offering frankincense and other valuable kinds of incense, and gave honour to Alexander as to a god. After this the commanders sat down in the chairs that were placed about and took counsel together. ... They were all filled with high hopes for it was as if a god presided over them.²⁹⁰

This Hellenistic variant of 'the king's two bodies'—dubbed 'the cult of the empty throne' by Ellen Rice—may have Near Eastern *c.q.* Achaimenid antecedents.²⁹¹ When Alexander entered the tomb of Cyrus the Great, he found not only the king's sarcophagus but also a throne with Cyrus' regalia on it.²⁹² The king's empty throne certainly also referred to the Greek practice of dedicating thrones to gods, notably to Zeus, on which a statue of the god could be placed to signify his presence.²⁹³

Wedding ceremony

When a king married, the wife was elevated to status of royal consort and awarded an advent. A marriage also had features of a coronation. Upon becoming a queen, the wife was given a diadem and addressed as *basilissa*, also by the king himself.²⁹⁴ Not all the wives received a diadem (above, section 3.2). The wife, usually of royal blood herself, was escorted to her new home by a cortège of her husband's house. For example when Antiochos III married Laodike,

²⁹⁰ Diod. 18.60.4-61, 3. Cf. Plut., *Eum.* 13.4-8; Polyæn. 4.8.2; Nep., *Eum.* 7.2-3. Alexander seated on his throne during life: Phylarchos, *FGrH* 81 F 41 *ap.* Ath. 539e-f; Ephippos *ap.* Ath. 537d-539e. In a similar fashion, during the Battle of Gaza, 312 BCE, the opposing generals—*viz.* Demetrios *vs.* Ptolemaios and Seleukos, none of them kings at that time—commanded their armies from the left wing, the secondary place of honour, instead of positioning themselves on the 'royal' right wing (Diod. 19.82.1 and 83.1; for the king's place on the battlefield see below).

²⁹¹ Pace Grainger 1992, 37, who holds that the 'cult of the empty throne' was invented by Eumenes of Kardia, years after Alexander's death, for the mere *realpolitisches* design '[to permit] the snobbish Argyraspids to claim that they were not under the command of a mere Greek sanctuary.' On Eumenes and the throne of Alexander see further below.

²⁹² Arr., *Anab.* 6.29.5-6.

²⁹³ Honigmann, *op cit.* above ('der leere Sitz des Zeus'); the image also appears in early Christian art, where ivory carvings and mosaics show the empty throne of Christ, surrounded by the Apostles.

²⁹⁴ Plut., *Luc.* 18.3; Polyb. 5.43.4; Nikolaos of Damascus, *FHG* III 414 *ap.* Ath. 593a.

the daughter of Mithradates III of Pontos, she was brought from her father's house by an embassy led by the admiral Diognetos of Seleukeia:

Antiochos received the maiden with all due pomp and at once celebrated his nuptials with right royal magnificence. After the wedding festival was over he went down to Antioch, where he proclaimed Laodike *basilissa*.²⁹⁵

Weddings were celebrated with all due pomp, in the presence of many guests.²⁹⁶ Even a relatively unimportant political marriage of Antiochos III, *viz.* his wedding with the daughter of a notable of the city of Chalkis, Kleoptolemos, in 192/1 was a time-consuming event, celebrated with 'brilliant assemblies and festivals'.²⁹⁷ Sometimes we see evidence that the wedding ceremony took place in concurrence with a festival or other religious event, and *vice versa*; at the Ptolemaic court, a brother-sister marriage could coincide with rites of royal deification.²⁹⁸ In the case of the aforementioned wedding of Antiochos III and a girl from Chalkis, the wedding celebrations seem also to have been staged to keep the troops busy during the winter season. But first of all, royal weddings were international propaganda events,²⁹⁹ celebrated also in encomiastic poetry.³⁰⁰

²⁹⁵ Polyb. 5.43.3-4.

²⁹⁶ Diod. 16.92.1; 29.29.1; 31.16.1; Polyb. 5.43.3, 20.8; 30.25.1; Livy 36.11.

²⁹⁷ Diod. 29.2; cf. Polyb. 20.8; Liv. 36.11.

²⁹⁸ Diod. 16.92.1; E. Lanciers, 'Die Vergöttlichung und die Ehe des Ptolemaios IV. und der Arsinoë III', *ArchPF* 34 (1988) 27-32.

²⁹⁹ Some attestations, surviving by chance, of the propaganda surrounding the politically important marriage of Perseus and Laodike, the daughter of Seleukos IV, in 177, have been collected by Habicht 1989, 339: these include a dedicatory inscription to Laodike from Delos (*IG* XL.1074); a dedication for king Perseus by a courtier, dated to 178 (*J.Del.* 140 A 43 and 443 B 71); and a hoard of one hundred magnificent silver coins bearing the portrait of Perseus found in Mersin in Kilikia, given to a courtier who had accompanied the princess: H. Seyrig, *Trésors du Levant, anciens et nouveaux. Trésors monétaires séleucides 2* (Paris 1973) 47-8. See also Sullivan 1990, 60-1, on the propaganda connected with the marriage of Mithradates I Kallinikos of Kommagene with the Seleukid princess Laodike Thea Philadelphos, an important marriage that linked the house of Kommagene with the Seleukid family and therefore was 'endlessly celebrated in the dynasty's inscriptions'; Sullivan suggests that Mithradates adopted his epithet *kallinikos* to stress his ties with his father-in-law Antiochos VIII Kallinikos.

Hunting

Hunting was an pivotal element of court life, reflected in funerary art (notably the so-called Tomb of Philippos at Vergina and the Alexander Sarcophagus) and palace decorations.³⁰¹ Hunting had ceremonial and symbolic meaning relative to the ideal of kingship. Most importantly, hunting mirrored battle and *vice versa*. The great battle scene on one side of the Alexander Sarcophagus in Istanbul is mirrored by a hunting scene on the other. These two scenes belong together as the two sides of a coin. Just as a king ought to be a skilled warrior, so he also should be a good hunter.³⁰² The hunt provided opportunities to learn or practice skills needed for war: horsemanship, the use of weapons, courage and persistence.³⁰³ Especially the hunt was a paradigm of the aristocratic notion of manliness.³⁰⁴ Hunting was

³⁰⁰ Kallimachos wrote a poem for the occasion of the marriage of Ptolemaios Philadelphos and Arsinoë, of which a fragment has remained (*fr.* 392); Theocr., *Id.* 17, 128ff., compared this brother-sister marriage to the *hieros gamos* of Zeus and Hera, whose love-making is described as inducing fertility in the land.

³⁰¹ Importance of hunting for Hellenistic monarchy: Diod. 31.27.8; 34.34; Plut., *Mor.* 184c; *Demetr.* 50; Plin., *NH* 7.158; 35.138; Polyb. 31.29; Arr., *Anab.* 4.13.2; cf. Rostovtzeff 1967 I, 296; Bevan 1902, II 278. Royal hunts are attested in particular abundance for Alexander, the Seleukids, and the Antigonids; but also the Ptolemies hunted in the traditional manner, alongside their famous expeditions into Africa for acquiring elephants and exotic animals. General works on ancient Greek hunting: J.K. Anderson, *Hunting in the Ancient World* (Berkeley 1985); R. Lane Fox, 'Ancient hunting: from Homer to Polybius', in: G. Shipley and J. Salmon eds., *Human Landscapes in Classical Antiquity: Environment and Culture* (London and New York 1996) 119-53; J.M. Barringer, *The Hunt in Ancient Greece* (Baltimore 2002). The royal hunt in Hellenistic art: Pollitt 1986, 38-41. Royal hunts in Macedonia: E. Carney, 'Hunting and the Macedonian elite: Sharing the rivalry of the chase', in: D. Ogden ed., *The Hellenistic World. New Perspectives* (London 2002) 59-80; B. Tripodi, 'Demetrio Polioretete re-cacciatore', *Messana* 13 (1992) 123-42; idem, *Cacce reali macedoni. Tra Alessandro I e Filippo V* (Messina 1998).

³⁰² In Polyb. 22.3.8-9 a Ptolemaic envoy in Greece praises Ptolemaios V for his 'skill and daring in the chase, ... expertness and training in horsemanship and the use of weapons.' cf. Phylarchos *FHG* 81 fr. 49; Plut., *Pyrrh.* 4.4; *Demetr.* 50; Diod. 34.34; Polyb. 5.37.10. Prousius II of Bithynia was surnamed The Hunter (ὁ κυνηγός; App., *Mithr.* 12.1.2); while staying at the court of Ptolemaios I as a hostage, Pyrrhos distinguished himself while hunting with the king (Plut., *Pyrrh.* 4.4).

³⁰³ In Greek classical literature the educational value of hunting is emphasised (e.g. Pl., *Leg.* 822d; Xen., *Cyn.* 1): Anderson 1985.

³⁰⁴ Roy 1998, 113.

also instrumental in creating group identity, and potentially a means to hierarchise court society. To be the companion of the king in the hunt was a privilege comparable to the honour of riding with the king in battle, or sitting at his table; kings could try to control partaking in the hunt as a means of conferring favour.

When a king was leading the hunt, it was his prerogative to kill the animal. Antiochos IX, who was ‘addicted to hunting’, hunted lions, panthers and wild boars and ‘was [so] reckless, [that] he frequently put his own life in extreme peril’.³⁰⁵ To kill a ferocious animal—lion, boar, or leopard—was like defeating a mighty enemy, ideally in single combat. Victory in battle, as we have seen, was tantamount to *sōtēria*, and in the Greek epic tradition mythic heroes like Herakles and Theseus who rid the land of dangerous beasts were saviours first of all. Conversely, in Greek epic tradition battle was often equated with hunting.³⁰⁶

The Hellenistic royal hunt had Macedonian antecedents. Hunting was ‘the leading pastime’ of the Argead aristocracy long before Alexander.³⁰⁷ In Greece and the Balkans, in reality and in myth, the wild boar and the lion were considered the hunter’s most formidable antagonists. The hunt Herakles made of the Erymanthian Boar and Nemean Lion made him a *sōtēr* and a civiliser. In case of the boar hunt—a more common activity among the Macedonians than the lion hunt prior to the conquests of Alexander, although mountain lions and leopards did exist in the Balkans—the meat of the victim, part of which was given to the gods, was eaten by the hunters in a festive banquet, thus making the hunt a double opportunity for ritual male bonding.³⁰⁸ Originally, it was said, a young aristocrat became an adult male

³⁰⁵ Diod. 34.34.

³⁰⁶ Perhaps the killing of uncommon or exotic animals could be seen as an emblem of victory and conquest, as it was in Ancien Régime iconography. At Versailles under Louis XV an entire gallery, the Petite Galerie, was devoted to the ‘exotic hunt’; the painters based their hunting-scenes on Greek and Roman writers, esp. Pliny, Diodoros and Herodotos, thereby associating the French king, who was in fact a fervent hunter himself, with heroes from Greek mythology and ancient history; also, these paintings were connected with the exotic animals in the royal menagerie, as the depictions of animals were painted after these: X. Salmon, ‘Des animaux exotiques chez le roi’, in: id. ed., *Les chasses exotiques de Louis XV* (Paris 1995) 15-34, esp. 33.

³⁰⁷ Hammond 1989a, 142. Cf. Polyb. 22.3.8; Arr., *Anab.* 4.13.2. Carney 2002 stresses the importance of hunting for competition *and* the creation of *philia* among the Macedonian *hetairoi*.

³⁰⁸ Similar to practice in epic tradition (cf. e.g. *Od.* 10.153) but perhaps in contrast to Classical Athens, where, it has been argued, aristocrats hunted for status but not for meat: on vase paintings on funerary reliefs, banqueteers eating meat are provided with game by professional hunters of lower status: J.

upon killing his first wild boar, after which he was allowed to recline at royal banquets (instead of standing, as *paidēs* ought to do); it was said that as *rite de passage* killing a boar had replaced an ancient obligation to kill a man.³⁰⁹ After the conquests of Alexander, Macedonian kings and courtiers were able to hunt on a gigantic scale, using former Achaemenid *paradeisoi* as hunting-ground, or creating new ones themselves. Near Eastern notions of the relation between hunting and royalty melted with Macedonian ideology. Lions and leopards were hunted by vast hunting parties, organised much like military campaigns.³¹⁰

Chorus, 'Jacht en maaltijd', *Hermeneus* 66.5 (1994) 298-301; cf. P. Schmitt Pantel and A. Schnapp, 'Image et société en Grèce ancienne: les représentations de la chasse et du banquet', *Revue Archéologique* (1982) 57-74; F. Ghedini, 'Caccia e banchetto: un rapporto difficile', *Rivista di Archeologia* 16 (1992) 72-88.

³⁰⁹ Hegesander Delph. F 33 *ap.* Ath. 18a, cp. Curt. 8.6.5. Cf. Hammond 1989a, 56; Cameron 1995, 83 n. 82.

³¹⁰ Although the royal hunt is a more common motif in Mesopotamia than in Greece and the Balkans before Alexander, this does not mean that the Hellenistic royal hunt itself was 'eastern', *pace* P. Briant, 'Chasses royales macédoniennes et chasses royales perses: le thème de la chasse au lion sur la Chasse de Vergina', *DHA* 17.1 (1991) 211-55, and *idem*, 'Les chasses d'Alexandre', in: *Colloque d'Etudes Macédoniennes* (Thessaloniki 1993) 267-277. O. Palagia, 'Hephaestion's Pyre and the Royal Hunt of Alexander', in: A.B. Bosworth and E.J. Baynham eds., *Alexander the Great in Fact and Fiction* (Oxford 2000) 167-206, takes a middle position by arguing that the hunting scenes from Pella and Vergina, which she dates to the late fourth century, were inspired by the hunts staged by Alexander in Persian *paradeisoi*; cf. *idem*, 'Alexander the Great as lion hunter: The fresco of Vergina Tomb II and the marble frieze of Messene in the Louvre', *Minerva* 9 (1998) 25-8. Carney 2002, on the other hand, argues for continuity of Argead hunting traditions. Indeed, 'heroic' hunting of 'strong' animals can be characteristic of any aristocratic society. Furthermore, mountain lions in northern Greece (the Asiatic lion that still lives in Indian nature reserves) are mentioned by Herodotos and Aristotle, writing about their own time, and have been archaeologically attested for the Balkans in Antiquity; they became extinct in Greece only in *c.* 80-100 CE, and probably lasted longer in the Balkans to the north of the Macedonian plain. The last lion in Anatolia was shot in 1870, and as late as 1891 lions were seen in the mountains near Aleppo. Abundant information about historical lions, including sources for the existence of lions in Macedonia in Antiquity, can be found in C.A.W. Guggisberg, *Simba. The Life of the Lion* (Cape Town 1961), summarised at the website of the Asiatic Lion Information Centre (www.asiatic-lion.org/distrib.html; visited January 2006). The fact that (visual) evidence for Macedonian royal hunts is more abundant for the period after Alexander is due to the general lack of archaeological evidence for early Argead court culture. All this does not preclude cultural interaction, especially regarding the imagery of hunting, not to mention the maintenance of

Apart from Alexander himself, also Lysimachos, Krateros, and Perdikkas were famous lion-slayers.³¹¹ On a famous mosaic from Pella two youthful, naked hunters (sometimes identified as Alexander and Krateros) adopt an heroic pose, expressing heroic *andreia*.³¹²

5.6 Conclusion: The Symbolism of Power

In this chapter evidence for Hellenistic royal ceremonial and ritual has been collected and discussed. Of course, there was not a single Hellenistic ritual of inauguration or *adventus*. Although the unevenness of the sources makes it difficult to find details of regional variation or development through time, it appears that there were notable similarities between the respective kingdoms. The necessity to present rituals as tradition precluded blatant innovation of what was supposed to be ancient.

Throughout this chapter, attention has been paid to the symbolism of royal ritual and ceremonial. The most important elements were the display of wealth (*tryphē*) and military power, claims to universal dominance, the promise of a better world, and what I would like to call the enactment of the myth of kingship.

In the sections on royal entries and processions (5.3 and 5.4), I tried to show how the imagery of Hellenistic royal entries amounted to the presentation of the ruler as the bringer of peace, prosperity and justice.³¹³ Since Greek ruler cult and various indigenous forms of reverence for the ruling monarch created an image of the king's eternal presence in the cities, even if he was physically absent, the actual entry of the ruler was like a divine *parousia*. The

enormous Persian-style *paradeisoi* by the Hellenistic kings. On this discussion see also Paspalas 2005, 72 with n. 4. On Hellenistic influences on the imagery of imperial hunting in the Roman Empire, especially as an expression of the emperor's *virtus*, see S.L. Tuck, 'The origins of Roman imperial (lion) hunting imagery: Domitian and the redefinition of *virtus* under the Principate', *G&R* 52.2 (2005) 221-45.

³¹¹ Lund 1992, 6-8.

³¹² Barringer 2005, argues that in aristocratic cultures of the Hellenistic Age, the image of hunting became more mythological, and a means of making heroes of mortal men; on funerary monuments of local potentates in Asia Minor royal hunt, warfare and banqueting are often combined.

³¹³ On the image of the entering king as the bearer of good fortune in various Ancient cultures, but especially the (Hellenistic) Near East and Rome, see Versnel 1970, 371-96.

emphasis on victory and military prowess connected the ceremony of entry with the ideology of the ruler as a manifested *sōtēr* who has conquered chaos and darkness.

Among the divinities with whom kings, notably Ptolemies, associated themselves when entering a city, Dionysos was most prominent. Dionysos was *der kommende Gott*, the epiphany deity *par excellence*.³¹⁴ Dionysos was also, together with Zeus and Herakles, a royal god *par excellence*.³¹⁵ Versnel has argued that Dionysos became such a suitable model for Hellenistic kingship because by defeating human adversaries instead of supernatural opponents, and by conquering *real* territory, Dionysos' conquest of Asia was mythical and historical at the same time. He was the victorious god who triumphed over man and world; he was not the god *of* victory, but *qualitate qua* a victorious god, whose return from the east signalled the dawn of an age of good fortune.³¹⁶

The public adulation of visiting Hellenistic kings in a city theatre or hippodrome was a form of inauguration. As we saw in the subchapter on accession rites, the central element of a Hellenistic inauguration was the presentation of the new king before the army and the populace. Such presentations could be repeated during an entire reign in many cities.

³¹⁴ Burkert 1985, 162, with n. 6 on p. 412.

³¹⁵ Tondriau 1953.

³¹⁶ Versnel 1970, 250-3. The theme of the bacchic triumphal march is best known from (late) Roman mosaics and sarcophagi, see K.M.D. Dunbabin, 'The triumph of Dionysos on the Mosaics in North Africa', *Papers of the British School of Rome* 39 (1971) 52-65, cf. id., *The Mosaics of Roman North Africa* (Oxford 1978), *passim*. Representations of bacchic triumphs on Roman mosaics may be directly influenced by the Grand Procession of Ptolemaios Philadelphos: G. Picard, 'Dionysos victorieux sur une mosaïque d'Acholla', in: *Mélanges Ch. Picard* II (Paris 1948) 810-21; López Monteagudo 1999, 45. The image of Dionysos as the victorious conqueror of Asia was known already before Alexander, but the conquest of India became the central aspect of the conquest myth only after Alexander: P. Goukowsky, *Essai sur les origines de mythe d'Alexandre* II (Nancy 1978) 11, 15 and 79; cf. Köhler 1996, 111-12, to whom I owe this reference; Köhler, following E. Neuffer, *Das Kostüm Alexander des Grossen* (diss. Giessen 1929) 46, explains that the first iconographic evidence of this 'new myth' is a series of coins struck during Ptolemaios I's rule as satrap of Egypt, bearing the head of Alexander adorned elephant's scalp and Dionysian bind. However, D. Michel, *Alexander als Vorbild für Pompeius, Caesar und Marcus Antonius. Archäologische Untersuchungen* (Brussels 1967) 32 questions the link between the elephant scalp and Dionysos, and identifies the bind as a royal diadem (on this controversy see further Köhler 1996, 112 with n. 394). See also S.S. Hartmann, 'Dionysus and Heracles in India', *Temenos* 1 (1965) 55-64; Tondriau 1953; Cerfaux & Tondriau 1957, 148-50; Versnel 1970, 251.

The Hellenistic kingdoms were empires, loosely uniting multifarious peoples and societies. This was notably the case in the Seleukid Empire, but also the Ptolemies and even the Antigonids had to reckon with diverse ethnic, cultural, and political entities within their respective spheres of influence. In neither of these kingdoms kings could easily appeal to a common set of social values endorsed by all the subjects. Instead, the symbols of power were adjusted to circumstances. Put into a simple scheme, two main forms of royal symbolism can be discerned, a local and a central one. First, kingdoms adopted and reformed culturally specific forms of monarchic representation for specific audiences. This category includes for example the coronation of the later Ptolemies at Memphis, the Seleukids' partaking in the Babylonian Akitu ritual, and the utilisation of the Greek religious procession. Second, the kingdoms gradually developed a central, all-embracing symbolism which would equally appeal to subjects of different nationalities. The latter was rooted in Greek and Macedonian tradition; but these general symbols of empire were conscientiously chosen to be comprehensible for both Greeks and non-Greeks, for instance by using generic attributes such as purple or the use of a spear as a sceptre, which were also known in Near Eastern traditions. The principal emblem of Hellenistic kingship, the diadem, was basically Greek in origin, but modified in such a way as to turn it into a generic symbol of kingship, acceptable to non-Greeks as well.