

The Hellenistic Royal Court.
Court Culture, Ceremonial and Ideology
in Greece, Egypt and the Near East, 336-30 BCE

Het Hellenistische koningshof
hofcultuur, ceremonieel en ideologie in
griekenland, egypte en het nabije oosten, 336-30 v.Chr.
(met een samenvatting in het Nederlands)

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Contents

<i>Preface</i>	iv
<i>Abbreviations</i>	v
<i>The Hellenistic dynasties</i>	vii
INTRODUCTION	1
1 COURT, KINGSHIP AND IDEOLOGY	7
1.1 Studying the royal court	7
1.2 The Hellenistic royal court	13
1.3 Hellenism and imperialism	18
1.4 The heroic ethos	31
2 PALACES	54
2.1 Hellenistic palaces: where and why	54
2.2 A closer look	81
2.3 The royal precinct	89
3 COURT SOCIETY	92
3.1 The origin of Hellenistic court society	92
3.2 The royal household	101
3.3 The friends of the king	119
3.4 Hierarchy	139
3.5 Factions and favourites	167
3.6 The royal pages	181

4	CULTURAL AND SCIENTIFIC PATRONAGE	189
4.1	Introduction: The birdcage of the Muses	189
4.2	Prestige and competition	202
4.3	Bonds between patron and client	216
4.4	Royal studies: new images of the world	228
4.5	The poetics of power: the ideology of Ptolemaic panegyric	236
4.6	Conclusion: The ivory tower	246
5	RITUAL AND CEREMONIAL	251
5.1	Introduction: The theatre of kingship	251
5.2	Accession rites	262
5.3	The ceremonial entry	289
5.4	Royal processions	305
5.5	Court ceremonial	325
5.6	Conclusion: The symbolism of power	345
6	SYNTHESIS: THE GOLDEN AGE	348
	SUMMARY	357
	APPENDIX: REGALIA	360
1.	The costume of the king	360
2.	The diadem	366
3.	The royal sceptre	372
4.	Purple	374
	<i>Bibliography</i>	385
	<i>Index</i>	410
	<i>Nederlandse Samenvatting</i>	420
	<i>Curriculum Vitae</i>	422

To my parents

Preface

Every time, in going on, there is something
of the first venture: a question of faith.
André Brink, *An Instant in the Wind* (1976)

Much gratitude is due to many people. It would take lengthy footnotes to do them all justice. Footnotes, however, have no place in a preface. But let me start with a nice quote I recently came across. In speaking of the Hellenistic kingdoms in the third century BCE, Sheila Ager remarked that ‘we may be in danger of seeking too much of a coherent pattern in a century where chaos theory might be a better methodology’.¹ Though certainly true – the Hellenistic Age really is the most fascinating period in world history – I merely shrugged: my mentor, Henk Versnel, always taught me not to despair in the face of seemingly contradictory evidence, but to accept ambiguity and disorder as part of historical reality.² He encouraged me to write this book. My other mentor, Josine Blok, encouraged me to finish it. During the final stages of the road to my doctoral degree, I could not have done without the help and perseverance of Godfried Marijnissen, συγγενῆς καὶ πρώτος φίλος, and Michel Buijs, colleague and friend.

Here are some other people I am happy to thank for their support. Lily Knibbeler, Rens Tacoma and Carolyn de Greeff, for a challenging environment during my Leiden years, when we were Skēnē, the pavilion of creativity set up in the backyard of Oikos. Helga Ruebsamen did her best to teach me how to write – though not in English – and convinced me that writing a doctoral dissertation is less difficult than writing a novel. My exceptional colleagues in Utrecht, in particular Floris van den Eijnde, Sara Wijma, Lina van ’t Wout and Diana Kretschmann. They volunteered to read and correct the manuscript (all remaining typos and inconsistencies are mine). The Philologisch Studiefonds for giving me the opportunity to travel in the Middle East.

Frans and Inge Strootman, for making it all possible. I dedicate this book to them.

In the opening section of 1 Maccabees it is stated that the world had much to suffer from the Successors of Alexander. My family knows all about it. Elise Wiggers, David and Leonoor Strootman, for giving me a reason.

¹ 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 35.

² See H.S. Versnel, ‘Inconsistency’, in: id., *Inconsistencies in Greek and Roman Religion I: Ter Unus. Isis, Dionysos, Hermes. Three Studies in Henotheism* (Leiden 1990) 1-37.

Abbreviations

A&A	<i>Antike und Abendland</i>
ABC	A.K. Grayson, <i>Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles</i> (Locust Valley 1975).
AchHist	H.W.A.M. Sancisi-Weerdenburg <i>et al.</i> eds., <i>Achaemenid History</i> (13 vols.; Leiden 1987-2003).
AKG	<i>Archiv für Kulturgeschichte</i>
AW	<i>Ancient World</i>
Berve	H. Berve, <i>Das Alexanderreich auf prosopografischer Grundlage</i> (2 vols.; Munich 1926).
AncSoc	<i>Ancient Society</i>
ANET	J.B. Pritchard ed., <i>Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament</i> (3rd edn; Princeton, NJ, 1969)
AJA	<i>American Journal of Archaeology</i>
AJPh	<i>American Journal of Philology</i>
ArchPF	<i>Archiv für Papyrusforschung</i>
Austin	M.M. Austin, <i>The Hellenistic World From Alexander to the Roman Conquest. A Selection of Ancient Sources in Translation</i> (Cambridge 1981).
BCHP	R.J. van der Spek and I.L. Finkel, <i>Babylonian Chronicles of the Hellenistic Period</i> (forthcoming; preliminary online at www.livius.org).
BICS	<i>Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies</i> , London
BM	British Museum
CAF	T. Kock, <i>Comicorum Atticorum Fragmenta</i> (1880-1888).
CAH	<i>Cambridge Ancient History</i>
CE	<i>Chronique d'Égypte</i>
CHI	<i>Cambridge History of Iran</i>
CJ	<i>Classical Journal</i>
C Phil.	<i>Classical Philology</i>
CQ	<i>Classical Quarterly</i>
DHA	<i>Dialogues d'histoire ancienne</i>

FGrH	F. Jacoby, <i>Fragmente der griechischen Historiker</i> (1923-)
FHG	C. Müller, <i>Fragmenta Historicum Graecorum</i> (1841-1870)
Fraser	P.M. Fraser, <i>Ptolemaic Alexandria</i> (3 vols; Oxford 1972).
G&R	<i>Greece and Rome</i>
Glassner	J.-J. Glassner, <i>Chroniques mésopotamiens</i> (Paris 1993).
IG	<i>Inscriptiones Graecae</i> (1873-)
JDAI	<i>Jahrbücher des deutschen archäologischen Instituts</i>
JHS	<i>Journal of Hellenic Studies</i>
JNES	<i>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</i>
JRS	<i>Journal of Roman Studies</i>
MDAI(I)	<i>Mitteilungen des deutschen archäologischen Instituts, Istanbulische Abteilung</i>
OCD	<i>Oxford Classical Dictionary</i> (3rd edn; ed. S. Hornblower & A. Spawforth)
OGIS	<i>Orientis Graeci Inscriptiones Selectae</i>
RBL	<i>Review of Biblical Literature</i> (online at www.bookreviews.org)
RE	A. Pauly, G. Wissowa, W. Kroll eds., <i>Real-Encyclopädie der klassischen Altertumswissenschaft</i> (1893-).
REG	<i>Revue des Études Grecque</i>
Riv.Fil.	<i>Rivista di Filologia e di Istruzione Classica</i>
Sachs & Hunger	A.J. Sachs and H. Hunger, <i>Astronomical Diaries and Related Texts from Babylonia</i> . (3 vols; Vienna, 1988, 1989, 1996).
RPh	<i>Revue Philologique</i>
SEG	<i>Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum</i> (1923-)
SNG	<i>Sylloge Numorum Graecorum</i>
TAPhA	<i>Transactions of the American Philological Association</i>
TvG	<i>Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis</i>
Walbank	F.W. Walbank, <i>A Historical Commentary on Polybius</i> (3 vols; Oxford 1957, 1967, 1979).
YCS	<i>Yale Classical Studies</i>

The Hellenistic Dynasties

Kings of Macedonia

<i>Argead Dynasty</i>		<i>Antipatrid Dynasty</i>	
413-399	Archelaos	305-297	Kassandros
399-397	Orestes	297	Philippos IV
397-394	Aëropos II	297-294	Alexandros V
394-393	Amyntas II	297-294	Antipatros I
394-393	Pausanias (rival king)		
393-385	Amyntas III		<i>Civil Wars</i>
385-383	Argaios II	294-287	Demetrios I Poliorketes
383-370	Amyntas III (restored)	287-285	Pyrrhos of Epeiros
370-368	Alexandros II	287-281	Lysimachos
368-365	Ptolemaios of Aloros (regent)	281-279	Ptolemaios Keraunos
365-359	Perdikkas III	279	Meleagros
359-336	Philippos II	279	Antipatros II 'Etesias'
336-323	Alexandros III the Great	279-277	Sosthenes (<i>stratēgos</i> only)
323-317	Philippos III Arrhidaios	277-274	Antigonos II Gonatas
323-309	Alexandros IV	274-272	Pyrrhos of Epeiros, again
		272-239	Antigonos II (restored)

Antigonid Dynasty

306-301	Antigonos I Monophthalmos
306-287	Demetrios I Poliorketes
287-239	Antigonos II Gonatas
239-229	Demetrios II
229-221	Antigonos III Doson
221-179	Philippos V
179-168	Perseus

Attalid Dynasty

283-263	Philetairos (dynast only)
263-241	Eumenes I (dynast only)
241-197	Attalos I Soter (king in 238/7)
197-159	Eumenes II Philadelphos
159-138	Attalos II Philadelphos
138-133	Attalos III Philometor

Seleukid Dynasty

312-281	Seleukos I Nikator	128-122	Alexandros II Zabinas
281-261	Antiochos I Soter	125-120	Kleopatra I Thea
261-246	Antiochos II Theos	125	Seleukos V
246-226	Seleukos II Kallinikos	125-96	Antiochos VIII Grypos
226-223	Seleukos III Soter	113-95	Antiochos IX Kyzenikos
223-187	Antiochos III the Great	96-95	Seleukos VI Epiphanes
187-175	Seleukos IV Philopator	95-88	Demetrios III Eukairos
175-164	Antiochos IV Epiphanes	95-88	Antiochos X Eusebes
164-162	Antiochos V Eupator	95	Antiochos XI Epiphanes
162-150	Demetrios I Soter	95-83	Philippos I Epiphanes
150-145	Alexandros I Balas	86-85	Antiochos XII Dionysos
145-142	Antiochos VI Epiphanes	83-69	Kleopatra II Selene (regent)
145-139	Demetrios II Nikator	83-58	Seleukos VII Philometor?
139-129	Antiochos VII Sidetes	69-64	Antiochos XIII Asiatikos
129-125	Demetrios II (restored)	66-63	Philippos II Philorhomaïos

Ptolemaic Dynasty

323-282	Ptolemaios I Soter (king 305)	88-80	Ptolemaios IX (restored)
282-246	Ptolemaios II Philadelphos	80	Kleopatra Berenike
246-222	Ptolemaios III Euergetes	80	Ptolemaios XI Alexandros
222-204	Ptolemaios IV Philopator	80-51	Ptolemaios XII Neos Dionysos
204-180	Ptolemaios V Epiphanes	58-55	Berenike IV
180-145	Ptolemaios VI Philometor	51-47	Ptolemaios XIII Philopator
170-163	Ptolemaios VIII Euergetes	51-30	Kleopatra VII Philopator
145-144	Ptolemaios VII Philopator	48-47	Arsinoë
145-116	Ptolemaios VIII (restored)	47-44	Ptolemaios XIV Philopator
116-101	Kleopatra III Euergetes	36-30	Ptolemaios XV Caesar
116-107	Ptolemaios IX Philometor		
107-88	Ptolemaios X Alexandros		

Introduction

*Nach der Schlacht bei Arabella,
Hat der grosse Alexander
Land und Leute des Darius,
Hof und Harem, Pferde, Weiber,*

*Elefanten und Dariken
Kron und Szepter, goldnen Plunder,
Eingesteckt in seine weiten
Mazedon'schen Pluderhosen.*

Heinrich Heine, *Jehuda ben Halevy* 3.

This book is about court culture in the broadest sense. It discusses the social and formal aspects of court society, palace architecture, cultural and scientific patronage, and royal ritual. There are several reasons why I have committed myself to writing this book. The most important of these is the wish to fill a gap. Historians have long recognised the importance of the royal court for the evolution and functioning of monarchic states, its influence on scientific and artistic developments, and the importance of public rituals connected with the court for the legitimisation of royal rule. Historians have mainly studied the courts of Renaissance Italy and the European Ancien Régime. In classical studies, there has been much less interest, although there has been substantial historical research concerning the ceremonial of the Late Roman and Byzantine court. The Hellenistic court, however, has been relatively neglected.¹

¹ Cf. R. Strootman, 'De vrienden van de vorst. Het koninklijk hof in de Hellenistische periode', *Lampas* 38.3 (2005b) 184-97. For an overview of the *état de question* see below. The present study grew from my MA thesis, *Hof en heerser in de Hellenistische periode. De betekenis van het hof voor de legitimatie van absolute macht in de Hellenistische monarchieën 323-30 v.Chr.* (Leiden 1993).

There are two reasons why the Hellenistic royal court may be deemed an important subject. First, in the Hellenistic Age the foundations were laid for the development of the royal court in later history, both in Christian Europe and the Islamic East. Second, because the court was the apex of political power in the Hellenistic world. Studying it may help us understand Hellenistic kingship, one of the most important yet still most debated subjects of this period. The formal and social aspects of the court may teach us more about the nature of monarchic rule, the way it functioned *vis-à-vis* subject peoples and cities. Courtly ritual and ceremonial may shed new light on the ideology of Hellenistic kingship because it shows how kings saw themselves or wished to be seen by others. Finally, court culture and cultural patronage may clarify the meaning and use of ‘Hellenism’.

The continuity of Hellenistic kingship and court culture

In the Hellenistic Age, the Eastern Mediterranean and Near East witnessed the emergence of a new and confident imperial culture when Macedonian kings inherited and shaped as their own the legacy of the Achaemenid Empire. Later history owes much to these new kingdoms.² The Romans initially organised their eastern empire as a system of vassal states after the example given by the Seleukids and Ptolemies.³ They imitated Hellenistic ruler cult and many other aspects of Hellenistic royal ideology. Hellenistic monarchic imagery—the ruler portrait, Dionysos and Herakles as models for rulers, the sun as an image of cosmic rulership—influenced the shaping of an image for the Roman emperor, and eventually the image of Christ. The Parthian kings likewise borrowed much from their Macedonian predecessors. Centuries later, the first Caliphs and the Ummayyads, for the development of a monarchic ideology for the Islamic world empire, amalgamated Hellenistic philosophy of kingship with the ideologies of the Sassanians and Byzantines.⁴

² The following will be against the prevailing view that the Hellenistic kingdoms had only minimal influence on the ideology and organisation of the Roman Empire and the later Near East. A characteristic, recent example is G. Woolf, ‘Inventing empire in Ancient Rome’, in: S.E. Alcock *et al.* eds., *Empires. Perspectives From Archaeology and History* (Cambridge 2001) 311-22, at 313, claiming that the Romans ‘[lacked] a model or precedent for their position in the world’, and therefore developed an imperial ideology from scratch.

³ R. Strootman, ‘Queen of Kings: Kleopatra VII and the Donations of Alexandria’, in: M. Facella and T. Kaizer eds., *Client Kingdoms in the Roman Near East* (forthcoming).

⁴ A. al-Azmeh, *Muslim Kingship. Power and the Sacred in Muslim, Christian and Pagan Polities* (London and New York 1997; 2nd edn. 2001) 11-34; P. Crone, *God’s Rule. Government and Islam.*

The influence of Hellenistic kingship is evident too in later court culture. In the course of the centuries, more and more aspects of Hellenistic court culture were taken over by the Roman emperors: formal aspects (the imperial *amici*), palace architecture, regalia (purple, diadem, sceptre, probably the *globus* too), royal ritual (notably the Roman ceremony of *adventus*), and even hair-style.⁵ Via Rome and Byzantium, aspects of Hellenistic court culture were eventually transmitted to Medieval and Renaissance Europe, and the Ottoman Empire.

The reason behind the success and long life of Hellenistic royal culture was the amalgamation of ‘eastern’ and ‘western’ elements.⁶ The basics of Hellenistic imperial rule

Six Centuries of Medieval Islamic Political Thought (New York 2004) 165-96. Alexander lived on as ideal king, cf. E.H. Waugh, ‘Alexander in Islam: The sacred persona in Muslim rulership *adab*’, in: A. Small ed., *Subject and Ruler. The Cult of the Ruling Power in Classical Antiquity* (Ann Arbor 1996) 237-53; R. Stoneman, ‘Alexander the Great in the Arabic tradition’, in: S. Panayotakis, M. Zimmerman, W. Keulen eds., *The Ancient Novel and Beyond*. Mnemosyne Supplement 241 (Leiden 2003) 3-21; F. Doufikar-Aerts, *Alexander Magnus Arabicus. Zeven eeuwen Arabische Alexandertraditie* (diss. Leiden 2003; English translation forthcoming with Peeters, Leuven).

⁵ On the adoption of Hellenistic royal hair-styles by Imperial women see D.E.E. Kleiner, *Cleopatra and Rome* (Cambridge, MA, 2005) 242-60, tracing Hellenistic antecedents of the Roman monarchy’s self-presentation during the early Principate, albeit perhaps too much emphasis is laid on Kleopatra VII and her personal influence on Caesar and Antonius. P. Hardie, *Virgil’s Aeneid: Cosmos and Imperium* (Oxford 1986) 85-156, argues in favour of Hellenistic influence on Roman imperialistic ideology, apparent notably in the theme of gigantomachy in the Aeneid. E. Kosmetatou, ‘The Attalids of Pergamon’, in: A. Erskine ed., *A Companion to the Hellenistic World* (Oxford 2003) 159-74, esp. 173, argues for Attalid influence on Roman imperial ideology, although perhaps overestimating the uniqueness of the royal ideology of the Attalids. On the continuity of formal aspects of Hellenistic court society in the Principate see K. Buraselis, ‘Des Königs Philoi und des Kaisers Amici: Überlegungen zu Ähnlichkeiten und Unterschieden zwischen dem hellenistischen und dem römischen Modell monarchischer Regierung’, in: id. ed., *Unity and Units of Antiquity* (Athens 1994) 19-31, esp. 24-31 with n. 14; Buraselis emphasises the similarities between *philo*i and *amici*, but nevertheless remains indeterminate regarding the question of influence and continuity. Cf. I. Savalli-Lestrade, ‘Des “amis” des rois aux “amis” des Romains’, *RPh* 72 (1998) 65-86, showing how in the Roman east pre-existing *philia* networks were preserved and adapted to bind cities to the empire.

⁶ Throughout this book I will question the modern east-west dichotomy in which the Greeks are designated as ‘western’ or European; here, however, I have for the sake of convenience left this principle aside, hoping to emphasise the Hellenistic Greeks’ intermediate position between the cultures of the ancient Near East and Roman civilisation.

and ideology—forms of taxation and administration, the ideology of world empire, the centrality and autocracy of the king—had eastern antecedents, but these were integrated in the more modest Macedonian tradition of kingship, and adapted to Greek morality, philosophy and religion, resulting *i.a.* in a form of personal monarchy that emphasised the qualities and character of individual kings and queens. This made Hellenistic kingship acceptable as a model for the developing Roman monarchy, a model that provided an ideology of world empire yet without it being, in the eyes of Greeks and Romans, a form of ‘oriental despotism’.

Court culture and Hellenistic kingship

The principal aim of this study is to cast a new light on the phenomenon of Hellenistic Kingship by approaching it from the angle of the court.⁷ Ever since the publication of Norbert Elias’ *Höfische Gesellschaft* (1969) and Jürgen von Kruedener’s *Die Rolle des Hofes im Absolutismus* (1973), historians studying the cultural and political history of Europe after the Middle Ages have understood the importance of the court for the evolution of the modern European state system, and the number of publications is proportionately substantial. ‘Of all

⁷ For general discussions of Hellenistic kingship and its main problems see: C. Préaux, *Le monde hellénistique. La Grèce et l’Orient (323-146 av. J.-C.)* (Paris 1978) I, 181-388; H.-J. Gehrke, ‘Der siegreiche König. Überlegungen zur hellenistischen Monarchie’, *AKG* 64 (1982) 247-77; F.W. Walbank, ‘Monarchies and monarchic ideas’, in: *CAH* 7.1 (1984) 62-100; E.S. Gruen, ‘Hellenistic Kingship: puzzles, problems, and possibilities’, in: P. Bilde *et al.* eds., *Aspects of Hellenistic Kingship* (Aarhus 1996) 116-25; B. Virgilio, *Lancia, diadema e porpora. Il re e la regalità ellenistica*. Studi Ellenistici XI (Pisa and Rome 1999); K. Bringmann, *Geben und Nehmen. Monarchische Wohltätigkeit und Selbstdarstellung im Zeitalter des Hellenismus* (Berlin 2000); J. Ma, ‘Kings’, in: A. Erskine, ed., *A Companion to the Hellenistic World* (Oxford 2003) 177-95. Specifically on Ptolemaic kingship: P. Herz, ‘Die frühen Ptolemaier bis 180 v.Chr.’, in: R. Gundlach and H. Weber eds., *Legitimation und Funktion des Herrschers: Vom Pharao zum neuzeitlichen Diktator* (Stuttgart 1992) 52-97; R.A. Hazzard, *Imagination of a Monarchy. Studies in Ptolemaic Propaganda*. Phoenix Supplementary Volume 37 (Toronto, Buffalo, London 2000); G. Hölbl, *A History of the Ptolemaic Empire* (London and New York 2001) 77-123 and 160-77. On Hellenistic ruler cult there is a vast bibliography; a good overview is A. Chaniotis, ‘The divinity of hellenistic rulers’, in: A. Erskine ed., *A Companion to the Hellenistic World* (Malden, Oxford, Carlton, 2003) 431-45. Important older titles are: F. Taeger, *Charisma. Studien zur Geschichte des antiken Herrscherkultes. Band I: Hellas* (Stuttgart 1957); L. Cerfaux and J. Tondriau, *Un concurrent du christianisme: le culte des souverains dans la civilisation gréco-romain* (Paris and Tournai 1957); C. Habicht, *Gottmenschentum und griechische Städte* (Munich 1970).

the institutions affecting the political, religious and cultural life of early modern Europe,' John Adamson wrote, 'there was probably none more influential than the court.'⁸ The study of the early modern court focuses on three basic issues: (1) the court as a political system, (2) the court as the focal point of scientific and cultural developments, and (3) the court as the central stage for the monarchy's self-presentation – discussed in succession in chapters 3, 4 and 5.

In modern scholarship, Hellenistic kingship is mostly approached from the perspective of subject cities. By approaching it from the angle of its centre, the court, new evidence, or rather, data so far neglected or overlooked, will be used. Literature about the better documented and more intensively studied courts of the European Renaissance and Ancien Régime will lead the way into analyses of the Hellenistic court as a political instrument and as a stage for monarchic representation. The aim is a synthesis of the court as the locus of both monarchic representation (ritual, ceremonial, ideology) and actual politics (networks, social relations, diplomacy, competition). In other words: the aim is understanding the relationship between the ideology and reality of Hellenistic kingship.

The Hellenistic royal court was essentially the household of the royal family. The royal household included many 'friends' (*philoï*) of the king and his family. These *philoï* constituted the court society of the Hellenistic Age. They stood at the top of a pyramid of patronage networks which was the essence of imperial rule. In the Hellenistic kingdoms, government and court coincided, with the latter being the better term, as 'government' is a rather anachronistic term to describe the personal networks and ad hoc measures through which Hellenistic kings attempted, and not always successfully, to control the territory they claimed to control.

The court furthermore was a stage for the performance of the 'theatre of kingship'. It was the central place where the monarchy presented itself to the world. Palace architecture, the use of sacral and heroic images in iconography and propaganda texts, pomp and circumstance, the display of military power and wealth – all of it was carefully designed to legitimise royal power and to overawe both friend and foe. Most importantly, it was in the context of the court that the king himself was physically present and visible to others. What, then, were the most important 'messages' that were conveyed through the court?

⁸ J. Adamson, 'The making of the Ancien-Régime court, 1500-1700', in: id. ed., *The Princely Courts of Europe, 1500-1750* (London 1999) 7-42; the modern study of the court, and its relevance for understanding Hellenistic court culture, will be introduced more extensively in section 1.1.

The scope and structure of the book

Although the Hellenistic kingdoms owed a lot to the Achaimenid Empire, they owed at least as much to Argead Macedonia. The rulers of the Hellenistic dynasties were Macedonians before anything else. However, the Greco-Macedonian aspect of Seleukid and Ptolemaic kingship is frequently underestimated in present scholarship. In this book, the Hellenistic Age begins with the period of Macedonian expansion during the reigns of Philippos II and Alexander III. The emphasis lies on the empires of the Antigonids, Seleukids, and Ptolemies, but other kingdoms, like the kingdoms of the Attalids or the Pontic Empire of Mithradates VI, will occasionally be dealt with as well.

The book is divided into five parts. Part I, 'Court, kingship and ideology', discusses the methodology and main contentions of the study. Part II, 'Palaces', sets the stage for the drama of kingship by describing residences and palace architecture. Part III, 'Court society', is concerned with the social and political aspects of the courts. These include the central role of the royal family, the royal *philoï*, the organisation of the court and court titles. Part IV, 'Cultural and scientific patronage', discusses the patronage of art, scholarship and science at the royal courts, and the significance of 'Hellenistic' culture for the imperialism of the Macedonian dynasties. Part V, 'Ritual and ceremonial', describes the court as a stage for the theatre of kingship, and discusses the form and meaning of monarchic ritual. The book is concluded with a synthesis, titled 'A golden age', and a summary.

I

Court, kingship and ideology

1.1 Studying the royal court

It is difficult to define what a court is. One runs the risk of either excluding too many facets, or defining it too loosely. Basically, the court is the king's immediate social milieu, consisting of (1) the circle of persons ('courtiers') around a ruler, (2) the rooms and halls where the king lives, receives guests, gives audiences and banquets, and where the rituals or royalty are performed, and (3) the larger matrix of political and economic relations converging in the ruler's household.¹ The latter is of particular importance, as these personal relations formed the networks on which royal power was based.

¹ Adamson 1999, 7. Note that the 'court' is normally defined as merely the persons surrounding the king, cf. G. Elton, 'Tudor government. The points of contact III: The court', in: id., *Studies in Tudor and Stuart Politics and Government* (Cambridge 1983) 38-57: 'The only definition of the court which makes sense ... is that it comprised of all those who at any given time were within "his grace's house"'. See D. Starkey, 'Court history in perspective', in: id., *The English Court. From the Wars of the Roses to the Civil War* (London 1987) 1-24, esp. 5, for an even narrower definition, *sc.* only courtiers (*i.e.* without servants, guards, stablehands and so forth). The problem is of course, that in no two periods the court is the same; thus the Medieval European court was often peripatetic whereas Ancien Régime courts usually can be localised in one or more fixed residences, and definitions for this period more often include references to palaces (Asch 1991, 9-10). As we will see in chapter 1.2, contemporaries understood the Hellenistic royal court first of all as the king's household or *oikos*. An interesting alternative has been proposed by M.J. Rodríguez-Salgado, 'The court of Philip II of Spain', in Asch & Birke 1991, 206-44, defining the court as the place where the 'sovereign power' of the monarchy resides; this leaves open the possibility that the monarch's 'sovereign authority' can be present even when the monarch himself is absent: 'the monarch's residual authority, not his presence, was the prerequisite of a court' (p. 207). It does presuppose however the existence of a fixed residence.

Court is not a synonym of palace. Kings may maintain several palaces but normally have only one court. Neither is a palace a prerequisite for a court. Many courts in history were peripatetic, not least the Argead, Antigonid and Seleukid courts. This means that a king could hold court also *en route* in his camp (the natural habitat of *i.a.* Alexander the Great, Pyrrhos, Antiochos III and Philippos V), or on board of a ship (the Ptolemies in their floating palace Thalamegos; Kleopatra VII at Tarsos). Polybios describes the royal pavilion of the Ptolemaic army camp before the Battle of Raphia as if it were a palace, comprising a tent for public audiences.² Moreover, crucial court ceremonial such as inauguration rites took place in a public area rather than in the confines of a palace.

The modern study of the court goes back to the pioneering work of Norbert Elias (1969) and Jürgen von Kruedener (1973).³ Both tried to understand the role of the court in the development of absolutism in early modern Europe. Elias saw the royal court as principally an

² Polyb. 5.81.5.

³ N. Elias, *Die höfische Gesellschaft. Untersuchungen zur Soziologie des Königtums und der höfischen Aristokratie* (Neuwied and Berlin 1969; 7th edn. Frankfurt am Main 1994); J. von Kruedener, *Die Rolle des Hofes im Absolutismus* (Stuttgart 1973). On both classic works J. Duindam, *Myths of Power. Norbert Elias and the Early Modern European Court* (Amsterdam 1994) is essential reading. Both Elias and Kruedener, notably the latter, were influenced by Max Weber; this accounts for some striking similarities, as Kruedener did not consult Elias 1996 (he does however refer to Elias' civilisation theory of 1937). The point of reference for Elias, whose view of the court as a 'golden cage' for the nobility was mainly based on the memoirs of Saint-Simon, was the French court under Louis XIV; Kruedener based his model on princely courts in various German states during a much longer period. A. Winterling, *Der Hof der Kurfürsten von Köln 1688-1794. Eine Fallstudie zur Bedeutung 'absolutistischer' Hofhaltung* (Bonn 1986), contains fundamental criticism of Elias' model, based on a thorough case study; also J. Duindam, *Vienna and Versailles. The Courts of Europe's Dynastic Rivals* (Cambridge 2003), challenges many of Elias' conclusions by comparing Versailles with the Habsburg court, extending his research to the period 1550-1780. On Elias' thinking and its influence in general see S. Mennell, *Norbert Elias. An Introduction* (Oxford 1992). For the courts of the Renaissance and Ancien Régime in general: E.G. Dickens ed., *The Courts of the Italian Renaissance. Politics, Patronage, and Royalty, 1400-1800* (London 1977); A. Buck *et al.* eds, *Europäische Hofkultur im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert* (3 vols; Hamburg 1981); S. Bertelli *et al.* eds, *The Courts of the Italian Renaissance* (Milano 1986); R.G. Asch and A.M. Birke, eds, *Princes, Patronage, and the Nobility. The Court at the Beginning of the Modern Age, c. 1450-1650* (London and Oxford 1991); J. Adamson ed., *The Princely Courts of Europe, 1500-1750* (London 1999). For a critical overview of the debate since Elias 1969 see J. Duindam 'De herontdekking van het vorstelijk hof', *TvG* 108.3 (1995) 361-76.

instrument in the hands of the king to pacify the nobility. From the sixteenth to the eighteenth century the development of professional standing armies, employed in conflicts fought on an increasingly large scale, gradually led to a military monopoly of the king and the growth of a centralised state apparatus. This, in its turn, forced members of the old nobility—on whose military assistance the king was no longer dependent—to leave their ancestral domains and be present near the king in order to obtain offices, military commands and prestige. At court, competition for royal favour, extensive status expenditures expected from a ‘gentleman’, and the restrictions and obligations of court etiquette and ceremonial amounted to loss of political and economic autonomy on the part of the old noble families, who turned into a toothless court nobility obligated to an absolutist monarch. Recent scholarship has adjusted or rejected many of Elias’ views. The absolutism claimed by rulers like Louis XIV presumably was an ideal rather than a reality.⁴ Even the very existence of the opposition between king and nobility, on which Elias’ model rests, has been disputed.⁵ Duindam moreover has noted that the restrictions and obligations placed upon the nobility by court life also affected the king himself. For instance the system of obligatory conspicuous consumption required the most extensive status expenditures from the ruler himself, being the person of highest rank. As the growth of the apparatus of government did not necessarily result in all power getting into the hands of the king, Duindam argued that presence at court could also be advantageous for nobles, offering them opportunities to become part of the new central power.⁶ In sum, if the early modern court really was a golden cage, as Elias maintained, the king was imprisoned in it as well.

Although Elias’ *Höfische Gesellschaft* inspired modern court history most, Kruedener’s *Rolle des Hofes* has better stood the test of time. Kruedener’s aim was to develop a model for the study of the court rather than propose a grand theory. In this model, the historical significance of the court extended beyond its role in establishing power relations between the ruler and the nobility. Kruedener also emphasised the function of the court as the principal locus for monarchic representation. According to Kruedener, the court was both a platform for competition with rival monarchies and a stage for legitimating the monarchy *vis-*

⁴ N. Henshall, *The Myth of Absolutism. Change and Continuity in Early Modern European Monarchy* (London and New York 1992); on the creation of this myth see P. Burke, *The Fabrication of Louis XIV* (New Haven and New York 1992).

⁵ R.G. Asch, ‘Court and household from the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries’, in: Asch & Birke 1991, 1-38.

à-vis the subjects. This basic function of the court as a kind of theatrical stage makes Kruedener's model a more suitable starting-point for the study of the Hellenistic court: not only is this dimension conspicuously present in Hellenistic court culture, there even was a contemporary notion that kings were like actors displaying their *basileia* on a stage – and indeed they often literally did so, as the public pomp and ritual of Hellenistic kingship often took place in theatres, stadions or hippodromes.⁷

Four functions of the royal court

On the basis of Kruedener's model, four dimensions or functions of the court can be discerned:

1. the court as a political arena
2. the court as administrative centre
3. the court as symbolic centre
4. the court as a stage for monarchic representation

The court as a political arena combines the political, economic and social dimensions of the court. The court was the place where the wealth, power and prestige of the dynasty was accumulated and redistributed. This not only made the court an instrument of power in the hands of the ruler, it also brought advantages for those who wished to share in the power, wealth and prestige of the royal family. Acquiring a place of honour in the household of the king was a means for powerful families to exert influence on political matters, even permitting them at times to hold sway against the ruler's desire.⁸ In theory, the mechanism structuring power relations at court was the principle of proximity to the throne, *i.e.* the regulation of access to the person of the king, and the system of honorific titles, court offices and military commands, which developed to give expression to the intangible 'favour' of the king or the queen.⁹ In practice, the ruler was not necessarily in full control of the distribution of titles and offices, wealth and favour. At the Hellenistic courts, the king shared his power with numerous

⁶ Duindam 1994, 79.

⁷ Strootman 1993, 11-2; on the notion of royal ritual and court ceremonial as a form of theatre see section 5.1.

⁸ Duindam 1994, 95.

⁹ Kruedener 1973, 57: 'Abstammung als Quelle sozialer Ehre und als Ordnungsprinzip ... des Ranges [ist] im Prinzip aufgehoben und durch ein anderes Prinzip ersetzt worden: die Nähe zum Thron'.

persons or families, and sometimes the king was not even their leader. As will be argued in section 3.5, the power of the king was in reality not so absolute as official ideology claimed it was. Attempts of kings to control the composition of their household was an important source of conflict at the top of the kingdoms. Another major source of discord was conflict over the succession. Thus, internal conflict was characteristic of Hellenistic court culture but it was rarely an instrument of control in the hands of the king.

The court substituted the point of contact between the monarchy and the various ruling classes at the regional and local level.¹⁰ The courtiers (*philoï*) functioned as intermediaries. They were linked to the king and his family by networks of kinship, ritualised friendship (*philia, xenia, philoxenia*), and other personal ties, ‘surrounding the king as bees surround the queen in a hive’.¹¹ The *philoï*, in their turn, maintained personal ties with their cities and families of origin, and acted as private benefactors of other cities. They became local magnates because they were royal *philoï* or *vice versa*. Thus the court society constituted the epicentre of a complex and far-reaching network of patronage relations. ‘The court was an intermediary through which the king controlled his secondary and much wider zone of influence’, wrote Gabriel Herman, one of the very few ancient historians to have dealt with Hellenistic court culture analytically: ‘Its tentacles reached into every section of the kingdom, so that the king’s power was manifested to his subjects through the members of his court.’¹² The system, however, also worked the other way round, permitting cities and elite families to exert influence at court through royal *philoï*. Moreover, royal courts were not the only source of political power in the Hellenistic world. As long as the monarchy was strong and wealthy, kings would attract powerful men to their court and control cities and territory with their aid. But when a monarchy impoverished or lost charisma—usually the result of military failure—regional leaders turned away from the court or became political rivals.

The second dimension is the court as an administrative centre. As the Hellenistic royal court was essentially the household of the royal family, it was the centre of the (economic) management of the dynastic *oikos*: the taxation and the exaction of tribute and produce, the financial administration, and the chancellery. High ranking office-holders were ultimately

¹⁰ In general: Asch 1991, 4; Duindam 1994, 92.

¹¹ Bertelli 1986, 9.

¹² G. Herman, ‘The court society of the Hellenistic age’, in: P. Cartledge, P. Garnsey, E.S. Gruen eds, *Hellenistic Constructs. Essays in Culture, History, and Historiography* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London 1997) 199-224, at 200.

responsible, but they were assisted by many lesser officials, servants and local tax-collectors. The court likewise was the nerve centre of the kingdom as a military organisation.

In organising a festival and games at Daphne in 166/5 BCE, Antiochos IV Epiphanes ‘brought together the most distinguished men from virtually the whole world (*oikoumenē*), adorned all parts of his palace in magnificent fashion, and, having assembled in one spot and, as it were, having put upon a stage his entire kingship (*basileia*), he left [his enemies] ignorant of nothing that concerned him. ... In putting on these lavish games and stupendous festival Antiochos outdid all earlier rivals.’¹³ This revealing fragment from Diodoros sums up the next two dimensions of the court, which are mainly ideological and representational: the court as a symbolic centre and a stage for the theatre of kingship.

The court as a symbolic centre is not originally in Kruedener’s model. What I mean with this, is that the Seleukids and Ptolemies conceived, styled and propagated their court as the heart of empire and thus the heart of the entire *oikoumenē*. The court was a kind of microcosm where the empire was exhibited. As the self-declared summit of civilisation, the court was contrasted to the barbaric, even chaotic periphery at the edge of the earth. This ideology enhanced the ruler’s self-presentation as world leader and created a sense of unity in culturally and ethnically heterogeneous empires.

The last dimension, the court as a stage for legitimisation and competition, figures prominently in Kruedener’s model. Kruedener distinguishes three closely-related aspects of the legitimating function of the court: cultisation, charismatisation and distancing. In the Hellenistic world this mainly took three forms, respectively public rituals in which the superhuman nature of the monarchy, including the king’s divinity, was revealed, the presentation of the king as a glorious warrior, and the presentation of the court as sacred and inaccessible, for instance by integrating elements of temple architecture in palaces. The function of this was to overawe not only subjects but enemies as well, for the display of wealth, military might and political power was instrumental in competing with rival kingdoms too.¹⁴ Through the display of power symbols, wealth and splendour, the ruler did more than making claims: by putting up a show he could actual gain prestige and thus increase his charisma and legitimacy.¹⁵

¹³ Diod. 31.16.1.

¹⁴ Kruedener 1973, 21-2: ‘höfisches Imponiergehabe’.

¹⁵ Kruedener 1973, 21; cf. J.H. Shannon, *The Origins of the Modern European States, 1450-1725* (London 1974) 475.

1.2 The Hellenistic royal court

‘In the court I exist and of the court I speak, but what the court is, God knows, I know not.’ With these words the twelfth century patrician Walter Map began his account of the English court of his own age.¹⁶ Concerning the Hellenistic kingdoms, the sources do not give the impression either that there existed an unanimous notion of what the court exactly was. The court is variously described as either the household of the king or the people belonging to that household as members or friends.

To designate a royal household, *oikos* or *oikia* could be used. *Oikos* connotes the extended family’s house, household, property, and interests, but does not carry a connotation of royalty. By extension it could mean ‘kingdom’. Thus, when Polybios contrasts the fortunes of the Antigonid dynasty and the Achaian League, he places the royal *oikia* of the Macedonians on a par with the confederacy of the Achaians, as two state forms.¹⁷ A more specific term is *aulē*.¹⁸ Athenaios explains that this word, which normally denotes the courtyard before or around a house or farm, is used to denote a royal household ‘because there are very spacious squares in front of the house of a king’.¹⁹ *Aulē* in other words, could also mean ‘court’, to put it somewhat ambiguously, and the people surrounding Hellenistic kings are often called ‘the people of the court’ (οἱ περὶ τὴν αὐλήν) or *aulikoi*, literally ‘courtiers’.²⁰

¹⁶ Cited from R.A. Griffiths, ‘The king’s court during the Wars of the Roses: Continuities in and age of discontinuities’, in: Asch & Birke 1991, 42-67, at 67.

¹⁷ Polyb. 2.37.7 (τῶν Ἀχαιῶν ἔθνοους καὶ τῆς Μακεδόνων οἰκίας); cf. 2.48.2; 2.50.9.

¹⁸ Diod. 31.15A.1-3; Jos., *AJ* 12.106, 185; 13.368; 16.336; 1 *Macc.* 2.46; Polyb. 4.42.2; 5.29.3, 40.4. Curt. 10.5.8 translates *vestibulus regis*.

¹⁹ Ath. 189e. Large open courtyards were indeed characteristic of Hellenistic palace architecture, cf. chapter 2.2. An additional, perhaps less plausible explanation is given by Athenaios why *aulē* came to mean ‘royal palace’: the word’s second meaning, ‘resting-place for cattle’, was associated with the fact that the royal guard used to encamp and sleep in the yard in front of the king’s house. This use of *aulē* in the context of Hellenistic kings e.g. Polyb. 4.42.2; 5.29.3, 40.4; 1 *Macc.* 2.46. For the terminology see B. Tamm, ‘Aula regia, “aulē” und aula’, in: G. Säflund ed., *Opuscula Carolo Kerenyi dedicata*. Stockholm Studies in Classical Archaeology 5 (Stockholm 1968) 135-242.

²⁰ Polyb. 5.26.13; 5.36.1 (general); Polyb. 4.87.7 (Antigonid court); Polyb. 5.40.2, 34.4; 16.21.8; 18.55.3 (Ptolemaic); Polyb. 5.41.3, 50.14, 56.5; App., *Syr.* 45. Jos., *AJ* 12.215; 17.125; 18.54 (Seleukid). *Aulikoi*; Polyb. 16.22.8; Plut., *Mor.* 778b; *Demetr.* 17. An interesting variant is οἱ περὶ τὴν Ἄτταλον, ‘the people of Attalos’ (II) (Diod. 29.22). Cf. E.J. Bickerman, *Institutions des*

Aulē is not ordinarily used for ‘palace’, the customary word for which is *basileion* or *basileia*.²¹ The Romans took over this usage of ‘court’ (in Latin: *aula*), and via this route it reached its present use in modern European languages (‘cour’, ‘court’, ‘Hof’).²²

In addition to *aulikoi* various other terms designating ‘courtiers’ are used in the sources. A term often encountered in ancient historiography is *therapeia*, meaning ‘retinue’. According to Bickerman, *therapeia* was the *terminus technicus* for the (Seleukid) court.²³ However, the word is not used in this meaning in royal correspondence or other primary sources directly connected to the court. Moreover, when used in the context of monarchy *therapeia* can refer to the king’s personal attendants or his bodyguard, and the difference is often unclear.²⁴ There remains however one contemporary term for ‘courtiers’ which figures in both historiography and official documents, and this is simply ‘the friends of the king’ (οἱ φιλοὶ τοῦ βασιλέως). On civic decrees, the standard formula ‘the king, his friends (*philo*), and his military forces (*dynameis*)’ is recurrently used.²⁵ In ancient historiography, too, *philo* is used most often to denote the Hellenistic court society.²⁶

Séleucides (Paris 1938) 36: ‘Atour de roi se placent les “gens de la cour”, comme le langage hellénistique les appelait. Nous pouvons distinguer parmi ces “courtisans” deux groupes: “la maison du roi” et les “amis”’. Presumably, Bickerman’s understanding of *περὶ τὴν αὐλήν* as an umbrella term for *philo* and the servants of the king is too formal. Furthermore, *philo* was a much broader term, cf. Herman 1997, 214, who draws attention to the fact that Polybios, in speaking of the Ptolemaic kingdom, contrasts the people who are actually present at court (οἱ περὶ τὴν αὐλήν) with the officials who administered Egypt (οἱ τὰ κατὰ τὴν Αἴγυπτον χειρίζοντες) and the officials dispatched to posts in the wider Mediterranean (οἱ ἐπὶ τῶν ἔξω πραγμάτων διατάγμενοι). Apparently, all three categories consisted of *philo*.

²¹ Polyb. 10.27.9, 31.5; Diod. 19.18.1; Plut., *Luc.* 29.8; Ath. 654b; Jos., *AJ* 13.136; 14.16, 59; 17.90. The *pluralis maiestatis* Palaces was the name of the royal district in Alexandria (Strabo 508 and 524).

²² Tamm 1968.

²³ Bickerman 1938, 36.

²⁴ For instance, it is not clear at all whether Alexandros, ἐπὶ τῆς θεραπέας (Polyb. 4.87.5) at the court of Philippos V, was the king’s major-domo or captain of the bodyguard (*pace* Walbank I 536). *Therapeia* as royal retinue: Polyb. 5.39.1, 50.3, 56.7-8. As bodyguard: Diod. 33.4a. Cf. Polyb. 7.12.1; 5.50.1; 15.32.8; Diod. 31.17c; 18.27.1. An interesting variant is αὐλὰς θεραπεύειν (Ath. 189e). In place of *therapeia* also *therapontes* could be used, e.g. in Polyb. 5.39.1. Before the Hellenistic Age, Greek writers used *therapeia* also for the retinue of Persian kings, cf. e.g. Hdt. 1.199; 5.21; 7.184; Xen., *Cyr.* 4.6.1; 7.5.65.

²⁵ D. Musti, ‘Syria and the East’, in: CAH 7.1 (1984) 175-220, esp. 179.

We may conclude that, although there was no ‘official’ *terminus technicus*, a contemporary notion of a royal court did exist, conceiving the court as a distinct form of household, just as the royal palace (*basileion*) was distinguished from a genuine elite house. Terminology was not consistent, but the most precise denominations were *aulē* and *philoī*, the latter being used most often in Greek historiography and official documents. The evidence normally does not differentiate between the court as a household and as a social group, and in this sense the court is indeed not unlike the *oikos*.

Historical development

Hellenistic court culture was essentially Greek and Macedonian elite culture imported to Egypt and the Near East. The evidence for the courts of the Ptolemies, Seleukids and Antigonids reveals predominantly similarities with the Argead household in fourth century Macedonia, albeit on a much grander scale and with many ‘eastern’, chiefly Achaemenid, elements integrated in it.²⁷ The historical development of the Hellenistic court can be roughly divided into four main phases:

1. The period of imperialist expansion under Philippos II and Alexander the Great, in which growing royal autocracy leads to conflicts with the Macedonian high nobility (c. 350-323 BCE). Greek courtiers turn up already in the reign of Philippos; Alexander furthermore favours Macedonians from the lesser nobility, and Iranians.
2. The age of the Diadochs, when new courts are being set up. In this period, Greeks begin to dominate the Macedonian courts; non-Hellenic aristocrats retreat from the courts (323-c. 275).

²⁶ The Latin word for a Hellenistic courtier is *purpuratus*, because of the purple dye used to colour the clothing of the *philoī*, e.g. Liv. 30.42.6; 32.39.8; 37.23.7; 37.59.5; 42.51.2. Cic., *Cat.* 4.12; *Tusc.* 1.102; Curt., 3.2.10; 3.13.13; 5.1.37; Vitr. 2 *pr.* 1. Quint. 8.5.24.

²⁷ There are also similarities with the courts of Greek tyrants of the Archaic Age, and the rulers of Syracuse, in particular Dionysios II. The former are not very relevant, however, as there was no continuity across the Classical Age, nor was there any reference to Greek tyranny in the ideology of Hellenistic kingship other than the presentation of the king as the destroyer of tyranny. For the Achaemenid court see J.M. Cook, ‘The rise of the Achaemenids and the establishment of their empire’, in: I. Gershevitch ed., *The Cambridge History of Iran. Volume 2: The Median and Achaemenian Periods* (Cambridge 1985) 200-91, esp. 225-38.

3. A longer period in which the institutions of the court develop and become more complex and hierarchised. The possibilities of the king to manipulate the composition of the court society decreases; kings try to check the growing power of the *philoï* by patronising (non-Greek) favourites (c. 275-150 BCE).
4. The period of the decline of the great Macedonian dynasties; their court culture and ideology is adopted by the non-Greek, semi-Hellenized dynasties emerging in their wake. Hellenistic court culture is now extensively mixed with elements from various native cultures, and becomes truly 'Hellenistic'. Hellenistic royal ritual and iconography furthermore influences the self-presentation of Roman and Parthian rulers in this period (c. 150 BCE-50 CE).

The historical background to Hellenistic court society will be further discussed in section 3.1, especially the formative period under Philippos and Alexander, which saw violent conflicts between the Argead house and the great noble families of Macedonia.

The state of the question

Unlike the courts of the later Roman and Byzantine Empire, there is surprisingly limited scholarship about Hellenistic court culture.²⁸ In the older literature, brief textbook accounts of particular courts can be found, as well as some exceptional attempts at analysis.²⁹ Most

²⁸ Recent titles are D. Schlinkert, 'Vom Haus zum Hof. Aspekte höfischer Herrschaft in der Spätantike', *Klio* 78 (1996) 454-82; H. Maguire ed., *Byzantine Court Culture from 829 to 1204* (Cambridge, MA, 1998; 2nd edn. 2005). In particular Roman and Byzantine monarchic ritual have been the subject of ample research and debate, e.g. A. Alföldi, *Die monarchische Repräsentation im römischen Kaiserreiche* (Darmstadt 1970); id., 'Gewaltherrscher und Theaterkönig', in: K. Weitzmann ed., *Late Classical and Mediaeval Studies in honor of A.M. Friend jr.* (Princeton, N.J., 1955) 15-55; O. Treitinger, *Die oströmische Kaiser- und Reichsidee nach ihrer Gestaltung im höfischen Zeremoniell* (3rd edn. Darmstadt 1956); S.G. MacCormack, *Art and Ceremonial in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London 1981); M. McCormick, M., *Eternal Victory. Triumphal Leadership in Late Antiquity, Byzantium, and the Early Medieval West* (Cambridge 1986); A. Cameron, 'The construction of court ritual. The Byzantine Book of Ceremonies', in: D. Cannadine and S. Price eds., *Rituals of Royalty* (1987) 106-36.

²⁹ E.R. Bevan, *The House of Seleucus* (London 1902) II, 273-4, evokes a rather decadent 'oriental' court for the (later) Seleukids; the chapter about the Seleukid court in E.J. Bickerman, *Institutions des Séleucides* (Paris 1938) is very good, given its date. Early attempts at analysis, but lacking theoretical

literature dealing with *philoï* is either institutional history or deals with prosopographic aspects of court society, including court titulature (which is normally believed to be more systematic and formalised than will be contended in this book).³⁰ This approach did not change with the advent of modern court studies in the 1970's and 1980's. The past decade, however, has seen relatively numerous publications on the Hellenistic court; roughly speaking, these consist of on the one hand studies of cultural, particularly literary patronage at the Ptolemaic court, on the other hand studies of the relation between cities and the court.³¹

support, are W. Otto, 'Zum Hofzeremoniels des Hellenismus', in: *Epitumbion H. Swoboda dargebracht* (Reichenberg 1927) 194-200, and G. Corradi, 'Studi sulla corte ellenistica', in: id., *Studi Ellenistici* (Turin 1929) 229-343. For a synthesis of the older literature see H.H. Schmitt, 'Hof', in: H.H. Schmitt and E. Vogt eds., *Kleines Wörterbuch des Hellenismus* (Wiesbaden 1988) 251-57, and for a more recent overview A. Winterling, 'Hof', in: *Der Neue Pauly* (1998) 661-5.

³⁰ Relevant scholarship concentrates on the Argead court under Alexander and the Ptolemaic court. Of importance is notably the work of Léon Mooren, including *The Aulic Titulature in Ptolemaic Egypt. Introduction and Prosopography* (Brussels 1975); *La hierarchie de cour ptolémaïque. Contribution à l'étude des institutions et des classes dirigeantes à l'époque hellénistique* (Louvain 1977), and 'The Ptolemaic Court System', *CE* 60 (1985) 214-22. Prosopographical treatments of particular courts, containing also valuable discussions of offices and titles, are H. Berve, *Das Alexanderreich auf prosopografischer Grundlage* (2 vols; Munich 1926), W. Peremans and E. van 't Dack, *Prosopographia Ptolemaica. VI: La cour* (Louvain 1968), and W. Heckel, *The Marshalls of Alexander's Empire* (London and New York 1992). The important article by C. Habicht, 'Die herrschende Gesellschaft in den hellenistischen Monarchien', *Vierteljahrschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte* 45 (1958) 1-16, about the ethnicity of Seleukid notables, will be discussed in chapter 3.3. For the Antigonids in Macedonia see S, le Bohec, 'Les philoi des rois antigonides', *REG* 98 (1985) 93-124, and id., 'L'Entourage royal a la cour des Antigonides', in E. Levy ed., *Le système palatial en Orient, en Grèce et à Rome* (Strasbourg 1987) 315-26. G. Herman, 'The "friends" of the early hellenistic rulers: servants or officials?', *Talanta* 12/13 (1980/81) 103-9, is concerned with the development and meaning of court titles. H.W. Ritter, *Diadem und Königsherrschaft* (Munich and Berlin 1965), examines the meaning of the Hellenistic diadem in the context of coronation ritual, claiming Persian origins for both, cf. id. 'Die Bedeutung des Diadems', *Historia* 36.3 (1987) 290-301.

³¹ Notable Hellenistic 'court historians' of the past decade are Gregor Weber, Gabriel Herman and I. Savalli-Lestrade. G. Weber, *Dichtung und höfische Gesellschaft. Die Rezeption von Zeitgeschichte am Hof der ersten drei Ptolemäer* (Stuttgart 1993), recognises the court society as a separate object of study. Although the title of his book seems to refer to Elias rather explicitly, Weber is primarily interested in court poetry and the place of poets at the court of the first three Ptolemies. Because it also includes more general discussion of the court, *Dichtung und höfische Gesellschaft* is nonetheless

Palace architecture, too, has only relatively recently acquired its rightful place of honour in the bibliography of Hellenistic archaeology.³² But aside from the odd obligatory reference to Elias' *Höfische Gesellschaft*, ancient historians still study their ancient courts *in vacuo*.

1.3 Hellenism and imperialism

Modern studies of Hellenistic kingship tend to emphasise the differences between the kingdoms. This has led to important new insights, particularly with regard to the Achaemenid antecedents of Seleukid monarchical ideology and imperial administration.³³ Regarding

of principal concern for historians of the early Ptolemaic court. See also G. Weber, 'Interaktion, Repräsentation und Herrschaft. Der Königshof im Hellenismus', in: A. Winterling ed., *Zwischen Haus und Staat* (Munich 1997), which is broader in scope. G. Herman, 'The court society of the Hellenistic age', in: P. Cartledge, P. Garnsey, E. Gruen eds., *Hellenistic Constructs. Essays in Culture, History, and Historiography* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London 1997) 199-224, while concentrating on two cases of factional strife at the Ptolemaic and Seleukid courts, uses Elias 1969 but no later literature on courts and court society, and consequently assumes too much freedom on the part of the king in conferring titles and honours on *philoï*. In the same direction goes also L. Mooren, 'Kings and courtiers: Political decision-making in the Hellenistic states', in: W. Schuller ed., *Politische Theorie und Praxis im Altertum* (Darmstadt 1998) 122-33. On the function of courtiers as intermediaries between court and city see I. Savalli-Lestrade, 'Courtisans et citoyens: le cas des *philoï* attalides', *Chiron* 26 (1996) 149-81, and id., *Les philoi royaux dans l'Asie hellénistique* (Geneva 1998). For literature about the patronage of poets, scholars and scientists at court see chapter 4.1.

³² See n. 2 in chapter 2.

³³ Continuity and change in Hellenistic Babylonia: J. Oelsner, 'Kontinuität und Wandel im Gesellschaft und Kultur Babyloniens in hellenistischer Zeit', *Klio* 60 (1978) 101-16; H. Kreissig, *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft im Seleukidenreich. Die Eigentums- und die Abhängigkeitsverhältnisse* (Berlin 1978); R.J. van der Spek, *Grondbezit in het Seleucidische Rijk* (Amsterdam 1986); S. Sherwin-White, 'Seleucid Babylonia. A case study for the installation and development of Greek rule', in: A. Kuhrt and S. Sherwin-White eds., *Hellenism in the East* (London 1987) 1-31; 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; 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; A. Kuhrt and S. Sherwin-White, *From Samarkhand to Sardis. A New Approach to the Seleucid*

Ptolemaic kingship, on the other hand, it has long been customary to exaggerate its Egyptian aspect, and to view the Ptolemies first of all as pharaohs.³⁴ Continuities with pre-Hellenistic Macedonia and similarities between the dynasties are frequently played down. In this book, the courts of the major dynasties of the Hellenistic world will be discussed simultaneously. Against the prevailing view that ‘no single model accounts for Hellenistic kingship’,³⁵ I will argue that the Hellenistic royal courts had significant features and structures in common, due to intermarriage, diplomatic contacts, a comparable reliance on Greeks and Macedonians for monarchic rule, a shared Macedonian background, the continuity of elements of Achaemenid imperial organisation, and rivalry. Only after similarities have been recognised, the specific peculiarities of the respective monarchies can be estimated.

Hellenism and imperialism

The essence of the present approach is to understand the monarchies of Antigonids, Seleukids, Ptolemies and Attalids as hegemonic *empires*: supranational state systems, based on military conquest and aimed at exacting tribute rather than governing lands and populations.³⁶ When necessary, these empires interfered in local politics, or even actively stimulated economic development in order to enhance regular tax and tribute income in certain regions, like the

Empire (London 1993); H.W.A.M. Sancisi-Weerdenburg *et al.* eds., *Continuity and Change. Proceedings of the 8th Achaemenid History Workshop, April 6-8, 1990, Ann Arbor, Michigan* (Leiden 1994). It may be added that continuity in the east in the Roman period is a rather *disregarded* issue.

³⁴ For the conventional approach see D.J. Thompson, ‘The Ptolemies and Egypt’, in: A. Erskine ed., *A Companion to the Hellenistic World* (Oxford 2003) 105-20, esp. 105 and 113-5, characteristically stating that ‘there was a Greek background *too* to monarchy’ (p. 113; my italics). G. Hölbl, *Geschichte des Ptolemäerreiches* (Darmstadt 1994), deals with the Ptolemaic kings as pharaohs and as *basileis* in separate chapters, but offers no answer to the question how these two ‘faces’ were interrelated.

³⁵ Gruen 1996, 116.

³⁶ As one of the dominant state forms in world history, empires have always attracted attention from historians. General studies of ‘empire’, sometimes containing brief sections on Hellenistic imperialism, include S.N. Eisenstadt, *The Political System of Empires* (London and New York 1963; 2nd rev. edn. London and New Brunswick, N.J., 1993); T. Sowell, *Conquests and Cultures. An International History* (New York 1998); A. Pagden, *Peoples and Empires* (London 2001). S. Howe, *Empire. A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford 2002) is chiefly concerned with historiographic approaches to modern European imperialism and colonialism.

Ptolemies did in some parts of Egypt and the Seleukids perhaps in Babylonia.³⁷ But in general subject cities and peoples were relatively autonomous under the imperial umbrella. This was most evidently the case in Seleukid Asia, but is true of Ptolemaic, Antigonid and Attalid imperialism as well. Since co-operation with, and only rarely occupation of, autonomous cities, temples or vassal kingdoms, was vital to imperial rule, Hellenistic kingship presented itself in multiple forms. In provinces and cities the manifestation of royal rule was adapted to local and regional traditions and expectations. Following the example of the Achaimenids, Alexander had done so when he was in Memphis, Babylon, Baktra and Susa. In Egypt, the Ptolemies played the role of pharaoh for the sake of their Egyptian subjects, particularly the temple priests, including a coronation ritual in their Egyptian capital Memphis. It would be wrong, however, to homogenise Ptolemaic kingship as simply a mix of foreign Greek and indigenous Egyptian elements. The Ptolemies were pharaohs only in Egypt, not in Cyprus or Palestine, let alone in Ionia or mainland Greece – and most significantly: not in Alexandria. There is ample evidence that the Seleukids likewise modified their presentation in accordance with local culture, presenting themselves for instance as traditional Babylonian kings in Babylonia, but not elsewhere. Thus we see Antiochos Epiphanes during his short career being elected as magistrate in Athens, enthroned as pharaoh in Memphis, sacrificing to Yahweh in Jerusalem, taking part in a Syrian new year festival near Antioch, and perhaps performing a ritual of marriage with the goddess Inanna in Elam. Still, neither Seleukids nor Ptolemies ever pretended that they really *were* Babylonians, Jews or Egyptians. They never concealed that they were Macedonians before anything else.

³⁷ Ptolemaic economic dirigism in Egypt: Thompson 2003, 108-111, following the views of C. Préaux, *L'économie royale des Lagides* (Brussels 1939). M. Aperghis, *The Seleukid Royal Economy. The Finances and Financial Administration of the Seleukid Empire* (Cambridge 2004), argues that the Seleukid in Asia showed a comparable concern for economic development for the sake of increasing tribute in silver coin; cf. *id.*, 'Population, production, taxation, coinage. A model for the Seleukid economy', in: Z.H. Archibald *et al.* eds., *Hellenistic Economies* (London and New York 2001) 69-102, with the response by K. Bringmann, 'Königliche Ökonomie im Spiegel des Euergetismus der Seleukiden', *Klio* 87.1 (2005) 102-115, and my review in *BMCR* 2006-06, 40; cf. F. de Callatay, 'La richesse des rois séleucides et le problème de la taxation en nature', in: V. Chankowski and F. Duyrat eds., *Le roi et l'économie. Autonomies locales et structures royales dans l'économie de l'empire séleucide* (Paris 2005) 23-47. The Achaimenids perhaps had a similar economic policy in parts of their empire: R. Ghirsham, *Iran. From the Earliest Times to the Islamic Conquest* (Harmondsworth 1954) 187.

The multiform faces of monarchy, discussed especially in section 5.3, are only one side of Hellenistic imperial representation. Simultaneously an all-embracing, imperial form of kingship developed, connecting the various local forms of monarchic representation at the highest level. This unifying royal culture crystallised at the very centre of empire: the court. As will be argued throughout this book, the culture of the court was predominantly Greek, or rather ‘Hellenistic’, since the Hellenism of the court was a distinct non-ethnic, supranational form of culture, tending to smooth the regional differences among the Greeks and redefine Greek culture in the light of a more cosmopolitan world view. Thus a new, Hellenistic form of empire developed, replacing Achaimenid imperial ideology and imagery which Hellenistic kings for various reasons chose not to adopt, even though especially the Seleukid Empire was in many other respects a continuation of the Persian Empire.³⁸ In this culture of empire non-Greeks could in principle participate. Just as the kings would play varying cultural roles in accordance with their audience while retaining their Greco-Macedonian character, so too would local elites who co-operated with the empire adopt to some extent the Hellenism of the court to express their allegiance to the monarchy and be able to participate in the imperial system. Members of civic elite families, non-Greeks as well as ‘ethnic’ Greeks, developed a multiple identity which was both local and imperial, e.g. Babylonian-Seleukid, Judean-Ptolemaic, or Greek-Antigonid. Hellenism became a means of defining who did and who did not participate in the imperial order of the Hellenistic kings. The adoption of Hellenistic culture bound local elite members to the monarchy and distanced them from families who had no share in power. Thus, Hellenism became the ‘high culture’ of empire, creating a sense of commonwealth in states that were characterised by their political, ethnical, and cultural heterogeneity.³⁹ It was a non-national, ‘cosmopolitan’ form of Greekness in which indigenous

³⁸ M.M. Austin, ‘The Seleukids and Asia’, in: A. Erskine ed., *A Companion to the Hellenistic World* (Oxford 2003) 121-33, esp. 127-8. Alexander and the Ptolemies even made anti-Persian propaganda in Egypt: OGIS 54 and 56; cf. Austin 2003, 128; Gruen 1996, 117; S.M. Burstein, ‘Alexander in Egypt: Continuity or change?’, in: *AchHist* 8 (Leiden 1994) 381-7.

³⁹ R. Strootman, ‘Mecenaat aan de hellenistische hoven’, *Lampas* 34.3 (2001) 187-203, esp. 205-6; cf. id. ‘Literature and the kings’, in: J. Clauss and M. Cuijpers eds., *A Companion to Hellenistic Literature* (forthcoming; Malden, Oxford, Carlton 2007). On the concept of ‘Hellenism’ in modern historiography: R. Bichler, *Hellenismus. Geschichte und Problematik eines Epochenbegriffs* (Darmstadt 1983); H.W. Pleket, ‘Hellenisme: het juk van de periodisering’, *Lampas* 21.2 (1988) 68-80; A. Kuhrt and S. Sherwin-White, ‘Introduction’, in: Kuhrt & Sherwin-White 1987; R. Strootman, ‘Hellenistische Geschiedenis’, *Lampas* 38.3 (2005) 280-5.

ideas and forms could be amalgamated, not unlike Ottoman culture in the empire of the sultans.⁴⁰

To sum up: to propose a single model to account for Hellenistic kingship is exactly one of the aims of his study. According to this model Hellenistic kingship has two basic characteristics: (1) cultural differentiation of monarchical representation on regional or local levels, and (2) integration of the manifold forms of monarchical representation—pharaonic, Babylonian, Greek, Macedonian, Judean and so forth—in a comprehensive form of imperial ideology, connected with the court and existing in more or less similar form in all the major kingdoms, and being predominantly Greek in appearance.

Universal Empire

In both chapter 4 and chapter 5, it will be shown that rulers in written propaganda, public ritual and iconography cultivated not only an idealised image of being absolute rulers, but also of being rulers of empires that knew no limits.

Above, I have defined the Hellenistic monarchies as empires. Hellenistic *basileia* does not accord to modern definitions of ‘territorial state’ or ‘national state’.⁴¹ On coins and in other forms of propaganda kings never specified the territory or people over which they ruled. *Basileia*, the contemporary *terminus technicus* for the Hellenistic monarchic state, meant ‘kingship’ rather than ‘kingdom’. The Argeads as well as the later Antigonids, who styled themselves King of the Macedonians (*i.e.* the people, not the country), are somewhat aberrant in this respect, although their Macedonian kingship too may be considered a component of

⁴⁰ A supra-national form of Greekness, uniting Greeks by the feeling that they were a single people developed already before the Hellenistic Age: F.W. Walbank, ‘The problem of Greek nationality’, in: id., *Selected Papers. Studies in Greek and Roman History and Historiography* (Cambridge 1985) 1-19.

⁴¹ A territorial state, or ‘early state’, may be defined with H.J.M. Claessen, *Verdwenen koninkrijken en verloren beschavingen. Opkomst en ondergang van de vroege staat* (Assen and Maastricht 1991) 19, as a form of organisation that exercises (legitimate) power over a specified territory; cf. id., ‘The Early State. A Structural Approach’, in: H.J.M. Claessen en P. Skalník eds., *The Early State* (The Hague 1978) 533-96; typical of Hellenistic empires was their *unspecified* territory. A national state is the opposite of an empire: a state pretending or attempting to be a nation-state, *i.e.* ‘a state whose people share a strong linguistic, religious, and symbolic identity’ (Tilly, *op cit.* below, p. 2-3). In history, national states normally suppressed minorities in order to become nation states, whereas empires are by definition supra-national. The nation state, as David Mitchell stated in *Cloud Atlas*, ‘is merely human nature inflated to monstrous proportions’.

their overall title of *basileus* (the problem of the Macedonian identity of Hellenistic kings will be dealt with in section 3.2). The Ptolemies, as the location of their capital shows, saw themselves as the rulers of a maritime empire, of which Egypt was only a part – albeit the most important, and at times the only part.⁴² The Seleukids certainly were not ‘kings of Syria’. They too used the title of *basileus* without any restrictive addition, albeit they may have ‘limited’ their pretensions by carrying the title King of Asia, which they had inherited from Alexander, and which potentially contained claims to Egypt. The Hellenistic title of *basileus* was the equivalent of the eastern title of Great King. At the same time however the title referred to old Macedonia, where the *basileus* was a warrior prince amidst warrior noblemen. Thus Hellenistic kingship was presented to the outside world as absolutist and universal, whilst retaining a certain ideal of equality between the king and his companions internally.

The universalistic pretensions of Hellenistic kingship have always been underestimated in modern scholarship. The assumption that there existed a balance of power between the Hellenistic kingdoms, and moreover that Hellenistic kings themselves knew about and acceded to this principle,⁴³ has led historians to largely ignore the evidence attesting the existence of an Hellenistic ideology of universal empire. Needless to say, Hellenistic kings were not *really* world emperors. But political ideology does not always accord with political reality. In *Prestige and Interest*, Mario Liverani has brilliantly shown how monarchies in the

⁴² In the absence of a (Macedonian) ‘homeland’, historians often define the Ptolemaic empire as basically the kingdom of Egypt with some ‘overseas’ or ‘foreign’ possessions added to it. It has even been hypothesised, most influentially by É. Will, *Histoire politique du monde hellénistique (323-30 av. J.-C.)* (2nd edn; Nancy 1982) I, 153-208, that this supposed ‘overseas’ expansion was the result of *defensive imperialism*.

⁴³ Thus e.g. É. Will, ‘The succession to Alexander’, *CAH* 7.1 (1984) 23-61, at 29: ‘[The period of] the Diadoch Wars, ... is [the period] which sees the elimination of the unitary idea in favour of the particularist tendency.’ For a (cautious) re-evaluation of the concept see 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, esp. 38 and 49. The view that the pretensions of Hellenistic kings were universalistic was also expressed by G.A. Lehmann, ‘Das neue Kölner Historiker-Fragment (P. Köln. Nr. 247) und die *chroniké syntaxis* des Zenon von Rhodos (FGrHist 523)’, *ZPE* 72 (1988) 1-17, and id., ‘Expansionspolitik im Zeitalter des Hochhellenismus: Die Anfangsphase des “Laodike-Krieges” 246/5 v.Chr.’, in: Th. Hantos and G.A. Lehmann eds., *Althistorisches Kolloquium aus Anlass des 70. Geburtstages von Jochen Bleicken. 29.-30. November 1996 in Göttingen* (Stuttgart 1998) 81-101 (I owe this reference to G.-J. Gehrke).

Second Millennium Near East—when political power in the east was likewise divided up among several competing empires—employed strategies to deal with the inconsistency of claims to world power on the one hand and the recognition of the existence of other monarchies on the other hand – two conflicting images that were kept radically apart as separate cognitive realities.⁴⁴ We see the same claims to universal dominance even more pronounced in the First Millennium BCE, in the empires of the Assyrians, Persians and Macedonians. What W.W. Tarn interpreted as an idealistic dream of unity of mankind, was certainly not ‘one of the great revolutions in human thought’ but the Hellenistic translation of age-old standard ideology of empire.⁴⁵ The Hellenistic kings gave this ideology a profound Hellenic form, fitting it in Greek philosophy and morality as well as Macedonian traditions of kingship. Thus they made what was originally considered an excrescence of ‘oriental despotism’ acceptable to the Greeks, and later the Romans too, who adopted and adapted it for their own use after the demise of the Hellenistic states.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ M. Liverani, *Prestige and Interest. International Relations in the Near East ca. 1600-1100* (Padua 1990).

⁴⁵ W.W. Tarn, ‘Alexander the Great and the unity of mankind’, *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society* 19 (1933) 123-166, at 123; cf. id., *Alexander the Great* (Cambridge 1948) I, 137-8 and 145-8. The popularity of Tarn’s view of Alexander’s idealism dwindled twenty-five years later with E. Badian, ‘Alexander the Great and the Unity of Mankind’, *Historia* 7 (1958) 425-44; on the discussion see R.A. Todd, ‘W.W. Tarn and the Alexander ideal’, *The Historian* 27 (1964) 48-55, and I Worthington, ‘Alexander and the “Unity of Mankind”’, in: id. ed., *Alexander the Great. A Reader* (London and New York 2003) 198-201. Although Badian exposed Tarn’s theory as romantic wishful thinking, he provided no alternative explanation for the evidence used by Tarn (the *proskynesis* incident at Baktra, the wedding at Susa, the mutiny at Opis). On Assyrian universalism see notably M. Liverani, ‘The ideology of the Assyrian Empire’, in: M.T. Larsen ed., *Power and Propaganda. A Symposium on Ancient Empires* (Copenhagen 1979) 297-317; and id. ‘Kitru, kataru’, *Mesopotamia* 17 (1981) 43-66. Achaimenid royal ideology: M. Cool Root, *The King and Kingship in Achaemenid Art. Essays on the Creation of an Iconography of Empire* (Leiden 1979).

⁴⁶ In relation to Roman imperialism we encounter the dream of universal empire first and most notoriously in the *Aeneid*, where it is stated that Jupiter had given the Romans rule of the entire *orbis terrarum*, and *imperium* (command) *sine fine* (Verg., *Aen.* I 278-279, cf. VI 851-853); cp. the associated Augustean concepts of *Pax Romana* and *Mare Nostrum*.

Hellenistic kingship: ideology and reality

The purpose of monarchical representation is usually taken to be legitimisation of royal power. The pivotal question then must be: what was the relationship between royal representation and royal power, in other words, between image and reality?⁴⁷ To answer this question, we must first define what power is.⁴⁸

According to Max Weber's classic definition, power ('Macht') is any possibility for one actor within a social relationship to impose his will on others, even despite resistance, and regardless of the means by which it is done.⁴⁹ Naked power may become legitimate power, or authority ('Herrschaft'), when it is voluntarily accepted by the subjects because they regard it as rightful and advantageous.⁵⁰ This definition has often been questioned and modified. One important variation is given by Michael Mann, who, in the context of the political power of states, defined power as control of the means for attaining whatever goals one wants to achieve.⁵¹ Thus Mann shifts the emphasis away from the *exercise* of power—Weber's rather indeterminate imposition of one's 'Wille' or 'Befehl bestimmten Inhalts'—to the more concrete organisational *sources* of power, that is, to gain routine access to human and material resources. Recently Olivier Hekster and Richard Fowler refined Mann's terminology by defining royal power in the Ancient World as the sum of the monarchy's legitimacy, military

⁴⁷ Strootman 1993, 7-8.

⁴⁸ I agree with C.F. Noreña in BMCR 2006-07, 06: 'To discuss the ideological basis of power, one first should tackle the question what power is and what it does. Any analysis of the relationship between image and power has to include a definition of power. Common sense will not do.'

⁴⁹ M. Weber, *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft. Grundriss der verstehender Soziologie* (5th rev. edn; Tübingen 1964) 38: 'Macht bedeutet jede Chance, innerhalb einer sozialen Beziehung den eigenen Willen auch gegen Widerstreben durchzusetzen, gleichviel worauf diese Chance beruht.'

⁵⁰ M. Weber, 'Drei reinen Typen der legitimen Herrschaft', reprinted in *Methodologische Schriften* (Frankfurt am Main 1968) 215-28, esp. 215: 'Herrschaft soll heißen die Chance für einen Befehl bestimmten Inhalts bei angebbaren Personen Gehorsam zu finden.' Cf. Weber 1964, 122; O. Brunner, 'Bemerkungen zu den Begriffen "Herrschaft" und "Legitimität"', in: id., *Neue Wege der Verfassungs- und Sozialgeschichte* (Göttingen 1968) 64-79.

⁵¹ M. Mann, *The Sources of Social Power. Volume 1: A History of Power from the Beginnings to A.D. 1760* (Cambridge 1986) 6, reworking the definition of T. Parsons, *The Structure of Social Action I* (New York 1968) 263.

force, administrative competence and capacity to exact surpluses.⁵² This certainly leads us further, although the connection between the named elements is not explicated.

If we accept Mann's understanding of political power as the control of resources needed to attain a political goal, two new questions arise: by what means did Hellenistic rulers obtain that control, and for what goals?

The Hellenistic empires, like any empires, were based on conquest. This may be a truism, but I will argue further on that Hellenistic monarchy was of an even more violent nature than is commonly assumed. To understand the significance of war and violence for Hellenistic kingship, I will make use of Charles Tilly's model of state formation, which in turn is an elaboration of Norbert Elias' ideas pertaining to the same, and offers a synthesis of Weber's notion of power as the enforcement of one's will and Mann's notion of power as the control of resources.⁵³ The model was developed to explain the genesis of the European national states, so much of it is irrelevant for ancient history. Relevant, however, is the central presumption that monarchical states are competitive and violent by nature. For Tilly, the 'means of coercion' with which to impose one's will even on reluctant others is simply military force. Conflicts arise when in a given territory there are several men who dispose of coercive means: kings, noblemen, chieftains, warlords. As a rule, such men will attempt to monopolise the control of resources—manpower, metals, agrarian surplus—in that territory. As Tilly puts it:

Men who controlled means of coercion ... ordinarily tried to use them to extend the range of population and resources over which they wielded power. When they encountered no one with comparable control of coercion, they conquered; when they met rivals, they made war.⁵⁴

Peace occurs only when the resources of the competitors become exhausted or when one of them is victorious, whereafter the competition continues on a vaster scale in a larger territory. The dynamics of this competition are beyond the participants' grasp and neither are they able to withdraw lest they be conquered by their rivals. Hence the endemic warfare among the

⁵² O. Hekster and R. Fowler, 'Imagining Kings: From Persia to Rome', in: id. eds., *Imaginary Kings. Royal Images in the Ancient Near East, Greece and Rome* (Stuttgart 2005) 9-38, at 24-26.

⁵³ C. Tilly, *Coercion, Capital, and European States, AD 900-1990* (Cambridge, Mass., and Oxford 1990); N. Elias, *Über den Prozess der Zivilisation. Soziogenetische und psychogenetische Untersuchungen* (2 vols.; Bern and Munich 1936).

⁵⁴ Tilly 1990, 17; cf. Elias 1969, 142-57.

Hellenistic kingdoms. Control of resources (Tilly uses the term ‘capital’) is essential to acquire military means. Hellenistic kings preferred taxes in silver to tribute in kind, for in the Hellenistic Age money was, as Plutarch says, ‘the sinews of war’.⁵⁵ He who controls the largest population and exacts the most surpluses, disposes of the strongest army, which in turn enables him to control even larger populations and exact more surpluses. In Tilly’s words:

Some conquerors managed to exert stable control over the population in substantial territories, and to gain routine access to part of the goods and services produced in the territory; they became rulers.⁵⁶

Monarchical states are thus the products of warfare: permanent armies come into existence, the administration of taxes and tribute is professionalised, opponents are eliminated, and an ideology of kingship develops in which the triumphant monarchy acquires, to use Elias’ term, a monopoly of ‘legitimate violence’ within the territory it controls. ‘Why did wars occur at all?’, Tilly asks. ‘The central, tragic fact is simple: coercion *works*.’⁵⁷

It goes without saying that imperial systems based on repression and intimidation alone are doomed to fail. Therefore co-operation was as important as coercion, particularly co-operation with cities. Cities commanded the infrastructure and formed the loci where

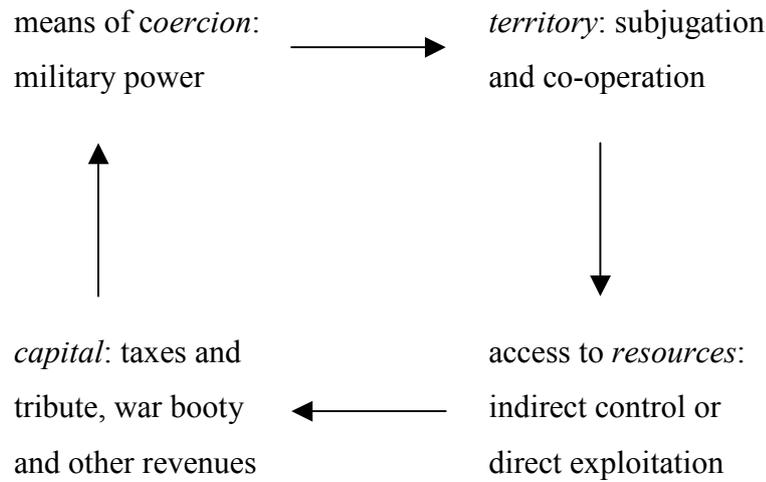
⁵⁵ Plut., *Cleom.* 27.1. Cf. Diod. 29.6.1: ‘In warfare a ready supply of money is indeed, as the familiar proverb has it, the companion of success. Since he who is well provided with money never lacks men able to fight.’ Marcus Crassus allegedly exclaimed that no man could be called wealthy unless he could afford to pay for a legion (Plut., *Crass.* 2; Cic., *Off.* 1.25; Plin., *NH* 33.134): E. Badian, *Roman Imperialism in the Late Republic* (Ithaca and New York 1968; 2nd edn. 1976) 81 with n. 20. For the importance of coined money in Hellenistic warfare see Aperghis 2004, 29-32; cf. F. de Callatay, *L’histoire des guerres mithridatiques vue par les monnaies* (Louvain 1997); *id.*, ‘Guerres et monnayage de Mithridate VI Eupator’, in: J. Andraeu, P. Briant, R. Descat eds., *Économie antique 5: La guerre dans les économies antiques* (Saint-Bernard-de-Comminges 2000) 337-64. Kings also tried to control silver mines directly, or accepted bulk metal for the production of weapons as tribute, see e.g. Curt. 9.8.1.

⁵⁶ Tilly 1990, 14.

⁵⁷ *Ibidem*, 15. Still, it all takes place largely unplanned and even unintentional; according to Elias 1969, 13, the process of monopolisation of violence comes about ‘als Ganzes ungeplant; aber sie vollzieht sich dennoch nicht ohne eine eigentümliche Ordnung’. It may be added that until the nineteenth century, no government (and surely not the Hellenistic kingdoms) ever succeeded in completely monopolising the (legitimate) use of violence.

surpluses were collected. Only rarely did rulers lay siege to cities to actually coerce them into submission; to do so in an area as large as the Hellenistic world would be impossible. Normally a deal was made: the ruler promised to protect the city against its enemies and guaranteed the city's autonomy, in return for which the cities voluntarily succumbed to the ruler and promised to pay him tribute, or to provide military aid.⁵⁸ Hence the self-presentation of Hellenistic rulers as liberators and saviours of cities. The Seleukids furthermore formed coalitions with lesser rulers at the imperial fringe—the Black Sea region, Armenia, Arabia—who obtained independence in return for acknowledging Seleukid overlordship. As far as the Seleukids were concerned, such rulers were vassals; they themselves probably looked upon the Seleukids as their equals. Put into a simple diagram the model adapted from Tilly can be thus summarised:

⁵⁸ C. Tilly, 'Entanglements of European cities and states', in: C. Tilly and W.P. Blockmans eds., *Cities and the Rise of States in Europe, A.D. 1000 to 1800* (Boulder, San Francisco, Oxford 1994) 1-27. F. Millar, 'The problem of Hellenistic Syria', in: Kuhrt & Sherwin-White 1987, 110-33, at 29, defined the Seleukid state as 'primarily a system for extracting taxes and forming armies.' Cf. R.L. O'Connell, *Soul of the Sword. An Illustrated History of Weaponry and Warfare From Prehistory to the Present*, who characterises the kings of the Neo-Assyrian Empire as 'gangsters collecting protection money.' On the curious paradox of cities simultaneously claiming autonomy *and* submitting to kings see H.S. Versnel, 'Isis, una quae es omnia. Tyrants against tyranny: Isis as a paradigm of Hellenistic rulership', in id., *Inconsistencies in Greek and Roman Religion I: Ter Unus. Isis, Dionysos, Hermes. Three Studies in Henotheism* (Leiden 1990) 39-95. It is now increasingly becoming clear that civic autonomy was not a specific Greek ideal, but rather a generic characteristic of ancient cities, also encountered in Mesopotamia, cf. esp. M. van de Mierop, *The Ancient Mesopotamian City* (Oxford 1999). The normal policy of kings was to divide and rule; by supporting certain aristocratic families or factions within a city or region against their competitors, dependent and thus relatively loyal oligarchic regimes could be created.



The question that follows is, how did all this relate to royal ideology as expressed in court ceremonial and monarchic ritual? In chapter 5 it will be shown that the central components of the model—military means, warfare, control of territory and resources—were also the basic constituents of monarchic representation. Kings far from concealed that warfare formed the foundation of their power. On the contrary, they presented military prowess as the principal legitimisation of their rule. They did so by celebrating their personal abilities as warriors, their victories and their success as conquerors; by displaying their wealth and military strength, and by being present *with their armies* among subject populations. Even seemingly peaceful aspects of the self-presentation of rulers—as liberators of cities, god-like peace-makers, sumptuous benefactors—are ultimately derivatives of the monarchy’s military foundation. In other words, it may be argued that in these cases the *ideology* of kingship agreed with the *reality* of kingship.⁵⁹ Acquiring legitimacy meant convincing others that one was a more

⁵⁹ As opposed to the common, originally Marxist understanding of political ideology as a means to cover up or legitimise inequality or exploitation; cf e.g. Liverani 1979, 298: ‘Ideology has the aim of bringing about the exploitation of man by man, by providing the motivation to receive the situation of inequality as “right”, as based on qualitative differences, as entrusted to the “right” people for the good of all’. By ‘ideology’ I mean a set of closely related beliefs, doctrines or ideas, in this case pertaining to kingship, and upheld, believed or propagated by persons who are in some way or other part of the monarchy. Although the ideology of Hellenistic kingship may be a ‘political’ belief, it is always closely connected with popular belief or morality. On the many meanings of ‘ideology’ see M. Bloch, ‘Ideology’, in: A. Barnard and J. Spencer eds., *Encyclopedia of Social and Cultural Anthropology*

successful warrior than one's rivals. In a world accustomed to monarchic rule for many centuries there was no need to justify the existence of kingship as such.⁶⁰ A king needed to assert that he, and only he, was the *rightful* king. This compelled kings to be victorious warriors in actuality (another explanation for the continuous warfare in Hellenistic history), to be generous and benevolent, and most of all to be *visible* in as large a territory as possible, not only in 'documentary' form (portraits on coins, statues, inscriptions) but also physically on the battlefield, in ceremonial entries into cities and in court ritual.⁶¹

(London and New York 1996; 3rd edn. 2002) 293-4; P. Burke, *History and Social Theory* (Cambridge 1992) 91-6; M. Freedon, *Ideology. A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford 2003); J. Plamenatz, *Ideology. Key Concepts in Political Science* 6 (London 1970). Royal 'propaganda' may be roughly defined as the communication of ideology, with the intention of persuading others to accept it too, or, in our case, to persuade them to accept a certain person or family as the legitimate king or royal dynasty; cf. D. Harter and J. Sullivan, *Propaganda Handbook* (Philadelphia 1953) 95, and S. Sargent and R. Williamson, *Social Psychology* (New York 1958) 441.

⁶⁰ Although there were anti-*despotic* tendencies in the philosophy and morality of the city-dwelling Greeks, it would be exaggerated to say that the Greeks were anti-*monarchic*. The Greek cities of Asia had been familiar with autonomy under royal (Achaemenid, Hekatomnid) protection for quite a long time; a mere handful of Greeks in the urbanised heart of mainland Greece was unaccustomed to royal overlordship, but in the Hellenistic age a *modus vivendi* was found quickly enough, even there. Moreover, in the philosophy of the Pythagoreans, Plato, Xenophon, and Aristotle, monarchy was not under all circumstances condemnable. Kings furthermore exalted or recreated the myths held dear by the Greeks, deriving models for kingship from the world of the gods and imitating the heroes of epic myth (see below, chapter 1.4). In fact, in the Hellenistic period the autonomous Greek *polis* prospered rather than decayed, or, as Patrick Baker recently put it, 'any disruption caused by the conquest of Greece by Philip, and later by Alexander's campaign, had relatively little effect on the Greek city-states beyond the multiplication of their number': P. Baker, 'Warfare', in: A. Erskine, ed., *A Companion to the Hellenistic World* (Oxford 2003) 373-88, at 376-7. See also J.L. O'Neill, J.L., 'Royal Authority and City Law under Alexander and his Hellenistic Successors', *CQ* 50 (2000) 424-31, showing that royal laws for cities were always embedded in, even subordinate to, civic law.

⁶¹ These three forms of representation will be treated in chapters 1.4, 5.3, and 5.4-5 respectively; for the importance of visibility see Hekster & Fowler 2005.

1.4 The Heroic Ethos

War was the principal source of power and charisma for Hellenistic monarchs, the very essence of kingship.⁶² Constant warfare was typical of the Hellenistic kingdoms. A king was *qualitate qua* a warrior before anything else. Antiochos III's *anabasis* in the east, Polybios says, 'made him appear worthy of his kingship, not only to the inhabitants of Asia, but to those of Europe as well'.⁶³ In major campaigns against worthy adversaries kings, and sometimes queens as well, were supposed to personally command the troops and lead the army into battle.⁶⁴ The king's presence in the field gave substance to honorific titles such as Nikator ('Victor'), Kallinikos ('Gloriously Victorious' – an epithet associated with Herakles), and Soter ('Saviour'). In the definition of kingship in the *Suda* it is stated that the right to rule was ultimately legitimised by success in the field.

⁶² On the importance of victory and military prestige for the legitimisation of Hellenistic kings see notably H.-J. Gehrke, 'Der siegreiche König. Überlegungen zur hellenistischen Monarchie', *AKG* 64 (1982) 247-77. See further M.M. Austin, 'Hellenistic kings, war, and the economy', *CQ* 36 (1986) 450-466; id., 'War and culture in the Seleucid empire', in: T. Bekker-Nielsen and L. Hannestad eds., *War as a Cultural and Social Force. Essays on Warfare in Antiquity* (Copenhagen 2001) 90-109. Cf. A. Chaniotis, *War in the Hellenistic World. A Social and Cultural History* (Oxford 2004), esp. 57-62. I was unable to consult R.W.J. Taylor, *The King and the Army in the Hellenistic World* (Oxford 1991).

⁶³ Polyb. 11.39.16. Victory as justification of kingship and praise for victorious kings: Polyb. 1.9.8; 4.2.7; 5.54.1, 34.4-10, 82.2, 87.3; 11.39.16; 18.6-7, 41.6-7; 28.1.6; Plut., *Demetr.* 17; 41.3; 50; *Pyrrh.* 11; *Mor.* 183; Diod. 20.76.7; 33.28a; App., *Syr.* 11.1.1, 3.15, 3.25; Strabo 13.4.2; *OGIS* 219, 1.34; 273; 332, 11.22-3; 239. In c. 138 the pretender Diodotos ('Tryphon'), in order to find support from the Senate for his rebellion against the Seleukids, sent a solid gold image of Nike weighing 10,000 staters to Rome, 'because he supposed that the Romans would accept Victory ... and would acclaim him as king' (Diod. 33.28a). In App., *Mac.*, 10.10, it is said that in order to demonstrate the Antigonid power, the fleet of Philippos V 'utterly destroyed all forces that sailed against him'. Cf. E.S. Gruen, 'The coronation of the diadochoi', in: J.W. Eadie and J. Ober eds, *The Craft of the Ancient Historian. Essays in Honor of Chester G. Starr* (Lanham 1985) 253-71; J. Seibert, 'Zur Begründung von Herrschaftsanspruch und Herrschaftslegitimation in der frühen Diadochenzeit', in: id. ed., *Hellenistische Studien. Gedenkschrift für Hemann Bengston* (Munich 1991) 87-100.

⁶⁴ Adcock 1953, 171; Préaux 1978, 186-9; Gehrke 1982, 255-6; Walbank 1984, 66.

It is neither descent nor law which gives monarchy to men, but the ability to command an army and to handle affairs competently. Such was the case with Philippos and the Successors of Alexander. For Alexander's natural son was in no way helped by his kinship with him, because of his weakness of spirit, while those who had no connection with Alexander became kings of almost the entire *oikoumenē*.⁶⁵

Although only they are mentioned, the dictum applies not to the Diadochs alone. Later Hellenistic kings needed military prestige too. The absence of primogeniture in Hellenistic succession (see chapter 3.2) made the acquisition of personal prestige something of continuous relevance. The meaning of the definition in the Suda is not that the Diadochs *lacked* legitimacy and compensated this deficiency with military success, but on the contrary, that they, 'who fought permanently',⁶⁶ were actually *more* legitimate than Alexander's offspring because of their military success and individual *aretē*.⁶⁷

War and legitimacy

Victory in war was considered a prerequisite for the establishment of peaceful, civilised life.⁶⁸ Especially the defeat of barbaric people, being morally and culturally outside the pale, could be seen as the triumph of Order over Chaos. In the third century, kings often actively sought

⁶⁵ Suda s.v. 'Basileia'; with 'Philippos' is meant Philippos III, who is here confused with Alexandros IV. The same notion existed in many other cultures; it was as important in Achaemenid Persia and Republican Rome: 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; W.V. Harris, *War and Imperialism in Republican Rome* (Oxford 1979) 11-2; cf. J. Keegan, *A History of Warfare* (London 1993) 268.

⁶⁶ Plut., *Pyrrh.* 12.3.

⁶⁷ Cf. Gruen 1985.

⁶⁸ Characteristic is Polyb. 13.9.2-4: 'The Gerraians begged the king [Antiochos III] not to abolish the gifts the gods had bestowed on them: peace (εἰρήνη) and freedom (ἐλευθερία). The king, when the letter had been interpreted to him, said that he granted their request.' Cf. Polyb. 4.3.8; 5.103.5-6; and 11.39.16, where respectively Antigonos Doseon, Philippos V, and Antiochos III are lauded by their contemporaries as keepers of the peace by means of victory. In the Ancient World, 'peace' generally speaking was not a lofty ideal but meant 'security' above all, and security could be best attained through military supremacy: L. de Blois, 'Het begrip vrede bij de Israëlieten, de Grieken en de Romeinen', in: L. de Blois and G.H. Kramer, *Kerk en vrede in de Oudheid* (Kampen 1980) 9-21, at 9.

after military confrontations with Celts, at that time the barbarian ‘others’ *par excellence*.⁶⁹ Celtic tribes had invaded Greece and Asia Minor in the 270s. Notably their attack on the central panhellenic shrine of Delphi came as a shock to all Greeks and was considered an attack on civilisation itself.⁷⁰ Though the crisis was over within a year—the Greeks found out soon enough that the dispersed Celtic war bands could be easily defeated when forced to engage in a pitched battle—the image remained of ferocious subhumans who had come from the earth’s periphery to strike at the heart of civilisation. This image, which was equated with the invasion of Xerxes and even the war between the Olympian gods and the Giants, was exploited in political propaganda by all Greek-Macedonian dynasties for years to come.⁷¹ The boast of having defeated Celts in battle enhanced the claim that the king was a saviour,

⁶⁹ The Greek (and Roman) view of Celts and other barbarians has been studied extensively in the past decades, notably, but not exclusively, in the context of the debate on ‘alterité’. For Greek and Roman attitudes to the Celts see generally Sidebottom 2002, 16-21; further literature includes B. Kremer, *Das Bild der Kelten bis in der augusteischen Zeit. Studien zur Instrumentalisierung eines antiken Feindbildes bei griechischen und römischen Autoren* (Stuttgart 1994); S. Mitchell, ‘The Galatians: Representation and reality’, in: A. Erskine ed., *A Companion to the Hellenistic World* (Oxford 2003) 280-93; T. Bridgman, *Hyperboreans. Myth and History in Celtic-Hellenic Contacts* (London and New York 2004). C. Lacey, *The Greek view of Barbarians in the Hellenistic Age* (diss. Boulder 1976), argues that in late classical and early Hellenistic times the Persians, the traditional barbarians *par excellence*, were no longer feared and loathed because they had been conquered; they now rather became subject to curiosity and finally found some sort of acceptance as co-inhabitants of an expanded Greek world; the ‘new barbarians’ had to come from beyond the boundaries of these expanded horizons, and (Celtic) ‘northerners’ and (Asian) nomads were most suitable for this purpose.

⁷⁰ For an account of this war and its aftermath see G. Nachtergaele, *Les Galates en Grèce et les Sôtéria de Delphes* (Brussels 1977); H.D. Rankin, *Celts in the Classical World* (London and Sydney 1987); Gabbert, 1997, 21-8; J.B. Scholten, *The Politics of Plunder. Aetolians and their Koinon in the Early Hellenistic Era, 279-217 B.C.* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London 2000).

⁷¹ For the ‘Celtic’ victory propaganda of the Antigonids, Seleukids, Ptolemies and Attalids see L. Hannestad, ‘Greeks and Celts: The creation of a myth’, in: P. Bilde *et al.* eds., *Centre and Periphery in the Hellenistic World* (Aarhus 1994) 15-38; and R. Strootman, ‘Kings against Celts. Deliverance from barbarians as a theme in Hellenistic royal propaganda’, in: K.A.E. Enenkel and I.L. Pfeijffer eds., *The Manipulative Mode. Political Propaganda in Antiquity* (Leiden 2005) 101-41. On encomiastic representations: S. Barbantani, *Φάρτις νικηφόρος. Frammenti di elegia encomiastica nell'età delle Guerre Galatiche* (Milano 2001).

benefactor and liberator of the Greek cities, in spite of the fact that the victors often employed Celtic warriors as mercenaries in their own armies.

Even minor victories could be turned into pretentious propaganda. In 275 Pyrrhos of Epeiros defeated an army column of Antigonos Gonatas by a surprise attack on its rear, which was guarded by Celtic mercenaries.⁷² Though Celts constituted only a small part of Gonatas' force and Antigonos' unemployed phalanx had surrendered without a fight, Pyrrhos was well aware that the defeat of these barbarians, as Plutarch says, 'added more to his reputation than anything else he had done', and propagated this battle as 'the greatest victory he had ever won'.⁷³ The shields taken from the Celts were dedicated in the sanctuary of Athena Itonis, conspicuously located along the main artery between Greece and Macedonia. The epigram inscribed above the trophies became famous among the Greeks.⁷⁴ The Macedonian shields that had been captured were dedicated to Zeus in Dodona, accompanied by a boastful inscription presenting Pyrrhos as the liberator of the Greeks from Macedonian oppression:

This metal destroyed Asia, rich in gold.

This metal made slaves out of the Greeks.

This metal now lies masterless by the pillars of Zeus of the Water-streams,
the spoils conquered from proud-voiced Macedonia.⁷⁵

Attalos I assumed the title of king and the epitheton Soter after he was able to boast to have defeated the Galatians in battle.⁷⁶ Although Celts were the preferred enemies, any 'barbaric' people would do. Alexander and the Seleukids posed as the defenders of civilisation against Central Asian horse nomads; in the last lines of the Hymn to Demetrios, the role of the barbarian is given to the Aitolians.⁷⁷

⁷² Just. 25.3.1-5; Paus. 1.13.2; Plut., *Pyrrh.* 26.3-4. Cf. P. Levèque, *Pyrrhos* (Paris 1957) 557.

⁷³ Plut., *Pyrrh.* 26.5; cf. Paus. 1.13.2.

⁷⁴ The epigram is cited in chapter 4.2.

⁷⁵ Paus. 1.13.2.

⁷⁶ Strabo 13.4.2. Bickerman in *Berytus* 8 (1843/44) 76-8, states that Attalos did not assumed the kingship because of a defeat of Galatians, but because of a victory over Antiochos Hierax; it is true that Hierax, and the Seleukids in general, were the most important adversaries of Attalos, but there was much greater propaganda value in stressing victory over the Galatians, Hierax' allies (so also Allen 1987, 29 n. 4).

⁷⁷ Although the Aitolians were Hellenic, their *koinon* lacked cities, the key signifier of Classical Greek civilisation. They were considered a backward and unreliable people by the civic Greeks, especially

It was dishonourable for a king if his *esprit de combat* was below expectation. For example Ptolemaios IV Philopator, of whom Polybios derisively says that he was more disposed to poetry than to fighting; Polybios castigates Ptolemaios less for being idle than for harming his own reputation, which eventually cost him the loyalty of his army and the support of the people of Alexandria.⁷⁸ Defeat in battle signalled that one was unworthy of kingship. In written accounts of kings fleeing from the battlefield, the image of the king losing or taking off his diadem and royal robe figures as a standard metaphor for the loss of the right to be king.⁷⁹ The most elaborate example of this topos is Plutarch's account of a battle between Pyrrhos and Demetrios in 287. Demetrios was King of the Macedonians at that time, but lost that title when Pyrrhos defeated him in battle. When Demetrios saw that all was lost, he took off the signs of royal status, hoping to escape unnoticed. Pyrrhos, at the same time, did precisely the opposite: 'For it happened that he had taken off his helmet, and he was not recognised by anyone, until he put it on again and by its high crest and goat-horns made himself known to all.'⁸⁰ The Macedonian troops immediately went over to Pyrrhos and hailed him as their king. Demetrios meanwhile 'put on a humble soldier's mantle and sneaked away' – 'behaving like an actor', as Cavafy added, 'who when the performance is over changes his clothes and departs.'⁸¹

after they had become the major military power in Central Greece: Scholten 2000, 1-28. For the Demetrios Hymn see below, chapter 5.3.

⁷⁸ Polyb. 5.34.4-10. Cf. Polyb. 5.87.3: 'He was not averse to peace, ... but rather too much inclined to it, being drawn towards it by his indolent and depraved habit of life', and at 14.12.3-5 he adds that 'Ptolemaios Philopator ... abandoned entirely the path of honour (*καλός*) and took to a life of dissipation'; and when later in his reign he was forced into a war against his will, Polybios wastes no words on it because it 'contained nothing worthy of note, no pitched battle, no sea-fight, no siege.' See C. Préaux, 'Polybe et Ptolémée Philopator', CE 40 (1965) 364-75.

⁷⁹ Defeated by the Romans, Tigranes the Great threw himself unrobed and unarmed at the feet of Pompey, offering him his diadem (Plut., *Luc. & Cim. Comp.* 3.4); when Perseus surrendered to the Romans, he arrived accompanied only by one of his sons, wearing a mourning garment instead of a purple robe (Liv. 45.7.3-4). Cf. Arr., *Anab.* 2.11.5; Plut., *Alex.* 33.5 (Darius III); Plut., *Aem.* 12.1 and 23.2 (Perseus); Plut., *Luc.* 36.6 (Tigranes I); Plut., *Luc.* 17.4 (Mithradates VI).

⁸⁰ Plut., *Pyrrh.* 11.5-6, cf. *Demetr.* 44.6.

⁸¹ Plut., *Pyrrh.* 11.6.; Cavafy, 'King Demetrios', trans. R. Dalven. An even more elaborate reversal takes place in Plut., *Aem.* 23.1: Perseus turns his royal robe *inside out* and flees the battlefield unnoticed.

Warfare formed the practical basis of monarchic rule. Military means were employed to enforce control over territories and populations in order to exact the resources needed to finance military power, and Hellenistic kings never concealed the violent basis of their power. On the contrary: killing was an important duty of kings, and warfare was the central theme in royal ideology, from which all other components of royal legitimisation—*sotēria*, *euergesia*, *tryphē*—were ultimately derived. Like royal pomp, battles were ephemeral events. Warfare therefore was immortalised in victory monuments, on paintings decorating royal palaces,⁸² by court historians, in epic, and in memorials at panhellenic sanctuaries.⁸³ Victory could even be commemorated by means of recurrent festivals.⁸⁴

The king's presence in the field boosted the army's morale more effectively than a regimental banner or magical field standard could ever do. When Antigonos Gonatas was about to engage in a naval battle with the Ptolemaic fleet, and was warned that the ships of the enemy far outnumbered his own, the king replied: 'But how many ships do you think my presence is worth?'⁸⁵ The presence of a king could moreover demoralise the enemy. When the council of Antiochos III discussed the revolt of Molon, one courtier advised the king to proceed to the east without delay to be 'personally present at the theatre of events', because 'once the king presented himself before the eyes of the people with an adequate force, ... he [Molon] would soon enough be seized by the people and delivered to the king.'⁸⁶ When the troops of Antiochos finally faced Molon's rebel army, the king at the head of his cavalry guard rode towards the rebels, who, 'as soon as they came in sight of the king, went over to

⁸² I. Scheibler, *Griechische Malerei der Antike* (Munich 1994) 154-8.

⁸³ For hunting and battle scenes as a (royal) art genre in the Hellenistic age: Pollitt 1986, 38-41 (hunting) and 41-6 (battle); cf. T. Hölscher, *Griechische Historienbilder des 5. und 4. Jahrhunderts v. Chr.* (Wurzburg 1973) 122-69; B.R. Brown, *Ptolemaic Paintings and Mosaics* (Cambridge, Mass., 1957). See Hintzen-Bohlen 1990 on various forms of memorial set up by Hellenistic kings in panhellenic sanctuaries.

⁸⁴ Jos., *AJ* 12.11: Ptolemaios Philadelphos decreed that the day on which his navy had defeated the fleet of Antigonos Gonatas was to be 'remarkable and eminent every year through the whole course of his life.'

⁸⁵ Plut., *Mor.* 183c-d; cf. Plut., *Demetr.* 50; Caes., *BCiv.* 3.109.

⁸⁶ Polyb. 5.41.8-9. Cf. Polyb. 5.51.8, where Zeuxis assures that the lands under Molon's control 'would evidently resume their allegiance and join the king' as soon as Antiochos and his army arrived.

him.’⁸⁷ Conversely, when the king was slain, the battle was lost, and consequently the whole campaign. For this reason kings were often targeted by enemy champions. Alexander made use of that knowledge when attacking Darius at Issos and Gaugamela. At Issos he was ‘seeking for himself the rich trophy of killing the king’, who ‘cut a conspicuous figure, at once providing great incentive to his men to protect him, and to his enemies to attack.’⁸⁸ But at the Granikos it was Alexander who was attacked by noblemen in search of glory:

The Persians came charging at them with a shout. ... A large number closed in on the king, who stood out because of his shield and the crest on his helmet, on each side of which there was a plume striking for its whiteness and its size. Alexander received a spear in the joint of his cuirass, but was not wounded. Then the Persian generals Rhoisakes and Spithridates came at him together. Side-stepping the latter, Alexander managed to strike Rhoisakes ... with his spear, but when the spear shattered he resorted to his sword. While the two were engaged hand-to-hand, Spithridates brought his horse to a halt beside them and, swiftly pulling himself up from the animal, dealt the king a blow with his barbarian sabre. He broke off Alexander’s crest, along with one of the plumes, and the helmet only just held out against the blow, the blade of the sword actually touching the top of the king’s hair. Spithridates then began to raise the weapon for a second blow, but Kleitos got there first, running him through with his spear. At the same moment Rhoisakes also fell, struck by a sword-blow from Alexander.⁸⁹

This description, bringing back the battle to single combat between aristocratic warriors, is reminiscent of the battles in the *Iliad*. It is not a literary construction of Plutarch; Arrian describes the same event in much the same words.⁹⁰ The ultimate origin of their mutual source presumably is the propaganda of Alexander himself, who was eager to be known as a new (and better) Achilles.⁹¹

⁸⁷ Polyb. 5.53.2. Cf. Walbank 1984, 74, writing that Molon’s soldiers’ belief in the king’s ‘divinely favoured personality with an overwhelming claim to [their] loyalty’ was enhanced by ‘the frequent repetition of such cult titles as “Saviour” and “Benefactor” which marked the king out from ordinary men.’ It also worked the other way round: the king’s frequent presence on the battlefield generated loyalty and was an important factor in proving that the claims inherent in the cult titles were true.

⁸⁸ Curt. 3.11.7.

⁸⁹ Plut., *Alex.* 16.6-11; trans. J.C. Yardley.

⁹⁰ Arr., *Anab.* 1.14.6-8.

⁹¹ According to Plut., *Pyrrh.* 16.8-10, a similar incident happened during the Battle of Herakleia: ‘During the fighting Leonnatos the Macedonian noticed that one of the Italians had singled out Pyrrhos and was riding towards him, following his every movement. At length he said to the king: “O King, do

By demonstrating heroism a king proved that he was worthy of kingship, turning ideology into reality. The heroic ethos of the king as a valiant spear-fighter put him on a par with the mythic heroes of ancient times. The countries over which a king ruled were considered his, or his family's, *doriktētos chōra*, 'spear-won land'.⁹² This must be taken literally. *Doriktētos chōra* can be translated as 'war booty', a reward for personal bravery and hence a private possession. As a private possession, spear-won land was inheritable.⁹³ Just like Achilles would not accept that Agamemnon took Briseïs from him, so the descendants of Seleukos Nikator, even in formal diplomacy, never accepted that Ptolemaios Soter had taken possession of Koile Syria, which was their ancestor's price after the Battle of Ipsos.

Alexander's preoccupation with his ancestors Achilles and Herakles is well-known. Arrian says that Alexander preferred to die in battle, 'doing great deeds, worth hearing to men of later generations, and dying gloriously'.⁹⁴ Alexander slept with the *Iliad* under his pillow and like Achilles, whom he wished to outdo, Alexander wanted to be known as 'the best of the Greeks'. His favourite passage in the *Iliad* was line 3.179: 'a good king and a mighty spear-fighter'. To attribute this to Alexander's so-called unique personality is simplistic: the ultimate source for such 'personal' details is Alexander's own propaganda. His visit to Achilles' tomb in the company of Hephaistion, his dramatic mourning of the latter's death, and so on – it all added up to the construction of an image of the king being as 'epic' as

you see that barbarian who is riding the black horse with white feet? He looks like a man who is planning some desperate action. He never takes his eyes off you, he pays no attention to anybody else, and it looks as though he is reserving all his strength to attack you. You must be on your guard against him." Pyrrhos replied: "Leonnatos, no man can avoid his fate. But neither he nor any other Italian will find it an easy task once they get to close quarters with me." Even as they were speaking, the Italian wheeled his horse, levelled his lance and charged at Pyrrhos. Then in the same instant that the Italian's lance struck the king's horse, his own was transfixed by Leonnatos. Both horses fell, but Pyrrhos was snatched up and saved by his friends, while the Italian, fighting desperately, was killed.' Of course, Plutarch is stressing the resemblance between Alexander and Pyrrhos; however, the incident, related in much the same words by Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 19.12, presumably goes back to a contemporary Greek source, perhaps Timaios (Nederlof 1940, 91-3) and may ultimately derive from real efforts by Pyrrhos to emulate or surpass Alexander.

⁹² Polyb. 9.36.3. Cf. Justin 15.1; Diod. 19.57.1-2.

⁹³ Polyb. 5.67.4-13: Antiochos III claimed Koile Syria in 218 because it had been awarded to Seleukos I for his share in the victory at Ipsos, almost a century earlier. Cf. Polyb. 28.1.4.

⁹⁴ Arr., *Anab.* 6.10.5.

Achilles. Alexander was certainly not unique in his self-presentation as an Homeric warrior. Theokritos in *Idyll* 16 promised to make Hieron of Syracuse, ‘the Achilles of our time’, as immortal as the heroes of the *Iliad*, and praised Ptolemaios Philadelphos as a mighty spear-fighter in *Idyll* 17. In art, statues such as the so-called Terme Ruler, portrayed rulers as naked heroes, holding a spear as their only sign of royalty. But most importantly, kings demonstrated manly virtue—variously denoted as *andreia*, *andragathia*, and *aretē*—by means of theatrical heroism on the battlefield, where invariably they commanded the shock cavalry on the right flank.⁹⁵ Polybios says that Philippos V proved that he was a real king and won a high reputation among both the Macedonians and the Greeks (including his enemies), ‘because of his ability and daring in the field’:

For it would be difficult to find a prince more richly endowed by nature with the qualities requisite for the attainment of power. He possessed a quick intelligence, a retentive memory,

⁹⁵ In the context of Hellenistic history, the nouns ἀνδρεία (‘manliness’ or ‘manly virtue’) and ἀνδραγαθία (valour in battle) denote display of courage, especially the latter as the former is a broader virtue. The relation between ἀνδρεία and ἀρετή is variable; the first could be a part of the latter, or a stage on the road to *aretē*: LSI, s.v. ἀνδρεία; J.K. Dover, *Greek Popular Morality in the Time of Plato and Aristotle* (Oxford 1974) 165-7. For some general observations on the varying and shifting meanings of *andreia* see the introduction to I. Sluiter and R.M. Rosen eds., *Andreia. Studies in Manliness and Courage in Classical Antiquity* (Leiden 2003). Ἀνδραγαθία had a mainly martial connotation and in inscriptions is regularly used to denote the military distinction for which an *andreion*, an award for being (among the) best, is given to an individual; L. Robert in *Antiq. Class.* 35 (1966) 429 has defined it thus: ‘ἀνδραγαθία dans les inscriptions honorifiques est le courage des soldats, des officiers ou des rois en campagne’. Cf. idem, *Laodicée du Lycos* (Paris 1969) 307 n. 2: ‘Le mot ἀνδραγαθία comme ἀνδρεία ne désigne pas, vaguement, ‘le mérite’, mais très précisément le courage physiques (athlètes, etc.), et surtout militaire et ἀνδραγαθία des actions d’éclat à la guerre, et non des mérites’; *andragathia* is connected with ἀριστεία, praise or reward for valour in battle: see W.K. Pritchett, ‘Aristeia in Greek warfare’, in: id., *The Greek State At War II* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London 1974) 276-90, giving an overview of the use of ἀριστεία and ἀνδραγαθία in Greek epigraphy and historiography of the Classical and Hellenistic periods. On images of masculinity in representations of Hellenistic kings see J. Roy, ‘The masculinity of the Hellenistic king’, in: L. Foxhall and J. Salmon eds., *When Men Where Men. Masculinity, Power and Identity in Classical Antiquity* (London and New York 1998) 111-35. For Hellenistic Greek attitudes towards masculinity in war in general see Chaniotis 2004, 102-4.

and great personal charm, as well as the presence and authority that becomes a king, and above all ability and courage as a general.⁹⁶

The fearlessness of kings is contrasted with the lack of perseverance of their enemies. Notably barbarians were said to be liable to the madness sent by Pan. Again, the Greek image of the Celts was pivotal; the Celts were known to be ferocious warriors, but their irrational ferocity bordered on insanity and could easily change into irrational panic.⁹⁷ Of course, Hellenistic kings were not always victorious in reality. Military setbacks however did not figure in royal propaganda. Like Assyrian, Persian and Egyptian kings, Hellenistic rulers hardly ever admitted defeat; their public self-presentation was all big victory.⁹⁸

The theatre of battle

A pitched battle was the occasion *par excellence* for a king to win prestige. Battle was honourable. Polybios depicts the battle of Raphia in 217 as a personal duel between Antiochos III and Ptolemaios IV to finish their families' age-old feud over the possession of Koile Syria: '[they] resolved to decide these matters by battle'.⁹⁹ The chief objective of a battle was to win, of course. Still, the conduct of the king and his troops on the battlefield was in many respects ritualised and full of religious behaviour. Moral obligations could even supersede tactical sense.¹⁰⁰ The king's obligation of honour to be at the head of his troops is at variance with the

⁹⁶ Polyb. 4.77.1-3; cf. 4.81.1. Similarly, Pyrrhos 'was not so much hated for what he had done as he was admired for making most of his conquests in person' (Plut., *Demetr.* 41.3).

⁹⁷ Rankin 1987, 55-6; Strootman 2005a. The Celts, it was said, feared nothing, but this had nothing to do with courage: it was based on *thumos*, the irrational absence of fear caused by lack of self-control: Arist., *Eth.Nic.* 3.5 b 28: 'Anybody would be mad or completely bereft of sensibility if he feared nothing, neither earthquake nor wave of the sea, as they say of the Celts'; the classic text for Celtic fearlessness is Arr., *Anab.* 1.4: 'Alexander asked the Celtic envoys what they were most afraid of in this world, hoping that his glorious name was known as far as their lands, or even further, and that they would answer: "You, my lord!" However, he was disappointed ... for the Celts replied that their worst fear was that the sky might fall on their heads.' Cf. Paus. 10.21.2; Poseidonios *ap.* Ath. 154c; Liv. 38.17; Polyb. 2.19.4, 11.3.1. Celtic Pan-ic: Paus. 10.23.5; Lucian, *Zeuxis* 8-11; cf. Bevan 1902 I, 139. Cp. the panic of Darius III on the Alexander Mosaic, discussed below.

⁹⁸ For the ideology of victory in Assyrian royal propaganda consult Liverani 1979 and 1981.

⁹⁹ Polyb. 5.79.1, 82.2, 86.7.

¹⁰⁰ Cp. the discussion of Caes., *BG* 5.24-37 in Sidebottom 2002, 99-106: 'contrary to much that has been written on the subject, generalship is not a universally constant activity. What generals do, and

general trend among the civic Greeks that generals ought to stay behind the lines to encourage the troops and ‘manage the battle’, instead of exposing themselves to danger in the first ranks.¹⁰¹

On the eve of battle, the king personally performed the sacrificial rites to call up divine assistance. Alexander sacrificed to local deities, perhaps the equivalents of Zeus, Athena and Herakles, before the Battle of Issos. Before the Battle of Pydna, Perseus sacrificed to Herakles.¹⁰² Victory signalled that the gods had indeed answered to the call. It was Zeus who bestowed victory on kings, often with the help of Athena Nikephoros.¹⁰³ Because of his connection with the divine, the king himself was a source of good omens: Zeus would send a dream promising victory (sometimes with Alexander present in it) or make his favour known through signs, for example an eagle flying above the field.¹⁰⁴ Sometimes, epiphanies of divine beings were actually seen in the midst of the *mêlée*. Pan aided Antigonos Gonatas against the

are expected to do, in battle are products of their culture’; cf. p. 108-9, arguing that the fact that Philippos and Alexander were able to implement tactical changes during battle means that they were in reality not constantly engaged in the fighting personally, as the sources suggest they did.

¹⁰¹ Sidebottom 2002, 108-9.

¹⁰² Curt. 3.8.22; Plut., *Aem.* 19.2.

¹⁰³ When Alexander II Zabinas, in need of funds, in c. 123 removed a gold statue of Nike from the Zeus temple at Antioch, he jokingly said that ‘Victory had been offered to him by Zeus’: Just. 34.2.5; Diod. 34.28; Jos., *AJ* 13.269; cf. Plut., *Demetr.*, 29.3, where the cry ‘Zeus and Victory!’ is used as password in Antigonos’ army camp. Antiochos I Soter thanked his victory in the Battle of the Elephants to his ancestor Apollo, and subsequently established a cult of Apollo Soter in the royal city Seleukeia, where he had buried his deified father Seleukos Nikator (IG 4458). Particularly in the Attalid kingdom the cult of Athena as bestower of victory was central to monarchic propaganda: Allen 1983, 121-9; Strootman 2005a, 124-34.

¹⁰⁴ R. Parker, ‘Sacrifice and Battle’, in: H. van Wees ed., *War and Violence in Ancient Greece* (London 2000), sees a shift in the importance of soothsaying before battle at the beginning of the Hellenistic Age: from external divine reassurance for civilians-turned-soldiers, legitimising the authority of civic generals, to Alexander’s person substituting for omens. On warfare and religion in the Classical and Hellenistic Greek world: W.K. Pritchett, ‘Religion and Greek warfare’, in: idem, *The Greek State At War. Part III: Religion* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London 1979) 1-10. Dreams of victory containing Alexander e.g. Plut., *Pyrrh.* 11.4-5.

Celts, in the Battle of Lysimacheia in 276, striking the enemy with terror; in 166, Dionysos made his appearance during the Battle of Mount Tmolos to aid Eumenes II.¹⁰⁵

After the troops had taken their position on the field, the king, followed by a cortège of *philoï* and horse guards, rode along the line of battle to show the soldiers his presence, and his forward position between them and the enemy. Speeches were delivered, especially to the Macedonian infantry.¹⁰⁶ At the Battle of Raphia, Ptolemaios IV, commanding the army together with queen Arsinoë, as well as Antiochos III reminded their troops of the prestige of the dynasty: ‘Since neither king could cite any glorious and generally recognised achievement of his own, both of them having but recently become king, they reminded their phalanxes of the glorious deeds of their ancestors in order to inspire them with spirit and courage’.¹⁰⁷

The troops addressed, the king gave the sign for the attack. At Sellasia in 222 Antigonos Doseon waved a purple banner to signal the start of the battle.¹⁰⁸ Alexander carried the sacred Shield of Athena from Ilion with him into battle during the storming of the town of the Mallians.¹⁰⁹ Pyrrhos was recognisable on the battlefield by his helmet with goat-horns.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁵ Strootman 2005a, 113 and 128; cf. Gabbert 1997, 26-7; Hansen 1971, 120-9. For a complete overview of divine aid in war in Greek historiography see W.K. Pritchett, ‘Military epiphanies’, in: idem, *The Greek State At War. Part III: Religion* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London 1979) 11-46. On divine manifestations in general: H.S. Versnel, ‘What did ancient man see when he saw a god? Some reflections on Greco-Roman epiphany’, in: D. van der Plas ed., *Effigies Dei. Essays on the History of Religions*. Numen Supplement 51 (Leiden 1987) 42-55, making a strong case for the authenticity of the belief that gods could actually be present among men. G. Wheeler, ‘Battlefield epiphanies in Ancient Greece: A survey’, *Digressus* 4 (2004) 1-14, offers psychological explanations, particularly post-traumatic stress disorder.

¹⁰⁶ Polyb. 5.53.5; 5.83.1-84.1; 8.13.5.

¹⁰⁷ Polyb. 5.83.2-84.1. Note that neither of the two kings referred to past achievements of the *army*.

¹⁰⁸ Polyb. 2.66.10-11, cf. 5.84.1. The entire army starting its advance *en masse* after a sign has been given by its supreme commander may also be understood as a ritualisation of the idea that a civilised army is a disciplined army; for this notion, an elementary part of the Greek cultural construct that is now usually called ‘the western way of war’, see the discussion in the first chapter of Sidebottom 2004, 1-15, aptly titled ‘At my signal unleash hell’, a quotation from the film *Gladiator* (1999), Ridley Scott’s flimsy remake of *Fall of the Roman Empire* (1964). A modern version of the myth of the ‘western way of war’ was propagated by V.D. Hansen in *The Western Way of War. Infantry Battle in Classical Greece* (New York 1989), and *Why the West Has Won. Carnage and Culture From Salamis to Vietnam* (London 2001).

¹⁰⁹ Arr., *Anab.* 6.13.2.

On the Alexander Sarcophagus in Istanbul, Alexander wears a helmet shaped as a lion's head, equating him with Herakles and perhaps meant to call up the hero's strength and valour in the king.¹¹¹

In limited campaigns, skirmishes, mountain warfare and other small enterprises, kings relied on Macedonian professionals. During great battles, however, the field army consisted of troops drawn from all parts of the kingdom.¹¹² The Seleukid battle lines at Raphia and Magnesia, recounted in detail by Polybios and Livy, are microcosms presenting the Seleukid *Vielvölkerreich* in miniature – the empire presented as army.¹¹³ The centre consisted of Macedonian heavy infantry, or infantry dressed and trained as Macedonians, including the elite corps of the Silver Shields and Bronze Shields. Next to these various 'native' units were employed, dressed and armed in accordance with the traditions of their homelands: horse archers from Central Asia, Thrakian and Lydian swordsmen, Galatian warriors, Persian and Agrianian archers, Babylonian and Arab light infantry, the so-called *kardakes*, and numerous others.¹¹⁴ All units, with the exception of allied troops, were led by Macedonian and Greek

¹¹⁰ Plut., *Pyrrh.* 11.5-6.

¹¹¹ Alexander was believed to have actually inherited the bodily strength and moral qualities of his ancestors Achilles and Herakles: Diod. 17.1.5; Plut., *Alex.* 2.1; cf. Huttner 1997, who distinguishes three functions of Herakles in monarchic ideology: as ancestor of the royal house (pp. 211-252), as patron-god of kings and queens, coming to their aid especially in battle (253-70), and as a model for royal conduct (271-318).

¹¹² For the composition of the Seleukid army see Bar-Kochva 1976 and 1993, 430-31, 567-70; Kuhrt & Sherwin-White 1993, 53-61; Sekunda 1997. Although troops could be sent by all the satraps of the empire, the bulk of the auxiliaries was drawn from areas near the location of the campaign.

¹¹³ Polyb. 5.80.3-13; Liv. 37.40.1-14. The armies at Raphia and Magnesia can be taken to be the typical composition of a Seleukid army in major battle (Kuhrt & Sherwin-White 1993, 55). As is well known from Herodotos' catalogue of Xerxes' army at Doriskos in Thrakia (Hdt. 7.61-99), as well as the accounts of the battles of Issos and Gaugamela, Achaimenid royal armies at maximum strength had a similar multi-ethnic organisation; cf. Briant 1999, 118-20, arguing that during the Persian invasion of Greece Xerxes brought, alongside a real army consisting of Iranian troops, a 'parade army' of token ethnic contingents that did not participate in the actual fighting.

¹¹⁴ 1,000 *Kardakes* were present at Raphia; Polybios classifies them as light or semi-light troops, being combined with a contingent of 500 Lydian javelin throwers. The meaning of *kardakes* remains obscure, the most popular translation being 'Kurds'; Briant 1999, 120-2 proposes that in the Achaimenid army *kardakes* were a unit of professional heavy infantry, recruited from various subject

commanders, although these were presumably assisted by native officers. At the flanks the heavy cavalry was positioned: around the king the Agema of 2,000 royal horse guards, the kataphrakts, and the Iranian heavy cavalry.

Roman and pro-Roman sources contrast contrasting the fear-inspiring but feeble ostentation of Hellenistic armies with the soberness and firmness of Romans legions. Plutarch says that ‘the barbarous hordes from all corners, and all their discordant and dreadful cries, [their] armour inlaid with gold and precious stones’¹¹⁵ of Mithradates Eupator, ‘the most warlike and hostile of all the kings’,¹¹⁶ at first did not fail to spread consternation among the Romans:

The air could not contain the shouts and clamour of so many nations forming in array. At the same time Median and Skythian garments, intermingled with bronze and flashing steel, presented a flaming and fearful sight as they surged back and forth so that the Romans huddled together behind their stockades; also the pomp and ostentation of their costly equipment was not without its effect and use in exciting terror; indeed, the flashing of their armour, which was magnificently embellished with gold and silver, and the rich colours of their Median and Skythian garments, intermingled with bronze and flashing steel, presented a flaming and fearful sight as they surged to and fro, so that the Romans huddled together behind their stockades.¹¹⁷

But in the end, the Hellenistic preference for ‘splendour without substance’ inevitably resulted in fiasco, after which, Plutarch assures his readers, Mithradates lost no time in completely remodelling his army in Roman fashion.¹¹⁸ The same topos is evident from an anecdote about Hannibal related by Aulus Gellius:

peoples but uniformly equipped, under the command of Persian officers, but this does not clarify their presence in the Seleukid empire.

¹¹⁵ Plut., *Luc.* 7.3. Mithradates’ warships, Plutarch adds, instead of having room for weapons and ammunition, contained ‘baths for concubines and luxurious apartments for women’ (7.5).

¹¹⁶ Plut., *Luc.* 3.2.

¹¹⁷ Plut., *Sulla* 16.2-3.

¹¹⁸ Plut., *Luc.* 7.4-5. Cf. Plut., *Mor.* 197c-d: ‘When king Antiochos [III] arrived in Greece with a great force, and all were terror-stricken at the great numbers of men and their armaments, Flamininus told a story for the benefit of the Achaians. He said he was in Chalkis dining with a friend, and was amazed at the great number of the meats served; but the friend laughed and said that it was all pork, differing only in their seasoning and the way they were cooked. “So then”, he said, “you should neither be

Antiochos [III] was displaying to him on the plain the gigantic force which he had mustered to make war on the Roman people, and was manoeuvring his army glittering with gold and silver ornaments. He also brought up chariots with scythes, elephants with turrets, and horsemen with brilliant bridles, saddlecloths, neck-chains and trappings. And then the king, filled with vainglory at the sight of an army so great and so well-equipped, turned to Hannibal and said: ‘Do you think that all this can be equalled and that it is enough for the Romans?’ Then the Carthaginian, deriding the worthlessness and inefficiency of the king’s troops in their costly armour, replied: ‘I think all this will be quite enough for the Romans, even though they are most avaricious.’¹¹⁹

Such descriptions were meant to create a contrast with the soberness and discipline of the Roman legionaries, but they do give some idea of the impression that Hellenistic kings wished to make on their enemies.

Hellenistic kings invariably commanded the heavy cavalry on the right flank of the line. The king in battle sat on his horse like a throne, surrounded by aristocratic elite cavalry, still called Companions in the age of Polybios in the Antigonid and Seleukid kingdoms. This was a peculiar characteristic of Hellenistic warfare. Classical Greek generals, Achaimenid kings and Roman commanders preferred the centre.¹²⁰ The Hellenistic kings’ position on one of the flanks with the cavalry stems from the king’s prestige as a horseman, typical of Macedonian aristocratic culture.¹²¹ The preference for the *right* flank as the place of greatest honour is probably due, ultimately, to the fact that most people are right-handed: just as a warrior wielded his spear with his right hand, so the royal cavalry on the right was supposed

amazed at the king’s forces when you hear names like Pikemen (λογχοφόροι), Super Heavy Cavalry (καταφράκτοι), Foot Guards (πεζεταίροι) or Two Horse Archers (αμφιπποτοξότας) – all these are no more than Orientals differing only from each other in their apparel!”

¹¹⁹ Gell., *NA* 5.5.2-6.

¹²⁰ Greek and Roman commanders sometimes encouraged their troops on foot as hoplite or legionary: E.L. Wheeler, ‘The general as hoplite’, in: V.D. Hanson ed., *Hoplites. The Classical Greek Battle Experience* (London and New York 1991) 121-70. Hellenistic kings fought on horseback.

¹²¹ Phylarchos, *FGrH* 81 F 49, states that a good king was *qualitate qua* a good horseman. Cf. Alexander’s melodramatic affection for Boukefalos. Mithradates the Great was famous for his bodily strength and horsemanship: ‘he was so strong that he could hurl a javelin while riding a horse, and could ride one thousand stades in a single day, changing horses at intervals’ (App., *Mithr.* 16.112).

to deal the enemy the decisive blow.¹²² The metaphor could be extended to include the defensive role of the cavalry on the *left* flank: the warrior's shield arm. Because of right-handedness, 'right' also had a positive symbolic, even religious connotations. In Classical Greece the left was connected with the secular, the right with the sacred.¹²³ No Hellenistic king ever behaved otherwise. The inherent tactical risk—that even a successful charge could lead the supreme commander with his cavalry astray, thereby dangerously exposing the right flank, as was the case with Alexander's charge at Gaugamela and Demetrios' charge at Ipsos—apparently was taken for granted:

After battle, it was again time for sacrifice, to give thank-offerings to the gods for success, and to pay the last honours to the dead, again with the king functioning as the principal priest. To bury the dead, Classical Greeks used to conclude an unconditional burial truce; Macedonians among each other did the same.¹²⁴ The concluding sacrifice, a peaceful activity, followed by a ritual, festive meal of the king and his military commanders, signalled that by means of victory order and peace had been restored.¹²⁵ The altar erected for this purpose, together with the tomb or monument for the fallen and the *tropaion*, made the battlefield a sacred area for time to come.¹²⁶

Theatrical heroism

Ancient accounts of Hellenistic battles, even when written centuries later, often echo the idea that the king personally decided the outcome of the fight. The king was sometimes even presented as fighting alone, unaided by others. This is remarkable. In the Greek world view

¹²² Cf. Polyb. 5.54.9: After the defeat of Molon, 'Antiochos rebuked the rebel troops at some length, and then gave them his right hand in sign of pardon.'

¹²³ P. Vidal-Naquet, *Le chasseur noir. Formes de pensée et formes de société dans le monde grec* (Paris 1981; 2nd rev. edn. 1991).

¹²⁴ The 8,000 Macedonian dead of the Battle of Kynoskephalai in 197 remained unburied until three years later Antiochos III ordered the bones to be buried in a magnificent tomb: Liv. 36.8; App., *Syr.* 16; cf. Plut., *Flam.* 8 for the total of the Macedonian casualties.

¹²⁵ Polyb. 5.14.8. Cf. Sidebottom 2002, 17.

¹²⁶ In 218 BCE Philippos V, 'on reaching the site of the battle between Antigonos [Doston] and Kleomenes (*viz.* Sellasia), he encamped there, and next day after inspecting the field and sacrificing to the gods on each of the hills Olympos and Evas, he resumed his march' (Polyb. 5.24.8-9). The tomb of the slain was regarded as a *heroon*: W.K. Pritchett, 'The battlefield trophy', in: idem, *The Greek State At War. Part II* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London 1974) 246-75, at 299-70, with n. 68.

fighting in formation, *i.e.* the very opposite of fighting individually, was considered a distinguishing characteristic of civilised armies.¹²⁷ Thus the king is distinguished from an ordinary soldier, and moved away from cultural conventions of normality – only not in the direction of barbarity, but towards the heroes of epic myth. In 208 the army of Antiochos III was saved from a surprise attack of Central Asian warriors, due to the king's personal courage:

The Baktrian cavalry ... came up to attack their adversaries while they were still in marching order. The king, understanding how important it was to withstand the first charge of the enemy, called together two thousand of his cavalry who used to fight round him; all the others he ordered to change formation where they were, and put themselves in their usual order for battle, while he himself with the force I just mentioned encountered the Baktrians and halted their first charge. It appears that at this occasion Antiochos fought more brilliantly than anyone else who was with him. ... In the battle Antiochos' horse was transfixed and killed, and he himself received a wound in the mouth and lost several of his teeth, thereby gaining a greater reputation for *andreia* on this occasion than on any other.¹²⁸

This image of the king as a *promachos*, deciding the outcome of battle virtually single-handedly, is reminiscent of the aristocratic champions in the *Iliad*.¹²⁹ Similarly Pyrrhos of Epeiros, in a battle in Macedonia in 291, engaged in single combat with Pantauchos, a Macedonian general; Plutarch describes the episode deliberately in epic style:

A fierce battle ensued and the fighting was especially violent around the two commanders. Pantauchos was by general consent the best (*aristos*) fighting-man of all Demetrios' generals. He combined courage (*andreia*), strength and skill in arms with a lofty and resolute spirit, and he challenged Pyrrhos to hand-to-hand combat. Pyrrhos, for his part, yielded to none of the kings in valour and daring: he was determined to earn the fame of Achilles not merely through

¹²⁷ Sidebottom 2002, 19-20.

¹²⁸ Polyb. 10.49.7-14.

¹²⁹ For single combat in epic literature see V.M. Udwin, *Between Two Armies. The Place of the Duel in Epic Culture* (Leiden 1999), maintaining that the duel is the defining characteristic of epic culture. Specifically on *promachoi* in the *Iliad* see H.W. Singor, 'Nine against Troy. On epic *phalanges*, *promachoi*, and an old structure in the story of the *Iliad*', *Mnemosyne* 44 (1991) 17-62, and id., '*Eni potestas machedsthai*. Some remarks on the Iliadic image of the battlefield', in J.P. Crielaerd ed., *Homeric Questions* (Amsterdam 1995) 183-200; O. Hellmann, *Die Schlachtszenen der Ilias* (Stuttgart 2000). For the 'heroic' nature of Argead kingship see Tarn 1927, 44-72.

his ancestry but through his prowess in the field, and he advanced beyond the front rank of his troops to confront Pantauchos. First they hurled javelins at each other, and then coming to close quarters, they drew their swords and fought with all their strength and skill. Pyrrhos received one wound, but inflicted two on Pantauchos, one in the thigh and one along the neck. Finally he drove his opponent back and forced him to the ground, but he could not kill him outright, as his friends came to the rescue and dragged him away. This victory of their king's uplifted the Epirotes' spirits and inspired by his courage they succeeded in penetrating and breaking up the Macedonian phalanx; then they pursued their enemies as they fled, killed great numbers of them and took five thousand prisoners.¹³⁰

In another episode, Pyrrhos is even said to have been seized with epic war-frenzy when fighting the Mamertines, who had attacked the rear guard of his army column:

Pyrrhos ... at once rode to the rear, helped to drive off the enemy, and exposed himself fearlessly in fighting against men who were not only courageous but well-trained in battle. The enemy became all the more elated when Pyrrhos was struck on the head with a sword, and retired a little away from the fighting. One of them, a man of giant stature clad in shining armour, ran out in front of their ranks and challenged Pyrrhos in a loud voice to come forward if he were still alive. This infuriated Pyrrhos, and in spite of the efforts of his guards to protect him, he wheeled round and forced his way through them. His face was smeared with blood and his features contorted into a terrible expression of rage.¹³¹ Then before the barbarian could

¹³⁰ Plut., *Pyrrh.* 7.4-5; trans. I. Scott-Kilvert. See Diod. 17.83.4-6, for a comparable description of the *andreia* of Alexander's commander Eriguio, accepting a challenge for a duel with the Persian general Satibarzanes (cf. Curt. 7.4.33-40 and Arr., *Anab.* 3.28.3). Note that Pyrrhos' imitation of Achilles is not presented here as *imitatio Alexandri*; as a descendant of Achilles, Pyrrhos was believed to have inherited the qualities of his ancestor as well. Plutarch compares Pyrrhos with Achilles also at 13.2 and 22.8. Cf. I. Sluiter, 'Homer in the dining-room: An ancient rhetorical interpretation of the duel between Paris and Menelaus (Plut., *Quast.Conv.* 9.13)', *Classical World* 98.4 (2005) 379-86, for Plutarch's literary use of the *Iliad*'s being 'so fundamental to any educated person', that his readers would know all underlying facts connected with a small quotation, perhaps even knowing them by heart; this article was kindly brought to my attention by Michel Buijs.

¹³¹ δεινὸς ὄφθῆναι τὸ πρόσωπον; B. Perrin translates: 'a countenance terrible to look upon'. For even more 'epic' behaviour ascribed to Pyrrhos see Plut., *Pyrrh.* 22.9 (προσιδεῖν δεινὸς ἐφάνη τοῖς πολεμίοις) and 30.7. Cp. the 'epic duel' between Philopoimen and the Spartan king Machanidas, related in Polyb. 11.17.7-18.7, and discussed by Chaniotis 2004, 193-7, who surmises that 'Polybios must have heard of this combat ... from eye-witnesses'; cf. pp. 195-7 for the Hellenistic Greek

strike, he dealt him a tremendous blow on the head with his sword. So great was the strength of his arm and the keenness of the blade that it cleft the man from head to foot, and in an instant the two halves of his body fell apart. The barbarians halted and came on no further, for they were amazed and bewildered at Pyrrhos and believed him to be a superhuman being.¹³²

The hero changing shape and cleaving his opponent in halves – these are images we normally associate with the Achilles in the *Iliad*, Hagen in the *Nibelungenlied*, or Cúchulainn in the *Táin bó Cúailnge*. But even though the quotations above are literary renderings by an author whose main concern was not writing history, the allusions to Homer or epic warfare in general are no inventions of Plutarch, but authentic: they surely go back to contemporary image-building of kings who wished be known as heroic warriors. It is not uncommon that historical kings are transformed into legendary heroes in later epic traditions.¹³³ Here it happened already during the kings' lives by means of deliberate propaganda. Thus, the only preserved copy of a battlefield painting, the Alexander Mosaic from the Casa del Fauno in Pompeii, typically presents Alexander as *promachos*, eager to engage in single combat with Darius.¹³⁴

obsession with war narrative, esp. hand-to-hand combat, in general; Chaniotis rightly suggests that 'reading or listening to narratives of how aggressors were destroyed gave their enemies a sense of relief' (p. 197).

¹³² Plut., *Pyrrh.* 24.2-4; trans. I. Scott-Kilvert. Like the preceding quotation from Plutarch, this passage goes back to contemporary panegyric, probably the Epeirote biographer Proxenos, who, as a court historian of Pyrrhos', has a predilection for homeric scenes: Nederlof 1940, 174-5; cf. idem 1978, 207.

¹³³ N. Voorwinden, 'Het Germaanse heldenepos. Een verleden in dienst van het heden', in: M. Schipper ed., *Onsterfelijke roem. Het epos in verschillende culturen* (Baarn and Schoten 1989) 62-80, discussing this development at 62-6, conceptualised for the *Nibelungenlied* and the Dietrich of Bern cycle by A. Heusler, *Die altgermanische Dichtung* (Potsdam 1941) 153-62; cf. W. Haug, 'Andreas Heuslers Heldensagenmodell: Prämissen, Kritik und Gegenwurf', *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum* 104 (1975) 273-92.

¹³⁴ The Mosaic, now in the Archaeological Museum in Naples, was copied from a famous painting, reflections of which have been preserved in other media. On the mosaic consult B. Andrae, *Das Alexandermosaik aus Pompeji* (Recklinghausen 1977); P.J. Holiday, 'Roman triumphal painting: its function, development, and reception', *The Art Bulletin* (March 1997); A. Cohen, *The Alexander Mosaic* (Cambridge 1997); K. Stähler, *Das Alexandermosaik* (Frankfurt am Main 1999). M. Donderer, 'Das Pompejanische Alexandermosaik: Ein ostliches Importstück?', in: *Das antike Rom und der Osten: Festschrift für Klaus Parlasca zum 65. Geburtstag* (Erlangen 1990) 27-8, suggested that the mosaic was originally made in the east, perhaps decorating a palace, and was imported to Italy; most

Alexander is depicted with an obsessed, lion-like look.¹³⁵ Upon looking Alexander in the eye, Darius, like Hektor at the approach of Achilles, panics and turns, chased by Alexander. So there is also an element of hunting in the Alexander Mosaic, intensified by Alexander's predator-like expression and Darius' frightened countenance.¹³⁶

Heroism in ideology presupposes that kings were obliged to perform heroic deeds on the battlefield, either in actuality or in some ritualised manner. Of course Pyrrhos' frenzy did not really enable him to cleave a man in two with a single blow—although most contemporaries who heard probably believed it—but the duel as such probably took place in reality. As is well-known, Alexander's recklessness often put himself and others in danger. But Alexander was not as exceptional in this respect as his later biographers made him appear to be. To be sure, Hellenistic kings seldom died peacefully, perishing in battle with a frequency not encountered among Achaimenid kings or Roman emperors.¹³⁷ Fleeing from the battlefield was considered the greatest disgrace for a king.¹³⁸ Notably Seleukid kings are said

scholars agree, however, that all the mosaics in the Casa del Fauno were made by a local workshop, cf. E. Pernice, *Pavimente und figurliche Mosaiken. Die hellenistische Kunst in Pompeji* 6 (Berlin, 1938) 94; P.G.P. Meyboom, 'I mosaici pompeiani con figure di pesci', *Mededeelingen van het Nederlands Historisch Instituut te Rome* 29 (1977) 49-93, esp. p. 72 n. 271.

¹³⁵ It has been argued that for the sake of this image he was represented with the light brown eyes of a lion, although written sources attest that this was not the real colour of his eyes: P.G. Maxwell-Stuart, 'Alexander's eyes', in: idem, *Studies in Greek Colour Terminology* (Leiden 1981) II, 170-2; the evidence for Alexander's looks is collected in C. de Ujfalvy *Le type physique d'Alexandre le Grand d'après les auteurs anciens et les documents iconographiques* (Paris 1902).

¹³⁶ In Hellenistic royal ideology, as in myth, hunting and battle are often equated (below, chapter 5.5).

¹³⁷ For example Pyrrhos, Lysimachos, Ptolemaios Keraunos; Antigonos I, Demetrios II, Antigonos III, Seleukos II, Antiochos III, Antiochos IV, Demetrios I, Alexandros I, Antiochos X, Antiochos XII, Ptolemaios VI, Ptolemaios X. Several others were murdered or committed suicide.

¹³⁸ In particular Perseus' cowardice after Pydna became a moral example: he hang on to his life 'with idle hope' (Diod. 31.9.3-7), because 'to those who have failed, nothing seems so sweet as life, although things worse than death happened to them; and this is what befell Perseus' (Plut., *Mor.* 198 b); cf. A.J.L. van Hooff, *Zelfdoding in de Antieke Wereld* (Nijmegen 1990) 138-9. Comparable judgements in App., *Syr.* 11.3.16, 4.20; Plut., *Luc. & Cim. Comp.* 3.4; Liv. 44.42.1-2; see Bar-Kochva 1976, 86, for more examples.

to have committed suicide after defeat in order to save their family's honour and to escape the humiliation of captivity.¹³⁹

The most striking examples of personal bravery in the sources at our disposal regard the age of Alexander and the Diadochs. The duel between commanders may indeed have been typical of Balkan warfare in the fourth century and before.¹⁴⁰ H.-J. Gehrke has shown,

¹³⁹ Including Antiochos VII Sidetes, Demetrios II and Alexandros II Zabinas. See K. Ehling, 'Selbstmorde von Seleukidenkönige', *Historia* 50.3 (2001) 376-8, with a complete list of suicidal kings on p. 376; Ehling argues that the belief that for a king suicide was a noble way to die was influenced by Epicurean philosophers, whose presence at the later Seleukid court is indeed attested; for this reason, *philoï* of dead Seleukids would claim that their former master had committed suicide even if this was not the case. However, among the Hellenistic philosophical schools, the Epicureans approved least of voluntary death. Furthermore, the notion that it was dishonourable to survive failure was not restricted to the Seleukids (the most famous examples being Mithradates VI and Kleopatra VII) as in Greek and Roman thought from Archaic to Christian times, justifiable *autothanasia* was conceived first of all as an ostentatious act connected with honour, and the prevalent motive given in the sources is fear for loss of face: Van Hooff 1990, 162-4, cf. 114-22 and 137-50.

¹⁴⁰ On the 'heroic' character of Argead kingship see Tarn 1927, 44-72. A similar kind of aristocratic heroism existed in Iranian warfare as well. In Diod. 17.83.5-6, for instance, the Persian general Satibarzanes challenges the Macedonian commander to single combat in Aria in 328. And Diod. 17.6.1-2 informs us that Darius III became king because of his *andreia* 'in which he surpassed all other Persians': 'Once when king Artaxerxes was campaigning against the Kadusians, one of them with a wide reputation for strength and courage challenged a volunteer among the Persians to fight in single combat with him. No other 'dared accept, but Darius alone entered the contest and slew the challenger. ... It was because of this prowess that he was thought worthy to take over the kingship' (trans. C. Bradford Welles). Persian sources affirm that bodily strength, good bowmanship and horsemanship were central elements of the Persian ideal of kingship, e.g. DNR (inscription of Darius I, Naqs-i Rostam); XDNb (inscription of Xerxes); cf. Sancisi 1980, 178; Briant 1999. G. Gropp, 'Herrscherethos und Kriegsführung bei Achämeniden und Makedonen', in: J. Ozols and V. Thewalt eds., *Aus dem Osten des Alexanderreiches. Völker und Kulturen zwischen Orient und Okzident* (Cologne 1984) 32-42, after discussing the courage and martial qualities expected from Persian kings, argues that Alexander's subjugation of the Achaimenid Empire was in part due to the respect he had won by his courageous behaviour during battle, and that Darius 'lost his throne' because of his cowardice; although this is an attractive idea—Alexander's acceptance by the Iranian nobility was no doubt enhanced by his ostentatious bravery—Gropp accepts far too uncritically the Greek sources claiming that Darius fled from the field for fear of hand-to-hand combat with Alexander. For a diametrically opposite view see Jona Lendering's revisionist view of the Battle of Gaugamela in

however, that an heroic ethos remained an essential component of royal self-presentation until the end of the Hellenistic Age.¹⁴¹

The theatrical heroism of the king was not only Homeric emulation. It was a Near Eastern tradition, too. In both Egypt and Mesopotamia the image of the king standing his ground whilst surrounded by overwhelming numbers of enemies was a topos in royal propaganda: the king has been betrayed by his allies, or even deserted by his own troops, making his stand a heroic fight of the one against the many. The best known example is the contemporary depiction of Ramesses the Great's at the Battle of Kadesh.¹⁴² Also in Assyrian victory inscriptions the king of Assur is always represented as fighting numerous, even numberless enemies banding together against him. The enemies' numerical superiority reveals their moral inferiority: because they dare not confront the Assyrian king on equal terms they are cowards who lack the support of the gods.¹⁴³ Hence the standard presentation of the enemy as 'rebel', 'traitor' or 'liar'. In Achaimenid inscriptions all those who do not submit to the Great King are collectively denoted as *drauga*, 'lie', a word with religious connotations implying that the king's enemies were impious evil-doers, enemies of the cosmic order of Ahuramazda.¹⁴⁴ In the same manner, Seleukid kings were presented as prevailing over either 'traitors' or 'barbarians', against all the odds, and 'with divine favour and aid'.¹⁴⁵ In the epic poem *Galatika*, the court poet Simonides of Magnesia wrote that Antiochos Soter crushed the Celts while being outnumbered ten to one.¹⁴⁶ And Antiochos III, 'elated by his success [against the rebel Molon] and wishing to overawe and intimidate the barbarous dynasts whose dominions bordered on and lay beyond his own dominions, so as to prevent their furnishing anyone who rebelled against him with supplies or armed assistance, ... decided to march

Alexander de Grote. De ondergang van het Perzische Rijk, 340-320 v.Chr. (Amsterdam 2004) 168-174; an English translation of the relevant chapter is online at www.livius.org.

¹⁴¹ Gehrke 1982, 266-8.

¹⁴² The so-called Poem of Pentaur on the Papyrus Sallier gives a first person account of the pharaoh's exploits, who says *i.a.*: 'Here I stand / All alone / There is no one at my side / ... / But I find the favour of Amun / Far better help to me / Than a million warriors or ten thousand chariots'.

¹⁴³ M. Liverani, 'Kitru, kataru', *Mesopotamia* 17 (1981) 43-66.

¹⁴⁴ Sancisi 1980, 178.

¹⁴⁵ OGIS 219; Austin 139.

¹⁴⁶ An outline of the content of Simonides' *Galatika* is preserved in Lucian, *Zeuxis* 8-11. Cf. Barbantani 2001, 208-14; Bar-Kochva, 1973; Rankin 1987, 99; Strootman 2005a, 116 n. 58.

against them.¹⁴⁷ Rebel princes who could not be subjugated could, paradoxically, be turned into autonomous vassals by the grace of the king. In 206/205, Euthydemos, the semi-independent ruler of Baktria was defeated in battle by Antiochos III but could not be wholly subdued. Seleukid propaganda, preserved in Polybios, claimed that Euthydemos received an envoy of the king, a *philos* called Teleas, and reasoned with him:

... that Antiochos was not justified in attempting to deprive him of his kingdom. He himself had never revolted against the king, but after others had revolted he had possessed himself of the rule (*archē*, not *basileia*) of Baktria by destroying their descendants. After speaking at some length in the same sense he begged Teleas to mediate between them in a friendly manner and bring about a reconciliation, entreating Antiochos not to grudge him the name and state of king, as if he did not yield to this request, neither of them would be safe; for considerable hordes of Nomads were approaching; and this was not only a grave danger to both of them, but if they consented to admit to them, the whole empire would certainly relapse into barbarism. After speaking thus he dispatched Teleas to Antiochos.¹⁴⁸

Thus, continuing both Achaimenid and Argead tradition, Hellenistic kings needed to possess, or pretend to possess physical strength and fighting skills, and courageousness in battle. Dynastic succession alone was not enough to become a legitimate king, as the absence of primogeniture in the Hellenistic royal families made every single brother or half-brother a potential rival.

¹⁴⁷ Polyb. 5.55.1. Both rebels and barbarians were de-humanised in propaganda, and treated accordingly in reality. In keeping with ancient Near Eastern traditions, the bodies of the generals who revolted against Antiochos III were first mutilated, and then crucified in a conspicuous place. Molon's body was exposed on the cross at the foot of Mount Zagros (Polyb. 5.54.6-7), and after the capture of Achaïos the council discussed 'many proposals as to the proper punishment to inflict on Achaïos, and it was decided to lop off in the first place the unhappy prince's extremities, and then, after cutting off his head and sewing it up in an ass's skin, to crucify his body.' Barbarians, in particular Celts, who according to Polyb. 18.37.9 were a people without culture, were routinely accused of incest, cannibalism, and necrophilia in Greek historiography, cf. e.g. Poseidonios *ap.* Diod. 5.32-3 and Strabo 4.43. Paus. 10.22.2 described the atrocities committed by Celtic warriors during the invasion of Greece in 279 as 'unlike the crimes of human beings'; for the gruesome details see Strootman 2005a, 118-21.

¹⁴⁸ Polyb. 11.39.1-5.

II

Palaces

*The sacred is a fine hiding-place for the profane:
they are always so similar.*

David Mitchell, *Cloud Atlas*

2.1 Hellenistic palaces: where and why

Hellenistic palaces were built inside or adjacent to cities. This amounts to a paradox: cities in general cherished their autonomy—within the imperial framework they were *de iure* and also normally *de facto* self-governing states—while Hellenistic were fiercely autocratic. Their rule was characterised by an absolutist ideology that made even Louis XIV look like a constitutional monarch. In this chapter we will see how royal palaces were incorporated in cities, and by what (architectural) means civic and royal space were distinguished and connected. The principal question is: what can the use of space tell us about the relationship between the royal and the civic in Hellenistic cities? To answer this question, first the principal residences of the Hellenistic monarchies will be discussed. This rather broad outline will be followed by an overview of the structure, architecture and decoration of palaces. Finally, the implications for the relationship between kingship and city will be discussed.¹

¹ Parts of the present chapter were presented at the first session of the *Sacred and Profane* workshop in Utrecht, January 19, 2001, and at the ESSHC international congress in The Hague, February 28, 2002. I am grateful to Karl-Joachim Hölkeskamp and Amélie Kuhrt for useful comments on earlier versions of the text.

The Antigonids resided mainly in Pella, Aigai, and Demetrias. The Seleukids disposed of numerous ‘capitals’ containing royal palaces, including Seleukeia on the Tigris, Seleukeia in Pieria, Antioch, Daphne, Apameia, Sardis, Tarsos, Mopsuestia, Tambrax in Hyrkania and probably Baktra, besides using former Achaimenid residences, notably Susa and Ekbatana. The Ptolemies resided first of all in Alexandria, but also maintained smaller palaces in Memphis, Naukratis and Pelousion.²

Palace and *polis*

The genesis of the Hellenistic palace was linked to the founding of cities. The aims of establishing new cities was to boost and control the economy, and to military control territory. Cities were founded on sites that were both commercially attractive and strategically important, so that they became economic and military centres at the same time. Strategic considerations, however, normally prevailed over economic ones in the choice of sites. Thus, Demetrios Poliorketes abandoned the city of Pagasai in favour of the more easily defensible city of Demetrias, and relocated Sikyon on a more strategic site.³ Likewise, Seleukos Nikator’s heavily fortified city of Antioch defended an important stone bridge over the Orontes predating the city’s foundation.⁴ Several of such fortified cities, combined with purely military outposts at mountain passes, river crossings and junctions, linked up to become a strategic network commanding the roads. Controlling the roads was the essential prerequisite of imperial rule. The strategic and economic functions of cities were separate

² With the exception of the Antigonid palaces at Pella, Vergina and Demetrias, none of the large palaces of the three main dynasties have yet been excavated; additional archaeological is provided by the royal buildings on the akropolis of Pergamon, Hasmonean and Herodean palaces in Judea, and the Greco-Baktrian palace of Aī Khanoum in Afghanistan. The principal studies modern studies of Hellenistic palace architecture are V. Heerman, *Studien zur makedonischen Palastarchitektur* (Nürnberg 1986); I. Nielsen, *Hellenistic Palaces. Tradition and Renewal* (Aarhus 1994); G. Brands and W. Hoepfner eds., *Basileia. Die Paläste der hellenistischen Könige* (Mainz am Rhein 1996); B.L. Kutbay, *Palaces and Large Residences of the Hellenistic Age* (Lewiston, Queenston, Lampeter 1998); E. Netzer, *Die Paläste der Hasmonäer und Herodes’ des Grossen* (Mainz am Rhein 1999); I. Nielsen ed., *The Royal Palace Institution in the First Millennium BC* (Athens 2001). In 1999, thanks to a grant from the Philologisch Studiefonds, I was given the opportunity to visit the principal Seleukid cities in Turkey and Syria, as well as several sites in Jordan, Israel and Palestine.

³ A.W. Lawrence, *Greek Aims in Fortification* (Oxford 1979) 114.

⁴ *Ibidem* 41.

spheres. Direct and structural royal involvement in civic life was mainly restricted to military matters. Royal building policy within the new cities, too, fell into two categories, one being the building activity for the king's own purpose, *i.e.* palaces and fortifications, the other public buildings. The latter category, which was part of royal benefactions policy, was not restricted to new foundations, nor even to regions actually under the command of kings. Offering public buildings and monuments to *poleis* or to panhellenic sanctuaries like Delphi beyond direct political control was a form of propaganda, presenting kings as philhellenes, protectors and benefactors of Hellenism anywhere in the world.⁵

The cities of the Hellenistic age, the old as well as the new, were, generally speaking, fiercely independent, the non-Greek ones no less than the Greek. Most cities were autonomous in theory and actuality. Even Alexandria, Antioch and Pergamon had a *boulē* and *ekklesia*.⁶ Most cities were ungarrisoned. Kings demanded only three things from cities: the formal acknowledgement of their divine suzerainty, loyalty or aid in war, and payment of tribute (though not all this was demanded by all kings of all cities at the same time). Securing a city's loyalty sometimes induced kings to drastic measures like installing garrisons or burden urban government with a royalist *gerousia*. There often was an *epistatēs* in a city – perhaps a royal official who had full power of attorney, but more probably a *philoxenos* of the king who acted as intermediary, taking care of the interests of the city as well. Levying taxation worked best when economic life flourished, and economic life flourished when cities were free to conduct their own business. In return for the king's protection of civic

⁵ Thus, the Antigonids built on Delos, the Seleukids in Miletos, and the Attalids and Ptolemies in Athens: H. Lauter, *Die Architektur des Hellenismus* (Darmstadt 1986) 15-6. Antiochos IV ordered building projects in mainland Greece even though the Treaty of Apameia precluded Seleukid rule west of the Tauros Mountains. Lauter's hypothesis (p. 17) that Antiochos' building activities in relatively obscure cities such as Tegea on the Peloponnese and Lebadia in Boiotia was due to the fact that he was not *allowed* to build in *poleis* that mattered is incorrect; Antiochos IV, who was an exponent of renewed Seleukid confidence rather than of decline, more plausibly wished to show that his long and powerful arm still reached even the smallest of towns in Roman occupied Greece; besides, he also built Athens, the city in Greece that mattered most. In a like manner, though with the exception of Baylon and Jerusalem less well documented, the Seleukids acted as benefactors of non-Greek cities in the east.

⁶ For the 'democratic machinery' of Ptolemaic Alexandria see Fraser 1972, 93-115. Also Macedonian cities under the Antigonids were administered by an *ekklēsia*, a *boulē* and civic magistrates: Hatzopoulos 2001, 190-1; for the evidence see Hatzopoulos 1996 I, 1270-65 and II, 54-110.

independence—of *autonomia*, *eleutheria* and *dēmokratia* in the case of Greek cities—cities recognised the king’s overlordship.⁷ Paradoxically, there was much to gain from subjugation to imperial protection in terms of civic autonomy. First, kings were obliged to actually offer the protection they promised to cities in return for tribute and allegiance. Moreover, cities maintaining direct relations with a king became, to borrow a word from the Late Medieval Holy Roman Empire, *Reichsunmittelbar*, that is, safeguarded against the territorial ambitions of nearby principalities and rival cities exactly because of their subjugation the (absent) imperial ruler.

Some of these new cities were designated to become royal residences. A residence may be defined as a city in which a king or a dynasty repeatedly held court in a royal palace. In residential cities, the palace (*basileion*; Latin *regia*) or an entire royal district (*basileia*) was build inside the city walls, but adjacent to what may be called the civic part of the city.⁸ Residential cities normally also harboured a royal mint. The evolution of the Hellenistic palace followed, and in all probability influenced, the tendency in Hellenistic architecture of linking together the most important buildings according to a preconceived design. The *basileia* often consisted of numerous structures, of which the king’s private house was only one.⁹ One would therefore expect some concept, visible in the architecture, that set the two ‘antithetical societies’¹⁰ of court and city in apart and visualised the king’s otherness *vis-à-vis* the citizens. Below we will see how this was achieved by a careful choice of location and by the use of elements from religious architecture to shape the royal part of a city like a sacred *temenos*.

The origins of Hellenistic palace architecture can be traced back to a variety of Greek, Macedonian, and Oriental sources.¹¹ Oriental influences were most strong in the Seleukid

⁷ On this central paradox of Hellenistic kings’ relation with cities see above, chapter 1.3.

⁸ *Basileion*: e.g. Ath. 654; Diod. 34.15; Plut., *Luc.* 29.8, Jos., *AJ* 13.36; *basileia*: Polyb. 10.31.5; 1 *Macc.* 11.45; Strabo 17.1.9. Although usage is not consistent, *aulē* (‘open courtyard’ or ‘forecourt’) may by extension also connote ‘palace’ (see above, chapter 1.2).

⁹ Lauter 1986, 85-8; Nielsen 1994, 25-6.

¹⁰ Nielsen 1994, 208.

¹¹ For the various precedents consult Nielsen 1994, 27-80, though perhaps overestimating somewhat Persian influence, cf. E. Kosmetatou in *AJA* 104.4 (2000) 809-11; R. Etienne, ‘Basileia’, *Topoi* 8 (1998) 347-55. On the problem of (dating) the influence of Greek architecture in pre-Hellenistic Macedonia see R.A. Tomlison, ‘Southern Greek influences on Macedonian architecture’, in: *Ancient Macedonia* 3 (Thessaloniki 1983) 285-9.

empire and least in the kingdom of the Antigonids. Notwithstanding the important oriental *c.q.* Iranian and Mesopotamian influences on Hellenistic palace architecture, the royal palaces of the ‘motherland’ Macedonia provide the natural point of departure for any examination of the antecedents Hellenistic palaces. Royal palaces in pre-Hellenistic Macedonia probably resembled the fortified farmsteads in which the Macedonian landed aristocracy dwelled, except in size.¹² One important legacy of these original noble farmsteads, returning in Hellenistic palace architecture, is their fortified character.¹³ By the addition of arcades and loggias, Hellenistic palaces, though fortified, also presented an ‘open’ outlook. Inside, the basic form of the palace was an open courtyard surrounded by rooms – hence the designation ‘court’ (*aulē*). Naturally there were also oriental and (mainland) Greek models for Hellenistic palaces. One of the most influential precedents, was the palace of Mausolos at Halikarnassos.

Halikarnassos

The city of Halikarnassos was the residence of the Karian dynast Mausolos, benefactor and protector of Hellenic culture. At least since 367 Halikarnassos was Mausolos’ residence and, as a naval base, the centre of a short-lived maritime empire. With its enormous size, its straight hippodamian outline, and the involvement of the king in its building, Halikarnassos may be regarded a ‘proto-Hellenistic’ city, a model for city foundations of later kings, and for the positioning of the palace *vis-à-vis* the city.¹⁴

Mausolos’ palace was situated on Zephyrion, a promontory directly adjacent to the port and the harbour fortress.¹⁵ Vitruvius informs us that the palace was covered with gleaming marble and that its outer walls were superbly decorated.¹⁶ The style in which the palace was built may have been Greek, Anatolian, or Persian (as Mausolos was also an Achaimenid satrap), or a

¹² Macedonian landlords’ farmsteads resemble the manor houses of Attic landowners from the fifth and fourth centuries BCE (Nielsen 1994, 93, with n. 197; cf. 81 nn. 176 and 177); whether these influenced Macedonian architecture, however, is uncertain. Bronze Age palaces—of which the centre was the typical *megaron*, a structure that played no role in Hellenistic palace architecture—did not provide a model.

¹³ The basic form is the *tetrapyrgion*, a rectangular house with four corner-towers, also known from pre-Hellenistic Asia Minor and Syria (Nielsen 1994, 65 and 115); this model returns in the palaces at Demetrias (below) and Antioch (Jos. *AJ* 13.36).

¹⁴ Lauter 1986, 85; Hoepfner & Schwandner 1994, 226.

¹⁵ For the location: Nielsen 1994, 63 with n. 138; cf Hoepfner and Schwandner 1994, 228.

¹⁶ Vitr. 2.8.10; Plin., *Nat.* 36.47.

mixture of this. According to Nielsen, its style was Greek rather than Oriental because of the overall Hellenic character of Halikarnassos.¹⁷ But given the Karian-style lion sculptures excavated elsewhere in the city, a mixture of Greek and non-Greek elements—both of them ‘indigenous’ in this part of the world—may be envisaged. Mausolos’ tomb, the famed Mausoleum, was in the heart of the city. It stood on an artificial terrace of gigantic proportions, along the main road connecting the eastern and western gates. The terrace presumably supported also several other structures, including perhaps a hippodrome or stadium.¹⁸ The tomb of Mausolos prefigures the Hellenistic habit of burying kings in a monumental tomb (*heroon*) in or near a city as *heros ktistēs*, deified city founder, thus creating a special bond between the dynasty and a specific city.¹⁹ Alexander laid siege to Halikarnassos in 334, and although the city fell soon enough, he was not able to take the palace-fortress on the Zephyrion peninsula. It is probably no coincidence that Alexander founded one of his own capitals, Alexandria by Egypt, on a resembling site resembling Halikarnassos, and ordered a palace to build there on the Lochias peninsula, adjacent the military harbour.

Several peculiarities of Mausolos’ royal city return in Hellenistic residences. First, the fact that the palace was set apart from the rest of the city by its location on a peninsula. Second, that the palace was positioned adjacent to a fortress and a military harbour. Third, that the precinct of the royal tomb contained a structure to accommodate large crowds, *i.e.* a stadion or hippodrome. Fourth, that the king’s tomb was placed in the centre of the town, but was also raised above it.

Antigonid palaces

The Antigonids maintained residences at Pella, Aigai, Demetrias, Thessalonike, Kassandreia, Pydna, and Miēza.²⁰ The palaces of Demetrias, Pella and Aigai have been excavated. The first

¹⁷ Nielsen 1994, 65.

¹⁸ P. Pedersen, *The Mausolleion Terrace and Accessory Structures* (Aarhus 1991); Nielsen 1994, 139; Hoepfner & Schwandner 1994, 230.

¹⁹ In Classical times, city founders were known as *oikist* (οἰκιστής) and worshipped as heroes; in the Hellenistic Age *ktistēs* became the preferred term, cf. Lauter 1986, 86; Hoepfner & Schwandner 1994, 230. There was *i.a.* *heroon* of Demetrios Poliorketes in Demetrias and of Seleukos Nikator in Seleukeia in Pieria.

²⁰ Of Hellenistic Thessalonike, Kassandros’ residence, only a heavily damaged temple of Sarapis has remained, cf. D. Müller, ‘Thessalonike’, in S. Lauffer ed., *Griechenland. Lexikon der historischen*

of these was an Antigonid foundation, the latter two were early Hellenistic rebuildings of former Argead palaces. The cities of Antigonid Macedon were mostly independent political entities with civic institutions combining Greek and Macedonian traditions.²¹ Royal palaces, therefore, could be connected with, but not incorporated in these *poleis*.

The best known Antigonid palace is the palace of Pella. Lying at one of the main roads of Macedon, Pella had been a royal residence at least since the reign of Archelaos (413-399), though not earlier than the reign of Amyntas III (393-369).²² Philippos II received Demosthenes and Aischines there, and it was the birthplace of Alexander.²³ Under the Antigonid dynasty the importance of Pella increased, although the also used other residences.

The palace of Pella was situated on a hill some distance from the actual city. Excavation have revealed a large palace with exceptionally massive outer walls, built mainly in the second half of the third century BCE, especially by Philippos II and Demetrios I.²⁴ The palace consisted of multiple rooms and halls for residence, reception, administration, service and storage. The ceremonial part of the complex was located at the front of the palace, behind a monumental façade on a high terrace, facing the city. Between this façade and the city ran a broad ramp to create an impressive approach to the main entrance and vestibule. Against the slope of the hill, adjoining the palace, was a theatre.²⁵ In the Hellenistic kingdoms, theatres were the principal stages for the enactment of royal rituals, as we will see later (chapter 5). This explains why theatres were so often attached to palaces (as we will see in the present chapter). Finally, a game park (*paradeisos*) was located in the vicinity of Pella.²⁶ In the city proper, smaller palaces were excavated, presumably the private *palazzi* of the king's friends.²⁷

Stätten (Munich 1989) 676-82; Miëza, one of the royal cities of Macedonia, is often identified with modern Levkadia, where a two-storeyed monumental grave was found but no palace, cf. D. Müller, 'Levkadia', in Lauffer 1989, 392.

²¹ Hammond and Walbank 1988, 475-6.

²² M.B. Hatzopoulos, 'Macedonian palaces: Where king and city meet', in: I. Nielsen ed., *The Royal Palace Institution in the First Millennium BC* (Athens 2001) 189-99, at 189.

²³ D. Müller, 'Pella', in: Lauffer 1989, 524-5.

²⁴ Nielsen 1994, 89-93; M. Siganidou, 'Die basileia von Pella', in: Brands & Hoepfner 1996, 144-7. Hammond and Walbank 1998, 479; Hatzopoulos 2001, 191 and 194.

²⁵ Lauter 1986, 86; Nielsen 1994, 88.

²⁶ Polyb. 31.29.1-8. Cf. Nielsen, 1994, 88.

²⁷ Nielsen 1994, 84.

The palace at Aigai, present-day Vergina, resembled the palace at Pella, but was smaller.²⁸ Before the Hellenistic Age, Aigai had been the place where the kings of the Argead line were buried.²⁹ In Hellenistic times Aigai was a residence of Kassandros and later the Antigonids. The excavated Antigonid palace was situated on a high terrace, halfway city and akropolis. Both Kassandros and Antigonos Gonatas probably built there; Gonatas restored or rebuilt the palace after the Celts had sacked it in 279.³⁰ As in Pella, the palace was reached via a broad ramp leading, leading to a monumental, two storeyed façade behind a large artificial terrace. A second terrace commanded a superb view over the plain – looking down upon the city, the road leading from it, and the theatre against the slope of the hill.³¹ The relatively modest proportions of the palace at Aigai may indicate that the palace served mainly ceremonial and representational purposes, and was not an administrative centre.

A third Antigonid residence of importance was located in the city of Demetrias in southern Thessaly.³² Demetrias, one of the Fetters of Greece, was the southernmost residence of the Antigonid dynasty. The city had been founded by Demetrios Poliorketes shortly after gaining control of Macedonia (294 BCE), and was populated by means *synoikismos* of nearly all towns in the district of Magnesia.³³ Due to the city's favourable location at the Bay of Iolkos, as well as the commercial privileges granted to its *politai*, Demetrias soon became an *urbs valida et ad omnia opportuna*, its population rising to approximately 25,000 in the third

²⁸ M. Andronikos, *Vergina. The Royal Tombs and the Ancient City* (Thessaloniki 1984); C. Saatsoglou-Paliadeli, 'The palace of Vergina-Aegae and its surroundings', in: I. Nielsen ed., *The Royal Palace Institution in the First Millennium BC* (Athens 2001) 201-13. For the identification of Vergina with Aigai: N.G.L. Hammond, 'The Archaeological background to the Macedonian kingdom', in: *Ancient Macedonia* (Thessaloniki 1970) 53-67; Andronikos 1984, 65-7; M.B. Hatzopoulos, 'Aigéai: la localisation de la première capitale macédonienne', *REG* 109 (1996) 264-69.

²⁹ The site of Aigai was inhabited since ca. 1000 BCE; it became a royal residence since the beginning of the Macedonian monarchy around 700 : Hatzopoulos 2001, 189 with n 6 at p. 195; Saatsoglou-Paliadeli 2001, 207.

³⁰ D. Müller, 'Vergina', in: Lauffer 1989, 702-3; Nielsen 1994, 81; Hammond and Walbank 1988, 477; M. Errington, 'Aigai', in: *RE*² I, 313.

³¹ Nielsen 1994, 81-2. The theatre, the scene of Philippos II's murder during a royal spectacle in 336, has been dated to the fourth century BCE.

³² H. Kramolisch, 'Demetrias', in: Lauffer 1989, 190-1; P. Marzoff, 'Demetrias', in *RE*² III 426-7; id., 'Der Palast von Demetrias', in: Brands & Hoepfner 1996, 148-65.

³³ Plut., *Demetr.* 53.3.

century BCE.³⁴ When Seleukos took Demetrios prisoner, Demetrias became the residence of Antigonos Gonatas, who later buried his father's ashes there in 283.³⁵ Because of its central position in Greece and vis à vis the Aegean, Demetrias was an ideal base of operations for such imperialists as Demetrios Poliorketes and Philippos V, and for a short while also Antiochos the Great.

Demetrios programmed Demetrias to become at once a royal residential city, a naval base and a commercial centre. He chose this site because of the military advantages it offered. The city had steep approaches on almost all sides and disposed of two natural harbours, one of which became the basis of the Antigonid fleet.³⁶ The city in its final form was surrounded by extensive fortifications built by Demetrios, Philippos V, and Antiochos III.³⁷ The city was protected by a wall of over eight kilometres length, strengthened with artillery towers and defensive outworks, and three fortresses: two on the akropolis in the west and one in the south adjoining the palace.³⁸

The royal palace was built on an eminence in the city. Excavations have revealed a large structure around a central peristyle court, resembling the palace at Aigai but larger. This building, defended by thick outer walls and corner-towers was the focus part of a larger royal area.³⁹ Adjoining the palace to the west and south was a citadel of considerable size. Between the palace and the citadel lay a terrace overlooking the city. On this terrace was the palace's main entrance, a propylon gateway in the western façade. To the south of the palace was an open square. From an inscription found there, we know that this square was known as *hiera agora*, Holy Agora. The *hiera agora* was the centre of a ceremonial and cultic area and

³⁴ Kramolisch 1989; the phrase is from Liv. 39.23.12.

³⁵ Plut. *Demetr.* 53.3. The city remained under the control of the Antigonids until Philippos V yielded it to the Romans, who subsequently gave Demetrias to the newly founded League of the Magnesians. In 192/1 Demetrias fell into the hands of the Seleukid king Antiochos III, who enlarged its fortifications. One year later, Philippos V reoccupied the city and bequathed it to his son Perseus, who held the city until 168. On the history of Demetrias see F. Stählin, *Das hellenistischen Thessalien. Landeskundliche und Geschichtliche Beschreibung Thessaliens in den hellenistischen und römischen Zeit* (Stuttgart 1924) 69-70. On the burial of the city's *heros ktistēs* Demetrios see below, chapter 5.2.

³⁶ Strabo 9.5.1; Diod. 20.102. Cf. Winter 1971, 114. Polyæn. 6.2.1 informs us that already the fourth century Thessalian ruler Alexandros of Pherai had a naval base on the same location.

³⁷ Winter 1971, 277 with n. 31.

³⁸ Stählin 1924, 72-3; Winter 1971, 178 with fig. 172; Hammond and Walbank 1988, 480.

³⁹ Winter 1971, 277; Nielsen 1994, 93.

consisted of several buildings, including a temple of the city god Athena Iolkia.⁴⁰ The square apparently functioned as a transitional area between the *basileia* and the city. As in Halikarnassos, the city's *heroon*, here the tomb of Demetrios Poliorketes, was not connected with the *basileion* but built at some distance at the summit of a steep hill to the west of the city; near the tomb a theatre was built.⁴¹

Seleukid palaces

Both the vastness of their empire and their warlike nature induced the Seleukids to travel around continuously, and hence to maintain numerous residences. Seleukos I Nikator initially established his base at Babylon but added more and more residences as his territorial control expanded.⁴² In the centre of his empire, the former Achaimenid palaces of Ekbatana and Susa were at his disposal, and in the west Sardis. But Seleukos was also the most energetic founder of cities after Alexander.⁴³ In Mesopotamia he built *i.a.* Seleukeia on the Tigris, in Syria Antioch, Seleukeia in Pieria, Laodikeia on the Sea, Apameia, and many more. All these cities contained Seleukid palaces. Seleukos' successors built even more cities, or refounded and rebuilt existing ones, for example Damascus and Aleppo.⁴⁴ During the second century, when the Seleukids had lost Asia Minor and were gradually losing control over the Upper Satrapies, the residences of the dynasty became restricted to those lying in the Fertile Crescent of Mesopotamia and the Levant, until finally, after *c.* 120, only Antioch and its nearby sister-cities, and Damascus were left as (competing) operation bases for the by then hopelessly divided dynasty.

⁴⁰ Lauter 1986, 86, cf. 99-113; Kramolisch 1989, 191.

⁴¹ Lauter 1986, 86.

⁴² Strabo 16.2.4-5. Seleukeia overshadowed but never replaced Babylon, where Alexander had resided and where also several Seleukid kings stayed, among them Antiochos I and Antiochos IV, boasted three palaces; these were initially built by Nebuchadrezzar II (*c.* 604-562) and were later extended by the Achaimenids; on the palaces at Babylon see Nielsen 1994, 31-5. Near the palace in the south, a theatre was built, probably by Alexander, and later restored by the Seleukids.

⁴³ On the foundations of Seleukos Nikator: Kuhrt & Sherwin-White 1993, 20-1; J.D. Grainger, *The Cities of Seleukid Syria* (Oxford 1990).

⁴⁴ T. Leisten, 'Damaskos: Perserzeit und Hellenismus', in: *RE²* III, 294-7. Damascus had been a Macedonian colony since Alexander's reign and a Seleukid residence notably in the last phase of the dynasty's history.

In modern discussion of the Seleukid Empire there is a tendency to find the ‘capital’ of the kingdom, or of an individual king’s reign. In the past, historians identified notably Antioch as the Seleukid capital; today, historians prefer Seleukeia on the Tigris. Bickerman criticises Seleukos for having made Antioch his capital instead of Babylon or Seleukeia on the Tigris, and thereby weakened his position in the east.⁴⁵ Conversely, Downey believed that Seleukeia in Pieria initially was the Seleukid capital under until Antiochos I ‘shifted the capital to Antioch’.⁴⁶ Bickerman held that Seleukeia in Pieria was no more than a port for Antioch, and as such the city of course did function.⁴⁷ However, the notion of a capital in the modern sense, *i.e.* a central seat of central government, did not exist in this empire.⁴⁸ The Seleukids maintained more than one ‘capital’, each being the administrative, military and economic heart of its own region, and in this sense Antioch in Syria was not more important than Seleukeia in Mesopotamia, Sardis in Lydia, or Ekbatana in Media. Other capitals of the empire in its heyday may have been Baktra (Zariaspa) and the unnamed city near present-day Aī Khanoum (perhaps Alexandria in Oxiana).

The city of Seleukeia on the Tigris is poorly known.⁴⁹ Literary sources inform us that it was Seleukos’ main residence in Mesopotamia for the greater part of their history.⁵⁰ The

⁴⁵ E. Bickerman, ‘The Seleucid Period’, in: *CHI* 3.1 (1988) 3-20, 4-5.

⁴⁶ G. Downey, *A History of Antioch in Syria. From Seleucus to the Arab Conquest* (Princeton 1961) 54 and 87.

⁴⁷ E. Bickerman, ‘The Seleucid Period’, in: *CHI* 3.1 (1988) 3-20, 4-5.

⁴⁸ Given Antioch’s central location in the Seleukis region, and the fact that according to Strabo (16.2.6) and Libanius (*Or.* 11.94-9) Seleukos Nikator built a palace at Daphne, near Antioch, suggests that Seleukos also saw Antioch as a ‘capital’. Seleukeia in Pieria on the other hand was still considered a ‘royal city’ in the time of Antiochos III, even though the city was then in the hands of the Ptolemies (Polyb. 5.58.4). Apameia too was a Seleukid capital, as *i.a.* Antiochos III resided there when he made his preparations for his first campaign against the Ptolemies (Polyb. 5.58.2), as well as Diodotos Tryphon when he was fighting Demetrios II (Strabo 16.2.10).

⁴⁹ See in general Kuhrt & Sherwin-White 1993, 135, see further M. Streck, *Seleukia und Ktesiphon* (1917); J. Wagner, *Seleukeia-am-Euphrat/Zeugma. Studien zur historischen Topographie und Geschichte*. Beihefte zum Tübinger Atlas des Vorderen Orients, Series B, Geisteswissenschaften 10 (Wiesbaden 1976); R.A. Hadley, ‘The Foundation of Seleucia-on-the-Tigris’, *Historia* 27 (1978) 228-230; A. Invernizzi, ‘Seleucia on the Tigris. Centre and periphery in Seleucid Asia’, in P. Bilde *et al.* eds., *Centre and Periphery in the Hellenistic World* (Aarhus 1993) 230-50. For the excavations: L. Waterman, *Preliminary Report upon the Excavations at Tell Umar* (1931) and *id.*, *Second Preliminary Report upon the Excavations at Tell Umar, Iraq* (1933).

city was built at a crossing of the Tigris, where the roads from Media, southern Mesopotamia and Syria met, and was connected with the Euphrates by an artificial canal. Of the original Seleukid settlement not more than the so-called ‘administrative block’, perhaps part of the *basileia*, has been extensively excavated. The city was very large, larger even than Antioch, and had a mixed Macedonian, Greek and Babylonian population.⁵¹

In Levantine Syria Seleukos founded Antiocheia on the Orontes (Antioch), Laodikeia on the Sea, Apameia and Seleukeia in Pieria.⁵² These four cities were constructed by a concerted plan, involving the same architects, and resembled each other in their design.⁵³ They were called ‘sister-cities’ by Strabo, and the region in which they were founded was called the Seleukis.⁵⁴ Seleukos I perhaps at first preferred Seleukeia in Pieria as his main residence in the Levant, a strategically located Mediterranean port to rival Alexandria.⁵⁵ He was buried there, presumably according to his own wish, in a famous monumental *heroon*, the Nikatoreion.⁵⁶

⁵⁰ Strabo 16.1.5; 16.2.4-5.

⁵¹ S. Sherwin-White *et al.*, ‘Seleuceia on Tigris’, *OCD* 1380; Nielsen 1994, 112; Van der Spek 1986, 177. On the ‘administrative block’: ‘Fourth Preliminary Report of the Excavations at Seleucia and Ctesiphon, Seasons 1969, 1970’, *Mesopotamia* 5/6 (1970/71) 9-104.

⁵² The cities were named after Seleukos’ father, mother, wife, and himself respectively. According to App., *Syr.* 57, Seleukos all in all built sixteen cities named Antiocheia after his father, five Laodikeia after his mother, nine Seleukeia after himself, and four after his wives, *sc.* three Apameia’s and one Stratonikeia.

⁵³ Downey 1961, 54; Grainger 1990, 67-87.

⁵⁴ Strabo 16.2.4.

⁵⁵ On this residence in general see Downey 1961, 54 and Nielsen 1994, 112. The evidence for the foundation of Seleukeia is collected in Downey 1963, 29 n. 8. The city, with its splendid buildings and strong defences, is described by Polyb. 5.59.3-11. All remaining structures, however, date from the Roman period, though inscriptions from Seleukid times give valuable information on the *polis* institutions and magistrates of the city. Seleukeia as Nikator’s residence: H. Seyrig, ‘Séleucos I et la fondation de la monarchie syrienne’, *Syria* 47 (1970) 290-311; E. Will, ‘La capitale des Séleucides’, in: *Akten des XIII. Internationalen Kongress für klassische Archäologie, Berlin 1988* (Mainz am Rhein 1990) 259-65.

⁵⁶ App., *Syr.* 63. At Seleukeia, Antiochos I not only introduced a *heros ktistēs* cult for his father but also established a cult of Apollo Soter, his grandfather, to commemorate his victories over the Celts in Asia Minor, cf. Strootman 2005a, 115-7.

When Seleukeia in Pieria was captured by the Ptolemies, Antioch became the most important of the four ‘sister-cities’ of the Seleukis.⁵⁷ Antioch was destined to become the greatest city in the Levant until Late Antiquity, and for this reason its history is fairly well-known from written sources as compared to other Seleukid residences.⁵⁸ Thus we know that the foundation of Antioch in 300 was accompanied by a grotesque symbolic act at the expense of Antigonos Monophthalmos, Seleukos’ archenemy, whom he had vanquished the previous year at Ipsos. For not only did Seleukos transfer to his new city the inhabitants of nearby Antigoneia, the prestigious city foundation of Monophthalmos, but Seleukos also—*vae victis*—demolished Antigoneia completely, using the salvaged materials to build his own residence.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ Seleukeia fell into the hands of the Ptolemies in the Third Syrian War (246-241), until it was retaken by Antiochos III in 219. On the Ptolemaic occupation: A. Jaehne, ‘Die syrische Frage, Seleukeia in Pierien und die Ptolemäer’, *Klio* 56 (1974) 501-19; F. Muccioli, ‘Seleuco III, i Tolemei e Seleucia di Pieria’, *Simblos* 2 (1997) 135-50. Also Laodikeia on the Sea was temporarily lost to the Ptolemies. Apameia always remained under Seleukid control, becoming the main military base and training camp of the Seleukid army in Syria; Strabo 16.2.10 mentions a ‘war office’ (λογιστήριον τὸ στρατιωτικόν), a stud farm (ἵπποτροφίον) with 300 stallions and more than 30,000 mares, and instructors in phalanx-warfare; Apameia also accommodated a royal mint, cf. J.Oelsner, ‘Apameia’, in: *RE²* I (1996) 824-5. The palace of Apameia, where the peace conference after Antiochos’ III war with the Romans took place (188), has not been excavated but presumably was located on the fortified akropolis, now a small Syrian village, where the remains of a theatre were found. Excavation reports of Apameia are published by the Centres Belges de Recherches Archéologiques à Apamée as *Fouilles d’Apamées de Syrie* (Brussels 1961-) and *Fouilles d’Apamée de Syrie: Miscellanea* (Brussels 1968-), cf. J.-C. Balty ed., *Apamée de Syrie. Bilan de recherches archéologiques 1965-68* (Brussels 1969), and id., *Apamée de Syrie. Bilan de recherches archéologiques 1969-1971* (Brussels 1972).

⁵⁸ For the history of Antioch see Downey 1961 (*op cit.* above) and id., *Ancient Antioch* (Princeton 1963). The literary and epigraphical evidence for Antioch under the Seleukids is collected and discussed in Downey 1961, 24-45. For the excavations in and around Antioch, present Antakya in the Hatay (Turkey) see the reports in *Excavations in the Plain of Antioch* (Chicago 1960-) and G.W. Elderkin *et al.* ed., *Antioch-on-the-Orontes* (Princeton 1934-1972).

⁵⁹ Downey 1961, 57. Outside the city, across the river Orontes, Seleukos set up a remarkable statue on a place that was since called Hippokephalos (‘Horse’s Head’). The statue represented the head of a horse with a gilded helmet lying beside it. The horse was said to be symbolic of Seleukos’ flight to Egypt after Antigonos Monophthalmos had driven him from Babylonia, whilst the helmet symbolized Seleukos’ final victory over his single-eyed opponent at Ipsos. The group bore the inscription: ‘On this

The city of Antioch commanded a junction of roads linking Asia Minor, Mesopotamia, and Koile Syria, and had access to the Mediterranean via the Orontes river and the port of Seleukeia in Pieria.⁶⁰ Besides the economic advantages of this location, Antioch was predestined to become a military centre, guarding the crossroads and enabling the Seleukids to quickly despatch troops to all corners of the surrounding region. The city was formally independent and had the political institutions of a genuine Greek *polis* such as a *boulē*. As was also the case in Alexandria, the inhabitants of Antioch were organised in citizen bodies, *politeumata*, based on ethnicity, each living in its own district.⁶¹

Libanius says that his home-town Antioch was so beautiful, that even the gods were eager to dwell there.⁶² One category of gods actually did so. From literary sources it can be established that the Seleukid kings maintained one their principal palaces in Antioch, though perhaps not earlier than the reign of Seleukos II.⁶³ The exact location of the palace is

Seleukos escaped from Antigonos, and was saved; and returning and defeating him, he destroyed him'. The horse's head also appeared on coins of Seleukos (Downey 1963, 38-9). Antigoneia on the Orontes had been Monophthalmos' most prestigious city founding (Billows 1990, 152, 242, and 297; cf. Downey 1963, 29 with n. 7; Tcherikover 1926, 61). Despite Seleukos' destructive interference, a town called Antigoneia still existed in Syria as late as 53 CE as a satellite village of Antioch (Dio 40.39.1-2; cf. Billows 1990, 297). Lib., *Ant.* 72-7, 87, 250, ascribed the foundation of Antioch to Alexander the Great; Downey 1963, 27-8 with n. 2, suggests that this legend may be based on an actual visit of Alexander *en route* from Issos to Phoenicia, that Alexander perceived the plan of building a city or a fortress there, and that Seleukos remembered this plan when he himself was king. But the story may as well be entirely legendary.

⁶⁰ Lawrence 1971, 38.

⁶¹ Strabo 16.2.4; cf. Lauter, 1986, 78; Downey 1961, 47; *id.* 'Strabo on Antioch: Notes on his methods', *TAPA* 72 (1941) 85-95. The quarters of Antioch were separated by means of a monumental, colonnaded avenue; the remains of the main road date to the Roman period but it already existed in a different form from the Hellenistic age (Lauter 1986, 81).

⁶² Lib., *Ant.* 109. On Seleukos Nikator's building activities in Antioch as known from written sources see Downey 1963, 27-44, and on the architectural design Downey 1963, 31-4. The most active builder in Antioch after Seleukos was Antiochos IV, who added a new quarter and a second *agora*, perhaps a part of the *basileion* like the *hiera agora* at Demetrias, cf. Downey 1963, 57, and Downey 1961, 95-6, 99-107.

⁶³ Apart from numerous sources attesting that the Seleukids resided at Antioch, Diod. 33.4, Jos., *AJ* 13.129-142, Strabo 16.2.5, and I *Macc.* 11.45 mention a palace specifically. Before the building of a palace in the city Antioch, the Seleukids probably resided in nearby Daphne.

uncertain, but most scholars agree that it was located on the island in the Orontes river, where the remains of a hippodrome, a Roman palace, and surrounding walls were excavated.⁶⁴ Thus, the royal area was separated from the city in a way that could not be misunderstood. Of the original Hellenistic palace little is known. Written sources attest only what one would already expect: that the *basileia* area consisted of several buildings (*oikoi*); that the main palace had a monumental *propylon* entrance; that it was fortified; that it was a renowned centre of royal patronage and housed a famous library.⁶⁵ The palace area on the island further included a hippodrome, and probably also a fortress with military barracks and arsenals.⁶⁶

About eight kilometres outside of Antioch, the sacred grove at Daphne was a central sanctuary of the Seleukid monarchy since the days of Seleukos Nikator.⁶⁷ It presumably was a sacred place already before the Hellenistic Age; under the Seleukids Daphne was consecrated to Apollo, tutelary deity and ancestor of the royal family, and Artemis.⁶⁸ The sanctuaries' focus was a divine laurel tree, and it was said that Apollo's pursuit of the maiden Daphne, and

⁶⁴ The island was still called *Regia* in the time of Malalas (sixth century CE); see further Nielsen 1994, 112-3. On the Roman palace: Downey 1961, 643-7, cf. Downey 1963, 117-8. On the hippodrome: W.A. Campbell, 'The Circus', in: G.W. Elderkin ed., *Antioch-on-the-Orontes I: The Excavations of 1932* (Princeton 1934) 34-41. The island no longer exists today, but its former shape can be determined by traces in the ground (Downey 1961, 27). The positioning of the fortified palace on an island has a precedent in the palace built by the Syracusean tyrant Dionysios I, who erected a *turanneia* on the island of Ortygia: 'Perceiving that the island was the strongest section of the city and could be easily defended, he divided it from the rest of the city by an extensive wall, and in this he set high towers at close intervals.. He also constructed on the island at great expense a fortified akropolis as a place of refuge in case of immediate need, and within its wall he enclosed the dockyards which were connected with a small harbour' (Diod. 14.7.1-3; transl C.H. Oldfather, cited after Hatzopoulos 2001, 191). Cf. B. Funck, 'Beobachtungen zum Begriff des herrscherpalastes und seiner machtpolitischen Funktion im hellenistischen Raum. Prolegomena zur Typologie der hellenistischen Herrschaftssprache', in: Brands & Hoepfner 1996, 44-55, esp. 44.

⁶⁵ Nielsen 1994, 113, cf. Downey 1961, 641. We know that the palace was fortified because in 147 it withstood military attack during the rioting that took place in the city in the reign of Demetrios II, cf. Bevan (1902) II, 223-6. Library: Downey 1963, 47-8. Antioch also harbored a royal treasury and a royal mint (Downey 1963, 54).

⁶⁶ Nielsen 1994, 113.

⁶⁷ Strabo 16.2.6; Lib., *Or.* 11.94-; cf. Downey 1961, 83.

⁶⁸ Strabo 16.2.6 mentions an 'asylum precinct' (ἄσυλον τέμενος), containing a temple dedicated to Apollo and Artemis.

the latter's transformation in a tree, had taken place there.⁶⁹ Daphne, also today a place of exceptional beauty, was in Hellenistic and Roman times renowned as a beautiful *paradeisos*, with streams, fountains, and springs, providing coolness and an abundance of clear water.⁷⁰ A yearly festival of Apollo was celebrated at Daphne by the inhabitants of Antioch.⁷¹ Antiochos IV Epiphanes attempted to transform the festival into a panhellenic event (below, chapter 5.4). The grove at Daphne further consisted of a theatre, a stadion, and a fortified royal palace.⁷²

Other important residences of the Seleukids were Sardis in Lydia, Ekbatana and Susa in the core of the empire, and Baktra and Aī Khanoum in the east. Sardis, the western terminus of the former Achaimenid, and subsequently Seleukid Royal Road, was the Seleukids' main stronghold in Asia Minor.⁷³ On a terrace against the northern slope of the reputedly impregnable citadel hill once stood the palace of Kroisos and later an Achaimenid palace.⁷⁴ In the third century the Seleukids transformed Sardis into a Hellenistic *polis*, both

⁶⁹ Myths relating to Syrian Daphne have been collected in Downey 1963, 41-4, and A. Porteous, *The Lore of the Forest* (London 1996; orig. publ. as *Forest Folklore*, 1928) 75-6.

⁷⁰ Strabo 16.2.4-5. The water coming to Daphne from the surrounding mountains was said to originate in the Kastalian fountains at Daphne in Greece, flowing all the way to Syrian Daphne via an underground waterway; in the murmur of the water oracles were heard (Porteous 1996, 75-6, cf. 252).

⁷¹ Strabo 16.2.6.

⁷² Downey 1963, 44; cf. Downey 1961, 642-3; Nielsen 1994, 115. As in the case of the palace at Antioch, the palace at Daphne must have been strongly fortified because in 246, during the Laodikean War, its outnumbered defenders successfully withstood a siege (Just. 27.1.4-7, App., *Syr.* 65; Val. Max. 9.10 ext. 1; Polyæn. 8.50; Hieron., *In Dan.* 11.5). Daphne may have been palace where Demetrios Poliorketes was imprisoned after his capture by Seleukos, and subsequently drank himself to death. This palace had gardens and game parks, and was located in the still unidentified 'the Syrian Chersonese' (Plut., *Demetr.* 50.5-6). The Seleukis indeed looks a little like a peninsula, but one may also think of the sedimentary plain in eastern Kilikia, with the cities Tarsos, Mallos, and Adana, all of whom were (re)named Antiocheia in Seleukid times and perhaps had palaces or *paradeisoi*, as well as Mopsuestia, where a Seleukid palace is mentioned by Jos., *AJ* 13.13.4. Nielsen 1994, 115 identifies Apameia as Demetrios' golden cage.

⁷³ Bickerman 1938, 53-5; G.M.A. Hanfmann, L. Robert, W.E. Mierse, 'The Hellenistic Period', in: G.M.A. Hanfmann ed., *Sardis: From Prehistoric to Roman Times. Results of the Archaeological Exploration of Sardis 1958-1975* (Cambridge, Mass., and London 1983) 109-39.

⁷⁴ Polyb. 7.15.2; Hdt. 1.154. Cf. Winter 1971 324-5; Nielsen 1994, 63. Xen., *Oec.* 4.20-4 praises the beauty of the *paradeisos* added to the palace by Cyrus the Younger. See also G.M.A. Hanfmann, 'On

architecturally and institutionally.⁷⁵ They enlarged the citadel's defences and rebuilt the palace as a genuine Hellenistic *basileion* serving as a royal palace when the king was present and as governor's palace in his absence.⁷⁶ This *basileia*, the administrative centre of Seleukid Asia Minor, boasted a Royal Treasury, a Royal Mint, and Royal Archives.⁷⁷

In the east the Seleukids also took over Achaemenid residence rather than building new palaces in new cities. The border regions between Mesopotamia and the Iranian plateau had been the geographical heart of Achaemenid power for more than two centuries. Here the Persian kings had build magnificent residences such as Persepolis and Pasargadai in the Persis, Ekbatana in Media, and Susa in Susiana.⁷⁸ Of these, the Seleukids, like Alexander before them, used Susa and Ekbatana as royal residences, but not, it seems, the palaces in the Persis.⁷⁹

the palace of Croesus', in: U. Höckmann and A. Krug eds., *Festschrift für F. Brommer* (Mainz 1977) 145-54.

⁷⁵ Kuhrt & Sherwin-White 1993, 180, have called Sardis 'perhaps the best example [of] deliberate hellenisation' in Asia Minor; the process of Hellenisation was speeded after Sardis had been depopulated by Antiochos III as punishment for its role in the revolt of Achaïos (220-213), and subsequently was repopulated by Antiochos' governor Zeuxis (Hanfmann *et al.* 1983, 109). Correspondence between Sardis and Antiochos III shows that the city had a *boulē*, passing regular decrees, but also a royal *stratēgos* and treasurer (*tamias*) (Hanfmann *et al.* 1983, 113). Architectural innovations included the building of an *agora*, a theatre, and a stadium. On Sardis as a Greek *polis* see esp. Kuhrt & Sherwin-White 1993, 181-2 and 135. On Hellenistic architecture in Sardis: C. Foss and G.M.A. Hanfmann, 'Regional setting and urban development', in: G.M.A. Hanfmann and J.C. Waldbaum eds., *A Survey of Sardis and the Major Monuments Outside the City Walls* (Cambridge, Mass., and London 1975) 17-34: 29-30.

⁷⁶ Winter 1971, 318-24; Hanfmann *et al.* 1983, 113. As a governor's residence Sardis was the seat of *i.a.* Zeuxis, Antiochos' III 'viceroy' in Asia Minor, whose rule is well known from epigraphical evidence.

⁷⁷ Hanfmann *et al.* 1983, 113.

⁷⁸ On Achaemenid royal palaces: Nielsen 1994, 35-51. Smaller palaces that once belonged to the Achaemenids were mainly used as the seats of governors, cf. Nielsen 1994, 112 with n. 217 and 115-28.

⁷⁹ Alexander's use of Iranian palaces: Bosworth 1993, 179. Susa as a Seleukid residence: Strabo 15.3.5; cf. Kuhrt & Sherwin-White 1993, 135. The two palaces at Susa were build by Darius I and Artaxerxes II, but the Seleukids may have rebuild them using elements of Achaemenid architecture: R. Boucharlat, 'Suse et la Susiana à l'époque achéménide: données archéologiques', *AchHist* 4 (1990) 149-

The Hellenistic palace found at Aī Khanoum in Afghanistan, perhaps Alexandria on the Oxus, was originally built under the Seleukids; around 150 the palace was enlarged by an unknown Greek-Baktrian dynast.⁸⁰ The palace in its final form was enormous, the whole area being some 87,500 m². It was a truly Hellenistic palace, its architecture combining Greek-Macedonian and Iranian elements, the latter represented by a large audience hall with a

75: 151; cf. Kuhrt & Sherwin-White 1993, 135; Nielsen 1994, 35. Ekbatana as Seleukid residence: Polyb. 10.31.4-13; Strabo 11.13.5; II *Macc.* 9.3. Ekbatana lay strategically at the Khorasan road connecting Mesopotamia with Iran. It had been the residence of Median kings until conquered by Cyrus the Great (Kuhrt 1995, II 654, 657-8). In 210/1 Antiochos III assembled the army for his *anabasis* at Ekbatana; Polyb. 10.31.12-3 says that Antiochos stripped the palace of its precious decorations in order to coin money for his troops, acquiring nearly 4,000 talents in this way; the enormous wealth Polybios claims to have been kept at the palace indicates how important Ekbatana was for the Seleukids as a treasury. The palace mentioned by Polybios was built by the early Achaimenids, but the whole site now lies under the modern city of Hamadan and is beyond reach for archaeologists: H.W.A.M. Sancisi-Weerdenburg, ‘Het Achemenidenrijk: een “early state”?’, in: R. Hagesteijn ed., *Stoeien met staten* (Leiden 1980) 165-86: 169. Strabo 15.3.3 explicitly states that the Seleukids did not use former Persian palaces in the Persis, the traditional core of the Achaimenid dynasty, *i.e.* Persepolis and Pasargadai, although there was a royal mint in the Persis. The reason may be, apart from the fact that Persepolis had been burnt by Alexander, that the Persis was a peripheral region, important only for the Achaimenids because it was their homeland and principal power base. Macedonian control of the Persis was weak from the beginning; the Persis was among the first countries to break away from Seleukid rule, perhaps *de facto* as early as the late third century, achieving formal independence under indigenous rulers in the second half of the second century (Kuhrt & Sherwin-White 1993, 225-6; Sullivan 1990, 110-2). Alexander may already have foreseen the difficulty of controlling this mountainous region, that cost him so much trouble to conquer (Bosworth 1993, 88-92); H.W.A.M. Sancisi-Weerdenburg, “*Den wereltvorst een vuyle streek aan sijn eer cleet*” (Utrecht 1991) 21, has suggested that Alexander destroyed Persepolis—Xerxes’ palace and the symbolic centre of Achaimenid power—not merely as an ideologically motivated act of revenge, but also as an attempt to destroy the central power base of the Achaimenid family, the Persian heartland, whose inhabitants were said to be the most warlike of all the Persians (Diod. 19.21.3). Thus, Alexander emphasised his personal victory over the Achaimenid family, replacing Darius as the legitimate Great King.

⁸⁰ K. Karttunen, ‘Aī Khanoum’, *RE*² 1 (1996) 306.

columned vestibule, resembling the Great Apadana at Persepolis.⁸¹ The palace enclosure was reached from the city by a monumental *propylon*, giving access to a broad avenue leading up to the palace proper. After passing a mausoleum the avenue terminated at a forecourt before the peristyle entrance to the main palace. The latter was divided in an official and ceremonial wing, and a residential part, separated from each other by a wide corridor. The ceremonial part consisted of a large audience hall and rooms for administration or service. Behind this lay the residential part, comprising apartments, decorated reception halls and dining rooms.⁸² As

⁸¹ M. Colledge, 'Greek and non-Greek interaction in the art and architecture of the Hellenistic East', in: A. Kuhrt and S. Sherwin-White eds., *Hellenism in the East* (Berkeley and Los Angeles 1987) 134-62, at 143; cf. P. Bernard, 'Ai Khanoum on the Oxus. A Hellenistic City in Central Asia', *Proceedings of the British Academy* 53 (1967) 71-95; id., 'An ancient Greek city in Central Asia', *Scientific American* 246 (1982) 126-35, esp. 129. Today it is often maintained that Ai Khanoum was first of all an 'eastern' city, e.g. Kuhrt & Sherwin-White 1993, 178-9; Nielsen 1994, 127-8; but to find Near Eastern culture in this part of the world is hardly surprising; much more striking is the undeniable Greek-Macedonian character that *also* characterized this ancient city: its hippodamian grid, Greek theatre, and gymnasium. Whether the palace—resembling the palaces at Pella and Aigai at least as much as Persepolis—is oriental or Greek depends on what one prefers; for example, with a total surface area of over 80,000 m², the palace at Ai Khanoum may 'dwarf' the 'by comparison miniscule' c. 10,000 m² of the palace at Aigai (Kuhrt & Sherwin-White 1993, 136), but hardly the 60,000 m² of the palace at Pella, and certainly not the *basileia* of Alexandria. I am therefore inclined to agree with Frank Holt, who, commenting on the western bias of W.W. Tarn and the eastern bias of A.K. Narain in respectively *The Greeks in Bactria and India* (Cambridge 1938) and *The Indo-Greeks* (Oxford 1957), stated that 'new evidence has clearly demonstrated the active cross-current of eastern and western cultures in ways that Tarn and Narain could scarcely imagine. ... At Ai Khanoum, a marvelous Hellenistic city has been unearthed which provides at once a clear picture of Greek and Oriental features side by side': F.L. Holt, *Alexander the Great and Bactria* (Leiden 1989) 5. For the excavations by the Délégation Archéologique Française en Afghanistan (DAFA) led by Paul Bernard, one may consult the eight volumes of *Fouilles d'Ai Khanoum*. Discovered only in 1961, excavations at Ai Khanoum came to a standstill with the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979; see P. Bernard, 'Ai Khanoum en Afghanistan hier (1964-1979) et aujourd'hui (2001): Un site en péril, perspectives d'avenir', *Comptes Rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* (2001) 971-77. In 2004 the site allegedly was stripped of its remaining archaeological treasures by treasure-hunters protected by warlords of the Northern Alliance.

⁸² Nielsen 1994, 125-6.

in other Hellenistic royal cities, a theatre was located at the divide between *basileion* and *polis*, against the slope of the akropolis.

Ptolemaic palaces

Unlike the Seleukids or Antigonids, the Ptolemies resided mainly in a single city: Alexandria by Egypt. Alexandria was not the capital of Egypt; the capital of Ptolemaic Egypt was Memphis. In its heyday, the third century BCE, Alexandria was first of all the centre of a maritime empire, connecting Egypt and the Red Sea with the eastern Mediterranean. Still, Alexandria was not the only place where the Ptolemies resided. Ptolemaic kings travelled too, albeit not as permanently as their Seleukid rivals, temporarily moving their court for the *ad hoc* reasons of war and diplomacy, marriage and accession. The Ptolemies, presumably *ab initio*, often stayed in Memphis, and in the second and first centuries BCE visited the Egyptian countryside on more regular basis. They maintained palaces in Memphis, Siwah and Pelousion.⁸³ Also the fortress-city Pelousion is likely to have contained a royal palace under the Ptolemies. Archaeological evidence for Ptolemaic palace architecture is scarce, though some indication regarding their outlook is given by the well-preserved governor's palaces in Ptolemaïa in Cyrenaïca and Araq el Emir in Transjordania.⁸⁴

The most significant Ptolemaic residence after Alexandria was Memphis, where the Ptolemies were enthroned as pharaoh and where priestly delegations from the Egyptian temples would gather to meet with the king.⁸⁵ Memphis was almost 3,000 years old when Ptolemaios, son of Lagos, first took possession of it in his capacity as satrap of Egypt. Strategically located between the Nile Delta and the Nile proper, and at the terminus of the inland roads to both Asia and the western oases, Memphis had always been the principal economic, military and administrative centre of Lower Egypt.⁸⁶ The city was a royal residence

⁸³ *Ibidem* 130 n. 235. Ptolemaios II Philadelphos received Antiochos II Theos at Pelousion in 252 (Hieron., *In Dan.* 11.6); Pelousion also served as base of operations for Ptolemaios IV Philopator during the Fourth Syrian War.

⁸⁴ Nielsen 1994, 138-51.

⁸⁵ Ptolemies and Memphis: D. Crawford, W. Clarysse, J. Quaegebeur, eds., *Studies on Ptolemaic Memphis*. *Studia Hellenistica* 24 (1980) 83-9. D.J. Thompson, *Memphis under the Ptolemies* (Princeton 1988); W. Huss, W., *Der makedonische König und die ägyptischen Priester. Studien zur Geschichte des ptolemäischen Ägypten*. *Historia Einzelschriften* 85 (Stuttgart 1994).

⁸⁶ Thompson 1988, 3. The central position of Memphis is reflected in an earlier name given to the place: *Ankh-tawy*, 'The Balance of the Lands'. Strabo 17.1.31 says that Memphis lay 'near Babylon',

already in the Early Dynastic Period and the Old Kingdom, but also later pharaohs resided, built and were inaugurated there. Memphis was a sacred site, the home of Ptah and the house of the Apis bull. Under the Ptolemies Memphis was the first and foremost city in Egypt, the administrative centre of the province, and the scene of a successful attempt to integrate Greek-Macedonian kingship with local customs and beliefs. Memphis had a mixed population of Greeks, Egyptians, and Idumaeans, organised as *politeumata*.⁸⁷ The Egyptian element was dominant, and the temple priests formed the city's ruling class. Strabo describes the palace and the temple district as the two outstanding features of Memphis.⁸⁸ The Ptolemaic palace lay on a height in the northern part of the city, but all that Strabo says about it, is that it included a citadel (*akra*) and a large park with a lake. For ceremonial purposes the Ptolemies also maintained the existing Egyptian palaces, lying in a spacious enclosure in the north-east. These included the Palace of Apries, the only palatial structure in Memphis explored by archaeologists to some extent.⁸⁹ Near the Egyptian palace was an ancient temple precinct, where Ptah, the Creator God, was worshipped.⁹⁰ The great temple of Ptah was of special

i.e. it was the gateway to Egypt. Foreign invaders always headed for Memphis first, *i.a.* the Assyrian Esarhaddon, Kambyzes, Alexander, and Antiochos Epiphanes: Kuhrt 1995, II 499, 634, and 662; Thompson 1988, 4. Memphis flourished especially in the New Kingdom but was also crucial to the Saite kings (664-525) of late dynastic history: Kuhrt 1995, II 640. After 525 Memphis became the satrapal capital of Achaimenid Egypt: Kuhrt 1995, II 690.

⁸⁷ For the population see Thompson 1988, 82-105, cf. 107-8. On Egyptian priestly elites see also A.B. Lloyd, 'The Egyptian elite in the early Ptolemaic period. Some hieroglyphic evidence', in: D. Ogden ed., *The Hellenistic World. New Perspectives* (London 2002) 117-36.

⁸⁸ Strabo 17.1.31-2.

⁸⁹ Thompson 1988, 15; Nielsen 1994, 27. Remains of Hellenistic palaces have not been found, but Memphis is an extremely underexcavated site. The Hellenistic palace already lay in ruins when Strabo visited the city. The palace of the pharaoh Apries (589-570) was only one of several monuments within the palace enclosure built by the Saite kings. The Saite palace was later used by the Achaimenid satraps, by Alexander when he stayed at Memphis in 332 and 331, and by Alexander's satrap Kleomenes, whom Ptolemaios replaced in 323. For this palace see W.M.F. Petrie and J.H. Walker, *Memphis II: The Palace of Apries* (London 1909); B. Kemp, 'The Palace of Apries at Memphis', *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts in Kairo* 33 (1977) 101-8.

⁹⁰ Since the Early Dynastic Period there had been a cult of Ptah at Memphis; this Memphite god was a symbol of unity and thus of special importance for pharaonic kingship. In the so-called Theology of Memphis (*ANET* 4-6), an ancient text that explained the relation between Ptah and the pharaoh, Ptah was declared Creator God and king of the united Egypt (Kuhrt 1995, II 631, cf. I 145-6). The cult of

importance for the Ptolemies. In the temple's large ceremonial hall the Ptolemies, like the pharaoh's before them, were enthroned according to Egyptian custom. The monuments of Memphis were built by various pharaohs, and the Ptolemies too were eager to leave their mark on city and temple.⁹¹ Already Ptolemaios II presented the priests of Ptah with a statue of his deified sister-wife Arsinoë, who consequently became the Consort of Ptah.⁹² Philadelphos' grandson Ptolemaios IV Philopator set up statues of himself and added a ceremonial *propylon* in Egyptian style to the temple, no doubt to be used instead of the existing gateways for the Ptolemies' coronation ritual.⁹³ Also Kleopatra VII made additions to the temple area.⁹⁴

Alexandria, in contrast to age-old Memphis, was not an Egyptian but a truly Hellenistic city, home of a polyglot population of Greeks, Egyptians, Levantines and others.⁹⁵

the Apis Bull, who was worshipped as a physical manifestation of Ptah, was the most significant of various animal cults which became especially prominent in the last millennium BCE (Kuhrt 1995, II 637). On the cult of Apis under the Ptolemies see Thompson 1988, 190-211.

⁹¹ Thompson 1988, 18. The temple of Ptah was surrounded by several dependencies, including the stables and court of the Apis Bull and the Mother of Apis, built by Psammetichus II (595-589), and the Apis Bull embalming house of Soshenq I (945-924). A colossal statue of the Ramesses II (c. 1290-1224), who added more structures to the Temple of Ptah than any other king, stood outside the enclosure gates (in the twentieth century the statue was brought to Cairo, but has recently returned). Other builders at Memphis were Amenemhet III, Tuthmosis IV, Amenophis III, and Merneptah. For the archaeology of Memphis see W.M.F. Petrie *et al.*, *Memphis*, I-V (London 1909-13); R. Anthes *et al.*, *Mit Rahineh* 1955 and 1956 (Philadelphia 1959 and 1965).

⁹² Thompson 1988, 126-7.

⁹³ *Ibidem* 17.

⁹⁴ *Ibidem* 125.

⁹⁵ The single most important study of Alexandria still is P.M. Fraser's monumental *Ptolemaic Alexandria* (3 vols; Oxford 1972); on the city in general, its archaeology and history, also A. Bernard, *Alexandrie la grande* (Paris 1956; 2nd edn; Paris 1966); N. Hinske ed., *Alexandrien. Kulturbegegnungen dreier Jahrtausende im Schmelztiegel einer mediterranen Großstadt* (Mainz 1981); N.Grimal, *et al.* eds., *La gloire d'Alexandrie* (Paris 1998); G. Grimm, *Alexandria. Die erste Königsstadt der hellenistischen Welt* (Mainz am Rhein 1998); M. Pfrommer, *Alexandria. Im Schatten der Pyramiden* (Mainz am Rhein 1999); W.V. Harris and G. Ruffini eds., *Ancient Alexandria between Egypt and Greece* (Leiden 2004). For the initial population of Alexandria: Fraser, I 5-7; R. Cavenaille, 'Pour une histoire politique et sociale d'Alexandrie: les origines', *AC* 41 (1972) 94-112; A. Jähne, 'Die 'Ἀλεξανδρέων χώρα', *Klio* 63 (1981) 63-103: 68-72. At first, the Greek element was dominant; with the reign of Ptolemaios Physkon (145-116) as watershed, a certain degree of 'Egyptianisation' set in:

This lively and prosperous port with its many monuments was the greatest metropolis of the Mediterranean. It was rivalled only by Antioch and later by Rome in the size of its population and magnificence. Alexandria was a sea port, located in the heart of the Ptolemaic kingdom. Egypt with its agricultural abundance lay around the corner, and via the seas the Ptolemies had access to all parts of their maritime empire.⁹⁶ In a later age, Dio Chrysostomos commented that Alexandria...

is situated, as it were, at the uniting centre of the whole earth, of even its most far away nations, as if the whole city is an *agora*, bringing together all men into one place, displaying them to one another and, as far as possible, making them one people.⁹⁷

The city was the first city founded by Alexander the Great.⁹⁸ When Ptolemaios Soter buried Alexander here as *heros ktistēs*, Alexandria became the most prestigious and most hallowed

Fraser, 115-31; Hoepfner and Schwandner 1994, 242. On the multicultural, but predominantly Hellenic nature of the population see D. Delia, 'All Army Boots and Uniforms? Ethnicity in Ptolemaic Egypt', in: *Alexandria and Alexandrianism. Papers Delivered at a Symposium Organized by the J.P. Getty Museum, April 1993* (Malibu 1996) 41-52.

⁹⁶ Under normal weather conditions it was a mere 4,5 days sailing from Alexandria to Ephesos (Ach. Tat., 5.15.1, 17.1) and only 2,5 days to Cyprus (Lucianus, *Nav.* 7); Cyrenaica and Palestine were even easier reached by ship: F. Meijer, *Schipper, zeil de haven binnen, alles is al verkocht. Handel en transport in de oudheid* (Baarn 1990) 179-80. The Great Harbour of Alexandria, below the famed Pharos lighthouse of Ptolemaios Philadelphos, was among the largest in the ancient world. But the city boasted also a second harbour, the Eunostus harbour in the west (Fraser, II 58 n. 133; Hoepfner & Schwandner 1994, 238). The Great Harbour was enclosed by artificial dykes, of which the Heptastadium between the mainland and the Pharos island was the most impressive (Bernard 1966, 145-7; Fraser, I 21). The lighthouse on Pharos—like the Mausoleum at Halikarnassos one of the Wonders of the World—was built under Philadelphos, but perhaps planned already by his father, Ptolemaios Soter (Fraser, I 20).

⁹⁷ Dio. Chrys. 32.36.

⁹⁸ Arr., *Anab.* 3.1.5-2; 7.23.7; Diod. 17.52.1-2; Plut., *Alex.* 26.2; cf. Bosworth 1993, 247. After discussing the various reasons Alexander may have had for founding Alexandria, Bosworth concludes that 'his desire for glory, in this case to be honoured in perpetuity as founder, may have been the fundamental factor.' As regards the actual foundation, the sources agree that the plan to build Alexandria was conceived when the king was in Egypt, where he noticed the favourable site at Lake Mareotis, near the western delta, with its unique possibilities for trade with the Mediterranean and the

of all Alexander's foundations. The city had the democratic institutions of an autonomous *polis*.⁹⁹

When Ptolemaios I became satrap of Egypt in 323, he initially resided in Memphis, but when he acquired control of Palestine, Phoenicia and Syria after his defeat of Perdikkas in 320, he set up court in Alexandria.¹⁰⁰ There, waiting for him to take possession, was the royal palace that Alexander had ordered to be built. Archaeologically, this most renowned *basileion* of the Hellenistic world remains something of a mystery, but the lack of remains is counterbalanced by extensive literary evidence provided by Polybios, Strabo, and others. Of the original palace commissioned by Alexander no more is known than that it was a large and rich complex. Interestingly, the same source adds that Alexander did not conceive the palace as an integral part of the city, but as an additional element.¹⁰¹ The later Ptolemaic *basileia* was much larger. Strabo, who visited Alexandria in the late first century BCE, describes it in some detail, and informs us that the royal district was so large that it was known as the *basileia*, the Palaces. The *basileia*, Strabo says, covered one fourth to one third of the entire city, as each of the Ptolemies was eager add a monument of his own,¹⁰² constituting 'a city by itself'.¹⁰³ The *basileia*, according to Strabo, consisted of two parts. First, the *basileia* proper: a large semi-

hinterland. But Alexander planned his actions always well in advance. The foundation is usually dated after Alexander's return from Siwa in 331 (Bosworth 1993, 74). Alexander supervised the demarcation of the city's outline himself, and ordered his architect Deinokrates of Rhodes to build on a straight hippodamian grid five city districts, containing about forty residential blocks each, *i.e.* enough to accommodate a total population of 75,000 to 100,000; attracting many new settlers from Greece and from among the Greeks living in Egypt and Cyrenaïca, the city later may eventually have reached 300,000 (Diod. 17.52.6) to 500,000 citizens (Hoepfner & Schwandner 1994, 237 and 241).

⁹⁹ Fraser, I 93-115.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibidem* II, 11-2 n. 28.

¹⁰¹ Diod. 17.52.4.

¹⁰² Strabo 17.1.9 (793): 'And the city has beautiful public sanctuaries and the *basileia*, which occupies a quarter or even a third of the entire enclosure. For each of the kings added some adornment to the public structures and each one also added further buildings to those already existing, so that, as the poet says, "from others others grow". But all stand near each other, between the harbour and to what lies beyond them.' Plin., *NH*. 5.2.62 says that the *basileia* covered only fifth of the city, but that would bring the total area still to about one square kilometre, against two square kilometres for Strabo's estimation (Hoepfner and Schwandner 1994, 243; cf. Nielsen 1994, 131-33; Fraser, I 11-37; Bernard 1966, *infra*).

¹⁰³ Ach. Tat., *Leuc.* 5.1.88: ἀλλήν πόλιν.

public and ceremonial area with temples, tombs and other monuments. Second the so-called Inner Palaces, the central residential palace on the Lochias peninsula where the kings lived, worked and received guests.¹⁰⁴ The long and narrow peninsula had its own enclosed harbour, to the effect that the Inner Palaces' focus point was the Mediterranean as well as the city and the hinterland. The Inner Palaces are only mentioned by Strabo; Polybios describes them with some more detail.¹⁰⁵ The complex was entered through a monumental façade with a Gate of Audience.¹⁰⁶ It contained, besides the usual residential rooms and offices, several peristyle reception halls, including a central Great Peristyle. In a park on the landward side of Lochias were many pavilions for banqueting and drinking, as well as guesthouses.¹⁰⁷ A citadel (*akra*), containing a prison, was also on Lochias.¹⁰⁸

The enormous semi-public part of the *basileia* dominated the centre of Alexandria, lying between the Inner Palaces and the city as a sort of transitional area. It contained many buildings, named by Strabo, who was stunned by their magnificence and size. Nearest to the Inner Palaces were the theatre and the stadion.¹⁰⁹ These could be used for ceremonial purposes, as was also the case with the *basileia*'s gymnasium. Strabo further mentions a huge temple of Poseidon at the harbour, a temple of the royal deity Dionysos, parks, the Museum, the Library, the law courts, and a precinct for ruler cult. The latter was near the sea and

¹⁰⁴ Fraser, I 22-3; II 60-3; Hoepfner & Schwandner 1994, 238 and 242; Nielsen 1994, 131. There was a second residential palace on the island Antirrhodos, close to Lochias, with a small harbour (Strabo 17.1.9; cf. Fraser, II 63 n. 147). Lochias mirrored the Zephirion peninsula at Halikarnassos, where Mausolos had built his palace. The remains of the palace now lie under the surface of the sea, though recently archaeologists have started diving up finds that may have belonged to the Ptolemaic palaces. For an overview and evaluation of the finds at Alexandria until the end of the Millennium consult R.S. Bagnall, 'Archaeological Work on Hellenistic and Roman Egypt, 1995-2000', *AJA* 105 (2001) 227-43, esp. 229-31. See further F. Goddio *et al.*, *Alexandria: The Submerged Royal Quarters* (London 1998); J.-Y. Empereur, *Alexandria Rediscovered* (London 1998); id., 'Travaux récents dans la capitale des Ptolémées', in: *Alexandrie: Une mégapole cosmopolite*. Cahiers de la Villa Kérylos 9 (Paris 1999) 25-9; J. Yoyotte, 'Alexandrie. La grande bataille de l'archéologie', *l'Histoire* 238 (1999) 50-4. For pictures see Grimm 1998 and L. Foreman, *Cleopatra's Palace. In search of Legend* (1999).

¹⁰⁵ Polyb. 15.25-34; Cf. Fraser, II 61-2 n. 144-5.

¹⁰⁶ Polyb. 15.31.2: τὸν χρηματιστικὸν πυλῶνα.

¹⁰⁷ Nielsen 1994, 130-131.

¹⁰⁸ Polyb. 5.39.3; Plut., *Cleom.* 37.5; Ath. 196 A. Cf. Fraser, I 29; II 99 n. 228.

¹⁰⁹ Bernard 1966, 140-1; Fraser, I 23, 31; II 64 n. 149; 99-100 n. 231; Hoepfner & Schwandner 1994, 245.

contained the tombs of Alexander and the Ptolemies, the so-called Sema, as well a sanctuary for dynastic cult.¹¹⁰ The buildings belonging to the Museum were also in the royal area, as well as the library, the most beautiful monument of Alexandria according to Strabo. The Alexandrian *basileia* furthermore consisted of parks and gardens with collections of exotic animals and plants.¹¹¹ Like genuine imperialists, the Ptolemies plundered the Egyptian countryside for monuments with which to adorn their capital; in particular obelisks and sphinxes from the New Kingdom and Saite periods were transported from Egypt to Alexandria.¹¹² The presence of these antiquated monuments must not be considered too rashly as proof of a thriving Egyptian culture in Alexandria, let alone of Egyptian prevalence in the city. Rather these monuments were expressions of Ptolemaic control over the province of

¹¹⁰ Strabo 793-4; cf. Plut., *Ant.* 86. Ach. Tat. 5.1. and Zenob. 3.94 locate the Sema ‘in the middle of the city’. On the location of the Sema: Fraser, II 36-41n. 85-8. Other writers mentioning the Sema *c.q.* Alexander’s tomb include Suet., *Aug.* 18; Dio 51.16.3-5; Hdn. 4.8.9. For an extensive discussion of these and other sources see especially Fraser, II 31-6 n. 79-84 with earlier literature; cf. Bernard 1966, 229-37. The location of Alexander’s grave has puzzled scholars and laymen for the last two centuries, but there is little chance it will be found. For the search for Alexander’s grave one may now consult N.J. Saunders, *Alexander’s Tomb. The Two Thousand Year Obsession to find the Lost Conqueror* (New York 2006). The Ptolemies were buried either in one and the same building or in separate tombs. The evidence collected by Fraser, II 34-5 n. 82 to prove that Alexander and the Ptolemies were buried in one mausoleum, only proves they were buried in the same enclosure, but not in the same building. According to Dio 51.8.6, Plut., *Ant.* 74 and Suet., *Aug.* 17.4 Cleopatra VII built a separate mausoleum for Antony, but presumably this tomb was situated in its own precinct. On Kleopatra’s tomb of see Fraser, II 33-4 n. 81. In Strabo’s time, the former Ptolemaic precinct of the ruler cult was consecrated to the worship of Augustus and was called *σεβαστή αγορά* (cp. the *hiera agora* at Demetrias; cf. Fraser, II 98 n. 220). The focus of this sanctuary was a temple called the *Sebasteion* (Caesareum); the building of this temple was begun by Kleopatra VII and finished under Augustus: Hoepfner & Schwandner 1994, 237, 245; cf. Bernard 1966 134-6; Fraser, I 24-5; II 68-9 n. 155-8.

¹¹¹ Ath. 654b-c.

¹¹² These were mainly from the New Kingdom and Saite periods, many originally set up in Heliopolis. Since these are ancient pharaonic monuments, it is difficult to date just when they were transported to Alexandria; although there is scholarly consensus that most were placed there under the Ptolemies, instead of exclusively in the Roman period, it remains controversial whether this was done during the entire Ptolemaic period, or only in the later phases of the kingdom’s history, when Ptolemaic power had become largely restricted to Egypt: Bagnall 2001, 229-30.

Egypt, their principal and most stable source of income, and should perhaps better be considered imperial appropriation, to use Saïd's term, of a conquered culture.¹¹³

2.2 A closer look

In the previous chapter a broad view of royal residences was given. In particular we have looked at the physical separation of civic and royal space in cities. It is now time to take a closer look at the structure of Hellenistic royal space and the architecture of what we have called the 'inner palace', the residential and representative abode of the royal family.

The Palace at Pergamon

The best known palace complex in the Hellenistic world (excepting the by comparison small Hasmonean and Herodean palaces in Palestine) is in the Attalid capital of Pergamon.¹¹⁴ As their kingdom was a relatively small one, the Attalid kings concentrated their building activities in the city that subsequently became synonymous with their state. Monarchic architecture in Pergamon reveals the same basic structure as in other Hellenistic cities; furthermore, the archaeological remains at Pergamon are reminiscent of Strabo's description of the Alexandrian *basileia*. But unlike the other major residences—Alexandria, Seleukeia-Tigris, Antioch—in Pergamon the various constituent buildings have been relatively well preserved. Pergamon therefore offers valuable indirect evidence for other royal centres.

Before Pergamon became the Attalid capital, it had been a royal stronghold of the Achaimenids, Alexander, Lysimachos, and the Seleukids. The palace complex, developing in the late third and early second century BCE, was focused on the akropolis. Like in other Hellenistic residential cities, it is possible to distinguish between an innermost palace—the heavily fortified private house of the king and his family—and a semi-public outer area

¹¹³ Strootman 2001, 204.

¹¹⁴ Good recent treatments of the monuments and archaeology of Pergamon are W. Radt, *Pergamon. Geschichte und Bauten einer antiken Metropole* (Darmstadt 1999); and H. Koester ed., *Pergamon, citadel of the gods. Archaeological Record, Literary Description, and Religious Development* (Harrisburg 1998), with an overview of new research until 1997 at pp. 1-40.

filled.¹¹⁵ This intermediary area was structured by means of a procession road leading from the city's main gate, passing various sanctuaries and other religious monuments, including the fabled Great Altar, and terminating at the inner palace. Taken together, the religious architecture on the akropolis of Pergamon was a magnificent shrine for the cult of victory and kingship.

The building programme at the akropolis was initiated by Attalos I immediately after he assumed the diadem in 238 or 237. Attalos' assumption of the diadem and the title of *sōtēr*, whereby he formally repudiated Seleukid sovereignty, was legitimised by his victory over the Celts who had invaded Asia Minor some decades before. Although both he and his, no less warlike, successor Eumenes fought other enemies as well—Bithynia, Pontos, Rhodes, the Seleukids—recurrent victories over the archetypal barbaric Celts conferred upon the Attalids an aura of beings the very saviours of civilisation, and the theme of the king as barbarianslayer subsequently became pivotal to Attalid image-building *c.q.* their superseding of the Seleukids as protectors and saviours of the cities of Asia Minor.¹¹⁶ To this end, Attalos re-dedicated the ancient *temenos* of Athena Polias, Pergamon's main deity, to Athena Nikephoros. Attalos also introduced a cult of Zeus Soter on the Pergamene akropolis.¹¹⁷ Just outside the city walls, a second sanctuary of Athena Nikephoros was built, the so-called Nikephorion, located at the beginning of the procession road that connected it with its

¹¹⁵ The concept of privacy and private life, as opposed to public life, is also visible in the structure of Greek houses of the classical period: L.C. Nevett, *House and Society in the Ancient Greek World* (Cambridge 1999) 155.

¹¹⁶ For the Attalid wars in Asia Minor consult F. Staehlin, *Geschichte der kleinasiatischen Galater* (Leipzig 1907); C. Habicht, 'Über die Kriege zwischen Pergamon und Bithynien', *Hermes* 84 (1956) 90-110; Hansen 1971, 28-33; Allen 1983, 195-9; F. Chamoux, 'Pergame et les Galates', *REG* 101 (1988) 492-500. For 'Celtic' propaganda see K. Strobel, 'Keltensieg und Galatersieger', in: E. Schwertheim ed., *Forschungen in Galatien* (Bonn 1994) 67-96; Strootman 2005a.

¹¹⁷ Allen 1983, 121-2; Hansen 1971, 447-50; cf. OGIS 302. Because Athena and Zeus, the deities most closely associated with *akropoleis*, were the saviour of cities and bestower of victory *par excellence*, they provided excellent paradigms for Attalid kingship. In Classical times it was not uncommon that Zeus and Athena were worshipped jointly, sharing the same cult epithets: J. Neils, 'Athena, Alter ego of Zeus', in: S. Deacy, and A. Villing eds., *Athena in the Classical World* (Leiden 2001) 219-32, esp. 224-6.

counterpart on the akropolis.¹¹⁸ It were however Attalos' sons and successors Eumenes II Philadelphos Soter (197-159) and Attalos II Philadelphos (159-138) who transformed the akropolis and its slopes into a coherent royal domain.¹¹⁹

The gradual transition from *polis* to palace, from civic to royal space, followed the city's main road, which began at the Nikephorion outside the monumental Gate of Eumenes, crossed the city, and finally winded up the akropolis hill to terminate at the palace. This doubtless was also the route taken by the *pompē* of the triennial panhellenic Nikephoria Festival, founded in 180 by Eumenes II to commemorate a victory over the Celts of Galatia, at which occasion Eumenes also took the epithet of Saviour.¹²⁰ The first landmark the road came across was the *agora*, the symbolic heart of the *polis* Pergamon. After passing several public building associated with civic life, the road led through a gate and followed its way up against the southern slope of the akropolis until it reached through a gate decorated with a statue of Nike a large peristyle court. Here we find an altar and temple dedicated to Zeus Soter, and a later added equestrian statue of Attalos III. This square—inaccurately called Upper Agora in modern literature—marked the transition from civic to royal space. Behind it were three interrelated *temenē* that together formed the heart of the building programme started by Eumenes II: the terrace precinct supporting the Great Altar, the *temenos* with the tombs of the Attalids, and the central sanctuary of Athena.

¹¹⁸ Radt 1999, 242-3; H.-J., Schalles, *Untersuchungen zur Kulturpolitik der pergamenischen Herrscher im dritten Jahrhundert vor Christus* (Tübingen 1985) 145-6. The Nikephorion was first built by Attalos I c. 220 and rebuilt by Eumenes II after troops of Philippos V had demolished it in 201 (Polyb. 16.1; App., *Mac.* 4; cf. Hansen 1971, 55-7). In 155 the sanctuary was razed again, this time by Prousius II, who carried the cult statue of Athena off to Bithynia.

¹¹⁹ Strabo 13.4.2; cf. Hansen 1972, 234-98.

¹²⁰ Hansen 1971, 449-50; Allen 1983, 123-9; Strootman 2005a. The Nikephoria found some recognition as a paramount panhellenic festival throughout the Attalids' sphere of influence in the Aegean; the festival was equated to the Soteria of Delphi, instituted to commemorate Apollo's saving of Delphi from a Celtic attack in 279. For the foundation of the festival see M. Segre, 'L'institution des Nikephoria de Pergame', in: L. Robert ed., *Hellenica* V (Paris 1948) 104-5; C.P. Jones, 'Diodorus Paspas and the Nikephoria of Pergamon', *Chiron* 4 (1974) 183-205. Coins struck to advertise the inauguration of the Nikephoria show an image of the cult statue of Athena Nikephoros, a fully armed goddess with a small Nike standing in her hand: A.S. 'Faita, The Medusa-Athena Nikephoros Coin from Pergamon', in: S. Deacy, and A. Villing eds., *Athena in the Classical World* (Leiden 2001) 163-180.

The Great Altar probably was built as a memorial commemorating Attalid victory, with the help of the gods, over the Celts (though exactly which victory remains a matter of controversy – possibly all victories together). It was most probably dedicated to Zeus. The reliefs on the altar's outer walls depicted a gigantomachy, the war between the Olympian Gods—representatives of *kosmos*—and the Giants—representatives of *chaos*—as an allegory of the Attalids' prestige as saviour-kings.¹²¹ The three central characters on the frieze are Zeus, Athena and Herakles. The participation of the latter, according to myth, was of decisive importance in the Olympians' final victory in the battle against the Giants; as a reward for having saved the day, Herakles was deified and awarded a place among the immortals as a thirteenth Olympian. The interesting thing is, of course, that in the iconographic programme of the Great Altar, the Attalid kings are associated with Herakles. Just as the mortal Herakles saved the world from the Giants on behalf of the gods, so too did the Attalids save the world the Celts. On the inside of the altar, a frieze depicted the myths of Auge and her son Telephos, son of Herakles and forefather of the Attalids.¹²² Auge had introduced the cult of Athena, and was buried, on the very hill where Telephos would later found the city of Pergamon. This inner frieze emphasised both Telephos' descent from Herakles and the Attalids' descent from Telephos. Beyond the Great Altar was a second precinct; this one contained the tombs of the Attalids, probably the tomb of Auge, and possibly the tomb of Telephos. Here the equation of Attalid victories with the victory of Herakles, for which he received a place on the Olympos after his apotheosis, on the Great Altar, becomes immediately relevant. Then, passing through

¹²¹ On the Great Altar, its construction and date, consult P.J. Callaghan, 'On the date of the Great Altar of Zeus at Pergamon', *BICS* 28 (1981) 115-21; W. Hoepfner, 'Das vollendete Pergamonaltar', *AA* (1996) 115-34; R. Dreyfus and E. Schraudolph eds, *Pergamon. The Telephos Frieze from the Great Altar* (2 vols; San Francisco and New York 1996); R. Özgan, 'Bemerkungen zum grossen Gallieranathem', *Arch. Anz.* (1981) 489-510; F. Queyrel, F., *L'Autel de Pergame. Images et pouvoir en Grèce d'Asie*. *Antiqua* 9 (Paris 2005); W. Radt and G. De Luca, 'Sondagen im Fundament des Grossen Altars', *AJA* 105 (2001) 129-30; A Stewart, 'Pergamon Ara Marmorea Magna. On the Date, Reconstruction, and Functions of the Great Altar of Pergamon', in: N. De Grummond and S. Ridgway eds., *From Pergamon to Sperlonga. Sculpture and Context* (Berkeley 2000) 32-3.

¹²² For the Telephos Frieze see I. Kertész, 'Der Telephosmythos und der Telephosfries', *Oikumene* 3 (1982) 203-15; B. Andreae, 'Dating and significance of the Telephos Frieze in relation to the other dedications of the Attalids of Pergamon', in: Dreyfus and Schraudolph 1996, I 121-6; W.-D. Heilmeyer ed., *Der Pergamonaltar. Die neue Präsentation nach Restaurierung des Telephosfrieses* (Tübingen 1997).

a last gate—a propylon entrance decorated with images of Athena's owl and Zeus' eagle—the road entered the sacred *temenos* of Athena. The focus of this final sanctuary was a small pre-Hellenistic temple, in which a cult statue of Athena Nikephoros with golden victory wreath was placed by Attalos I or Eumenes II. The Athena precinct further harboured a gigantic statue of Athena Promachos and a statue of Attalos Soter standing side by side, and various votive offerings commemorating Attalid success in war.¹²³ The surrounding stoai were decorated with sculptured and painted trophies—*sc.* Celtic and Macedonian (*c.q.* Seleukid) armour and weapons—and in the north gave access to a *tropaion* where the weapons dedicated to Athena the Bestower of Victory were kept. Together, the three central *temenē* corresponded with each of the three principal protagonists on the central frieze of the Great Alta: Zeus, Athena, and—given the association of the kings with Herakles and the possible presence of Telephos' *heroon* by the tombs of the Attalids—Herakles. Hidden behind this triad of *temenē* was, finally, the royal palace. The Hellenistic palace was heavily fortified.¹²⁴ Excavations have revealed that it consisted of five houses with peristyle courtyards and beautifully decorated reception rooms, classified as Palaces I-V, as well as storage chambers, workshops and offices. Also a fortress with arsenals and barracks was part of the Pergamene 'inner palace'.¹²⁵ In spite of the extensive semi-public sacred space in front of it, and its fortifications, particularly on the northern and eastern side of the akropolis, the palace of Pergamon showed also a rather 'open' face towards the city: the large theatre against the

¹²³ For the finds in the Athena precinct consult H. Fraenkel, *Altertümer von Pergamon* 8.1 (Berlin 1890); Radt 1999, 159-68. For interpretations and theories, esp. regarding the so-called Dying Gauls, see E. Künzl, E., *Die Kelten de Epigonos von Pergamon*. Beiträge zur Archäologie 4 (Würzburg 1971); R. Wenning, *Die Galateranatheme Attalos I. Eine Untersuchung zum Bestand und zur Nachwirkung pergamenischer Skulptur* (Berlin 1978); Schalles 1985, 80-149; cf. A. Stewart, *Attalos, Athens, and the Akropolis. The Pergamene 'Little Barbarians' and their Roman and Renaissance Legacy* (Cambridge 2005).

¹²⁴ M. Kohl, 'Sièges et défense de Pergame. Nouvelles réflexions sur sa topographie et son architecture militaires', in: J.-C. Couvenhes and H.-L. Fernoux, eds., *Les Cités grecques et la guerre en Asie Mineure à l'époque hellénistique* (Paris 2004) 177-98. Cf. W. Hoepfner, 'Zum Typus der Basileia und der königlichen Andrones', in: Brands & Hoepfner 1996, 17: 'Sie waren von einer eigenen Wehrmauer umgeben und deutlich von der Wohnstadt abgesetzt'.

¹²⁵ Radt 1999, 63-81. The service and storage rooms were located on the site where the Romans later built the Traianeum.

southern slope of the akropolis, the place where the Attalid royal family presented itself to the people during festive celebrations.

In sum, we may conclude on the basis of archaeological and written evidence, that Hellenistic palaces normally consisted of five components. First the internal, least accessible part of the palace, consisting of the residential quarters of the royal family, where perhaps also important courtiers dwelled, and where the king met with his council and his guests in the banqueting rooms so numerous and prominently present in palaces.¹²⁶ Second, a military section, consisting of a fortress with barracks and arsenals, and normally closely attached to the residential part palace. Third, a public or ceremonial section with an audience hall or throne room, banqueting rooms and small sanctuaries. Fourth, an operational section with servants' quarters, storerooms, kitchens, and so forth. Fifth, the more accessible, representational area between the palace and the city. This section belonged as much to the palace as to the *polis*, as here the city's main public buildings were located. Here one could find temples, altars, libraries, theatres, stadiums, hippodromes, and it was here that the monarchy presented itself to the populace.

Inside Hellenistic *basileia*

Our knowledge of the details of Hellenistic palace architecture is unfortunately meagre, even compared to Near Eastern palaces from earlier, let alone later periods. As there is no Hellenistic Persepolis, Alhambra, or Topkapı, information respecting their internal set-up, decoration and use must be gathered from various disconnected sources, including the finds at

¹²⁶ The exact place of *philoï* in palaces is difficult to ascertain, cf. Weber 1997, 40 n. 51. Respecting mansions in the Classical city, L.C. Nevett, *House and Society in the Ancient Greek World* (Cambridge 1999) 174, ascertains that 'as well as a core nuclear family, individual households are likely to have housed a number of other individuals, including long-term guests, and that friends and neighbours are also likely to have been an important part of domestic life. It remains to be explored how far these individuals were able to move freely about the house, and in what way the basic categories of outsider and family member ... need to be modified in order to accommodate them [in our understanding of what *oikos* means].' For the place of *philoï* and *xenoi* in royal households see further below, chapter 3.3. For the development of palatial banqueting rooms: W. Hoepfner, 'Zum Typus der Basileia und der königlichen Andrones', in: Brands & Hoepfner 1996, 1-43; I. Nielsen, 'Royal Banquets. The Development of Royal Banquets and Banqueting Halls from Alexander to the Tetrachs,' In I. and H.S. Nielsen eds., *Meals in a Social Context. Aspects of the Communal Meal in the Hellenistic and Roman World* (Aarhus and London 1998) 102-33.

Vergina and Pella, Masada and Jericho, the architecture of Hellenistic governor's palaces such as those excavated at Doura-Europos, Jebel Khalid and Araq el Emir, and sporadic descriptions of palaces' interiors in written sources.

The archaeological evidence shows that the basic constituent of an Hellenistic palace was a rectangular peristyle courtyard surrounded by rooms, sometimes with the addition of a second storey with a colonnaded balcony. The Antigonid palace at Aigai was a smaller, more basic version. In the middle of the monumental front façade of the palace, a propylon gate led to an inner court. Around this court were three large pillared chambers and nine smaller *andrones*, rooms for dining and drinking.¹²⁷ Next to the propylon was a round hall, the function of which remains unexplained.¹²⁸ In larger palaces simply duplicated the courtyards. Thus the palace at Pella consisted of multiple courtyards, each giving access to a different type of rooms, *i.a.* banqueting rooms, apartments, workshops, storage-rooms.¹²⁹ The palace was clearly divided into an 'official', ceremonial section, and a residential section laying at the back of the complex. The two parts were separated by means a portico. Besides *andrones* for ritual feasting, the official section contained two rounded rooms that may have served as sanctuaries. Perhaps the library mentioned by Plutarch was also located here.¹³⁰ In the residential wing heated apartments and a bathhouse with swimming-pool were found. Perhaps the western wing of the palace formed yet a third section, set apart for administration, service and storage, and perhaps containing the royal treasury.¹³¹ A similar set-up characterised the palaces of the Hasmoneans and Herod in Palestine, and the royal palace at Aï Khanoum. Audiences were held either in special audience halls, as in Aï Khanoum, or in the propylon gatehouse in the main facade, *i.e.* on the palace's threshold, as in Alexandria.¹³² Gardens

¹²⁷ Andronikos 1984, 42; Hammond and Walbank 1988, 477; Nielsen 1994, 81-4.

¹²⁸ This conspicuous round hall or *tholos*, next to the innermost hall of the vestibule entrance, may have served as a throne room, an audience hall or (most likely) a sanctuary; its inside was clad in marble and in it were found an inscription dedicated to Herakles, ancestor of the Argeads, as well as a tribune with two steps, perhaps a base for a throne, a cult statue or an altar: Nielsen 1994, 82-3. See however Saatsoglou-Paliadeli 2001, 202-4, for a re-investigation of the *tholos* and new suggestions.

¹²⁹ Livy (Liv. 40.6.1-16-3), drawing on Polybios, suggests that there were separate quarters for princes, *sc.* the quarrelling sons of Philippos V, and mentions such elements as a *vestibulum (aulē)*, *triclinium (andrōn)* and *ambulatio* (covered portico); cf. Hatzopoulos 2001, 193.

¹³⁰ Plut., *Aem.* 18.6.

¹³¹ Nielsen 1994, 92-3. Treasury: Plut., *Aem.* 23.3.

¹³² Nielsen 1994, 210, offers a table comparing the sizes of audience halls in various palaces.

normally formed part of a *basileia* as well, and often a Persian-style *paradeisos*, game park, was located in the vicinity of the palace.¹³³

Decoration

Of course, apartments, ceremonial halls, and banqueting rooms were richly decorated with floor mosaics and wall paintings. We can get some impression of the style and appearance of these from the mosaics found at Pella and the frescoes adorning the tombs at Vergina, as well as from Roman copies and imitations preserved in Italy, in particular the Alexander Mosaic and wall-paintings from Pompeii, the frescoes of Boscoreale and the Nile Mosaic of Palestrina. It comes as no surprise that subjects favoured at apparently were hunting, battle and myth. Sculpture focused on representations of gods and members of the royal family.

Some idea of what the Inner Palaces of Alexandria looked from on the inside has been indirectly preserved in Athenaios' *Deipnosophistai* V 204d-206c. Here Athenaios cites a description, perhaps ultimately based on an official account, of the ceremonial river boat commissioned by Ptolemaios Philopator. On board of this floating palace called Thalamegos, Philopator and later Ptolemaic kings and queens travelled up and down the Nile. They did so, perhaps on a yearly basis, to sacrifice at the temples alongside the river, be visible to the populace, and to demarcate the extent of Ptolemaic sovereignty.

The Thalamegos had three floors. On these were 'all conveniences of pleasant living', including bed-chambers, banqueting rooms and even sanctuaries. All storeys were surrounded by promenades, the first two colonnaded, the upper promenades shaped like a concealed peristyle with walls and windows. Athenaios particularises the interior and its decorations:

As one came on board from the stern there was an open vestibule with columns against its sides; at the side facing the bow there was a peristyle fore-gate made of ivory and exquisite wood. Opposite the main gate, at the other side of a kind of over-roofed proscenium, was a portal with four doors leading into a second vestibule. Beyond this was the main hall. It had columns all around and there was place for twenty couches. Most of it was made of Syrian (*i.e.* Phoenician) cedar and Milesian (*i.e.* Cypriote) cypress; the surrounding doors, twenty in total, had panels made of fragrant cedar wood and were adorned with ivory ornaments and handles

¹³³ Evidence for Hellenistic royal gardens and parks, and their eastern antecedents, has been collected in I. Nielsen, 'The gardens of Hellenistic palaces', in id. ed., *The Royal Palace Institution in the First Millennium BC* (Athens 2001) 165-87. For Near Eastern (palace) gardens in general see M. Carroll, *Earthly Paradise. Ancient Gardens in History and Archaeology* (Los Angeles 2003).

of red copper which had been gilded in fire. The shafts of the columns were made of cypress wood, their capitals in the Corinthian style were decorated with gold and ivory. The entire entablature was inlaid with gold, supporting a frieze with remarkable ivory figures, more than one and a half foot high, of rather mediocre workmanship, to be honest, but of extraordinary profusion. The ceiling consisted of panels made of cypress wood, beautifully decorated with gilded sculptured ornamentation. Adjacent to this banqueting-hall were seven sleeping apartments, behind which was a narrow passage-way dividing off the women's quarters. The latter contained a dining-hall with nine couches, similar to the main hall in its magnificence, and five sleeping apartments.¹³⁴

At the second storey there were more dining-rooms, a peristyle hall with columns of Indian marble, sleeping apartments, and a round sanctuary (ναὸς θολοειδής) with a marble statue of Aphrodite. There also was a dining-room in Egyptian style, with columns decorated with floral motifs. All rooms were richly decorated:

Near the bow one came upon a chamber devoted to Dionysos; it contained thirteen couches and was surrounded by a row of columns. It had a cornice which was gilded as far as the surrounding architrave; the ceiling was decorated in accordance with the spirit of the god. In this room, on the right-hand side, a recess was built, which was entirely covered with real gold and precious stones so that it looked like a stone wall. Enshrined in it were portrait statues of the royal family made of Parian marble.¹³⁵

In Alexandria the palace gardens were used for feasting. In 279 or 278 Ptolemaios Philadelphos entertained his household and guests in the palace gardens on the occasion of the first celebration of the Ptolemaia Festival and the posthumous apotheosis of his parents, Ptolemaios I and Berenike I. For this event an enormous banqueting pavilion was erected, which is described in full detail by Kallixeinos of Rhodes.¹³⁶ The pavilion could hold 130 couches along the sides. It was entirely covered with a scarlet canopy, resting on wooden pillars shaped like palm trees and bacchic wands. Along the edges of the pavilion there was a portico with a peristyle and a vaulted roof where the retainers of the guests could stand. On the outside the pavilion was enclosed by curtains, coloured with purple dye and decorated with

¹³⁴ Ath. V 204f-205d.

¹³⁵ Ath. V 205d-206c.

¹³⁶ Kallixeinos FHG III 58 *ap.* Ath. 196a-197c.

myrtle and laurel branches and the pelts of exotic animals. On the inside the pavilion was decorated with marble statues, portraits of the royal family, and painted panels depicting symposia and mythological scenes. Along the sides military beautifully elaborated military cloaks, armour, and shields were hung, and the ceiling was adorned with large gold images of eagles. The floor was covered with ‘Persian’ carpets, on which all sorts of flowers were strewn. All the tableware was made of gold and silver, Kallixeinos assures, totalling more than 10,000 talents.

2.3 The royal precinct

In Hellenistic residences, the royal palace formed the heart of the city. Yet at the same time, they were cut off from the cities in which they stood, to the effect that the city became divided into clearly discernible civic and royal space.¹³⁷ Both choice of site and architectural means were employed to set palaces apart from their urban surroundings. The dividing line was delimited by walls, water, differences in altitude, or a combination of these. Palaces could be build on a promontory (Halikarnassos, Alexandria, Herod’s Caesarea on the Sea, to some extent also Aī Khanoum), an island (Antioch), or, more commonly, on a hill (Aigai, Demetrias, Pergamon, Sardis, Apameia). Monumental facades, and broad avenues and ramps leading up to the main entrance enhanced the image of the palace as an elevated, almost mysterious place.¹³⁸ Thus, royal space and civic space were separated in a way that could not

¹³⁷ Cf. Jos., *AJ* 14.59: ‘the palace and the city of Jerusalem’ (πόλις καὶ βασιλεία); cp. 13.36, where we read that Demetrios II shut himself up in a palace ‘near Antioch’, even though evidently the *basileion* on the Orontes island *in* Antioch is meant.

¹³⁸ Cf. Bertelli 1986, 17: ‘The spaces, external and internal, in which the court is situated, are the visible measure of its sacred quality; its ideal separateness is accentuated by physical separation from the town in which it stands.’ Visitors of the archaeological remains of Pergamon can experience for themselves how height was employed to literally elevate kingship; the *Rough Guide to Turkey* (3rd. edn.; London 1997) 251, comments that ‘the acropolis is readily accessible on foot – though this is one attraction you may want to reach by taxi, at least on the way up.’ Cp. the recommendations in the 1996 *Lonely Planet* guide for Israel and the Palestinian Territories respecting the (in)accessibility of the Herodian residence of Masada: ‘The steep and long “Snake Path” ... is hard going and, depending on how fit you are, the stagger to the top takes anything from 30 minutes to over an hour. ... Top up with water before you start out, even though there is water available at the summit.’ Hatzopoulos 2001,

be misunderstood. The separation could be reinforced by the use of strong defensive outer walls, towers and bulwarks, and the incorporation of a fortress. The perception of akropolis and citadel as royal space—also in non-residential royal garrisons would be stationed there—emphasised the military nature of the monarchy. It indicated the king's role as protector of cities, a conviction expressed in Kallimachos' encomiastic Hymn to Zeus: 'From Zeus come kings. ... You gave them cities to protect. And you yourself are seated in the citadels of the cities to judge those who rule their people badly, and those who rule well.'¹³⁹ Presumably, in the eyes of some citizens in some cities it might as well have indicated military occupation.

The use of *akropoleis* meant not only that kings appropriated the city's main military focus but also, according to Greek tradition, the city's principal sacred area. In Greek *poleis*, and many eastern cities as well, the citadel hill was the abode of the principal city deities, associated notably with Zeus and Athena.¹⁴⁰ These gods were expected to protect the city from its enemies, precisely the responsibility that kings too claimed vis-à-vis the cities. Because cities were autonomous, and not legally part of kingdoms, it was only by playing the role of a god that a king could legitimise his presence and influence in cities.¹⁴¹ Cities, in turn, offered cult to their royal protectors and benefactors, precisely like they offered cult to their divine *sōtērēs*. By incorporating elements of religious architecture—enclosure walls, *propylaia*, forecourts, theatres, temples and *tholoi*—the palace district was consciously fashioned to resemble a *temenos*, with the 'closed' and somewhat hidden 'inner palace', where the king dwelled, becoming almost like a temple or *naos*.

The incorporation of sacral architecture in palaces is also known from pre-Hellenistic Mesopotamia and Egypt, and these examples may have influenced Hellenistic palace architecture to some extent. Unlike Mesopotamian or Egyptian palace architecture, however,

argues that the Argead-Antigonid palaces at Pella and Vergina were much more open and undefended than the Seleukid, Ptolemaic and Attalid *basileia*, and suggests that this was due to the despotic nature of the eastern monarchies; this contrast seems rather overdrawn, especially in the case of Vergina, where the palace was located on a height near the citadel.

¹³⁹ Callim., *Hymn* 1.78-88. See also below, chapter 4.5). In Hellenistic town planning, it was customary to incorporate the citadel in the defences surrounding the city as a whole: Lawrence 1979, 131.

¹⁴⁰ When Demetrios Poliorketes visited Athens in 304, he stayed in the *opisthodomos* of the Parthenon as the *xenos* of Athena Polias: Plut., *Demetr.* 23-4; cf. 26.3 and Diod. 20.100.5-6.

¹⁴¹ S.R.F. Price, *Rituals and Power. The Roman Imperial Cult in Asia Minor* (Cambridge 1984).

the boundaries between royal and civic space in Hellenistic cities were not rigorously demarcated. Palaces were not isolated from their surroundings. On the contrary, palaces were the focal points of a lively interaction between *basileus*, *philoï*, *politai* and foreign ambassadors. In most residences we find a transitional area between *polis* and palace, such as the *Basileia* in Alexandria, the *hiera agora* in front of the palace at Demetrias, or the sequence of *temenē* along the processional road in Pergamon, which became more and more related to monarchy as one neared the palaces on top of the akropolis. This ‘representational’ section was a more or less public area where king and citizens met. In the stadiums, hippodromes and theatres built here, the public rituals of royalty were performed.¹⁴²

¹⁴² See below, chapter 5. This aspect of Hellenistic palace architecture endured in the Roman Empire, cp. the positioning of hippodromes before the Palatine and the imperial palace in Rome and Constantinople respectively.

III

Court Society

*Political leaders must follow their followers. ...
History and theory suggest that followers create
leaders rather than the converse.*

M. Edelman, *Constructing Political Spectacle*
(1988) 37-8.

3.1 The origin of Hellenistic court society

In chapter 1.2 we have defined the Hellenistic royal court as essentially the household of the royal family, consisting of both persons and property. The nucleus of the royal *oikos* was the royal family: the king, his consort(s) and offspring. The king was the *kyrios* (head) of the *oikos* (household).¹ As the family head, he was responsible for his family's relations with the outside world. This means that he was obliged to receive ambassadors in person and give public audiences, and deal with all important matters of his household personally, including its religious affairs. However, in both the Ptolemaic and Seleukid kingdoms these responsibilities were also carried out by queens and princes. The 'extended family' consisted further of various relatives and non-kin friends, as well servants and guards. Most important among these were the so-called 'friends of the king', the *philoï tou basileōs*, who were related to the royal family by means of aristocratic guest-friendship and sometimes fictive kinship. The *philoï* society was hierarchised and structured by means of a gradually developing system of aulic offices and honorific titles.

¹ Cf. Pomeroy 1997, 23 and 28, perhaps overemphasising the absolute authority of the male family head over all aspects of his household, including authority over his wife and children.

In this chapter the persons constituting the court society will be discussed. After a brief discussion of the genesis of Hellenistic court society under Philippos and Alexander, we will first look at the royal family, the nucleus of the court. Characteristic of the Hellenistic dynasties is the relative importance of women at court. It will be argued that the prevalence of royal women can in part be explained from the importance of female family members for inheritance and succession. Next, the *philoï tou basileōs*, ‘the friends of the king’, will be discussed. Who were these courtiers? What were their (ethnic) origins, how were they attracted to court and what was their relationship with the royal family? Of special importance here are the conceptions of *philia*, ‘(ritualised) friendship’, and *xenia*, ‘guest-friendship’, as well as gift exchange and the system of honorific and other aulic titles that structured and hierarchised court society.

From the outside, the royal household presented an image of unity and harmony. In practice, the unity of the royal family, and hence of the court, was often disarrayed as a result of polygamous marriage and the absence of primogeniture in succession. At the Argead and Seleukid courts, the core of the household was divided into sub-families centred round the respective queens and their children, each having its own followers and personnel. As a result, conflict over the succession frequently broke out, often with disastrous effects. Relations between the *philoï* and the king, and between *philoï* among each another, too, were not necessarily harmonious; the reigning king was not even automatically the most powerful individual. We therefore also look at conflicts at court, and the strategies employed by kings to remain master of their own houses, particularly through the employment of ‘favourites’ to counterbalance the power of the *philoï*. It will be argued the preferred favourites were non-Greeks and women. The last part of this chapter deals with the practice of bringing up the children of the nobility together with the children of the king as royal pages (*basilikoi paides*).

Philippos II and the Macedonian nobility

The birthplace of Hellenistic court culture was fourth century Macedonia. The courts of the Diadochs were essentially imitations of the Argead court, albeit in renewed and enlarged form, and appropriating various Achaimenid elements. But in spite of Achaimenid and Greek influences, the basic appearance was Macedonian.

In pre-Hellenistic Macedonia the king shared his power with local barons, the so-called *hetairoi* or Companions of the king, who as heavy cavalry dominated the armed forces

until the reign of Philippos II.² The king was principally the war leader of the united tribes of the Macedonian people. Although ideology presented the king as an absolute monarch, he was in practice *primus inter pares* of the high nobility. The Argead family, who dominated the coastal plain around the Thermaic Gulf, was merely the most powerful of several powerful clans.³ The male heads of the mightiest noble families were called the king's *suggeneis*, 'relatives', and had the right to greet the king with a kiss.⁴ In fact, they often were tied to the king by family relations. Together they formed a war council, that advised the king.⁵ Macedonian aristocrats, particularly those ruling the mountainous hinterland, were fervently independent, and the king was entirely dependent on their support in wartime.

In the fourth century Argead kings endeavoured to monopolise political power. It was perhaps Philippos II who took the first step in breaking the prevalence of the *hetairoi* in the army by enlisting common Makedones as heavy infantry. These *pezhetairoi*, Foot Companions, although commanded by aristocratic officers, were directly answerable to the king.⁶ From the ranks of the *pezhetairoi* a royal infantry guard of 3,000 *hypaspistai* was recruited, even more closely bonded with the king. The aristocracy continued to supply the army's heavy cavalry and to derive political power from that, but now less than before: the *pezhetairoi* enabled the king to pursue a foreign policy of his own, and the Makedones

² Hammond 1989, 141, estimates that in 334 the total number of Companions was about 2,800.

³ Cf. Hammond 1989, 142. Following the defeat of the Illyrian king Bardyllis in 358, Philippos II abolished the small kingdoms of Upper Macedonia and pacified the members of their royal houses by making them Companions. Also some members of the Paionian and Odrysian royal house became Companions of the Macedonian king, among them Aristonos who commanded the Paionian cavalry at Issos and belonged to Alexander's inner circle. [Hammond 1989, 141]

⁴ Arr., *Anab.* 7.11.9; Diod. 17.77.5. Sources for the Argead court concern mostly the reign of Alexander; but because of the profound changes taking place at Alexander's court, they tend to emphasise the pre-existing situation as well as the new. Sources use *hetairoi* in two meanings: (1) to denote the heavy cavalry constituting the core of the early Macedonian army, and by extension the whole of the horse- and land-owning aristocracy of Macedonia, comparable to the Greek *hippeis*, and (2) the small group of the mightiest clans' family-heads who were the king's personal advisors and (fictive) kinsmen; cf. Hammond 1989, 53-8 and 140-8. In the Hellenistic period, *hetairoi* persisted as a military term denoting a type of noble cavalry.

⁵ Hammond 1989, 53. In all accounts of such informal meetings at Alexander's court (collected in Hammond 1989, 143-4) the council invariably discussed military matters.

⁶ Hammond 1989, 148-50; Walbank 1940, 1-2. For Philip's pursuit of absolutism see Errington 1990, 220-2.

serving as heavy infantry acquired some political influence to set off the power of the *hetairoi*.⁷ With his new model army of combined (royal) infantry and (noble) cavalry, Philippos was able to establish Macedonia as the leading power in the Balkans.

Philippos was now also able to begin a process of curtailment of the *hetairoi* at court. The expansion of Argead power beyond Macedonia required the creation of administrative offices accountable to the king. How much freedom Philippos really had in appointing officials of his own choice is difficult to ascertain, but the evidence suggests that he was rather successful in his efforts to by-pass the old nobility in favour of his personal followers and friends, whom he recruited among the lesser Macedonian nobility as well as among Thessalians and other Greeks.⁸ Theopompos expresses how the old nobles must have felt when confronted with the upsurge of favourites at court: ‘from the entire Greek and barbarian world men of debauched, villainous and servile character flocked to Macedonia and obtained

⁷ Hammond 1989, 100-106. What exactly the competence of the army assembly was is a controversial question; in the Argead kingdom the assembly acclaimed new kings at their succession, and played a part in trials of treason against the king during Alexander’s rule (Arr., *Anab.* 3.26; 4.14.3; Plut., *Alex.*, 55.3; Curt. 6.8.25), and in the Hellenistic kingdoms as well (Polyb. 5.27.5, 29.6; Plut., *Eum.* 8.3; *Demetr.* 18; Diod. 18.37.2; 19.51.1; App., *Syr.* 54). The rights of assembly, however, were not ‘official’, since there existed no (codified) Macedonian constitution: R.M. Errington, ‘The Nature of the Macedonian State Under the Monarchy’, *Chiron* 8 (1978) 77-133. The traditional view of the assembly having formal rights in Macedonian ‘Staatsrecht’ goes back to F. Granier, *Die makedonische Heeresversammlung. Ein Beitrag zum antiken Staatsrecht* (Munich 1931), but is now usually rejected, cf. R.M. Errington, ‘The historiographical origins of Macedonian Staatsrecht’, in: *Ancient Macedonia* 3 (Thessaloniki 1983) 89-101. It goes without saying, however, that the absence of formal constitutional rights does not preclude informal, ritualized powers; the assembly earned influence by supporting the king, who would not be able to command and rule without the army’s consent, being well aware that in ‘in the great mass of men that was an army’, as E.L. Doctorow wrote, ‘strange currents of willfulness and self-expression flowed within the structure of military discipline’ that no sane general suppressed (*The March*, cited from the 2006 British edn., p. 12). Thus, when Alexander had Philotas tried before the assembly to muster support for his execution against the will of the nobility, the king did so fully aware that the verdict would be binding: J.L. O’Neil, ‘Political Trials under Alexander the Great and his Successors’, *Antichthon* 33 (1999) 28-47.

⁸ Theopomp. *FHG* I 320; Polyb. 8.9.6-10.11 = *FGrH* 115 F 225a. For a different interpretation see J.L. O’Neil, ‘The ethnic origins of the friends of the Antigonid kings of Macedon’, *CQ* 53 (2003) 510-22, esp. 510-11, explaining these Greeks at Philippos’ court as an ‘error’ of Polybios which can be explained as an anachronism, viz. the presence of Greeks at the Hellenistic courts.

the title of Companion of Philip'. Athenaios, who quotes Theopompos, adds that Philippos consulted such men in even the most weighty matters, and cites as most astonishing example the case of the 'flatterer' Agathokles, the son of a Thessalian serf, who was given the command of an army and sent to the kingdom's northern marches with full administrative mandate.⁹ Another passage in Athenaios suggests that already Philippos's predecessor Perdikkas III had attempted to break the power of the high nobility at court by promoting a favourite, namely a Greek called Euphraios. This *homo novus* became so powerful at court 'that Parmenion, as soon as Philippos had become king, seized Euphraios and killed him.'¹⁰ The same Parmenion, exponent of the Macedonian high nobility *par excellence*, later became the leader of the aristocratic opposition against Alexander's pursuit of absolutism.

The absolutism of Alexander the Great

During Philip's reign Parmenion the son of Philotas, who came from a leading family from Upper Macedonia, was the king's most trusted and most successful commander. He owed his position of honour perhaps to the help he gave Philippos in getting rid of Perdikkas III's man Euphraios, or to the status of his family. In the history of Alexander, Parmenion was still in the centre of power. Alexander however continued his father's policy of creating a new elite by bestowing favours upon outsiders and lesser nobles, and eliminated his opponents at court in co-operation with these favourites. Alexander's reign is characterised by a succession of

⁹ Ath. 167b. Cf. Plut., *Alex.* 9. 'Son of a Thessalian πενέστης' is a *topos*, meant to discredit someone who has crossed a social boundary. Ath. 260a says the same of king Lysimachos (his father's name was Agathokles); H.S. Lund *Lysimachus. A Study in Hellenistic Kingship* (London 1992) 2, accepts that Lysimachos' father was a Thessalian. Paus. 1.9.5, however, claims that Lysimachos was a Macedonian, as is also concluded by I.L. Merker, 'Lysimachos, Thessalian or Macedonian?', *Chiron* 9 (1979) 31-6 and A.B. Tataki, *Macedonians Abroad* (Athens 1998), both cited after O'Neill 2003, 510 n. 5. Polyb. 8.10.5-6, in response to Theopompos' view of Philippos's court, angrily wrote that 'in speaking of Philippos and his friends not only would one hesitate to accuse them of cowardice, effeminacy, and shamelessness to boot, but on the contrary if one set oneself the task of singing their praises one could scarcely find terms adequate to characterise the bravery, industry, and in general the virtue of these men who indisputably by their energy and daring raised Macedonia from the rank of a petty kingdom that of the greatest and most glorious monarchy in the world.'

¹⁰ Carystius *FHG* IV 357 *ap.* Ath. 508e. Aesch., *Letter* 12.8, informs us that two Athenian friends of Philippos were given land and 'very comely wives', cf. Hammond 1989, 64.

harsh conflicts with the high nobility of Macedonia.¹¹ During the campaign in Asia, many changes in the composition of the court, and thus in the command structure of the army, took place, enabling Alexander to make decisions without the consent or against the wishes of the nobility. Several anecdotes containing verbal exchanges between Alexander and Parmenion testify to this. The most famous, and most illustrative, is the conversation recorded by Plutarch and Arrian about Darius' peace offer after the Battle of Issos: "If I were Alexander," said Parmenion, "I would accept these terms." "So would I," said Alexander, "if I were Parmenion."¹²

Alexander's initial strategy was advancing to prominent positions some young men who had been royal pages together with him, the most important of whom held the position of *sōmatophulax*, Royal Bodyguard. *Sōmatophulax* is perhaps the oldest Macedonian court title, and the title persisted in the Hellenistic period. At the court of Argead Macedonia there were seven *sōmatophulakes*. They were drawn from the (lesser) nobility and of about the same age as the ruling monarch, and were responsible for the king's safety and personal well-being. They accompanied the king wherever he went and guarded the entrance to his bedchamber together with the royal pages.¹³ The *sōmatophulakes* were not allowed to hold other offices.¹⁴

¹¹ The conflicts at Alexander's court are exhaustively discussed in S. Müller, *Maßnahmen der Herrschaftssicherung gegenüber der makedonischen Opposition bei Alexander dem Grossen* (Frankfurt am Main 2003). See also E. Badian, 'Conspiracies', in: A.B. Bosworth and E. J. Baynham eds., *Alexander the Great in Fact and Fiction* (Oxford and New York 2000) 50-95, arguing that Alexander systematically exploited tensions at his court in order to suppress opposition. Neither Müller nor Badian, however, see as the cause of these tensions Alexander's pursuit of absolutism.

¹² Plut., *Alex.* 29.4; cf. Arr., *Anab.* 2.25.2. See also Arr., *Anab.* 3.10; Plut., *Alex.* 31.5-7. Pace E.D. Carney, 'Artifice and Alexander History', in: A.B. Bosworth and E. J. Baynham eds., *Alexander the Great in Fact and Fiction* (Oxford and New York 2000) 263-285, who argues that the image of Parmenion as the opponent of Alexander in the extant biographies of the king was taken over from Kallisthenes, and thus ultimately derived from Alexander's own propaganda aimed at justifying Parmenion's death. This may be so, but it does not mean that Parmenion was not in reality an opposition figure; after all, he and his sons were killed by Alexander. Cf. E.J. Baynham, *Alexander the Great. The Unique History of Quintus Curtius* (Ann Arbor 1988), arguing that Curtius' description of Alexander's absolutism is unhistorical but reflects Roman themes of *regnum*, *libertas* and *tyrannus*, in a way reminiscent of Tacitus.

¹³ Cf. Arr., *Anab.* 4.13.7; Curt. 3.12.6; 8.6.22; 9.6.4; I *Macc.* 1.6. Towards the end of Alexander's reign, the *sōmatophulakes* were Aristonos, Hephaistion, Leonnatos, Lysimachos, Peithon, Perdikkas, Peukestas, and Ptolemaios. Only two are known to have belonged to important Macedonian families:

Alexander, however, broke with this tradition and promoted his *sōmatophulakes* to important positions in the army. In 325 he even broke with the traditional number of seven bodyguards by creating an eighth post for Peukestas, officially because this officer of the guard had saved Alexander's life during the attack on the fortress of the Mallians. In reality, Peukestas in all probability belonged to Alexander's inner circle previously, as he had already held important commands and served as the king's shield bearer. Peukestas was later assigned to the important post of satrap of Persis.¹⁵ Peukestas and the other *sōmatophulakes*—besides Peukestas notably Ptolemaios, Peithon, Perdikkas, Leonnatos and Hephaistion, Alexander's foremost favourite—became the king's principal supporters in his struggle with the leaders of the nobility. The latter were gradually removed from key positions at court and in the army, to be replaced by Alexander's protégés, culminating in the elimination of Parmenion, his sons, and followers in the winter of 330.¹⁶ The executions were followed by a drastic reorganisation

Leonnatos, a member of the house of Lynkestis (Curt. 10.7.8; Berve II, 232 no. 466), and Perdikkas, who belonged to the house of Orestis (*ibidem* no. 627); the others to all probability came from the lower nobility (Berve I, 26). When Philippos exiled Alexander from court, the friends who accompanied him were, apart from Hephaistion, Harpalos, Ptolemaios, Erigyios and Laomedon, from outside the old Macedonian nobility; all of these friends were later raised by Alexander to important offices (Arr., *Anab.* 3.6.6; Plut., *Alex.* 10.3.5), cf. the remarks of Paul Cartledge in *Alexander the Great. The Hunt for a New Past* (2004) 206. Berve I, 25, identifies as *sōmatophulakes* the *custos corporis* mentioned in Curt. 4.13.19 and 6.11.8, but here probably the Royal Pages are meant, who served as bodyguards of the king under the supervision of the *sōmatophulakes* (for royal pages at the Hellenistic courts see below, chapter 3.6). After Alexander's death, new *sōmatophulakes* were appointed for Alexandros IV—two of whom are known by name, cf. S.M. Burstein, 'I.G. II² 561 and the court of Alexander IV', *ZPE* 24 (1977) 223-5—and Philippos III.

¹⁴ Berve I, 28.

¹⁵ Arr., *Anab.* 6.28.3-4; 6.13.2; Diod. 17.99.4; cf. Schachermeyr 1970, 16 n. 13; Berve II, 318 no. 634. Although Grainger 1990, 46, perhaps goes too far in claiming that Peukestas was not a nobleman, and 'one of the very few Macedonians ever to rise from the among the common people to a position of power', he probably came from a family of lesser nobles.

¹⁶ Arr., *Anab.* 3.27; Plut., *Alex.* 49; Curt. 7.2.11-35. The accusation was high treason; thus, Parmenion's son Philotas was sentenced to death for an alleged conspiracy against the king (Curt. 6.8.1, 11.9-10; cf. Plut., *Alex.* 49.8-10). E. Badian, 'The death of Parmenio', *TAPhA* 91 (1960) 324-38, rightly argued that the conspiracy of Philotas rather was a conspiracy *against* Philotas, cf. Stoneman 2004, 69. Already in 336, in connection with the murder of Philip, Alexander had ordered the execution of two brothers from the important noble house of Lynkestis, followed two years later by

of the command-structure of the army. Both Kleitos and Hephaestion were promoted to the rank of hipparch of the Companion cavalry, the post previously held by Philotas. The elite infantry regiment of the hypaspists came under the command of Neoptolemos, a relative of Alexander associated with the Molossian royal house.¹⁷ Also other important positions were now given to young confidants of the king. As Bosworth sums up in *Conquest and Empire*:

The senior positions, the commands of army divisions operating separately from Alexander, became monopolised by a small pool of marshals, dominated by the men who had engineered Philotas' downfall: Craterus, Hephaestion, Perdikkas and Coenus. These were the intimates of the king, his counsellors and marshals. Collectively they occupied the position Parmenion had enjoyed at the beginning of the reign, but no single person was dominant and there were antipathies between them, notably that between Hephaestion and Craterus. At the same time Alexander's coevals acquired court positions, displacing the older generation of Philip. ... The promotions were balanced by demotions, most of which we cannot trace. There was, however, a special disciplinary company, known as "the unit of insubordinates", into which Alexander drafted any Macedonian troops who were known to have expressed criticism of the removal of Parmenion.¹⁸

After Gaugamela (331), Alexander also raised Persians to high office, including Darius III's brother Oxartes and the even more powerful Mazaios, who became satrap of Babylonia. They were allowed to call themselves *suggeneis* of the king—a similar title also existed at the Achaimenid court—and had the right to greet the king with a kiss, to the chagrin of many Macedonian nobles.¹⁹ To take over the empire of the Achaimenids, Alexander needed the

the murder of a third brother, Alexandros, a son-in-law of Parmenion, on the accusation of secretly corresponding with Darius (Arr., *Anab.* 1.25.1; Curt 7.1.5-9). Also the accidental death of Kleitos the Black in 328 may have been a pre-arranged attempt to eliminate a nobleman who had risen to power during Philippos's reign. Parmenion's son Philotas held the important and prestigious position of commander of the companion cavalry; after his execution, his place was taken by Alexander's protégé Hephaestion (Diod. 18.3.4; App., *Syr.* 57). Alexander's introduction of the Persian ceremony of obeisance at his court enabled him to accuse Companions who refused of treason.

¹⁷ Plut., *Eum.* 1; cf. Arr., *Anab.* 2.27.6; Berve no. 548.

¹⁸ A.B. Bosworth, *Conquest and Empire. The Reign of Alexander the Great* (Cambridge 1988; 2nd edn. 1993) 104; For the Unit of Insubordinates see Diod. 17.80.4; Curt. 7.2.35-8; Just. 12.5.5-8.

¹⁹ Cf. e.g. Arr., *Anab.* 7.11.6; Plut., *Alex.* 43; Diod. 17.61.3, 77.4; Curt. 6.2.10. About a century earlier, a similar hostile reaction allegedly was provoked at the Achaimenid court when Artaxerxes II gave a

support of the Iranian nobility. In some cases Alexander simply will not have been able to remove and replace all Iranian barons, and therefore preferred to formally reinstate them, at least for the time being.²⁰

Alexander sometimes favoured Iranians as favourites at his court, above all the eunuch Bagoas, as well as Greeks, most prominent among them the Cretan Nearchos and Eumenes of Kardia, who had already received landed estates and the title of *hetairos* from Philippos II.²¹ In general, the Macedonian aristocracy opposed Alexander's reforms, but in the end their resistance proved futile. How successful Alexander had been in rearranging the top positions at court and in the army became apparent directly after his death, as most *sōmatophulakes*, and hardly any members of the traditional leading families of Macedonia, acquired a substantial share in the power Alexander bequeathed.²²

Greek called Entimos the right to have breakfast in the presence of the king; the Persian high nobility king (likewise called *suggeneis* in Greek sources) 'were offended because they found that the honour was depreciated' (Ath. 48f).

²⁰ Following Alexander's return from India, several of his administrators in the centre of the empire, especially Iranians, were accused of maladministration during the king's absence, and summarily executed. Orxines, the satrap of Persis, was put to death to make place for Peukestas; to appease the local nobility, the Persian Orxines was accused of not having prevented the desecration of the tomb of Cyrus the Great. In Bactria, Artabazos was dislodged from his satrapy soon after his assignment on the excuse that he had become too old, and was replaced by Kleitos, a Macedonian.

²¹ For the career of Eumenes see now E.M. Anson, *Eumenes of Cardia. A Greek among Macedonians*. Ancient Mediterranean and Medieval Texts and Contexts 3 (Leiden 2004), who, however, argues that ethnicity was not a crucial political factor at the Macedonian court, and that Eumenes was not an outsider because he was a Greek, but primarily because he lacked family ties with the Argeads and other noble families of Macedonia. 'Relative' as a honorific title at the Achaimenid court: Arr., *Anab.* 1.15.7; 3.11.5; 7.11.1 and 6; Ath. 48e; Curt. 3.3.14 (*cognati regis*); Diod. 20.1-3.

²² W. Heckel, 'King and "Companions"'. Observations on the nature of power in the reign of Alexander', in: J. Roisman ed., *Brill's Companion to Alexander the Great* (Leiden 2003) 197-226, esp. 210-25, argues that there were surprisingly little conspiracies against Alexander, which suggests that Alexander himself instigated the conflicts. Cf. E. Badian, 'Conspiracies' in: A.B. Bosworth and E. J. Baynham eds., *Alexander the Great in Fact and Fiction* (Oxford and New York 2000) 50-95; W. Heckel, 'Resistance to Alexander the Great', in: L.A. Tritle ed., *The Greek World in the Fourth Century. From the Fall of the Athenian Empire to the Successors of Alexander the Great* (London and New York 1997) 189-227. Alexander did not, however, succeed in removing from the centre of power the family

To sum up, Philippos and Alexander endeavoured to create a court in which not ancestry but the favour of the king determined who would rise to prominence. Apparently, Alexander was exceptionally successful at this, owing to the enormous scale of his conquests. His successors inherited both the scale and the flexibility of Alexander's court. They too tried to personally select their courtiers on the basis of loyalty and merit. How successful they were in achieving this ideal remains difficult to ascertain, but it seems that at least the first Hellenistic kings had many opportunities to do so. The transition to the Hellenistic version of the Macedonian court was marked by the replacement of 'Companion of the King' by 'Friend of the King' as the genuine Greek term for a courtier. The *philoï* of the Hellenistic world will be discussed later on. First we will have a look at the core of the Hellenistic court: the royal family.

3.2 The royal household

Hellenistic kingship was a personal and charismatic form of kingship. The term *basileia* does not imply an abstract notion of a 'state'. What we would now call the state, was called the king's *pragmata*, 'the affairs of the king', that is, the interests of the royal family. We must take this literally. It is impossible to distinguish between the king as a private person and as *basileus*, between court and household, between state and dynasty. Hellenistic monarchy was essentially a family affair.²³ The political activities of Hellenistic kings were not prompted by

of Antipatros, as the latter was not present at Alexander's court but had stayed behind as regent in Macedonia.

²³ I am grateful to Josine Blok for her advice when I was preparing this section. The ancient Greek family has been studied extensively in recent years, but modern views and approaches differ greatly, mainly because the sources—in which classical Athens is over-represented—provide no coherent picture of what the Greek family was like. In the past decades, the study of the Greek family has moved from the perspective of women's history to gender studies; see especially: S.B. Pomeroy, *Families in Classical and Hellenistic Greece. Representations and Realities* (Oxford 1997); C.B. Patterson, *The Family in Greek History* (Cambridge, Mass., and London 1998); particularly interesting is C.A. Cox, *Household Interests. Property, Marriage Strategies, and Family Dynamics in Ancient Athens* (Princeton, N.J. 1998). Of several Greek words denoting 'family', οἶκος is the most notable and familiar one; the purport of the word, however, remains evasive; it could denote 'household' as well as 'family', and was at any case not a legal term, not even in classical Attika:

impersonal *raison d'état*, but by family interests, the need to defend honour and obtain new glory, obligations toward kinsmen, affiliates, friends and allies, and competition with other dynasties.

The king

In the Hellenistic world, *basileia* was not a public office but a hereditary privilege. The royal title was an inheritable family possession, like estates and other material property, or like the family's ancestral prestige. Like any individual, a king's identity was determined first of all by his family membership. The *genos* ('kin') provided the individual with prestige, protection, economic security and social networks. The association of the ruling monarch with his family and ancestors is a recurrent theme in court poetry, honorary inscriptions and texts related to ruler cult.²⁴ Hellenistic kings did not affiliate themselves with native *poleis* or tribes as the origin of their identity, as most Greeks did,²⁵ nor with the countries they ruled.

Pomeroy 1997. 20; D.M. MacDowell, 'The *oikos* in Athenian law', *CQ* 39 (1989) 10-21. Other notions of family relations existed beside οἶκος, viz. γένος (usually 'family' in the sense of 'line', 'dynasty'), and συγγενεία and ἀγχιστεία, both of which denote blood relationships within and without the household, cf. W.E. Thompson, 'Some Attic kinship terms', *Glotta* 48 (1970) 75-81. For the various Greek notions of 'family' see Patterson 1998, 1-4 with further literature in nn. 1-3, and Pomeroy 1997, 19; specifically on γένος see S.D. Lambert, *The Phratries of Attica* (Ann Arbor 1993) 59-74; F. Bourriot, *Recherches sur la nature du genos* (Lille 1976); D. Roussel, *Tribut et cité* (Paris 1976). In what follows I endorse Patterson's proposition that 'instead of insisting on either οἶκος or γένος as the proper and only Greek equivalent of "family", I suggest a return to the broadly practical and flexible use of the English word and acknowledge that both γένος and οἶκος fall under the semantic umbrella of "family"' (Patterson 1998, 2).

²⁴ See e.g. Theocr. 17.114-15; OGIS 219 = Austin 139. Cf. the examples and references in J. Roy, 'The masculinity of the hellenistic king', in: L. Foxhall and J. Salmon eds, *When Men Where Men. Masculinity, Power and Identity in Classical Antiquity* (London and New York 1998) 111-35, at 112. Note that sculptured group portraits of kings and their families formed a popular subgenre of 'royal art', cf. B. Hintzen-Bohlen, 'Die Familiengruppe – ein Mittel zur Selbstdarstellung hellenistischer Herrscher', *JDAI* 105 (1990) 129-54.

²⁵ Ethnic denominations are absent from royal coins, as well as from royal letters and decrees. The one proverbial exception, the Seleukid Antiochos VII, was named 'Sidetes' because he had stayed at Side when he was exiled from court, not because he was born there; by presenting himself as 'the man from Side', Antiochos emphasised the triumph of his return. The reference to the isle of Kos as the birthplace of Ptolemy Philadelphos in Kallimachos' *Hymn to Delos* and Theokritos' *Idyll* 17 is meant

Conquered territory could be considered a personal possession, or was seen as land favoured and protected by the king. But territory never was a defining aspect of monarchy. Hellenistic kingship was not confined by geographical or cultural boundaries.

The king as a Macedonian

An exception to this pattern is the self-presentation of kings and their families as ‘Macedonian’. The Argead kings had been ‘*basileus* of the Makedones’. Philippos II added to this the title of *hēgemōn* of the Greeks; Alexander added to it the title King of Asia, the Greek rendering of the Persian title King of Kings or Great King. The Seleukids inherited the title King of Asia from Alexander; the Antigonids appropriated the prestigious title βασιλεὺς Μακεδόνων, King of the Macedonians. The Antigonids used this title *vis-à-vis* ethnic Macedonians in Macedonia; in addition they carried the title of *basileus* in its own right – a title with a broader scope, connoting claims of hegemony over diverse peoples and territories.²⁶ Still, the Seleukids and Ptolemies were Macedonian kings, too. They had Macedonian personal names which led their ancestry directly back to pre-Hellenistic Macedonia. Macedonian culture prevailed, too, in the kings’ appearance; the king normally wore Macedonian clothing and armour. Indigenous Egyptian, Babylonian, or Iranian attire was only assumed during specific ceremonial occasions before indigenous audiences. The Macedonian aspect of Hellenistic kingship was important because even the Seleukid and Ptolemaic dynasties depended on a Macedonian court elite for their rule, and on Macedonian infantry as the core element of their armies. Also *vis-à-vis* non-Macedonian subject peoples kings often presented themselves as Macedonians. On the Borsippa Cylinder, a Seleukid

to provide the king with a birth myth and associate him with Apollo, who was born on Delos; it also accentuated Philadelphos’ claims to the Aegean (see also below, chapter 4.5). On the usage and significance of (*polis*) ethnics in the Greek world see M.H. Hansen, ‘City-ethnics as evidence for polis-identity’, in: M.H. Hansen and K. Raaflaub eds., *More Studies in the Ancient Greek Polis* (Stuttgart 1996) 169-96. Hammond 1989, 69, claims that kings not even used patronymics, as these do not appear on coins; patronymics, however were as a rule used in royal letters and decrees. Cf. Hammond 1989, 69, for the (absence of) titles of Argead kings before Alexander.

²⁶ The unlimited pretensions of *basileia* were noted by G.H. Macurdy, ‘Roxane and Alexander IV in Epirus’, *JHS* 52.2 (1932) 256-61, at 258: ‘The word βασιλεία with almost no exception in Diodorus and elsewhere means royal power, *not* the country ruled over’ (e.g. Diod. 18.2.2; 20.20.2-3; 20.28.1), cf. id., ‘Note on Κατάγειν ἐπὶ τὴν βασιλείαν’, *JHS* 52.2 (1932) 261. On the *basileus*-title in the Hellenistic Age see further Bickerman 1938, 5; Aymard 1967.

propaganda text from 268 BCE, written in cuneiform Akkadian for the sake of the Babylonians, Antiochos I Soter is presented as a traditional Babylonian king who justifies his rule by calling on the Babylonian gods. Still it is stressed that the king is a ‘Macedonian’.²⁷ The ethnic refers to Macedonians as a people, not to the country of Macedonia. This might seem strange: the descendants of Ptolemaios Soter and Seleukos Nikator never set foot on Macedonian soil, they ruled over territories where even Greeks were a minority, to say nothing of Macedonians, and cultural life at court was predominantly Greek, not Macedonian.²⁸ The significance of the dynasties’ adherence to their Macedonian identity—apart from the necessity to satisfy the small Macedonian element in the army—was accentuating descent and dynastic continuity.

Dynastic continuity

It has already been emphasised that descent was an all-important factor in the identity of individual Hellenistic kings. The *oikos* was meant to be permanent, but its members were not.²⁹ Descent determined a king’s personal charisma and legitimated his rule, for prestige (and disgrace) was hereditary.³⁰ Just as in Archaic and Classical Greece the fame of victorious athletes was inherited and kept alive by their descendants, Hellenistic kings were heirs to the (military) reputation of their forefathers, in particular the founders of the respective kingdoms: Ptolemaios Soter, Seleukos Nikator, Antigonos Monophthalmos and Demetrios Poliorketes. Centuries later kings still considered themselves to be the heirs of these men, laying claims to territories that had once belonged to the legendary founders as if it were their own *doriktētos chōra*, or ‘spear-won land’. For instance in 219 Antiochos the Great laid claim to Southern Syria because it had been part of the spoils awarded to Seleukos Nikator after the Battle of Ipsos, a century earlier, even though the Seleukids had never actually possessed that area.³¹ In 196 the same king legitimised his conquest of Thrace by

²⁷ ANET 317; Austin no. 189. For references to the Seleukids as Macedonians in literary sources see C. Edson, ‘Macedonicum Imperium. The Seleucid empire and the literary evidence’, *CPh* 53 (1958) 153-70; on the Borsippa Cylinder see Kuhrt & Sherwin-White 1991.

²⁸ See chapter 4.

²⁹ Pomeroy 1997, 23.

³⁰ In classical Athens it was even believed that a son inherited the character of his father (Cox 1998, 84). On the importance of descent and kin in classical Greece see Pomeroy 1997, 67, and Patterson 1998, 1-2 with n. 3.

³¹ Polyb. 5.67.

referring to the victory of Seleukos Nikator over Lysimachos in the Battle of Koroupedion in 281.³² The territories Marcus Antonius gave to Kleopatra VII in 37 were roughly identical to the empire of Ptolemy Soter and Ptolemaios Philadelphos, nearly three centuries before.

Continuity from father to son was a central claim in royal propaganda. It is striking that Alexander the Great—supposedly the role-model for all Hellenistic kings—is absent from royal genealogies, although these even contained gods and demigods. Also absent from the official genealogies is the parentage predating the foundation of the kingdoms by the Diadochs. Ptolemaios Soter may have been known as the son of Lagos, or claimed that he was the son of Philippos II,³³ but under his successors, when the Ptolemaic kingship was firmly established, Lagos and Philippos no longer played any role in Ptolemaic propaganda. On the contrary, ‘Lagos’ does not turn up as a name in the Ptolemaic family tree, as if he was erased from history. Ptolemaic history began with the reign of Ptolemaios Soter.

The Hellenistic dynasties claimed divine ancestry. Like the Argeads before them, the Ptolemies and Attalids were the offspring of Herakles—a hero who was well suited to be an icon of kingship because of his stature as invincible warrior and saviour, and his posthumous deification as an Olympian god. This example was later followed by, among others, the kings of Pontos, Kommagene and even Numidia.³⁴ The Antigonids descended from Perseus, yet another semi-divine conqueror and saviour. The kings of the Molossians in Epeiros descended from Achilles and, since the reign of Pyrrhos, from Herakles too.

The Seleukids went even farther. They endorsed, and to all likelihood created, the myth that Seleukos Nikator was the actual son of Apollo (and thus a grandson of Zeus himself), modifying the earlier, but too drastic, attempt of Alexander to be recognised as the immediate son of Zeus-Ammon:

His mother Laodike, the wife of Antiochos, one of Philippos’ commanders, once dreamt that Apollo made love to her. And that afterwards he gave her a signet-ring with the image of an anchor engraved in the stone, and he asked her to give it to the child that would be born. The next morning when she awoke she found in her bed a ring exactly like the one she had dreamt of. And when Seleukos was born, on his thigh there was a birthmark in the shape of an anchor.

³² Polyb. 18.50; Liv. 33.38.

³³ N.L. Collins, ‘The various fathers of Ptolemy I’, *Mnemosyne* 50 (1997) 436-76.

³⁴ Herakles as ancestor: U. Huttner, *Die politische Rolle der Heraklesgestalt im griechischen Herrschertum*. Historia Einzelschriften 112 (Stuttgart 1997), esp. 65-85 (Argeads), 153-62 (Aiakids), 175-90 (Attalids).

On the day that he left to fight the Persians together with Alexander, his mother handed him the ring and told him who his real father was. ... Also all his descendants were born with an anchor on their thighs as proof of their divine descent and as natural tokens of their family.³⁵

The notion that with the coming of Seleukos Nikator a new epoch had begun, was emphasised by the introduction of a new year reckoning, the Seleukid Era. Like the Jewish, Christian or Islamic era year reckoning, which were later derived from it, the Seleukid Era counted the years from the (re)beginning of time: Nikator's first performance as king in Babylonia in 312 . This was utterly innovative, at variance with the existing Near Eastern practice of counting the years with every next king anew.

In the royal families there was a stronger tendency to repeat the same names through generations than among non-royal Greek and Macedonian elite families.³⁶ In Greek culture two considerations determined the giving of names to children. First, children could be named after their (paternal and then maternal) grandfathers or grandmothers, to emphasise descent; since the late fourth century also the practice of naming children after their fathers or mothers became customary. Second, a name could be chosen in anticipation of a child's future; a name which referred to an illustrious forebear created expectations of similar success.³⁷ In the Hellenistic dynasties these two considerations merged. Sometimes the names of mythic

³⁵ Just. 15.4.2-10. Cf. Grainger 1990, 2-3. The anchor figures as an heraldic emblem on Seleukid coins from Seleukos I to the fall of the empire, see e.g. A. Houghton, 'Some Alexander coinages of Seleucus I with anchors', *Mediterranean Archaeology* 4 (1991) 99-117; H.B. Mattingly, 'The second-century BC Seleucid counter-marks: Anchor and facing Helios head', *NAC* 27 (1998) 237-43.

³⁶ Pomeroy 1997, 71-5.

³⁷ *Ibid.* 154-5. The traditional custom of naming sons after their grandfathers was practised by the Antigonid dynasty, where the names Antigonos and Demetrios alternated, with Philippos being the most popular name for second or third sons. Among the Seleukids the names Seleukos and Antiochos were given to the first two sons but seemingly without any order; from the mid second century onward the names Demetrios and Philippos became popular too. Seleukid princesses were invariably called Laodike, Stratonike, Antiochis and Apama. The Attalid kings were alternatingly named Attalos and Eumenes. Minor hellenised dynasties in the East also had repeating (throne) names: Nikomedes and Prousius in Bithynia; Mithradates and Pharnakes in Pontos; Ariarathes in Kappadokia, Yannai (Jonathan) in the Hasmonean kingdom; Herodes in the Herodean dynasty. These were indigenous names but the method of name-giving seems to have been copied from the Macedonian dynasties – compare the varying throne names in the Achaimenid, Arsakid and Sassanian, or the names of Assyrian and Babylonian kings.

progenitors even turn up, for instance Alexander's son Herakles, and Perseus, the second son of Philippos V and, ironically, the last king of his line.

In the Ptolemaic kingdom the use of dynastic names was radical. Ever since Ptolemy Soter had by coincidence been succeeded by another 'Ptolemaios', the Ptolemaic kings gave this name to all their firstborn sons. In due course, Ptolemaios became a throne name, assumed at the accession also if a king was not named so at birth.³⁸ This custom of assuming a new name, perhaps rooted in pre-Hellenistic Macedonia, where royal women changed their names upon marriage. As a result, 'Ptolemaios' came to refer not only to the legendary forefather Ptolemy Soter, but to literally all preceding kings, and thus to the dynasty itself. During the third century the Ptolemies' firstborn daughters were still given names in the customary manner, *sc.* after their parental grandmothers—alternately Arsinoë and Berenike—and sometimes Ptolemaï̄s after their fathers and grandfathers. After *c.* 200 nearly all firstborn daughters were named Kleopatra, after the Seleukid wife of Ptolemy V. Kleopatra became a throne name too.³⁹ As a consequence, the Ptolemaic realm was for a period of 150 years continuously ruled by a royal couple called Ptolemy and Kleopatra, emphasising the dynasty's continuity. The image was enhanced by the Ptolemies' radical practice of brother-sister marriage, a perpetual self-fertilisation by means of which the dynasty distanced itself from the world of mortals.

The family's unity and continuity could also be emphasised in epithets: Philopator ('he who loves his father'), Eupator ('son of a noble father', but with divine connotations), Philometor ('he who loves his mother') and Philadelphos ('he who loves his brother'). Such dynastic epithets suggested that the succession from father to son or from brother to brother had been harmonious and legitimate, even when in reality this had not been the case. More than half of all the Ptolemaic kings had dynastic epithets, of which Philopator turns up most often.⁴⁰ Among the Seleukids ten out of twenty-six kings had dynastic epithets, mainly

³⁸ When two, or even three, full brothers successively became king, they were all called 'Ptolemy'. Given the high rate of child mortality even among elite families, it is inconceivable that all firstborn sons survived. Ptolemy XV was originally called Kaisarion. The epithet *Alexandros* used by Ptolemy X and Ptolemy XI is perhaps a reference to Alexander the Great, but may also have been these men's original personal names.

³⁹ There is one instance of three such queens who were full sisters: Kleopatra IV, Kleopatra Selene and Kleopatra Tryphaina, who were all daughters of Ptolemy VIII and Kleopatra III.

⁴⁰ Two Ptolemaic kings even had two such epithets: Ptolemy XII Philopator Philadelphos and Ptolemy XV Philopator Philometor. I have also included Kleopatra VII Thea Philopator in my counting.

Philopator and Philadelphos. Of the four ruling Attalid monarchs, three had dynastic epithets added to their names. The unity and continuity of the family was confirmed on coins, where the son was always made to resemble the father as much as possible. Specific physical features were emphasised on portraits through several generations, especially if such features could be conceived as signs of vigour and strength (in particular the typical Ptolemaic ‘strong chin’ and the bull’s neck of the early Seleukids). During the third century, kings were generally portrayed as forceful, strong-willed warriors. Later, the softer features of gods were assimilated in the portraits so that images were created which showed both human aspects as well as divine descent.⁴¹

Inheritance and succession

Hellenistic kings articulated their legitimacy in terms of inheritance. The *oikos* was, ideally speaking, permanent, hereditary and indivisible. The ideal *oikos* was furthermore hierarchical, with one male head who was vested with absolute authority over the other members of the household, and having only one heir to succeed him as *kyrios*. This son would become the new *basileus*. Thus, in theory, the kingdom was indivisible.

⁴¹ R. Fleischer, ‘Physiognomie, Ideologie, dynastische Politik. Porträts seleukidischer Könige’, in: *Akten des XIII. Internationalen Kongress für klassische Archäologie, Berlin 1988* (Mainz am Rhein 1990) 33-6, gives an overview of the evolution of family resemblance on Seleukid coins. Fleischer argues that in the second and first centuries BCE competition between various lines in the Seleukid house compelled both kings and pretenders to emphasise their descent, *c.q.* legitimacy, more strongly, but at the same time needed to distinguish themselves from their rivals; the (perhaps illegitimate) Alexandros Balas struck posthumous coins of Antiochos Epiphanes, whose son he claimed to be, on which the features of Antiochos were altered to look like those of Balas, instead of the other way round. Similarly, coin portraits of queens were made to resemble the sons in whose names they reigned; on double portraits the features of king and queen were often manipulated to resemble each other, even when they were not actually kin. This process of assimilation by which the queens’ features were manipulated to resemble those of their husbands was taken over in the Roman Principate, with the coins of Antonius and Octavia as the earliest known Roman examples, cf. S.E. Wood, *Imperial Women. A Study in Public Images, 40 B.C.-A.D. 68* (Leiden 1999).

When a king died, the inheritance was divided according to the prevalent Greek customs, but probably retaining the Macedonian practice to award a more prominent place to the deceased's female offspring.⁴² This means, first, that only agnates in the patriline could be heirs, and not affines (*i.e.* wives and their blood relatives); second, that the royal dynasties practised partial inheritance. Apparently, the inheritance was not bequeathed to all children in equal portions. Only one son would be heir to the title of *basileus* and receive the main part of the *oikos*' possessions. The other sons either stayed in the household together with their wives, children and possessions, so that the family's property remained intact, or would leave the household to found an *oikos* of their own. Partitioning of wealth and, above all, privately owned landed estates, is potentially dangerous for a monarchy.⁴³ Such partitioning, leading to fragmentation and the creation power of bases for pretenders, may well have contributed to the eventual fragmentation of power in the Seleukid and Ptolemaic kingdoms. Even full brothers of the king were therefore usually kept away from the court. In the histories of the Hellenistic kingdoms, brothers of the king seldom held significant positions at court or in the army. This for instance becomes clear from the group of powerful confidants surrounding

⁴² Classical and Hellenistic Greek society did not have a singular system of inheritance. Practices varied over time and space. The assumption that there was a more or less universal Greek *Staatsrecht* has been refuted by M.I. Finley, 'The problem of the unity of Greek law', in: *La storia del diritto nel quadro delle scienze storiche. Atti del primo congresso internazionale della Società Italiana di Storia del Diritto* (Florence 1966) 129-142. Instead, it has become increasingly clear that inheritance customs varied not only over time and place, but that even within a single polis (*viz.* Athens) various practices could exist alongside each other, cf. e.g. M. Broadbent, *Studies in Greek Genealogy* (Leiden 1968); R. Thomas, *Oral tradition and written record in Classical Athens* (Cambridge 1989); J. Davies, *Athenian Propertied Families, 600-300 BC* (Oxford 1971); D. Ogden, *Greek Bastardy in the Classical and Hellenistic Periods* (Oxford 1996); E. Lévy ed., *La codification des lois dans l'antiquité. Actes du Colloque de Strasbourg, 27-29 novembre 1997* (Paris 2000). In some exceptional cases local inheritance laws were codified but, as orations from classical Athens demonstrate, such laws were rather ambiguous. It is therefore better to speak of inheritance *customs* than of *laws*. In the Hellenistic dynasties, queens could dispose of their dowry, which remained her and her family's possession until her sons inherited after her death.

⁴³ Royal *oikia* possessed landed estates called *chōra basilikē* in Greek sources. This was private property comparable to land owned by private persons, cities or temples, and should be distinguished from the monarchy's more ideological claim to political sovereignty over countries and peoples. Documents from Seleukid Babylonia show that *chōra basilikē* was not indivisible since portions of it could change hands through sale or donation; cf. Van der Spek 1986, 14-7 and 171-2.

Antiochos the Great, a king strong enough to determine the composition of his royal council personally. Polybios provides detailed information about the composition of his court at various moments during his reign; but beside his own sons, who successively turn up as designated successors, no relatives of Antiochos are recorded to have held positions of honour and responsibility.

Female offspring could threaten the unity of the household's property, especially if a large dowry was expected. Upon marriage a woman would bring her dowry into another family, and thus take away a portion of her own family's possession (goods or estates). This could, however, be countered by means of a marriage the other way round in the next generation, *i.e.* a daughter of the princess who had been married off was sent to her mother's native *oikos* as a bride, bringing back a dowry of equal value. This mechanism can be discerned in all royal family trees. For instance the Argeads exchanged princesses with *i.a.* the kings of Epeiros. Philippos II's wife Olympias was a daughter of the Epeirote king Neoptolemos I; Olympias' daughter Kleopatra was then married to Alexandros the Molossian, the son and successor of Neoptolemos I. The Seleukids married Antigonid and Ptolemaic princesses, and *vice versa*, but preferably exchanged women and dowries with the lesser dynasties of Asia, in particular the royal house of Pontos.

The effect was, that generation after generation bonds were forged between the Seleukid royal house and its vassal kingdoms. Sometimes kings married women from elite families of Greek *poleis*, as for example Antiochos III, Philippos V and Mithradates VI. Thus, polygamous marriages created not merely threats to the internal harmony of the monarchies, but also political opportunities. In particular the Seleukids used marriage as an imperialistic strategy. When the Seleukid line became extinct, the right to the Seleukid diadem passed to the nearest kin in the female line, at that time to be found in the Ptolemaic family. In 34 BCE, at the public ceremony known as the Donations of Alexandria, Kleopatra VII claimed the Seleukid royal title for herself and her children: Kleopatra was an immediate descendant of Antiochos the Great, whose daughter Kleopatra (I) had married Ptolemaios V Epiphanes in 193; more significantly, of the last twelve Seleukid kings, ten had Ptolemaic mothers.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ On the Donations of Alexandria see below, chapter 5.2. The mothers were Kleopatra Thea (daughter of Ptolemaios VI), Kleopatra Tryphaina and Kleopatra Selene (daughters of Ptolemaios VIII and Kleopatra III 'Kokke'); the only exception was Antiochos X Eusebes, son of an unknown wife of Antiochos IX, who himself was the son of the Ptolemaic Kleopatra Thea. T.V. Buttrey, *Studies in the Coinage of Marc Antony* (Princeton 1953) 54-86, has argued that the 'elder' goddess implicitly referred to by Kleopatra VII's epithet *Thea Neōtera*, 'The Younger Goddess', was Kleopatra Thea, the

Similarly, Antiochos IV in 170/169 had claimed tutelage of the minor Ptolemaic king Ptolemy VI, his sister's son.⁴⁵

The crown prince

The notion that the Hellenistic monarchies knew a crown prince has been disputed, notably by Daniel Ogden in *Polygamy, Prostitutes and Death*.⁴⁶ I believe that this view is in need of adjustment. The Hellenistic dynasties did dispose of means to secure harmonious accession to the throne by appointing one of the king's sons as successor, and such attempts were only rarely unsuccessful. This did not, of course, preclude rivalry over the succession.

If the king had only one wife, the eldest son from this marriage would normally have had the right of primogeniture, albeit this was no iron-clad rule. However, most Hellenistic kings were polygamous and the existence of several wives complicated the succession.⁴⁷ Ogden has contended that 'amphimetric disputes'—*i.e.* conflicts between royal wives and between paternal half-brothers—were endemic at the royal courts. These rivalries structurally destabilised all three major Hellenistic dynasties and were the main cause of their collapse:

The Argead kings of Old Macedon were, for a number of reasons, polygamous. ... They failed to establish any consistent method of hierarchising their wives and the sons that were born of them; it might be said that they failed to establish any consistent principles of royal legitimacy. Their various wives were therefore in fierce competition with each other to ensure both their own status and the succession of their sons, phenomena which were intimately linked. ... The corollary was that rival wives hated each other [and that] the various groups of paternal half-siblings hated each other. ... The hellenistic dynasties that eventually succeeded

most imposing female figure in Seleukid history, who was the only other queen to use that title (indeed, the full legend *Basilissa Kleopatra Thea Neōtera* can even be read as 'The New Queen Kleopatra Thea'); for a different interpretation see A.D. Nock, 'Neotera: Queen or Goddess?', *Aegyptus* 33 (1953) 283-96, cf. T. Schrapel, *Das Reich der Kleopatra. Quellenkritische Untersuchungen zu den 'Landschenkungen' Mark Antons* (Trier 1996) 225-34.

⁴⁵ Mørkholm 1966, 68.

⁴⁶ D. Ogden, *Polygamy, Prostitutes and Death. The Hellenistic Dynasties* (London 1999). Cf. Cox 1998, on the instability of the classical Greek family.

⁴⁷ The practice seems to have been typically Macedonian. Some evidence for bigamous marriages other than in the Macedonian dynasties of the Hellenistic age can be found in Pomeroy 1997, 201 n. 36.

to the various parts of Alexander's empire inherited with them the same debilitating culture of unhierarchised polygamy and its concomitant, unhierarchised legitimacy.⁴⁸

It is true that succession conflicts often occurred, and that these were a major factor in the downfall of the Seleukid and Ptolemaic empires. But the fact that there were no consistent, let alone formalised, rules for the succession does not mean that kings did not dispose of methods to secure the accession of a chosen heir. The Ptolemaic practice of brother-sister marriage was one, extraordinary, strategy to preclude amphimetric disputes: as a blood relative of the king, the sister-wife had an indisputable higher status than other wives and the first born son from this marriage would naturally have the best title to the throne.⁴⁹ There were several other means to the same end. The main strategy employed was the elevation of one son above his (half)brothers by giving him far-reaching responsibilities, honours and authority. This practice existed also in Classical Greece, where a chosen heir could be given the responsibilities of a *kyrios* before the father had died.⁵⁰ A public sign of such an elevation to the status of 'crown prince' was assignment to the command of the cavalry on the left flank in battle. This place of honour was traditionally reserved for the man who was second only to the king, who himself commanded the right flank.⁵¹ We may also think of important

⁴⁸ Ogden 1999, ix-xi. Cf. the tabulation on p. xiii, where all certain and uncertain examples of 'amphimetric dispute' are collected. Cf. W. Greenwalt, 'Polygamy and Succession in Argead Macedonia', *Arethusa* 22 (1989) 19-45.

⁴⁹ The inspiration and motivation of royal brother-sister marriage is debated; the conventional explanation is to assume that it was originally a pharaonic tradition, cf. e.g. Turner 1984, 136-8. Others see it as a Ptolemaic innovation, as the pharaohs had not actually married their sisters since the end of the New Kingdom, some 700 years earlier. Ogden 1999 explained it as an attempt to annul the danger of amphimetric dispute, Hazzard 2000 as an attempt on the part of Philadelphos to reunify around himself the family descended from the Theoi Soteres.

⁵⁰ B. Strauss, *Fathers and Sons in Ancient Athens* (Princeton, N.J., 1993) 67-70; cf. Cox 1998, 84.

⁵¹ Thus, in the great battles of Alexander the Great, this position was reserved for Parmenion, whether Alexander liked that or not. 'Crown princes' commanding the left flank: Alexander at the Battle of Chaironeia; Antiochos (I), the son of Seleukos Nikator, at Ipsos (Plut., *Demetr.* 29.3); Antiochos, the son of Antiochos the Great at Panion; Seleukos (IV), another son of Antiochos the Great, at Magnesia (Liv. 37.41.1). All these men later indeed succeeded to their fathers' thrones, with the exception of Antiochos the son of Antiochos, who died before his father. Such mechanisms will have been normal in most monarchies. In the later Roman Empire the designate heir was presented to the public by his riding together with the emperor in one chariot during an imperial *adventus*, cf. H. Castritius, 'Zum

independent commands in campaigns, aulic or cultic responsibilities, or the government of an important province. More far-reaching is association on the throne by granting the heir apparent the title of *basileus* while his father was still alive, with corresponding responsibilities and authority.⁵² There is no indication that in cases like these the kingship of the son was inferior to that of the king. Rather, father and son shared the same, indivisible *basileia*, stressing the eternal continuity of royalty to boot.

As in the Classical Greek family, the public unity of father and son was the primary dyad in the royal family. The moral subordination of a son to his father guaranteed that the latter was in practice senior to the former.⁵³ The best known examples of joint kingship are the earliest instances, namely the joint kingship of Antigonos Monophthalmos and Demetrios Poliorketes, of Seleukos Nikator and Antiochos Soter, and of Ptolemy Soter and Ptolemy Philadelphos. Ptolemy Philadelphos even counted his regnal years from his elevation to the position of *basileus* next to his father, two years before he became sole ruler.⁵⁴ The elevation

höfischen Protokoll in der Tetrarchie. Introitus (adventus) Augusti et Caesaris', *Chiron* 1 (1971) 365-76.

⁵² In cuneiform inscriptions from Babylonia, Seleukid co-rulers are called *dumu lugal* or *mar šarri*, terms designating a 'crown prince', 'heir apparent'. For co-regency as a mechanism for designating an heir see also R.A. Billows, 'The succession of the Epigonoï', *SyllClass* 6 (1995) 1-11. Perhaps we can see the same principle among brothers at the Attalid court: when Eumenes II died he was not immediately succeeded by his own son Attalos (III), not yet of age at his father's death, but by his brother Attalos (II); C. Habicht, 'Kronprinzen in der Monarchie der Attaliden', in: V.A. Troncoso ed., ΔΙΑΔΟΧΟΣ ΤΗΣ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΑΣ. *La figura del sucesor en la realeza helenística*. Gerión Anejos 9 (Madrid 2005) 119-26, argues that this was the result of a mutual agreement between the two brothers and that Attalos II was for a time co-ruler of Eumenes, with the title of *basileus* (cp. the rule of Antigonos III Doson in during Philippos V's minority).

⁵³ According to Greek morality the relation between a father and his sons was naturally harmonious and any public deviation from this was considered a disgrace. On the 'public unity' of father and son in classical Athens see Strauss 1993. Cf. Cox 1998, 78-84: 'common sentiment acknowledged that close affective ties should [naturally] exist between father and son (Is. 7.14; Lys. 19.55) and any known case of enmity was used against an individual's character (Lys. 14.26-7)'; any friction was concealed because the father 'was constantly preoccupied with maintaining the honor of his family members [and] the need to present a unified front between father and son was a key element to preserving one's honor'.

⁵⁴ Hölbl 2001, 35 with n. 2. On the co-regency of Philadelphos: M. D. Gyax, 'Zum Mitregenten des Ptolemaios II. Philadelphos', *Historia* 51 (2002) 49-56.

of a son as co-ruler remained a common practice, as a total of thirteen recorded cases reveals (Table 1).

	co-ruler	sole ruler		co-ruler	sole ruler
<i>Ptolemies</i>			<i>Seleukids</i>		
Ptolemy II	284-282	282-246	Antiochos I	292-281	281-261
Ptolemy V	210-204	204-180	Seleukos	280-267	—
Ptolemy VII	145	145	Antiochos II	266-261	261-246
Ptolemy VIII	170-164	164-143	Antiochos	210-193	—
			Seleukos IV	189-187	187-175
			Antiochos V	165-164	164-162
<i>Antigonids</i>			<i>Attalids</i>		
Demetrios I	306-301	301-287	Attalos II (brother)	160-159	159-138
Antigonos II	?-287	287-239			

Table 1: association on the throne, after J.E. Morby, *Dynasties of the World* (Oxford 1994).

The elevation of a favourite son above his (half)brothers offered several advantages. First, the son was moved into a position of power from which it would be difficult to remove him after his father's death. Second, the king's preference for this particular son became public knowledge, so that the loyalty of the subjects, in particular the armed forces, was directed towards his person already before he had actually become sole king. Moreover, associating a son on the throne strengthened the position of the senior king himself: the co-regent would naturally be a loyal adherent because he depended on his father's favour for the preservation of his privileged position. In other words: Hellenistic kings had various strategies at their disposal to hierarchise their wives and children. The failure to consistently employ such strategies with success therefore must have had other reasons.

The queen

In the kingdoms of the Argeads, Seleukids, Ptolemies and early Antigonids, queens played such significant roles that female power can be considered a defining aspect of Hellenistic monarchy. Of course, women feature prominently at the top of the Hellenistic kingdoms because these states were family-based: because the (first) wife of the king, who is the mother of his heir, takes central place within the *oikos*, she may also be expected to figure in the

centre of politics. However, the same may be said of many other dynasties in world histories. It does not explain the relative prominence of Hellenistic royal women as compared to other dynasties in world history.⁵⁵ In the Ptolemaic kingdom, the queen eventually became the equal of her brother-husband, until finally Kleopatra VII ruled the kingdom alone, not as regent, but as queen in her own right.⁵⁶ But also among the Argeads after Alexander's death,

⁵⁵ The fundamental study of female power at the Hellenistic courts remains G.H. Macurdy, *Hellenistic Queens. A Study of Woman-Power in Macedonia, Seleucid Syria, and Ptolemaic Egypt* (Baltimore 1932); biographies of individual queens can also be found in J. Whitehorne, *Cleopatras* (London and New York 1994). On Argead queens and princesses see esp. E.D. Carney, *Women and Monarchy in Macedonia* (Norman, Okl., 2000). In the past decades there has been a renewed interest in Hellenistic royal women; the bibliography of recent titles (excluding Kleopatra VII) includes A. Bielman Sanchez, 'Régner au féminin. Réflexions sur les reines attalides et séleucides', in: F. Prost ed., *L'Orient méditerranéen de la mort d'Alexandre aux campagnes de Pompée. Cités et royaumes à l'époque hellénistique* (Rennes and Toulouse 2003) 41-61; E.D. Carney, 'The career of Adea-Eurydike', *Historia* 36.4 (1987) 496-502; id., 'Olympias,' *AncSoc* 18 (1987) 496-502; id., 'The Sisters of Alexander the Great: Royal Relicts,' *Historia* 37 (1988) 385-404; id., "'What's in a name?' The emergence of a title for royal women in the Hellenistic Period', in: S.B. Pomeroy ed., *Women's History and Ancient History* (Chapel Hill and London 1991) 154-72; 'Arsinoe before she was Philadelphus', *AHB* 8.4 (1994) 123-31; id., 'Olympias, Adea Eurydice, and the end of the Argead dynasty', in: I. Worthington ed., *Ventures into Greek History* (Oxford 1994) 357-380; id., 'Women and Basileia: Legitimacy and Female Political Action in Macedonia,' *CJ* 90 (1994) 367-91; id., 'Foreign Influence and the Changing Role of Royal Macedonian Women', *MDAI(I)* 5.1 (1993) 313-23; 'Women in Alexander's court', in: J. Roisman ed., *Brills' Companion to Alexander the Great* (Leiden 2003) 227-52; M. Meyer, 'Mutter, Ehefrau und Herrscherin. Darstellungen der Königin auf Seleukidischen Munzen', *Hephaistos* 11/12 (1992/93) 107-132; D. Miron, 'Transmitters and representatives of power. Royal women in Ancient Macedonia', *AncSoc* 30 (2000) 35-52; K.L. Nourse, *Women and the Early Development of Royal Power in the Hellenistic East* (diss. University of Pennsylvania 2002); J.L. O'Neil, 'Iranian wives and their roles in Macedonian royal courts', *Prudentia* 34.2 (2002) 159-77; M. Pfrommer, *Königinnen vom Nil* (Mainz am Rhein 2002); R. Strootman, 'De vrouwelijke koning. Machtige vrouwen in de hellenistische vorstendommen, 323-31 v.Chr.', *Groniek* 158/159 (2002) 45-62.

⁵⁶ On the formal aspects of the gradual transformation of Ptolemaic queens into co-rulers see Hazzard 2000. For the function of role-model Hellenistic queens may have had for upper class women see A. Bielman Sanchez, 'Régner au féminin. Réflexions sur les reines attalides et séleucides', in: F. Prost ed., *L'Orient méditerranéen de la mort d'Alexandre aux campagnes de Pompée. Cités et royaumes à l'époque hellénistique* (Rennes and Toulouse 2003) 41-61.

and in the Seleukid dynasty, the prominence of women is conspicuous. The first women wielding exceptional power among the Macedonians—Olympias, Adea-Eurydike, Arsinoë Philadelphos—appear already in the fourth century. Explanations therefore tend to focus on probable historical, *viz.* Argead, Achaimenid or pharaonic, antecedents rather than developments in the Hellenistic period. The most sensible explanation still is Macurdy's hypothesis that the apparent equality between men and women in the Macedonian royal families of the Hellenistic Age was rooted in the culture of the pre-Hellenistic Balkans *c.q.* Macedonia.⁵⁷ To this may be added the relative importance of women in the dynastic transmission of royal power, as argued above, and some Achaimenid influence added to the Argead tradition.⁵⁸ A

⁵⁷ Macurdy 1932; cf. *id.*, 'Queen Eurydice and the evidence for woman-power in early Macedonia', *AJPh* 48 (1927) 201-7.

⁵⁸ For 'the concept of power as a woman's dowry' in Argead Macedonia see also Miron 2000. Nourse 2002 argues that female power among the Seleukids was not only rooted in the Macedonian heritage but also influenced by the dynastic arrangements of the Achaimenids and Anatolian monarchies, which were adapted to suit the Seleukid's own circumstances and needs, the queen's place public image as much as her involvement in politically significant activities. The problem is, that our richest source for female power in pre-Hellenistic Anatolia and the Near East, Herodotos' *Histories*, is suspect, see J.H. Blok, 'Women in Herodotus' *Histories*', in: E.J. Bakker, I.J.F. de Jong, H. van Wees eds., *Brill's Companion to Herodotus* (Leiden, Boston, Cologne 2002) 225-42, evaluating various modern interpretations of the function of women, and showing that in the *Histories* women are essential indicators of normality, especially when transgressing the borders between the feminine and the masculine: 'women whose agency is destructive, or who are cast in negative light, indicate that something is rotten in the society to which they belong' (228). This does not imply, of course, that women at the Achaimenid court were *unimportant*; on the contrary, there is evidence that Persian royal women, too, participated in royal gift exchange, receiving landed property and economic privileges from the king, see H.W.A.M. Sancisi-Weerdenburg, 'Περσικόν δε κάρτα ο στρατός δῶρον: A typically Persian gift (Hdt. IX 109)', *Historia* 37.3 (1988) 372-4; cf. J.M. Bigwood, 'Ctesias, his royal patrons and Indian swords', *JHS* 115 (1995) 135-40, esp. 138: 'When Ktesias implies that queen Parysatis was a property owner on a significant scale (FGrH 688 F 16.65), he is certainly correct. His testimony, and also of course that of Xen., *Anab.* 1.4.9, cf. 2.4.27, is corroborated by cuneiform evidence of her property in Babylon': M.W. Stolper, *Entrepreneurs and Empire* (Istanbul 1985) 63-4; P. Briant, 'Dons de terres et de villes: l'Asie Mineure dans le contexte achéménide', *REA* 87 (1985) 53-72, at 59-90; and G. Cardascia, 'La ceinture de Parysatis', in: D. Charpin and F. Joannès eds., *Marchands, diplomates et empereurs* (Paris 1991) 363-9. Persian royal women also played a fundamental role in the dynastic transmission of kingship. Respecting the role of royal women in

last argument, explicated later on (section 3.5), is that as a result of polygamy women were ideal ‘favourites’ to delegate power to.

Rivalry between queens and their factions could destabilise the court. We can not say, however, whether conflicts between factions centred round the respective queens were due the king’s ‘failure to establish any consistent method of hierarchising his wives and the sons that were born of them’,⁵⁹ or the result of a deliberate policy of the king to keep the court divided. There were various means for kings to favour one queen over the other. Normally, only one of the queens was awarded the title of *basilissa*. The use of this title, comparable with the title of *basileus* for a crown prince, was a crucial mechanism for the establishment of hierarchy among the king’s wives. Like the crown prince, the *basilissa* was invested with ‘kingship’.

A typical feature of royal courts throughout the ages, was that the court as it were, ‘doubled’, because the queen had her own private quarters. There is no evidence that Hellenistic palaces were divided into a male and a female part.⁶⁰ Still, we sometimes hear that

Herodotos, A. Tourraix, ‘La femme et le pouvoir chez Hérodote. Essai d’histoire des mentalités antiques’, *DHA* 2 (1976) 369-86, argued that in monarchical societies power exercised by men is only legitimate and lasting if it includes ‘the feminine’ and is transferred through it, so that women fulfill the fundamental function of assuring the transmission and the permanence of Power; although Tourraix was later criticised for trying to re-introduce Bachofen’s notion of matriarchy, ‘the notion remains of matrilinear succession as a prerequisite to patrilinear succession’ (Blok 2003, 234). Still, when all is said and done, the fact remains that compared to Hellenistic queens and princesses, Achaimenid queens are nearly invisible in the official propaganda. On Achaimenid queens see M. Brosius, *Women in Ancient Persia (559-331 BC)* (Oxford 1996).

⁵⁹ Ogden 1999, ix.

⁶⁰ To be sure, neither is there conclusive proof that private houses of Greek elite families had separate women’s quarters, although that was the official ideology, and is the modern consensus, cf. e.g. Pomeroy 1997, 29: ‘the fundamental division of private space was between male and female’; cf. id., *Goddesses, Whores, Wives, and Slaves* (New York 1975) 71-3, and R. Just, *Women in Athenian Law and Life* (London 1989) 13-25. For a different view see M. Jameson, ‘Private space and the Greek city’, in: O. Murray and S. Price eds., *The Greek City. From Homer to Alexander* (Oxford 1990) 172-92, who argues that ‘Greek domestic architecture does not reveal a distinction between genders’; against the image of a rigid separation of men and women in Classical Athens also D. Cohen, *Law, Sexuality and Society* (Cambridge 1991) 133; cf. L.C. Nevett, *House and Society in the Ancient Greek World* (Cambridge 1999) 155, concluding that there is no archaeological evidence for a strict separation of male and female spheres in Greek houses.

a queen had her own servants and dignitaries. The later Seleukid court knew an office of ‘chamberlain of the queen’, or Lord of the Queen’s Bedchamber, as Bevan translates.⁶¹ One particular chamberlain, a man called Krateros, had been appointed by the king husband from among his own confidants. Other members of the queen’s court may have been relatives of hers or men from the entourage of her father.⁶² Queen Berenike, the wife of the Seleukid king Antiochos II had a personal bodyguard of Galatian swordsmen, put at her disposal by her father, the Ptolemaic king.⁶³ This would, in a sense, answer to the Greek custom according to which a married woman would herself dispose of her dowry; the dowry normally remained the possession of her *oikos* of origin until the woman’s sons came of age, or inherited it after her death.⁶⁴ The queen’s sons and daughters would grow up under the queen’s custody, until the boys reached the age of *paidēs* and became royal pages, serving the king. It seems plausible that princesses of the same age as male pages, *i.e.* between their thirteenth and eighteenth years, would together with the daughters of *philoī* serve the queen as ladies in waiting; there is some evidence that this was indeed the case at the Ptolemaic court in the late third century.⁶⁵

⁶¹ RIG 1158: κοιτῶνος τῆς βασιλίσσης (*c.* 100 BCE). Bevan 1902, II 283. The same man also bore the title of Chief Physician of the Queen: ἀρχίατρος τῆς βασιλίσσης.

⁶² The *tropheus* who was responsible for the pages at the court of Philippos II was a kinsman of queen Olympias: Plut., *Alex.* 5.

⁶³ Just. 27.1.4-7; App., *Syr.* 65; Val. Max. 9.10 *ext.* 1; Polyæn. 8.50 (246 BCE).

⁶⁴ The formal cause of the Sixth Syrian War was a dispute over Koile Syria, which according to the Ptolemaic government had been the dowry of Kleopatra I, daughter of Antiochos III and wife of Ptolemy V. Although Kleopatra had married Ptolemy in 193, it was only after Kleopatra’s death more than twenty years that this dowry was finally claimed by the Ptolemies; however, the reigning Seleukid king, Antiochos IV, rightly held the view that Kleopatra’s son was still a minor, and instead claimed both Koile Syria and the custody for his nephew (Polyb. 28.20.9). How strong such claims were, is exemplified by the fact that later sources (Jos. *AJ* 12.154; App., *Syr.*, 5) state that Koile Syria was actually ceded to the Ptolemies on this ground in 170/169; cf. Holleaux 1968, 339; Mørkholm 1966, 67.

⁶⁵ Polyb. 15.33.11, mentioning female *suntrophoi*, ‘foster-sisters’, of the Ptolemaic queen. On *basilikoi paidēs* and *suntrophoi* see further below.

3.3 The Friends of the King

Who were the *philoī tou basileōs*, the courtiers who were attached to the royal family and household by means of ritualised friendship? Where did they come from? How did they relate to each other and to the king? In what manner were power, status and wealth distributed among them? Below, we will first look at the general characteristics of the society of friends as a social group. We will then look at their origins and ethnicity, and finally at their association with the royal family by means of *xenia* and *philia*. Thereafter, the hierarchy of the court and conflicts among courtiers will be discussed.

Friends or officials?

All political power ideally rested with the king. But even godlike kings could not rule kingdoms on their own. In order to retain, increase and exploit monarchic power, a king must share power with others. ‘Monarchs make many hands and ears and feet their own,’ Aristotle wrote, ‘for they appoint persons who are friends of their rule and of themselves as their fellow-rulers.’⁶⁶ The ‘fellow-rulers’ of the Hellenistic kings were the so-called *philoī tou basileōs*, the ‘friends of the king’, a status group forming the supreme elite of the kingdoms.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ Arist., *Pol.* 1287b.

⁶⁷ φίλος and φίλος τοῦ βασιλέως are commonly found in both contemporary epigraphic texts as well as in secondary sources (Polybios, Diodoros, Appianos, Flavius Josephus, Plutarch and Athenaios); the equivalent of *philos* in Latin writings is *purpuratus*, cf. e.g. Liv. 30.42.6; Cic., *Cat.* 4.12; Curt. 3.2.10; Vitr. 2 *pr.* 1; Quint. 8.5.24. Other denominations for ‘courtiers’ in the literary sources are θεραπεία, ‘retinue’ (Polyb. 4.87.5; 5.56.7; 5.69.6; cf. Bickerman 1938, 36), οἱ περὶ τὴν αὐλήν, ‘people of the court’ (e.g. Polyb. 4.87.7; 5.26.13, 34.4, 36.1, 40.2, 41.3, 50.14, 56.5; 16.21.8; 18.55.3; App., *Syr.* 45; Jos., *AJ.* 12.125; 13.54; 17.125; 18.54). Bickerman 1938, 36, sees this as a broader, indicating *philoī* plus household personnel: ‘Atour de roi se placent les “gens de la cour”, *hoi perì tēn aulēn*, comme le langage hellénistique les appelait. Nous pouvons distinguer parmi ces “courtisans” deux groupes: “la maison du roi” et les “amis.” Αὐλικοὶ is a literal synonym of ‘courtiers’, but is rarely found (Polyb. 16.22.8; Plut., *Mor.* 778b; *Demetr.* 17). An interesting variant is οἱ περὶ τὴν Ἄτταλον, ‘the people of Attalos’ (Diod. 29.22). There is no indication that these different denominations had distinct meanings – *pace* Bickerman 1938, 36, who assumes that *therapeia* is the Seleukid king’s personal household of servants *et cetera*, as opposed to the king’s *philoī*, and that περὶ τὴν αὐλήν is the umbrella term for friends *and* household. None of these terms seem to have been ‘formal’ terminology, as these terms feature especially in secondary literary sources.

In co-operation with his *philoi*, a king controlled territory, peoples and cities. The *philoi* were the advisors of the king in all his undertakings, the accountants of the king's finances, the functionaries and tax collectors who administered the provinces, the generals and admirals who commanded the army and the fleet, the king's representatives in cities and his ambassadors at foreign courts.⁶⁸ They were not the employees of the king; they did not receive a regular salary. Usually born in elite families, most *philoi* did not depend on the king for an income, albeit they were rewarded for their services to the king with land, took their share of the plunder in war, and through their networks could participate in international trade. They were linked to the person of the monarch in a subtle, hierarchical system of

Furthermore, *philoi* was the umbrella term rather than *περὶ τὴν αὐλήν*, if we give credence to Polyb. 5.40, who says that Theodotos, governor of Koile-Syria for Ptolemaios IV, 'loathed the king ... and was wary of the *περὶ τὴν αὐλήν*', with whom those *philoi* are meant who were present at the court, *i.e.* in the king's presence (as opposed to those *philoi* who were at that moment absent from the court, like Theodotos himself). Polybios also once distinguishes between the *philoi* at court (*οἱ περὶ τὴν αὐλήν*), those administrating the province of Egypt (*οἱ τὰ κατὰ τὴν Αἴγυπτον χειρίζοντες*), and those responsible for administrating the rest of the Ptolemaic Empire (*οἱ ἐπὶ τῶν ἔξω πραγμάτων διατάγμενοι*). Modern literature about the *philoi* society is not very substantial; for general discussions see G. Herman, 'The "friends" of the early hellenistic rulers: servants or officials?', *Talanta* 12-3 (1980/81) 103-9; S. le Bohec, 'Les philoi des rois antigonides', *REG* 98 (1985) 93-124; G. Weber, 'Interaktion, Repräsentation und Herrschaft. Der Königshof im Hellenismus', in: A. Winterling ed., *Zwischen Haus und Staat* (Munich 1997); I. Savalli-Lestrade, *Les philoi royaux dans l'Asie hellénistique* (Geneva 1998); G. Herman, 'The court society of the Hellenistic age', in: P. Cartledge, P. Garnsey, E. Gruen eds, *Hellenistic Constructs. Essays in Culture, History, and Historiography* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London 1997) 199-224; R. Strootman, 'De vrienden van de vorst. Het koninklijk hof in de Hellenistische periode', *Lampas* 38.3 (2005b) 184-97. See also the literature referred to in section 1.2.

⁶⁸ The close ties between the king and his *philoi* finds expression in the civic decrees where we often see the standard phrase 'the king (and his family), the *philoi*, and the armed forces (*δυνάμεις*), cf. O. Kern, *Die Inschriften von Magnesia am Meander* (Berlin 1900) 86.15; Habicht 1958, 4; P. Hermann, 'Antiochos der Grosse und Teos', *Anadolu* 9 (1965) 29-159. *Philoi* as ambassadors: E. Olshausen, *Prospographie der hellenistischen Königsgesandten 1: Von Triparadeisos bis Pydna* (Leuven 1974); L. Mooren, 'Die diplomatische Funktion der hellenistischen Königsfreunde', in: E. Olshausen and H. Biller eds., *Antike Diplomatie. Wege der Forschung* 162 (Darmstadt 1979) 256-90.

ritualised personal ties. They were attached to the king's *oikos* as guest-friends.⁶⁹ In other words, they were servants nor officials, and it is not without reason that these men were known as the *friends* of the king.

It is unknown how many *philoï* were at the various courts at different moments, not even approximately. The only figure ever given is in Polybios' account of the Parade at Daphne in 166 BCE, where one thousand *philoï* paraded as a military unit in a procession staged by Antiochos IV Epiphanes.⁷⁰ It is highly uncertain, however, if this number reflects the number of *philoï* at Antiochos' court at that time and place. Neither is it possible to say where these people lived. During campaigns, *philoï* probably had pavilions for themselves and their retinues of servants, confidants and guards; in capital cities, they may have been lodged in the palace or stayed in private houses owned by themselves or by their own *xenoi*. In Pella several villa's dating to the Hellenistic Period were found; these may have belonged to *philoï*. It is likely that also in or near capital cities such as Alexandria, Seleukeia, or Antioch, important courtiers had their own little palaces.⁷¹

The *philoï* society was hierarchised by various means. One was the distribution of honorific court titles, court offices, and military commissions. Moreover, there existed various informal factors to allot favours and powers, which are now difficult to ascertain. The upper crunch of the *philoï tou basileōs* had a seat in the royal council, or *sunedrion*, granting them access to the person of the king on a regular basis, and hence influence on political matters. The members of the council were military generals before anything else. Writing about the court of Philippos V, Polybios calls the same *philoï* alternately 'courtiers',

⁶⁹ Cf. Nevett 1999, 174-5, on the Greek *oikos*: 'Recent work has shown that as well as a core nuclear family, individual households are likely to have housed a number of other individuals, including long-term guests, and that friends and neighbours are also likely to have been an important part of domestic life'.

⁷⁰ Polyb. 30.25.8. As Polybios says that these men were organised as a *syntagma*, there is a possibility that the 1,000 *philoï* were not pre-eminent courtiers but elite cavalymen comparable to the Companion Cavalry in Alexander's army. Cf. Weber 1997, 39 n. 50. On the parade at Daphne see chapter 5.4.

⁷¹ Cf. Polyb. 5.56.15: the wife and children of the Seleukid courtier Hermeias lived in Apameia while their husband and father was on campaign with the king. Of course we may also assume the existence of houses of *philoï* in their cities of origin as well as villa's on their landed estates.

‘commanders’, and the king’s ‘co-generals’.⁷² Below them were other levels of courtiers, also called *philoï*, not all of whom were soldiers. This means that ‘friend’ in the course of time also became to denote a formal rank, an ‘official’. This is noticeable particularly in the Ptolemaic kingdom in the second century BCE, where a wide variety of court titles is attested. The Hellenistic system of court titulature, however, was not principally a Ptolemaic invention. It grew from Argead and Achaimenid antecedents, and presumably first developed at the Seleukid court. Because we know very little about the exact meaning and function of Hellenistic court titles, it would be rash to conclude from the fact that the system apparently becomes more complex in the course of the second and first centuries, that the system became formal, static and bureaucratic. A more formal bureaucracy did develop at the lower levels of the administration, particularly in the Ptolemaic kingdom, but this tells us nothing about what happened at the core of Ptolemaic court society.

By sharing power with others, kings inevitably risked losing power to others. This is the eternal dilemma of all despotic, personal forms of rulership throughout the centuries:

It appears to be a universal principle that handing out favours is temporarily effective as an instrument of power, but eventually burdens the dispenser with newly-established interest-groups. ... Favourites could turn into rebels with remarkable speed. ... Power delegated, titles and privileges granted, places sold or given away would initially create a group loyal to the king, who usually, however, eventually turned into quick-tempered defenders of their own privilege.⁷³

Kings first of all needed helpers they could trust. Ideally, they chose as their closest collaborators men who could not themselves claim positions of importance by right of birth or otherwise, as such men are least difficult to remove from high office and thus more loyal. In other words, kings tend to select their courtiers as much on personal grounds as for their military or other professional capabilities. In practice, however, kings seldom controlled the composition of their courts entirely. Even Alexander had difficulty to remove Parmenion

⁷² Polyb. 4.87.7 (περὶ τὴν αὐλήν); 5.4.13 (ἐγεμόναι); 4.87.8 (συστρατευομένων); cf. Plut., *Mor.* 183b; Diod. 33.22. Pace Herman 1997, 214, who distinguishes men with power in the army from the courtiers proper; cf. K. Ehling, ‘Der “Reichskanzler” im Seleukidenreich’, *Epigraphica Anatolica* 30 (1998) 97-106, assuming a strict division between ‘civil’ and ‘military’ office-holders in the *sunedrion* of Antiochos III.

⁷³ Duindam 1994, 50-1.

from his inherited position as the second man at the Argead court. As already noticed, the first generation of Diadochs may have had exceptional opportunities to ‘hand-pick’ their friends, but not even they disposed of absolute power to appoint men of their own choosing to all crucial posts at court and in the army. Soon enough new interest-groups were established, proving increasingly difficult to control. The loyalty of the *philoï* therefore always remained a matter of constant concern for kings. The main threat was not that they would revolt. Open rebellion against the legitimate monarch was as inconceivable as in any other traditional monarchy, albeit malcontent courtiers might unite with a pretender or join a foreign court, taking their personal satellites, influence and even troops with them. Most dangerous for kings was the possibility that powerful men would remain devoted adherents of the dynasty but act at their own discretion, without the king’s consent or even against the king’s wish. This recurrent problem will be further discussed below.

Thus, paradoxically, the ideal *philos* was on the one hand dependent on, and subordinate to, the king, and on the other hand stalwart and able enough to independently command armies or rule provinces, and to frankly advise the king on important matters. Demetrios of Phaleron advised Ptolemaios Soter to read books about rulership, saying that ‘those things which the king’s friends are not bold enough to recommend to them are written in the books’.⁷⁴ This anecdote presents Demetrios as an ideal *philos* who did *not* mind mincing his words. Many are the passages in the sources where *philoï* are portrayed as either sycophantic and designing profiteers, or as a fearful lot who only flatter and dare not speak their minds in the presence of the king, let alone argue with him. In either case the results are presented as disastrous in the sources.⁷⁵ Although the motif of a king being corrupted by wicked advisors—presented as amusing anecdote by Athenaios, as moral example by Plutarch, and as political theory by Polybios—is a topos, at least it recognises, as Polybios says, that ‘the decisive importance for young kings, as leading either to their misfortune or to the firm establishment of their rule, is the judicious choice of the friends who attend on them.’⁷⁶

⁷⁴ Plut., *Mor.* 189d. A gratuitous advice since in the Hellenistic Age such books were normally written on orders of the king.

⁷⁵ For instance Diod. 28.2; Polyb. 8.22.1-3; 9.23.9; 15.34.4; Plut., *Demetr.* 17.2; Theopomp., FGrH 115 fr. 225 *ap.* Polyb. 8.9.5.

⁷⁶ Polyb. 7.14.6, adding that most young kings fail to do so.

Social and ethnic background ⁷⁷

As we have seen, the *philoï* community originated in the Argead kingdom during the reigns of Philippos and Alexander. Here the courtiers were called *hetairoi tou basileōs*, the companions of the king. The title of ἑταῖρος, although originally designating a member of the hereditary nobility of Macedonia, has similar connotations as φίλος in Greek. Both Philippos and Alexander endeavoured to remove these mighty barons of rural Macedonia from the key positions at court and in the army, and replace them with men of their own choosing. Philippos II took to awarding the title of *hetairos* at his own discretion. Alexander executed or murdered influential members of the Macedonian aristocracy to make place for his own friends, whom he recruited mainly among the lesser Macedonian nobility. When Alexander's empire was divided after his death, and each of the new kingdoms developed courts of their own, the demand for capable administrators and commanders became too great for the Macedonian nobility alone to meet. Now notably Greeks moved in to fill the gap. Initially, under Alexander and the first generation of Diadochs, members of indigenous *c.q.* Iranian aristocracies, too, rose to high office. This happened notably in the kingdoms of Antigonos Monophthalmos and Seleukos Nikator. A generation later, when the kingdoms were firmly established, non-Greek officials disappear from the sources. After *c.* 300 a new ruling ethno-class consisting of Greeks and Macedonians, came into being throughout the eastern Mediterranean and Near East.⁷⁸ The transition was marked by the substitution in formal writings of 'companion of the king' by 'friend of the king' as the preferred term to designate a courtier of high rank.⁷⁹ At the Hellenistic courts, the 'Hellenism' of the *philoï* group was in

⁷⁷ The tables in this section were presented at the international symposium on the *Post-Classical City*, Groningen 2003, and were inserted in Strootman 2005b. I would like thank the audience of the symposium, especially Onno van Nijf, for helpful comments. I was not able to benefit from J.L. O'Neil, 'The ethnic origins of the friends of the Antigonid kings of Macedon', *CQ* 53 (2003) 510-22, and id., 'Places of origin of the officials of Ptolemaic Egypt', *Historia* 55.1 (2006) 16-25, which appeared afterwards. O'Neil presents similar figures, based in part on the same samples, but draws different conclusions.

⁷⁸ The term 'ethno-class' was coined by Pierre Briant, 'Ethno-classe dominante et populations soumises dans l'Empire achéménide: le cas de l'Égypte', *AchHist* 3 (1988) 137-73, to designate the supranational elite of the Achaimenid Empire; the Iranian identity of this elite was partly a cultural construct, partly a matter of descent.

⁷⁹ The earliest contemporary reference to φίλος is from 285 BC (Welles no. 6; cf. Walbank 1984, 69; *pace* Konstan 1997, 96). In Arrian's *Anabasis* and Plutarch's *Alexander* ἑταῖρος is used as a technical

part a cultural construct, too, but of course this does not imply that the *philoï* were not *per se* ‘real’ Greeks.

In the late fourth and early third centuries the courts of the new kingdoms offered rare opportunities to obtain prestige, influence and riches. At the same time presence at court became a prerequisite for obtaining power and status. As a consequence, high birth was no longer the principal source for pre-eminent status at court. Instead, one’s status and importance was fixed by even less tangible determinants than ‘proximity to the throne’ or ‘favour’, albeit differences in rank and status were expressed by means of court titles, etiquette, dress, and ceremonial.⁸⁰ Elias Bickerman even boldly stated that the basis of the early Macedonian states in the Near East was the mutual goodwill (*eunoia*) between the king and his *philoï*: ‘Macedonians, Thessalians, other Greeks and various non-native elements were partners in exploiting the Orient and were as isolated in the immense alien country as the king himself. They all had to sink or to swim together. This was the real meaning of the mutual “good will” of which we have just spoken.’⁸¹ Flavius Philostratos described the early Ptolemaic court as ‘a dining table in Egypt to which the most distinguished men in the world were invited.’⁸² This is not poetic licence: Hellenistic courtiers really came from all over the world, and Gabriel Herman is surely right in calling the court in the Hellenistic world a ‘cosmopolis’.⁸³

This was for instance the case with the court of Antigonos Monophthalmos. Richard Billows has listed the names of all the friends of Monophthalmos mentioned in the sources; the prosopography contains 149 entries, and in of 82 persons also the ethnicity or birthplace is known.⁸⁴ The largest ethnic group are the Macedonians: 30, including the king’s son and grandson. This number exemplifies the transition in the years following Alexander’s death:

term for the Macedonian nobility during the reigns of Philippos and Alexander; Plutarch also refers to Alexander’s confidants, especially his *sōmatophulakes*, with φίλος as a generic term meaning ‘friend’; in his biographies of Demetrios, Agis, Flaminius, and Aemilius Paullus he uses φίλος for ‘courtier’ and not ἐταῖρος. Diodoros, on the other hand, uses φίλος for both Alexander’s and later Hellenistic courtiers. Cf. Herman 1980/1981, 13.

⁸⁰ Strootman 1993, 33; Weber 1993, 40; cf. Kruedener 1973, 58; Duindam 1994, 28-30.

⁸¹ Bickerman 1983, 7-8.

⁸² Philostr. 1.22.524. Theopomp. *FHG* I 320 *ap.* Ath. 167b claims that already the confidants of Philippos II had been ‘men who had rushed to his side from very many quarters’.

⁸³ Herman 1997, 208. Cf. Le Bohec 1985.

⁸⁴ Billows 1997, 361-452.

30 Macedonians out of a total of 82 courtiers is a strikingly lower percentage than the number of Macedonians at the Alexander's court; but it is also a strikingly higher percentage compared to the courts of the Ptolemies and Seleukids in the third and second centuries. Three other courtiers came from the Balkans as well: two men from Epeiros—including Pyrrhos, the later Epeirote king, who as a youth served Antigonos' for some time—and a man called Olkias, perhaps an Illyrian. Also remarkable is the number of 'Orientals' at Monophthalmos' court: four Iranians, a Lydian and a Bithynian. The remainder consists of Greeks. Thanks to the Greek habit of using their city of origin as an ethnic, it is possible to get some idea of the total area from which Antigonos recruited his *philoï*.

In the third century the number of Macedonians at the courts decreased. But the area from which the *philoï* originally came remained immense. Interestingly, *philoï* also came from cities far beyond the kingdom's sphere of influence. For instance at the court of Antiochos the Great of a total of 37 friends of the king whose place of origin is known, no less than 21 came from cities outside his actual sphere of influence (Table 2).

	223-187 BCE
Macedonians	9
Mainland Greece	10
Aegean Islands	9
Asia Minor	6
Syria	4
Non-Greeks	3
<i>Total</i>	41

Table 2: courtiers of Antiochos III ⁸⁵

At Antiochos' court we find 9 Macedonians. There are only 3 non-Greeks; one of them is Hannibal, who had fled to the Seleukid court after the Second Punic War. The remaining 30 are Greeks. The group of Macedonians is inclusive of king Antiochos' sons Antiochos and Seleukos. Though the number of other Macedonians seems small, their relative importance

⁸⁵ After Liv. 35.18.1; 36.5.3, 11.6, 12.4; 37.13.9, 34.1, 45.17; Polyb. 5.40.1, 41.2, 45.6, 70.11; 5.79; 7.15.2; 10.29.6; 11.39.12; 20.3.7; 21.17.7; 56.1. *Suda* s.v. 'Euphorion'.

was not: in *c.* 200 three of the five most powerful Seleukid *philoï* were Macedonians.⁸⁶ Polybios mentions a ‘Mede’ called Aspasianos and an Arab prince Zabdibelos as commanders of allied troops at the Battle of Raphia, but these vassal princes were only present for the duration of the Raphia campaign.⁸⁷

Table 3 shows the origins of Ptolemaic, Seleukid and Attalid *philoï* through larger periods of time. In the case of the Ptolemies and Seleukids two periods are distinguished, the second being the time when the empires contracted.⁸⁸ All these *philoï* are Greeks unless otherwise stated.

	305-180 BCE	180-30 BCE
Macedonians	3	7
Alexandria	6	8
Kyrene	0	4
Egypt	0	4
Aegean Islands	3	3
Mainland Greece	8	10
Asia Minor	4	3
Syria and Kilikia	0	3
Cyprus	0	1
<i>Total</i>	25	47

Table 3: Origins of Ptolemaic *philoï*⁸⁹

⁸⁶ O’Neil 2003 draws the same conclusion in respect to the later Antigonids: the number of Greeks at the Antigonid court increases but Macedonians continue to dominate the most important positions.

⁸⁷ Polyb. 5.79.7-8.

⁸⁸ The tables are based on the prosopographies of Mooren 1975 and Savalli 1998, neither of which is exhaustive, with some additions. Again, the tables discard those *philoï* whose origin or ethnic is unknown. The Antigonid court is excluded because no comprehensive prosopography of the Antigonid court was available; the Antigonids relied primarily on Macedonians from Macedonia, and to a lesser degree on Greeks from mainland Greece. The differing totals for the two periods are due to the available sources.

⁸⁹ After Mooren 1975.

Of the four courtiers from Egypt in this sample, only one was an Egyptian, namely Petosarapis, a favourite (*i.e.* a manifest outsider) at the court of Ptolemaios VI.⁹⁰ At the Ptolemaic court, relatively many courtiers apparently took pride in presenting themselves as Macedonians; this ethnic does not imply that they actually came from Macedonia.⁹¹

	312-187 BCE	187-64 BCE
Macedonians	6	0
Mainland Greece	6	7
Aegean Islands	7	4
Asia Minor	15	13
Syria and Kilikia	7	10
Cyprus	2	0
Crete	4	0
Other	2	0
<i>Total</i>	49	34

Table 4: Origins of Seleukid *philoï*⁹²

⁹⁰ We see here that at the Ptolemaic court a quarter of the total number of *philoï* mentioned with their place of origin in the prosopography of Mooren, came from Alexandria, and none from Kyrene and Egypt, between 300 and 180. In the second period 16 of 46 came from North Africa. The greater number of ‘North Africans’ may reflect the development of a settled ruling class with landed estates in Kyrene and the Egyptian interior. However, it is not possible to conclude anything from these numbers since the total is different for the two periods. On Petosarapis and favourites in general see below.

⁹¹ On the mutual perceptions of Greeks and Macedonians up until the death of Alexander see E. Badian, ‘Greeks and Macedonians’, in: B. Barr-Sharrar and E.N. Borza eds., *Macedonia and Greece in Late Classical and Early Hellenistic Times*. Studies in the History of Art 10 (Washington DC 1982) 33-51. How Greeks and Macedonians thought about each other after *c.* 300 is difficult to assess; it appears, however, that being a Macedonian was very prestigious in court circles.

⁹² After Savalli 1998, with the addition of Liv. 36.5.3; 37.13.9; Polyb. 5.40.1; 41.2, 45.6, 70.11, 79.7, 8, 10, 12; 7.15.2; 10.29.6; 11.39.12; 30.3.7. The prosopography of Savalli is incomplete and random, as it contains only those *philoï* of whom the title of *philos* has been explicitly attested, omitting *e.g.* such men as Antipatros and Hermeias, whose prominence at the court of Antiochos III is well attested (Liv. 37 *infra*; Polyb. 5 *infra*; 16.18.7; 21.7.9). The sample does not include sons of kings. To avoid

The Seleukids relied heavily on Greeks from Asia Minor. The percentage of *philoï* who are known to have come from Asia Minor remains unchanged even after the Seleukids had lost their possessions in Asia Minor; also the number of Greeks from the Aegean and the Greek mainland remained stable, even after direct Seleukid influence in the Aegean region had vanished.

	241-133 BCE
Pergamon	18
Asia Minor	12
Aegean Islands	4
Greek mainland	2
Magna Graeca	2
<i>Total</i>	38

Table 5: Origins of Attalid courtiers ⁹³

Attalid *philoï* came primarily from the city of Pergamon and the surrounding regions of the Aegean coast of Asia Minor, as well as the Aegean islands. Only two of the Attalid *philoï* originated beyond the Aegean.

Non-Greeks at the Hellenistic courts

In an influential article on the elites of the Hellenistic monarchies, Christian Habicht has calculated that in the third century a mere 2.5% of the Seleukid ruling class consisted of non-Greeks. He based his conclusion on a sample of about 250 leading men in the empire. Different from what I did in the tables above, Habicht accepted personal names as ethnic indicators.⁹⁴ Walbank comments that

disbalance, the Greeks who sought refuge at the Seleukid court after Antiochos III's defeat by the Romans in Greece in 192 are excluded; they were included in Table 2.

⁹³ After Savalli 1998. On Attalid *philoï* see also Tarn 1913, 233; Allen 1983, 129-35.

⁹⁴ C. Habicht, 'Die herrschende Gesellschaft in den hellenistischen Monarchien', *Vierteljahrschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte* 45 (1958) 1-16. Cf. Herman 1997, 201.

The exclusion of non-Greeks from this circle probably reflected the prejudices of the Greeks and Macedonians rather than any incapacity or reluctance to serve on the part of the indigenous population. Racial prejudice was characteristic of the Graeco-Macedonian caste within the kingdoms at least throughout the late fourth and third centuries.⁹⁵

In the past two decades, however, Habicht's view of the Seleukid elite as an ethnically homogeneous group has become an object of controversy. Recent historiography has revived the notion that there was substantial 'oriental' influence at the heart of the Seleukid Empire, as well as Egyptian influence at the Ptolemaic court, both in terms of persons and culture. The principal arguments against Habicht's calculation have been collected by Kuhrt and Sherwin-White in *From Samarkhand to Sardis*. Apart from several methodological objections—the sample is 'statistically worthless since the evidence then was (and still is) so incomplete and random geographically and chronologically'—their central argument is that personal names are unreliable as ethnic indicators since non-Greeks often assumed Greek names in the Seleukid kingdom. Kuhrt and Sherwin-White conclude that:

What we should visualise is a small exclusive court group, close to the king and dependent on his favour, occupying the top positions in the satrapies and armies, whose male members, in the third century, *generally* had Greco-Macedonian names. How and to what degree they were interlinked with members of the various indigenous populations remains unclear at present, although some recruitment into their ranks is likely. Below that were regional élites (Greek and non-Greek) running local affairs and representing and governing the ethnically variegated mass of farmers, soldiers, artisans, herders, cult personnel, traders and slaves.⁹⁶

Although the main thrust of the argument is certainly correct—the evident existence of autochthonous elites running regional and local affairs—the assumption that in the third century non-Greeks gained admission to the highest imperial ranks on a regular basis seems

⁹⁵ Walbank 1984, 68.

⁹⁶ Kuhrt & Sherwin-White 1993, 124-5, cf. 150-1. L. McKenzie, 'Patterns in Seleucid administration: Macedonian or Near Eastern?', *MedArch* 7 (1994) 61-8, goes even further and argues that, because the Seleukid administration combined Persian and Macedonian elements, an infrastructure was created that welcomed non-Macedonians, which in turn encouraged the creation of a shared culture. Similar opinions are expressed in Shipley 2000, 222. In defence of Habicht's view: Walbank 1984, 69; Weber 1997, 40-1; Herman 1997, 208.

doubtful. The fact that non-Greeks could assume Greek names does not help to identify them. Furthermore, ethnicity is not a matter of genealogy only; it is *also* a cultural construct.⁹⁷ When non-Greeks gained access to court but assumed a double, e.g. Babylonian-Hellenic, Judean-Hellenic, or Egyptian-Hellenic identity, this of course did not make them ethnic ‘Greeks’, but it does testify to the dominance of Greeks and Macedonians, and the prevalence of Hellenic culture at the royal courts.⁹⁸ Finally, as I will expound below, the rare non-Greek courtiers who do turn up in the sources unconcealed, were favourites, rising to prominence precisely because they were outsiders.

In the empire of Alexander and in the kingdoms of the first Diadochs in the east, members of the Persian ruling class initially retained positions of influence and power.⁹⁹ As Macedonian hegemony was not yet firmly established, Alexander and his immediate successors had to collaborate with the settled elites of the former Achaemenid Empire in order to pacify and govern the conquered territories. Alexander’s policy was to come to terms with the Iranian elites rather than to try to subdue them at all cost. Many Iranian magnates retained, or were newly appointed to, positions as satraps and commanders. Some were even allowed a place of honour at the Macedonian court. The most prominent examples are Oxyathres, a brother of brother of Darius III, who was given a place in Alexander’s entourage and received the title Companion of the King, and the eunuch Bagoas, a former favourite of Darius, whose influence with Alexander is stressed twice by Curtius.¹⁰⁰ Iranians, however, were normally assigned to, or affirmed in, posts in the provinces rather than at court. These could be

⁹⁷ Cf. M. Davies, ‘Greek personal names and linguistic continuity’, in: S. Hornblower and E. Matthews eds., *Greek Personal Names: Their Value as Evidence* (Oxford 2001) 15-39, who argues that among the Greeks personal names were indicative of the cohesion and cultural continuity of a specific community. Thompson 2001 shows that in Ptolemaic Egypt native Egyptians were pre-eminent conveyors of the Greek culture which was favoured by Ptolemaic administration. On Greek identity as a cultural construct see especially J. Hall, *Ethnic Identity in Greek Antiquity* (Cambridge 1997), and I. Malkin ed., *Ancient Perceptions of Greek Ethnicity* (Cambridge, Mass., and London 2001).

⁹⁸ On the multiple identity and loyalty of ethnic Babylonians see R.J. van der Spek, ‘Ethnicity in Hellenistic Babylonia,’ in: W.H. van Soldt ed. *Ethnicity in Ancient Mesopotamia. Proceedings of the 48e Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale, Leiden 2002* (Leiden 2004).

⁹⁹ Cf. E.N. Borza, ‘Ethnicity and cultural policy at Alexander’s court’, *AW* 23 (1992) 21, arguing that there was no ‘formal’ policy of hellenisation at Alexander’s court.

¹⁰⁰ Oxyathres: Curt. 6.2.11; Berve no. 586. Bagoas: Curt. 6.5.23; 10.1.22-38; Berve no. 195.

important positions. Mazaïos, the able commander of the Achaimenid army in the Gaugamela campaign, became satrap of Babylonia in 331.¹⁰¹ Artabazos, another prominent figure at the court of Darius III, became satrap of Baktria in 329.¹⁰² Apparently, Alexander needed men whose families possessed authority and prestige among the Iranians, but at the same time tried to keep them away from the centre of power.¹⁰³ This is standard policy in any imperial state.¹⁰⁴

Already during the reign of Alexander efforts were made to remove Iranians from the most crucial positions. Immediately after Alexander's death, his generals planned a rearrangement of the empire in which also the remaining Iranian satraps lost their positions.¹⁰⁵ The indigenous elites reacted to their exclusion from the centre by retreating to their provincial power bases.¹⁰⁶ In relatively inaccessible regions such as northern Anatolia, Armenia, the Persis, or the Thebaid, non-Greek states eventually re-emerged to challenge Macedonian domination – but seldom in the core regions of the empires.

In Egypt, Alexander left Egyptian provincial nomarchs in office, under the supervision of the Egyptians Doloaspis and Peteisis. Their authority was limited, however, by the fact that they had no military responsibilities; the armed forces in Egypt were under the command of two Macedonians, Balakros and Peukestas, and the ultimate authority of the satrapy was

¹⁰¹ Berve no. 484; Mazaïos' son became satrap in Syria (Curt. 5.13.11); when Mazaïos died of old age he was replaced by another Iranian, Stamenes (Arr., *Anab.* 4.18.13; Curt. 8.3.17 calls him Ditamenes; Berve no. 718).

¹⁰² Berve no 152.

¹⁰³ N.G.L. Hammond, *The Genius of Alexander the Great* (Chapel Hill 1997), argues that there was complete equality between Macedonians and Persians at Alexander's court (pp. 134, 143-44, 159, 190, 201); see however the objections to this view in the review article by C.A. La'da in *Mnemosyne* 52 (1999) 757-61, at 759.

¹⁰⁴ Alexander, of course did not aim at a 'unity of mankind', or a fusion of Macedonians and Persians; he did not give the daughters of Macedonian nobles in marriage to Iranian princes. For the notion see Tarn 1948, 110-1, 137-8; against it see E. Badian, 'Alexander the Great and the Unity of Mankind,' *Historia* 7 (1958) 425-44; A.B. Bosworth, 'Alexander and the Iranians,' *JHS* 100 (1980) 1-21.

¹⁰⁵ On the decisions made at Babylon in 323 BCE see now A.B. Bosworth, 'The Politics of the Babylon Settlement', in: *id.*, *The Legacy of Alexander. Politics, Warfare, and Propaganda under the Successors* (Oxford 2002) 29-63.

¹⁰⁶ Iranians in Asia Minor in the Hellenistic period: Briant, 'Les Iraniens d'Asie Mineure après la chute de l'Empire achéménide (A propos de l'inscription d'Amyzon)', *DHA* 11 (1985) 167-185.

given to Kleomenes, a Greek from Naukratis.¹⁰⁷ Ptolemaios Soter also employed Egyptian functionaries, in one recorded case even in the army, but kept them at arms-length from his court.¹⁰⁸ From the reign of Ptolemaios Philadelphos onward, Egyptians almost completely disappear from the upper and middle ranks of Ptolemaic hierarchy.¹⁰⁹ They reappear only as favourites in a later phase.

An important reason why the Diadochs at first courted the former Achaimenid ruling caste was its military potential. The intense and constant warfare of the Diadochs among each other in the late third century divided the Macedonian armed forces into various smaller armies. In the resulting demand for troops, the Iranian nobility was the key to the manpower of Asia. In particular Iranian cavalry—heavily armoured nobles, the forerunners of the Seleukid kataphrakts, with their retainers—could be decisive on the battlefield.¹¹⁰ Persian

¹⁰⁷ Arr., *Anab.* 3.5; cf. Hölbl 2001, 12 with n. 11-12.

¹⁰⁸ Hölbl 2001, 27 with n. 89. These functionaries are known from hieroglyphic grave epitaphs; the meaning of their honorific titles is unclear; the sarcophagus of the Egyptian nomarch Nektanebo boasts the title of ‘the great first-ranking officer of the army for his majesty’ (Hölbl p. 27 n. 90); cf. Turner 1984, 126. Shipley 2000, 222, quotes several epitaphs of Egyptians dated to the reign of Soter; these men apparently were very influential in the province of Egypt, but not at court.

¹⁰⁹ On the social and economic privileges of Macedonians and Greeks under the Ptolemies see D.J. Thompson, ‘Hellenistic Hellenes: The case of Ptolemaic Egypt’, in: I. Malkin ed., *Ancient Perceptions of Greek Ethnicity* (Cambridge, Mass., and London 2001) 301-22. Some other relatively recent work on ethnicity in Ptolemaic Egypt: R.S. Bagnall, ‘Greeks and Egyptians. Ethnicity, Status, and Culture’, in: *Cleopatra’s Egypt. Age of the Ptolemies* (New York 1988); K. Goudriaan, *Ethnicity in Ptolemaic Egypt* (Amsterdam 1988); P. Bilde ed., *Ethnicity in Hellenistic Egypt* (Aarhus 1992); W. Clarysse, ‘Greeks in Ptolemaic Egypt’, in: S. Vleeming ed., *Hundred-gated Thebes. Acts of a Colloquium on Thebes and the Theban area in the Graeco-Roman Period* (Leiden 1995) 1-19; J. Ducat, ‘Grecs et Égyptiens dans l’Égypte Lagide. Hellénisation et Résistance à l’Hellénisme’, in: *Entre Égypte et Grèce. Cahiers de la Villa Kérylos* 5 (Paris 1995) 68-81.

¹¹⁰ The Persian noble cavalry was known under the Achaimenids as the king’s ‘kinsmen’, or *huvaka* in Old Persian (translated as *suggeneis* in Greek sources); they were the most prominent courtiers of the emperor and formed the core of the Achaemenid army, not unlike Alexander’s élite cavalry, the Companions. Cf. e.g. Arr., *Anab.* 4.12.1; Diod. 17.59.2. On Persian noble cavalry in the Achaemenid Empire: N. Sekunda, *The Persian Army, 560-330 BC* (London 1992) 56-7; 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, esp. 108-111. Already Alexander had 1,000 Iranian horsemen at his disposal at the Battle of the Hydaspes River in 326. In the great battles of the

aristocrats were the best horsemen in Asia, who reputedly regarded it a disgrace to be seen on foot.¹¹¹ The military success of Seleukos Nikator in the east between 312 and 303 was due to his excellent relations with the Iranian nobility, in which his Baktrian wife Apama presumably played a crucial role. The successors of Seleukos Nikator, too, relied on Iranian cavalry for their armies, and likewise maintained bonds with the Iranian families through marriages and alliances. By that time, however, Iranians were no longer prominent at court.

Xenia

As we have seen, *philoï* came from a wide range of Greek cities, often from outside the empires. An explanation of this perhaps remarkable fact is offered by Herman, who has drawn attention to the interrelation of *philia* and *xenia*.¹¹² The Greek tradition of *xenia* (or *philoxenia*)—a form of ritualised personal relationships with traits of fictive kinship, usually translated as ‘guest-friendship’—constituted supranational, ‘horizontal’ elite networks which linked men of approximately equal social status but of separate social units *c.q.* *poleis*, thus uniting the Greek world at its highest level. It was an aristocratic ideal, an archaic legacy.¹¹³ Through participation in a social sphere outside the city, civic elites distanced themselves from their inferiors. With the renewal of class distinctions in the Hellenistic *poleis*, the significance of *xenia* increased. It is worth quoting the summary of Herman’s argument in

Diadochs Near Eastern troops, notably Iranian cavalry, was prominently present. In the Battle of Gabiene in 317 Eumenes and the eastern satraps fielded about 5,000 Iranian horse supported by huge numbers of various Asian light infantry (Diod. 28.1-8); on the opposing side, Antigonos Monophthalmos had at least 1,000 Iranian heavy cavalry, 1,000 cavalry from Anatolia, and more than 10,000 ‘Asian’ and Anatolian light infantry, on a total army of 36,500 men (Diod. 19.29.1-7). Antigonos’ Iranian horsemen had Iranian commanders (Grainger 1990, 47). At the Battle of Ipsos in 302 BCE both Antigonos Monophthalmos and Seleukos Nikator fielded about 10,000 horsemen (Diod. 20.13.4; cf. Plut., *Demetr.* 28.3), numbers reminiscent of the armies of the Persian Great Kings. Cf. E. Badian, ‘Orientals in Alexander’s Army,’ *JHS* 72 (1965) 160-61; W.W. Tarn, *Hellenistic Military and Naval Developments* (Cambridge 1930).

¹¹¹ Xen., *Cyr.* 4.3.22; cf. Hdt. 136.2: ‘The Persians teach their sons between the ages of five and twenty, only three things: to ride, use a bow, and speak the truth’.

¹¹² G. Herman, *Ritualised Friendship and the Greek City* (Cambridge etc. 1987).

¹¹³ Φιλοξενία as an aristocratic ideal in the world of Homer, esp. the *Odyssey*: M. Scott, ‘Philos, philotes and xenia’, *AClass* 25 (1982) 1-19; H. van Wees, *Status Warriors. War, Violence and Society in Homer and History* (Amsterdam 1992) 44-8.

full, as it is also sheds light on the preponderance of Greek culture at the courts of the Ptolemies, Seleukids and Antigonids:

Many of the courtiers ... were recruited through the instrumentality of *xenia*, an ancient form of fictive kinship. ... The Hellenistic rulers ... availed themselves of pre-existing *xenia* networks to draw new allies into their orbit. These networks account not only for the preponderance of Greeks among the newly recruited Hellenistic court members, but also for the increasing similarities between the three courts. The Hellenistic court societies, then, did not operate *in vacuo*. Instead, they were part of a wider, interactive, international society of ritualised friends. This society had since time immemorial constituted a world of its own, binding together the social elites of the Greek world through upper-class ideals. ... As a first step towards understanding Hellenistic “court politics”, one should therefore explore the relation between court societies and friendship networks.¹¹⁴

Apart from the king’s personal or paternal *xenia* network, new courtiers could also be recruited among *xenoi* of settled courtiers.¹¹⁵ *Xenia* networks provided kings with a means to attract, from outside court circles, *philoï* who did not yet possess a power base at the court but whose families were influential within their own cities. A second advantage was that *philoï* would normally retain links with their families and cities of origin, perhaps through several generations.¹¹⁶ ‘Having turned royal officials’, Herman says, ‘these members of governing élites are often found to be acting as mediators between the kings and their own communities of origin, deriving substantial benefits from both systems.’¹¹⁷

¹¹⁴ Herman 1997, 208.

¹¹⁵ Plut., *Agis* 10, cf. 3.

¹¹⁶ I. Savalli-Lestrade, ‘Courtisans et citoyens: le cas des philoi attalides’, *Chiron* 26 (1996) 149-81; F. Muccioli, ‘La Scelta delle Titolature dei Seleucidi. Il Ruolo dei philoi e delle Classi Dirigenti Cittadine’, *Simbolos* 3 (2001) 295-318. Pace O’Neil 2006, 20: ‘We cannot assume that all these men had an active connection with their home cities’. In cities we find both honours for the king dedicated by *philoï* (e.g. *OGIS* 128, 171, and 255) and decrees in honour of *philoï* dedicated by the king (e.g. *Syll.*³ 462; Welles 45; *OGIS* 317. Cf); cf. Buraselis 1994, 20; Habicht 1958, 11-2.

¹¹⁷ G. Herman, s.v. ‘Friendship’, *OCD* (1996) 611-3, at 613. On *philoï* as mediators between king and cities see also Bringmann 1993, 7-24; Savalli 1996. An interesting example of the geographical range of aristocratic *xenia* in the Hellenistic Age is provided by the third century Spartan kings. King Leonidas, who had lived ‘in the palaces of satraps’, and was married to the daughter of a satrap of a Seleukid *philos* (Plut., *Agis* 10, cf. 3); when Kleomenes was driven from Sparta, he went to

This web of relations cemented the empire together, as the Greek *poleis*, being *de iure* and normally also *de facto* autonomous states within the imperial framework, were the cornerstones of imperial rule. Kings could influence civic politics through their *philoï* – their families or adherents in the cities would benefit, too, from royal favour, which gave them the advantage over other parties in the internal political struggles of the *poleis*. Thus, the *philoï* represented the interests of the cities at court, and the interests of the court in the cities.

Philia

Courtiers were called ‘friends of the king’, or simply ‘friends’, because that is exactly what they were.¹¹⁸ Various forms of dependence tied the courtiers to the king and *vice versa*, but the principal arrangement underlying the relationship was *philia*, the Greek moral complex of friendship.¹¹⁹

In modern literature it is often taken for granted that *philia* at a royal court is at odds with the autocratic nature of Hellenistic kingship; ‘royal’ *philia* must therefore be something fundamentally different from what the term *philia* was normally understood to mean in Greek societies. Thus, David Konstan takes it that *philia* between the Hellenistic *philoï tou basileōs* and the ruler was ‘less personal and affectionate, more formal and calculated than the classical ideal’ and dismisses aulic *philia* as ‘a striking instance of the application of the language of friendship to distinctly hierarchical relations between people of different social station’—itself a striking instance of the modern apprehension of the Hellenistic era as a period of cultural and moral decline—but even Herman assumes that, although *philia* may lay at the root of the relationships at court, ‘the basic obligations of friendship [ultimately] came

Alexandria with his followers and stayed at the court of Ptolemaios III, who gave him an annual pension of 24 talents; Kleomenes used that money largely to distribute gifts among own clients (Plut., *Cleom.* 32.3).

¹¹⁸ Cf. D. Musti, ‘Syria and the East’, *CAH* 7.1 (1984) 175-220, at 179. Personal ties between king and friends: L. Mooren ‘Kings and courtiers: Political decision-making in the Hellenistic states’, in: W. Schuller ed., *Politische Theorie und Praxis im Altertum* (Darmstadt 1998) 122-33, esp. 124 with n. 12.

¹¹⁹ Greek friendship has recently received much attention, in particular in the context of Athenian tragedy. For a comprehensive discussion of the literature see especially D. Konstan, *Friendship in the Classical World* (Cambridge 1997) 1-3. Herman 1987 is mainly concerned with *xenia*.

to be superseded by obligations of service.’¹²⁰ Yet I want to argue that *philia* at royal courts was not principally different from Greek *philia* in general.

Philia may be defined as a personal, reciprocal bond of loyalty and solidarity between two or more men or women of approximately equal status who share roughly the same interests. They were committed to each other by mutual obligations, and could rely on each other for help.¹²¹ The objective of *philia* was normally to achieve a common goal, and united action towards that end was a means to strengthen and display the bond. By means of exchanging gifts and favours (*charites*) the friendship was kept alive.¹²² Though *philia* may not have been ‘a subjective bond of affection and emotional warmth’, as M. Heath defined it, neither was it ‘the entirely objective bond of reciprocal obligations’,¹²³ as loyalty between friends was regulated by morality and honour. Violation of friendship was considered highly dishonourable, even impious.¹²⁴

¹²⁰ Konstan 1997, 121; Herman 1987, 164. Cf. Walbank 1984, 70. Cf. L. Smith Pangle, *Aristotle and the Philosophy of Friendship* (Cambridge 2002), who discards Aristotle’s understanding of *philia* as an aspect of monarchic relations since that would be incompatible with the inherent equality of *philia*.

¹²¹ S. Goldhill, *Reading Greek Tragedy* (Cambridge 1986) 82.

¹²² Herman in OCD 611; Konstan 1997, 78. Cf. Scott 1982, characterising Homeric *philia* as ‘based on self-interest but wholly co-operative in action’.

¹²³ M. Heath, *The Poetics of Greek Tragedy* (Stanford, Ca. 1987), 73-4. Konstan 1997, 1, defines *philia* as ‘a mutually intimate, loyal and loving bond between two or a few persons that is understood not to derive primarily from membership in a group normally marked by native solidarity, such as family, tribe, or other such ties. Friendship is thus what anthropologists call an achieved rather than an ascribed relationship, the latter being based on status whereas the former is in principle independent of a prior formal connection such as kinship.’ However, achieved and ascribed relationships should not be dissociated so radically, as *philia* can intensify solidarity between members of a social group, as much as ethnic or social ties can strengthen friendship.

¹²⁴ On this aspect most recently F.S. Belfiore, *Murder among Friends. Violation of Philia in Greek Tragedy* (Oxford 2000). Kings themselves were also subject to the obligations of *philia*: Diod. 20.70-3-4 relates how the Sicilian king Agathokles was punished by the divine powers because he had murdered a man who was his *philos* and *xenos* (cited after Herman in OCD, 612). Traitors and rebels were severely punished when caught, their bodies mutilated and degraded; this happened for instance with the rebel Achaïos after he had been captured by Antiochos III: ‘At the subsequent meeting of the *sunedrion*, there were many proposals as to the proper punishment to inflict on Achaëus, and it was decided to lop off in the first place the unhappy prince’s extremities, and then, after cutting off his head and sewing it up in an ass’s skin, to impale his body’ (Polyb. 8.21.2-3).

Like *xenia*, *philia* had traits of fictive kinship.¹²⁵ The Hellenistic aristocracies followed, it seems, Homer's saying that a good friend may be 'in no way less than a brother'.¹²⁶ Some royal *philoï* were honoured in inscriptions as the *suggeneis* or *adelphoi*, 'relatives' and 'brothers' of the king, even if they were not really related to him.¹²⁷ Such bonds of fictive kinship were no less strong than those between actual relatives. The parties involved in a *philia* relationship were ideally each other's peers, even when they were not equals in practice.¹²⁸ All *philoï* immediately surrounding the king belonged to the same status group. Hierarchy was created by various informal means, which will be discussed later. Thus, patron-client relations at the Hellenistic courts were characterised by what may be called 'fictive equality'.¹²⁹ Like the Companions in Alexander's council, the foremost *philoï* who had a seat in the *sunedrion* of Hellenistic king discussed matters of state openly with the king, even sometimes holding sway against the king's wishes.¹³⁰ This formal equality is an

¹²⁵ Herman, *OCD* 611; the word *φιλία* can also signify actual blood relationship.

¹²⁶ *Il.* 8.584-6. *Hetaireia* and *philia* as aristocratic ideals in Homeric epic: Scott 1982; Van Wees 1992, 44-8.

¹²⁷ Polyb. 4.48.5; Plut., *Mor.* 197a; 1 *Macc.* 3.32; 10.89; 11.31; 2 *Macc.* 11.12; OGIS 148; 259; cf. Liv. 30.42.6. In Classical Athens *συγγενεία* connoted all blood relatives, within and without the *oikos*, and was discerned from *ἀνχιστεία* (literally 'closest'), which was limited to blood relatives up to cousins.

¹²⁸ Equality of friends in a *philia* relationship: Herman in *OCD* 611; Heath 1987, 74; Konstan 1997, 97.

¹²⁹ In the definition of P. Burke, *History and Social Theory* (Cambridge 1992) 72, patronage is 'a political system based on personal relationships between unequals, between leaders (or patrons) and their followers (or clients). Each party has something to offer to the other. Clients offer patrons their political support and also their deference ... For their part, patrons offer clients hospitality, jobs and protection.' See however the objections raised by S. Silverman, 'Patronage as myth', in: E. Gellner and J. Waterbury eds., *Patrons and Clients in Mediterranean Societies* (London 1977) 7-19, and M. Gilsenan, 'Against patron-client relations', *ibidem* 167-83.

¹³⁰ *Pace* Konstan 1997, 121. On the *sunedrion* see below. Note that Hellenistic court society developed from the old Macedonian institution of *ἑταιρεία*, a term designating a (political) confraternity, cf. Herman in *OCD* 611. The Companions and the Macedonian king belonged to the same peer group in which the king, as *primus inter pares*, was more equal than the others. Cf. Arist., *Pol.* 5.9.6, where the relationship between a king and his common subjects is compared to the authority of a father over his children, *i.e.* an unequal relationship, whilst in *Eth. Eud.* 7.4.1-2 it is stated that a father-son relationship is *not* a form of *philia*.

aristocratic ideal, known also from Homeric and Archaic Greece.¹³¹ When Alexander, in a famous anecdote related by Curtius, exclaimed that Hephaestion ‘is Alexander too’, this answered to Aristotle’s dictum that a *philos* was ‘one’s other self’.¹³²

In the next section, the principal social dynamics that held together, and hierarchised, the *philoï* society will be discussed: gift exchange and the ritualised entertainment of friends and guests at court.

3.4 Hierarchy

The *philoï* community was a social group defined by the ideal of equality. At the same time the *philoï* community was in reality hierarchical. As the king was the focus for all aspects of the court society, a courtier’s relative status was determined by the principle of proximity to the throne, that is, the degree to which he was able to speak with the king in person, or with persons near the king, or persons near the persons near the king. Gift exchange, court titles and etiquette were instrumental in determining a courtier’s position within the court hierarchy.

In what follows, several aspects of the principle of proximity to the throne will be discussed. We will look at gift exchange as a mechanism for constructing social relations at court, the more formal system of titles, membership of the royal council, and other status determinants. In *Die höfische Gesellschaft* Norbert Elias listed what he believed to be the determinants for status at court.¹³³ Although Elias’ views have in later research been adjusted more often than not, this inventory still holds well. Elias’ status determinants are: family prestige, wealth (possessed and received), rank, military achievements, the king’s favour, and the ability to influence powerful persons (dignitaries, but also e.g. concubines of the king), membership of a certain clique, ‘esprit’, courtly behaviour and outward appearance. At the Hellenistic courts comparable mechanisms were at work.

¹³¹ Cf. Van Wees 1992, 45, who contrasts the hierarchy of the pre-Hellenistic courts in the Near East with the egalitarian ideology of the *Odyssey*.

¹³² Curt. 3.12.17; Arist., *Eth.Nic.* 1169b 6. Most recently on Aristotle’s (as well as other thinkers’) idea of friendship: Smith Pangle 2002.

¹³³ Elias 1969, 153.

Proximity to the throne

The inaccessibility of the king was fundamental in the power games played at the court. The king was *qualitate qua* distanced from other human beings, who would never meet him or had to wait long before meeting him. Waiting ritually accentuated the king's almost superhuman distance. This is a universal characteristic of despotic power. In 1995, UN secretary-general Boutros Boutros-Ghali travelled to the former republic of Zaire because president Mobutu had urgently requested a tête-à-tête with him. Michael Ignatieff, who accompanied Boutros-Ghali on this trip, later recalled how surprised he was that Mobutu was nowhere to be seen when the secretary-general and his staff arrived:

President Mobutu, we are told, is still at mass. So we cool our heels in his guest palace, a suburban bungalow in a heavily guarded compound in the middle of the forest. Boutros-Ghali walks about, looks at his watch, runs his hands over Mobutu's collection of gold African figurines on their cool white marble plinths. ... Why are we kept waiting? I ask one of the secretary-general's aides. Because, he whispers, Mobutu is king.¹³⁴

The fact that most people could not approach the king, at least not directly, accentuated the privilege of those few individuals who did have routine access to the king, *viz.* the most prominent courtiers, the queen, the king's personal physician and bodyguards, and the odd favourite.¹³⁵ They acted as mediators, or 'brokers', between the king and others.¹³⁶ Pyrrhos the Molossian, who as a young prince stayed at the court of Ptolemaios Soter as a hostage, 'cultivated Berenike in particular, seeing that she was the most influential and the most

¹³⁴ M. Ignatieff, *The Warrior's Honor. Ethnic War and the Modern Conscience* (London 1998) 82-3. On waiting as a means to ritually distance the ruler in the Hellenistic kingdoms see chapter 3.4.

¹³⁵ See for instance Diod. 30.10.2; Polyb. 5.26.8, 5.56.7; Jos., *AJ.* 12.17-32. Physicians: G. Marasco, 'Les médecins de cour à l'époque hellénistique', *REG* 109 (1996) 435-66; A. Jansen, 'Ad fundum. Philippus van Acarnanië en Alexander de Grote (ca. 330 v.Chr)', in: J.J.E. van Everdingen et al. eds., *Op het lijf geschreven. Bekendheden en hun lijfarts* (Amsterdam and Overveen 1995) 26-36; A. Mastrocinque, 'Les médecins des Séleucides', in: P. van Eijk, H.F.J. Horstmanshoff, P. Schrijvers eds., *Ancient Medicine in its Socio-Cultural Context* 1 (Amsterdam 1995) 143-51.

¹³⁶ The key role of 'brokers' in patron-client relations was first recognised by E. Wolf, 'Aspects of group relations in a complex society' (1956), reprinted in: T. Shanin ed., *Peasants and Peasant Societies* (Harmondsworth 1971) 50-66; cf. Kettering 1986; Burke 1992, 74; Duindam 1994, 86; Strootman 2005c, 192-3. Examples of mediators arranging meetings with Hellenistic kings: Jos., *AJ.* 12.185; 14.11.1; Polyb. 8.18.10.

virtuous and intelligent of the wives of Ptolemaios'.¹³⁷ Diodoros, probably drawing from Hieronymos of Kardia, tells how in 316 Dokimos, a partisan of Eumenes, was captured by Antigonos Monophthalmos but made a dramatic escape by negotiating with Antigonos' wife Stratonike; he later rose to high office in Antigonos' army.¹³⁸ Josephus relates how a century later a certain Joseph, an aristocrat from Jerusalem, travelled to the Ptolemaic court to obtain certain privileges for his family:

[He] privately sent many presents to the king, and to [queen] Kleopatra, and to their friends, and to all that were powerful at court, and thereby purchased their goodwill to himself.¹³⁹

Finally a meeting was arranged with the king. While Ptolemaios was travelling from Memphis back to Alexandria, Joseph waited along the road at a certain place, was invited into the royal carriage, and was given a short time to talk with the king:

With his amusing and clever conversation he made a good impression on the king, who began to like him, and he was invited for dinner at the palace, as a guest at the royal table.¹⁴⁰

Apart from the various official royal wives, also the concubines of the king often acquired power and influence at court on account of their closeness to the king. This is not always understood in the ancient sources, in which we often find the topos of the royal concubine as vulgar, unscrupulous, power-hungry courtesans, who turned kings into 'slaves' in order to rule for themselves:

¹³⁷ Plut., *Pyrrh.* 4.

¹³⁸ Diod. 19.16; J. Hornblower, *Hieronymus of Cardia* (Oxford 1981) 125-8. C.P. Jones, 'Hellenistic history in Chariton of Aphrodisias', *Chiron* 22 (1992) 91-102, comments that 'it is a likely suggestion that [Dokimos] betrayed his companions in return for a promise of advantage in the service of Antigonos' (94).

¹³⁹ Jos., *AJ.* 12.185.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibidem.* Cf. Jos., *AJ* 12.4.8, concerning the same queen: when a man called Arion was thrown in jail although he was innocent, his wife 'informed Kleopatra of this ... (for Arion was in great esteem with her), [and] Kleopatra informed the king of it.' On Josephus' sympathy for Kleopatra III: P.W. Haider, 'Judith - Eine zeitgenössische Antwort auf Kleopatra III. als Beschützerin der Juden?', *Grazer Beiträge* 22 (1998) 117-28.

In the temples of Alexandria there were many statues of Kleino, the cupbearer of Ptolemaios Philadelphos, representing her in a chiton and holding a rhyton. And are not some of the richest houses [in Alexandria] owned by Myrtilon, Mnesis and Potheïne? But what are Mnesis and Potheïne but flute-players, and was Myrtilon not one of those vulgar professional mime actors? And was Ptolemaios Philopator not the slave of the prostitute Agathokleia, who brought the kingdom to the brink of collapse? ¹⁴¹

This passage unwillingly demonstrates the power of the ‘official’ royal *maîtresse*. These women presumably were not the depraved common girls they appear to be in antipathetic historiography. For instance Ptolemaios Philopator’s principal *maîtresse*, the ‘prostitute’ Agathokleia, a ‘Samian dancing girl’ according to Plutarch, was in reality the sister of Agathokles, the highest ranking *philos* of the king.¹⁴² Likewise Alexander’s concubine Barsine – if she was indeed a concubine and not a wife – was the daughter of a Persian nobleman and had been married to the celebrated Achaemenid general Memnon.¹⁴³ Polybios’ claim that Ptolemaios Philadelphos set up statues of his concubines in sanctuaries indicates that being a royal concubine was a public role, an aulic office *avant la lettre*, comparable with the *maîtresse en titre* at the court of Louis XV.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴¹ Polyb. 14.11.2-5. Similar characterisations of Agathokleia are in Plut., *Kleom.* 33; Just. 30.1.7; Strabo 17.795; Ionn. Antioch. *FHG* IV 558. Strabo dubs the king ὁ τῆς Ἀγαθοκλείας; both Polybios and Justin accuse Agathokleia of having murdered the *basilissa* Arsinoë, and Polybios 15.25.12 holds her indirectly responsible for the death of Philopator himself. Cf. Diod. 33.13, who relates how Eirene, a concubine of Ptolemaios VIII, persuaded the king to commit murder; conversely, Jos., *Ap.* 2.55, relates how the same Eirene persuaded the king not to murder Jews; the latter story is reminiscent of the book of *Ester*: a central element in this Jewish novel from the Hellenistic period is the queen’s role as a broker.

¹⁴² Plut., *Amat.* 9; Polyb. 14.11.5.

¹⁴³ Just. 11.10.2; 13.2.7; Curt. 10.6.13; Diod. 22.20.1, 28.1; cf. Plut., *Alex.* 21; *Eum.* 1. Cf. Berve no. 206. Barsine’s father Artabazos was a leading figure at the court of Darius III, cf. Berve no. 152. Alexander’s son by Barsine, Herakles, probably was not a bastard but his legitimate heir.

¹⁴⁴ On the *maîtresse en titre* see C. Hanken, *Gekust door de koning. Over het leven van koninklijke maîtresses* (Amsterdam 1996): in this readable account of the evolution of the ‘office’ of concubine at the French court during the Ancien Régime, the author shows that the changing position of concubines reflects changing political circumstances *c.q.* the evolution of the French national state in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Another title used in the eighteenth century was *maîtresse déclarée*, which indicated an even more formal and public character; other official denominators

Gift exchange

The principal instrumentality that created and maintained bonds between a king and his *philoï* was the exchange of gifts. As Plutarch sceptically remarked: ‘kings hunt for men by attracting them with gifts and money, and then catch them.’¹⁴⁵

Gift exchange was a central element in the ideal of *philia*.¹⁴⁶ It also was tantamount to the royal virtue of generosity, a form of conspicuous consumption, of *tryphē*. In *Idyll* 17, the court poet Theokritos praises Ptolemaios Philadelphos as a man who is ‘generous with gifts, as a king befits, generous to cities and loyal friends.’¹⁴⁷ Magnanimity was a crucial component of the Hellenistic ideal of kingship, and kings were obliged to live up to that ideal. In a society where honour depended on appearances as much as on behaviour, giving lavish gifts was a pre-eminent mechanism by which kings could confirm their superior status and prove that they indeed possessed such infinite wealth as they were supposed to possess. Royal gifts went out, first of all, to the gods, then to relatives and friends, and finally to cities and temples. Although royal euergetism in cities is at present the best known and most studied form of royal gift giving, the munificence of Hellenistic kings toward their *philoï* was equally legendary in ancient times.¹⁴⁸

In anthropological theory, the principal function of gift exchange is the creation or affirmation of social relations. The process of exchanging gifts is often highly ritualised. It serves no economic aim, even though the circulation of goods brought about by gift exchange often has important economic consequences.¹⁴⁹ H.J.M. Claessen has distinguished between

included *maîtresse du Roi* and *maîtresse actuelle* (Hanken (1996, 96). Cf. Nikolaos of Damascus *FHG* III 414 *ap.* Ath. 593a, about Myrrhine, a concubine of Demetrios Poliorketes: ‘although he did not give her the diadem, he gave her a share in the royal power.’

¹⁴⁵ Plut., *Cleom.* 13.5.

¹⁴⁶ Konstan 1997, 4.

¹⁴⁷ Theocr., *Id.* XVII 124-5; cf. *Id.* XVI 32-3.

¹⁴⁸ For instance Ath. 48f; 49a; Sokrates of Rhodes *FHG* III 96 *ap.* Ath. 148a; Jos., *AJ* 12.40-1; 12.59; 13.82.

¹⁴⁹ S. Kettering, *Patrons, Brokers, and Clients in Seventeenth-Century France* (New York 1986), and *idem*, ‘Gift-giving and patronage in Early Modern France’, *French History* 2 (1988) 133-51; cf. Burke 1992, 74. On gift exchange in general see Burke 1992, 69-71. The economic aspects of gift exchange is a central theme in the archaic economy model of the school of Polanyi; however, Polanyi strictly distinguished between reciprocity (social) and redistribution (economic), acknowledging that the latter

four forms of royal gifts: ‘gifts’ (incidental donations), ‘renumerations’ (incidental gifts in return for some service or other), ‘salary’ (regular payment in return for services), and ‘offerings’ (various gifts to gods, priests or temples).¹⁵⁰ All forms are apparent in the Hellenistic kingdoms. The *philoï*, the people closest to the king, received mainly ‘renumerations’ in exchange for gifts or as rewards for specific services. Unwritten rules regulated what kind of present was proper in a given context.¹⁵¹

The most rewarding gift for the king to give was land. The distribution of landed estates among the *philoï* provided them with status, as well as a source of income. Not even royal executives such as satraps or court officials received a regular salary. They too were granted farmland to exploit, often including buildings, labourers and slaves.¹⁵² Estates could be managed *in absento*.¹⁵³ In addition to landed estates, kings could give their friends trading privileges, or the revenues of villages and harbours, and even cities.¹⁵⁴ Thus the requirements

was essentially a by-effect of the first; cf. G. Dalton ed., *Primitive, Archaic, and Modern Economies. Essays of Karl Polanyi* (New York 1968) xxxv.

¹⁵⁰ H.J.M. Claessen, ‘The Benevolent Lord’, in: H.J.M. Claessen and P. Skalnik eds., *The Early State* (The Hague 1978) 563-7.

¹⁵¹ Ath. 194a. Alexander gave fifty talents to the page who had warned him of a conspiracy (Curt. 8.10.26, cf. 8.6.19); Strato of Lampsakos received no less than eighty talents for tutoring the children of Ptolemaios Philadelphos (Diog. Laert. 5.58).

¹⁵² Van der Spek 1986, 179-80. Although royal concern with agricultural economy was not unknown in the Seleukid and Ptolemaic empires, Van der Spek shows that land grants were primarily political measures. For gifts of land see e.g. Curt. 8.10.26; Plut., *Alex.* 15.2; 1 *Macc.* 10.39; Plut., *Pomp.* 36.4. Cf. Hammond 1989, 55. On the difficult legal status and ambiguities of royal land grants, mainly, but not exclusively, in the Seleukid kingdom, see Van der Spek 1986, 154-61.

¹⁵³ Apollonios, major-domo of the Ptolemaic *oikos*, managed his possessions in the Fayum (some 2,500 ha. of land)—a gift of Ptolemaios Philadelphos, well known from the famous Zenon Papyri—through his steward, the Karian Zenon. It is impossible to tell whether the king gave from the private estates owned by the royal *oikos* or from ‘state land’, but Van der Spek 1986, 159, is surely right in stating that the question is irrelevant because it is equally impossible to define the difference between the king’s private land and state land.

¹⁵⁴ Hammond 1989, 142. Van der Spek 1986, 159, lists several instances of cities given by the Seleukids and others to favourites, including Telmessos, Tarsos and Ptolemaïs in Palestine; it is difficult to say what this means exactly, but probably the ‘possession’ of cities meant having a monopoly of levying tolls or taxes. This practice is also known from the Achaimenid kingdom, cf.

of the court provides a partial explanation for the endemic warfare among the Hellenistic kings: territorial gains provided new sources of income and new estates to distribute among the *philoï*, not to mention plunder.¹⁵⁵

Ever since Marcel Mauss wrote his classic essay ‘on the gift’ it has been accepted that gift-giving is subject to three rules: the obligation to give, to receive, and to reciprocate.¹⁵⁶ It was unbalanced reciprocity. The person with the highest status was obliged to offer the most valuable gifts or favours. This was first of all a matter of honour. It functioned as a means to secure that the person with the lesser status would not be able to fully reciprocate and would remain indebted and dependent. In an anecdote told by Plutarch, a courtier who requested of Alexander dowries for his daughters was offered fifty talents; when the courtier politely retorted that ten talents would be more than enough, the king said: ‘Enough for you to receive, but not enough for me to give.’¹⁵⁷

The apparent bluntness of such a request (the courtier in the anecdote after all asked for ‘only’ ten talents) is not surprising. It was not dishonourable to ask for gifts.¹⁵⁸ Any person who managed to appear before the king was expected to make a request, which would normally be complied with, although it was normal that a petitioner before the king would first present a gift himself. This could be a material gift, but also a service.¹⁵⁹ Josephus informs us that if the initial gift was too small relative to one’s status, the king could be displeased; if, however, the gift of the petitioner was accepted by the king, the request would be granted.¹⁶⁰ Then one could expect to be rewarded for their gifts or services with interest. In Greek morality working for pay was considered to be tantamount to servitude, but to be rewarded for services with gifts, honours or privileges was honourable.¹⁶¹ Furthermore, the distribution of royal gifts was a form of public allocation of the king’s favour, and helped

H.W.A.M. Sancisi-Weerdenburg, ‘Περσικὸν δὲ κάρτα ὁ στρατὸς δῶρον: A typically Persian gift (Hdt. IX 109)’, *Historia* 37.3 (1988) 372-4.

¹⁵⁵ Plut., *Alex.* 15.3-6; 34.1; *Eum.* 3.14; Just. 11.5.5.

¹⁵⁶ M. Mauss, *Essai sur le don* (Paris 1925).

¹⁵⁷ Plut., *Mor.* 127b.

¹⁵⁸ Ath. 211b; Aristodemos *ap.* Ath. 246e.

¹⁵⁹ 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 51.

¹⁶⁰ Jos., *AJ* 12.217 and 219.

¹⁶¹ Konstan 1997, 81-2.

determine the receivers' place within the court hierarchy.¹⁶² Thus, the exchange of gifts created both horizontal bonds of loyalty as well as vertical bonds of dependence to hold the formal equality of the *philoï* in check.¹⁶³

Apart from the quantity and value of gifts, the status of the person who gave them mattered. To be rewarded by a king increased one's status enormously. In many pre-industrial societies objects that had been in contact with the king's body attained a certain 'sacred' quality.¹⁶⁴ For this reason the Hellenistic kings, like the Achaimenids before them, gave away the cups and plates from their own table after banquets.¹⁶⁵ The occasions for gift exchange *par excellence* were the banquet and the symposium (see below, section 3.4).

The obligation to be generous placed a heavy financial burden on the king.¹⁶⁶ Still kings could not permit to fall short of expectations and loose face.¹⁶⁷ In order to satisfy their

¹⁶² Jansen 1984, 55-6, explains that one's proximity to the throne determined one's receiving royal gifts; it was also the other way round. Jansen rightly points out that common soldiers who received their payment from the crown, were therefore closer to the king than other subjects; in the context of the Hellenistic kingdoms this means that Macedonian military settlers who received royal gifts in the form of farmland in the provinces or regular payment when under arms, as well as incidental gratuities were closer to the king than the average subject, or even members of civic and rural elites.

¹⁶³ So also Herman 1987, 106.

¹⁶⁴ Jansen 1984, 58.

¹⁶⁵ The purple garments given to *philoï* as status symbols (see below) may have been woven on the looms of the king's wives or daughters; it was customary at the Argead court (and at the Greek *oikos* of the classical age as well) that the women would weave the menfolk's clothing, cf. Hammond 1990, 270.

¹⁶⁶ Cf. Plut., *Demetr.* 25.4: before setting out to meet Antonius for the first time at Tarsos, Kleopatra 'provided herself with many gifts, much money, and such ornaments as her high position and prosperous kingdom made it natural for her to take'. In Elias' model of the court, the aristocrats' obligation to live up to their status and to be generous emptied their pockets; the king profited from this because it made them dependent on royal generosity; this view is now no longer tenable, as the financial burden naturally weighed most heavily on the shoulders of those higher up *viz.* the king; cf. Duindam 1994, 86 and 95: If the nobles were to be tricked into status consumption, the monarch had to subject himself to the same rules of conduct. He, too, was the prisoner of the spending pattern. He could not control the game without participating in it. It is important to note that the pressure to prove one's superior status was greater on the monarch than on anyone else.'

¹⁶⁷ This phenomenon was first noted by F. Barth, *Political Leadership among the Swat Pathans* (London 1959); cf. Burke 1992, 69-70. Hellenistic kings who lacked funds would be criticised as

friends, kings were forced spend extravagantly, whether they could afford it or not. An impression of the vast expenses is given by this description of a ‘gift hoard’ stockpiled by Mithradates Eupator, which fell in the hands of the Romans:

In the city of Tauri, which Mithradates used as a storehouse of furniture, were found two thousand drinking-cups made of onyx welded with gold, and many cups, wine-coolers, and drinking-horns, also ornamental couches and chairs, bridles for horses, and trappings for their breasts and shoulders, all ornamented in like manner with precious stones and gold. The quantity of this store was so great that the transfer of it occupied thirty days.¹⁶⁸

As a consequence, kings ran the risk of over-consumption, which would erode the financial foundation of their military power, or even lead to dependence on wealthy *philoï*.¹⁶⁹ When a courtier once asked Ptolemaios V Epiphanes where he would find sufficient money to finance a campaign against the Seleukids, the king pointed to his *philoï* and said: ‘There, walking about, are my money-bags.’¹⁷⁰ Antiochos III was at the beginning of his reign financially dependent on his *philos* Hermeias.¹⁷¹ Kings could forestall this risk by distributing symbolic gifts. Purple clothing, tableware used at royal symposia, were in itself valuable, but were first

misers. In an amusing anecdote about Lysimachos—a practical joker with a dark sense of humour—the king threw a scorpion in the mantle of one of his *philoï*; the latter retaliated by requesting a gift of one talent from the king, who was thus scared out of his wits himself (Ath. 246e). Ptolemaios IV Philopator met with conspiracies and *philoï* going over to the Seleukid court because he was not able to fulfil their demands (Polyb. 5.34.4, 10).

¹⁶⁸ App., *Mithr.* 12.17.15; trans. H. White.

¹⁶⁹ Cf. Duindam 1994, 86: ‘Extravagant expenditures to confirm the pretense of power and status eroded the financial foundation. Status expenditures had to be reduced, resulting in the loss of face and thus loss of power. The king could avoid this by finding new sources of income. This in turn led to dependence – on the assemblies of estates or on private *financiers*.’

¹⁷⁰ Diod. 29.29. On the wealth of *philoï*: Diod. 33.20; Polyb. 15.25.28; Agatharchides *FHG* II 476 *ap.* Ath. 155d. Governors in the Hellenistic kingdoms were responsible for levying troops, using the provincial revenues to arm and pay them. It is possible that *philoï* who received important commands in the king’s army were likewise supposed to equip the soldiers under their command from their own resources, and that this was as compulsory as it was honourable, like liturgies in Classical Athens, but also brought profits in the form of booty and slaves; Apollonios, the wealthy Ptolemaic courtier and land-owner known from the Zenon Papyri, had become rich from trading slaves from Syria.

¹⁷¹ Below, subchapter 3.5.

of all tokens of intangible rewards such as ‘protection’ or ‘favour’; golden crowns (*stephanoi*) were gifts of honour, normally given as rewards for bravery in war.¹⁷² Such gift accompanied the distribution of honorific titles, which indicated a person’s position in the court hierarchy.¹⁷³ Also favours, privileges, and titles could be considered appropriate gifts. Philippos and Alexander rewarded men who had served them with Macedonian citizenship.¹⁷⁴ Speaking of the gift exchange complex in modern Sicily, one well-informed observer thus summed it all up:

Another characteristic custom of the Sicilians is giving presents. The number of presents given on Sicily is astonishing. This is because a present is a tangible mark of respect. The more presents you get, the more important you are.¹⁷⁵

The ostentatious distribution of gifts is inextricably intermixed with its counterpart, the ostentatious receiving of gifts. This is how Plutarch describes the elevation of a man to the status of an honoured *philos* of Mithradates Eupator:

When the old man woke up that morning, he saw that tables were placed in his house upon which stood gold and silver vessels; and a band of servants, eunuchs and pages brought him rich garments; and a horse, caparisoned like those of the royal *philoï*, stood before his door. ... The pages informed him that the king [Mithradates VI Eupator] had also bestowed on him the large estate of a man who had recently died, and that all this was a mere foretaste of what was yet to come. ... So he put on his purple robe, leaped upon his horse and rode through the city, crying: ‘All this is mine!’¹⁷⁶

¹⁷² 1 *Macc.* 10.20. Ath. 211b states that in the Hellenistic kingdoms only *philoï* had the right to wear purple and golden *stephanoi*. A handsome example of a *stephanos* is in the archaeological museum in Thessaloniki; helmets adorned with golden and silver *stephanoi* can be seen on the Alexander Mosaic and the Alexander Sarcophagus.

¹⁷³ A similar custom existed at the Achaemenid court, from which the giving of tableware may have been a borrowing, cf. Hdt. 9.20; Xen., *Anab.*, 1.2.27, 8.28-9; Lucian 59.39. Among the Persians receiving a sword was especially symbolic of the king’s favour, cf. J.M. Bigwood, ‘Ctesias, his royal patrons and Indian swords’, *JHS* 115 (1995) 135-40; Sancisi 1989.

¹⁷⁴ Hammond 1989, 141.

¹⁷⁵ G. Falcone, *Cosa Nostra* (Paris 1991).

¹⁷⁶ Plut., *Pomp.* 36.4-5. Plutarch tells this story as a morality tale about a poor old man’s sudden turn of fate; but the story is rooted in actual history as the protagonist was in reality the father of

Court titles

The ranking of *philoï* in the court hierarchy was regulated and explicated by means of court titles and offices.¹⁷⁷ The complex of aulic titulature was a form of formalised informality. The distribution of titles was part of the complex of gift exchange at court. Titles were presented by the king as gifts, comparable to, and presumably coming together with symbolic material gifts.¹⁷⁸

Hellenistic court titulature developed from the basal system of titles of the fourth century Argead court, and developed through the adoption of Achaimenid influences at the courts of Alexander and the Seleukids, into a more complex and refined system in the second century that is best attested for the Ptolemaic kingdom. Albeit the system of court titles at the later Ptolemaic court appears to have become somewhat formalised at the lower levels of the *philoï* society, the *philoï* society did not change into a bureaucracy.¹⁷⁹ A *philos*' actual position at court was *indicated* by his title, not determined by it. Rank and influence with the king were also indicated by less clear-cut signs, now lost to the historian. There is no Hellenistic Saint-Simon to inform us on the subtle details that determined and reflected status at court. But it is self-evident that intangible signs of status and favour existed alongside

Stratonike, one of the king's favourite wives. The giving of a horse is reminiscent of Achaimenid practice (Xen., *Anab.* 1.2.27); protocol at the Irano-Hellenic court of the Mithradatids will have predicated on both Greek and Persians Iranian, albeit Plutarch's frame of reference was Greek. On Mithradates' *philoï* see Sullivan 1990, 42-4.

¹⁷⁷ Modern literature concentrates on Ptolemaic court titles. Of significance are *i.a.* H. Willrich, 'Zum hellenistischen Titel- und Ordens-wesen', *Klio* 9 (1909) 416-21; W. Peremans and E. van 't Dack, *Prosopographia Ptolemaica. VI: La cour* (Louvain 1968).); L. Mooren, 'Über die ptolemäischen Hofrangtitel', in: *Antidoron W. Peremans sexagenario ab alumnis oblatum*. *Studia Hellenistica* 16 (Leuven 1968); *The Aulic Titulature in Ptolemaic Egypt. Introduction and Prosopography* (Brussels 1975); *La hierarchie de cour ptolémaïque. Contribution à l'étude des institutions et des classes dirigeantes à l'époque hellénistique* (Louvain 1977); G. Herman, 'The "friends" of the early hellenistic rulers: servants or officials?', *Talanta* 12-3 (1980/81) 103-9. I. Savalli-Lestrade, *Les philoi royaux dans l'Asie hellénistique* (Geneva 1998).

¹⁷⁸ Demetrios of Skepsis *ap.* Ath. 155b.

¹⁷⁹ *Pace* Walbank 1984, 70; Herman 1987, 164. Although a bureaucracy existed, esp. in Ptolemaic Egypt, the *central* government of the Hellenistic kingdoms was informal and personal. Even in the Roman Empire in its heyday, a bureaucratic administration existed alongside, or rather *below*, an informal court elite: P. Garnsey and R. Saller, *The Roman Empire. Economy, Society and Culture* (London 1987; 2nd ed. 1990) 20-42.

public titles and material badges of rank. The evidence sometimes hints at such status indicators. Polybios repeatedly reports that at meetings of the Seleukid royal council the man with the highest status had the honour of speaking first, from which we may deduce that the sequence of other speakers was determined by, and indicative of, status as well; invariably, the king was the last to speak – and to decide. At several courts, *sc.* of Alexander, Antiochos the Great, and Mithradates, we hear of etiquette requiring that a select band of *philoï* greeted the king when he woke up in the morning – a clear sign of rank and status comparable to the well-known ceremony of the French court in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.¹⁸⁰

The evidence for honorific titulature is relatively abundant but it is uneven and scattered. Because of the disparate nature of the evidence, the meaning of many titles is puzzling, and their relative status elusive. In the context of the Ptolemaic court Léon Mooren has distinguished between ‘honorific titulature’, *i.e.* titles awarded *honoris causa*, and ‘real aulic titulature’, *i.e.* titles indicating concrete aulic functions, such as major-domo, chamberlain or master of the hunt.¹⁸¹ Military and governmental offices belong to the latter category, too, as *philoï* manned all higher administrative and military posts. Also titles like *stratēgos* or satrap were indicative of one’s place in the court hierarchy, although Mooren does not include these. Albeit these categories are helpful for the modern historian, they do no justice to the complexity of Hellenistic aulic titulature. Most ‘real’ aulic titles were of course honorific as well, and may perhaps better be called honorific offices. The system of titles furthermore was not static, but open to change.

Unproportionally numerous evidence for titles from the Ptolemaic empire are extant. Titulature at the Seleukid court seems to have been near identical to that at the Ptolemaic court; both systems influenced each other, with the Seleukids initially having ascendancy over the Ptolemies.¹⁸² The Antigonids stuck to the old Macedonian titles predating Alexander, retaining for instance the honorific office of *sōmatophulax* at the heart of the court hierarchy.¹⁸³ In the Seleukid and Ptolemaic kingdoms a process of subdivision of titulature took place, and a more formal hierarchy with permanent offices developed after *c.* 200. A similar process began at the Antigonid court during the reign of Philippos V.¹⁸⁴ But even

¹⁸⁰ Curt. 8.6.13 (Alexander); Polyb. 8.21.1 (Antiochos); Plut., *Pomp.* 32.4 (Mithradates). See also below, chapter 5.5.

¹⁸¹ Mooren 1975, 2.

¹⁸² Bickerman 1938, 31; Mooren 1975, 2 and 5.

¹⁸³ Diod. 30.10.2, 30.11.1. On this title see above, chapter 3.1.

¹⁸⁴ Le Bohec 1985.

when lesser positions of honour declined into specific professions, at the uppermost levels there always remained an informal circle of powerful men surrounding the king whom Polybios calls ‘the most prominent of the people of the court’.¹⁸⁵

In the system of honorific titulature the word *philos*—an honorific title in itself—was of central importance.¹⁸⁶ We hear of such titles as First Friends (πρῶτοι φίλοι), Honoured Friends’ (τιμώμενοι φίλοι), and First and Highly Honoured Friends (πρῶτοι καὶ πρωτιμώμενοι φίλοι) at both the Seleukid and Ptolemaic courts.¹⁸⁷ These titles were probably introduced already in the early third century. What exactly they implied is unknown, but we may assume that they indicated status differences at the very least. Less elusive are two other notable titles attested for all the courts: Kinsman of the King (συγγενῆς τοῦ βασιλέως) and Foster-Brother of the King (σύντροφος τοῦ βασιλέως).¹⁸⁸ Both titles indicated that one had grown up with the ruling monarch as a royal page; apparently the title of *suggenēs* could also be awarded *honoris causa*.¹⁸⁹ Hellenistic kings, at least the Seleukids, addressed their *suntrophoi* as ‘brother’ and their (former) *tropheus*, *i.e.* the man who had been

¹⁸⁵ Polyb. 5.41.3: τοῖς ἐν ὑπεροχαῖς οὔσι τῶν περὶ τὴν αὐλήν. For a different view: Herman 1997, 215.

¹⁸⁶ Ath. 155b.

¹⁸⁷ Walbank 1984, 70 and Mooren 1975 *passim*. Honoured Friends also τιμώτατοι φίλοι (Jos., *AJ* 12.53). Πρῶτοι φίλοι also: Jos., *AJ* 13.13.85; 1 *Macc.* 11.27; 10.65.

¹⁸⁸ Συγγενῆς: Arr., *Anab.* 7.11.1 (Argeads); 1 *Macc.* 11.31; 2 *Macc.* 11.12; OGIS 148, 259; cf. Liv. 30.42.6; Polyb. 4.48.5 (Seleukids); Plut., *Mor.* 197a (Antigonids); Jos., *AJ* 16.288; 17.93; 17.220 (Ptolemies). σύντροφος: Polyb. 5.9.4 (Antigonids); Polyb. 5.82.8; 31.13.2; OGIS 247, 1-3; 2 *Macc.* 11.22 (Seleukids); Polyb. 15.33.11; 22.22.1-2 (Ptolemies); Polyb. 32.15.10 (Attalids).

¹⁸⁹ Ath. 48f; Jos., *AJ* 16.288; 17.93; 17.220; OGIS 148; Polyb. 4.48.5; 1 *Macc.* 10.20. On *sungeneia* as fictive kinship see A. Erskine, ‘Distant cousins and international relations: Syngeneia in the Hellenistic World’, in: K. Buraselis and K. Zoumboulakis, eds., *The Idea of European Community in History. Conference Proceedings II* (Athens 2003) 205-216. The title perhaps had Persian antecedents: at the Achaimenid court *suggeneis* were noblemen who were closely attached to the king, and formed a ceremonial bodyguard around him; see Arr., *Anab.* 1.15.7; 3.11.5; 7.11.1; 7.11.6; Ath. 48e; Curt. 3.3.14 (*cognati regis*); Xen., *Cyr.* 1.4.27; Diod. 20.1-3. De *hetairoi tou basileôs* mochten zich ‘verwanten’, *suggeneis*, van de vorst noemen en hadden als enigen het voorrecht de koning ter begroeting te kussen (Arr., *Anab.* 7.11.6). But Arrian speaks also of *hetairoi* as the king’s *sungeneis* at Alexander’s court; they were the only ones who had the right to greet the king with a kiss (Arr., *Anab.* 7.11.6).

in charge of the pages, as ‘father’.¹⁹⁰ In this way, ties of ritualised friendship were strengthened by means of fictive kinship.

To the category of ‘real aulic titulature’ belong first of all titles connected with the domestic affairs of the royal household. At the Ptolemaic court the principal dignitary seems to have been the *dioikētēs*, the major-domo; he was aided by a steward, who was responsible for the reception of guests and the progress of symposia and banquets.¹⁹¹ Other officials of high rank were the Chamberlain and the Captain of the Bodyguard.¹⁹² There were several

¹⁹⁰ ‘Brother’: 1 *Macc.* 11.30 (Seleukid, c. 160 bc); ‘father’: Jos., *AJ* 12.127, 12.148; 13.126; cf. Diod. 33.4.1.

¹⁹¹ *Dioikētēs*: *P.Tebt.* 8 = Austin 265 (reign of Ptolemaios II); cf. R.S. Bagnall, ‘Ptolemaic correspondence in P.Tebt. 8’, *JEA* 61 (1975) 168-80; *dioikētēs* is often translated as ‘first minister’ or ‘chief financial minister’, but such designations do not belong in the context of a court; a more useful comparison is that with the ‘Grand-Maître de l’Hôtel’ of the Ancien Régime, *i.e.* the dignitary responsible for the daily (economic) affairs of the household and by consequence of the entire kingdom. This Ptolemaic office perhaps developed from the chiliarchate in the reign of Alexander and the last Argead kings. The chiliarch was the major-domo who controlled the affairs of Alexander’s household, ‘the filter through which matters had to pass on the way to the king’, cf. Grainger 1990, 18-9, who supposes that the chiliarchate was created by Alexander as an *ad hoc* measure to meet with the sudden increase of court affairs after the conquest of the Achaimenid Empire; however, Sancisi 1980, 176, has drawn attention to the similarities between the Argead chiliarch and the Achaemenid office of *hazarpat*, the major-domo of the Persian court, who was second only to the king. See also Ehling 1998, 97-106, claiming that the designation ὁ ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων attested for courtiers of Antiochos III and Antiochos IV in literary sources was a formal, initially non-military Seleukid ‘office’ existing along with an office of ‘commander in chief’ of the army. At the Antigonid court the major-domo perhaps was called ἐπὶ τῆς θεραπείας (Polyb. 4.87.5, 8). Stewart: ἔδρατρος (Ath. 167b; Argead, c. 225); ἀρχεδραοτρος (Jos., *AJ* 12.2.12; Ptolemaic, c. 250).

¹⁹² ἐπὶ τοῦ κοιτῶνος: Porphyr. *FGrH* 260 F 20; *RIG* no. 1158 (Seleukid, reign of Antiochos IX); ἡγεμον τῶν ὑπασπιστῶν: Polyb. 7.16.2 (Seleukid, 216-5); Jos., *AJ.* 12.17 (Ptolemaic, c. 300). A captain of the bodyguard is perhaps also the ἐπὶ τῆς θεραπείας mentioned in Polyb. 4.87.5 and 87.8, cf. Diod. 18.27.1 (Antigonid, reigns of Antigonos III and Philippos V), though this title may as well indicate the office of Major-Domo, cf. Walbank, *Polybios* 536; the Achaemenid major domo (*hazarpat*) was also in charge of the king’s personal bodyguard (Sancisi 1980, 176), but Achaimenid influence on the Antigonid court is unlikely.

titles that may be translated as Chancellor or (Chief) Secretary.¹⁹³ The financial affairs of the royal *oikos* were managed by a (Chief) Treasurer.¹⁹⁴ We also hear of more specialised offices like Master of the Pages and Master of the Hounds.¹⁹⁵ A comparable office was that of head of the royal museum and library at Alexandria, responsible for the intellectual education of the king's children and the royal pages.¹⁹⁶ A special place of privilege and honour was held by the king's personal physician.¹⁹⁷ He was in charge of a staff of doctors and servants.¹⁹⁸ The physician's relative proximity to the person of the king or the queen made him well suited for the role of intermediate between the ruler and those who wished to obtain favours.¹⁹⁹ Several

¹⁹³ ἐπὶ τοῦ γραμματεῦς: Polyb. 4.87.8 (Antigonid, c. 225); γραμματεῦς: Polyb 15.27.7 (Ptolemaic, 203); ἐπιστολογραφός: Polyb. 31.3.16 (Ptolemaic). Cf. Polyb. 5.54.12, who mentions an ἀρχιγραμματεῦς of the royal army (Seleukid, 220-1).

¹⁹⁴ ταμίης: Ath. 493f, 494a (Ptolemaic); ἐπὶ τοῦ νομίσματος: Plut., *Aem.* 23.3 (Antigonid, 168), cf. Plut., *Luc.* 29.8. Aulic treasury-accountants should be distinguished from the regional treasure-guardians and citadel commanders known as θησαυροφύλαξ or γαζοφύλαξ, cf. e.g. Diod. 19.18.1 (Argead, 317 BCE) and 30.11.1 (Antigonid, 169 BCE); the latter guarded (not: managed) hoards stored away in strongholds for the financing of campaigns; how Allen 1983, 9 n. 4, can describe Philetairos' post as γαζοφύλαξ and commander of the Pergamon citadel for king Lysimachos as 'certainly not a military [position]', eludes me.

¹⁹⁵ Master of the Pages (τροφεύς) Plut., *Alex.* 5 (Argeads); Polyb. 31.13.1; *OGIS* 148, 256; App., *Syr.* 68; 1 *Macc.* 11.1, 31-2 (Seleukid); Jos., *AJ* 12.127, 148; 13.126-7; Plut., *Ant.* 5.31 (Ptolemaic). On the *tropheus* see further below. Master of the Hounds (ἀρχικυνηγός): Bevan 1902 II, 283 (Seleukid); this is an honorific office meaning perhaps Master of the Hunt; it may also mean just what it says, i.e. someone responsible for the royal hunting dogs.

¹⁹⁶ Strabo 17.1.8; *P.Oxy* 1241. Cf. Fraser II, 467 n. 34. On the Museum see below, chapter 4.4.

¹⁹⁷ ἀρχιατρός or simply ἰατρός: i.a. Plut., *Alex.* 19; Diod. 17.31.6 (Argead); Plut., *Mor.* 195a-b (Molossian); *RIG* no. 1158; Polyb. 5.56.1, 81.6; Porphyry. *FGrH* 260 F 20 (Seleukid); Polyb. 5.81.6 (Ptolemaic).

¹⁹⁸ Apollonphanes, chief physician of Antiochos III, is said to have been only one of several court doctors, and probably was in charge of the others (Polyb. 5.56.6-7).

¹⁹⁹ As is demonstrated by the deeds of Apollonphanes, personal physician of Antiochus III, who was 'a great favourite' of the king (Polyb. 5.56-7, esp. 56.2). Ptolemaios IV's physician Andreas was quartered in the king's own pavilion during the Raphia campaign (Polyb. 5.81.6; cf. Fraser I, 370). Alexander's prodigious trust in his physician Philippos the Akarnanian gave rise to a popular story recorded by Plutarch (*Alex.* 19 and 77; cf. Just. 12.47.6). In the original version of a related popular Roman tale—recorded by no less than fourteen writers in various versions—the consul Fabricius

court physicians were at the same time famous medical scientists, for instance Herophilos, Erasistratos and Krataios.²⁰⁰

The most important offices—major-domo, chamberlain, chancellor—were first of all honorific offices indicating status and proximity to the throne. Of course, these dignitaries were ultimately responsible for the duties indicated by their titles, but each of them had the requisite staff and assistants to carry out these duties in their stead. In Josephus' account of the arrival of the seventy Judean scholars who came to translate the Tora, the king ordered the steward to take care of the reception of the guests, but the steward forthwith delegated this to a lesser dignitary:

Now the man who was appointed to take care of the reception of guests, Nikanor by name, called for Dorotheos, whose duty it was to make provisions for [guests], and ordered him to lodge and feed every one of them, as had been ordered by the king.²⁰¹

The existence, at the middle levels, of more dignitaries such as this assistant-steward is self-evident. At the lower levels furthermore were various household servants who were not *philoï*: cashiers, grooms, cupbearers, stablehands, musicians, cooks, palace guards, all of whom have been attested, as well as muleteers, clerks, bakers, barbers *et cetera*, whose presence at court can be assumed, as well as slaves.²⁰²

rejects an offer from one of King Pyrrhos' intimates to poison his king; the traitor is Pyrrhos' physician Nikias, his proximity to the king making such an offer plausible (Plut., *Pyrrh.* 21.14-5; *Mor.* 195a-b; cf. Nederlof 1978, 170-4).

²⁰⁰ Herophilos and Erasistratos both worked at the court of Ptolemaios II Philadelphos; the latter had also been the personal physician of Seleukos I Nikator. Krataios, the physician of Mithradates Eupator, was a famous pharmacist and botanist. Hdt. 3.129-37 ascribes a similar fame to Demokedes of Kos, the Greek physician of Darius the Great. On medical scientists at the Hellenistic courts see further below, chapter 4.4.

²⁰¹ Jos., *AJ* 12.2.12-3. Similarly we hear of βασιλικοὺς τροπεζίταις at the Ptolemaic court, 'cashiers' or 'paymasters', *i.e.* lesser officials of the treasury, and presumably answerable to the Chief Treasurer.

²⁰² Cooks: Ath. 405e. Cupbearers: Polyb. 14.11; Ath. 195e; Agesarchos, *FHG* 67 *ap.* Ath. 425e; 606b. Grooms: Arr., *Anab.* 4.13.1; cf. Curt. 5.1.42; 8.6.4. Musicians: Ath. 43bc (Argeads); Ath. 603d-e; Polyb. 14.11; Ath. 167a, 350a, 603b; Mime-players and dancers: Diod. 34.34; Ath. 195e; 607c-d. Hammond 1990, 270, believes there were no slaves at the Argead court, at least until Alexander's campaign in Asia: '[because] at the Macedonian court the royal women made their menfolk's clothes and the Pages waited on the king; it was a slaveless set-up.' However, the royal women's

As was already suggested above, military titles were also indicative of status within the court society, court and army being interwoven. Army commanders were always at the same time *philoï*. All men mentioned by Polybios as members of the royal councils of Antiochos III and Philippos V are also mentioned as the kings' supreme military commanders in the field.²⁰³ For instance Philippos, a *suntrophos* of Antiochos III, was commander of the elephants in the Battle of Raphia (217 BCE) and the Battle of Magnesia, 27 years later.²⁰⁴ The most common title was *stratēgos*, general, but also more precise titles existed, for example Chief Commander of the Fleet in the Ptolemaic kingdom or Commander of the Peltasts in the entourage of Philippos V.²⁰⁵

The royal council

At the heart of the court was the *sunedrion*, the royal council.²⁰⁶ Membership of this council was more substantial than any court title or office. The *sunedrion* was a council of advisors of the king, as exists in most monarchic states. Kings were morally obliged to discuss important matters with the council, in particular foreign affairs and warfare, and could not easily dissent

responsibility for making clothes derived from their status as daughters and wives; they may have been assisted by slaves. The pages certainly did not perform all the duties Hammond suggests; rather, they formed a screen between the king and his servants, as we are informed that grooms saddled the kings' horse and that the pages merely brought the horses to the king and helped him to mount (Arr., *Anab.* 4.13.1; Curt. 5.1.42; 8.6.4); likewise, the pages' duty to wait on the king at table presumably meant that they took over food and drink from the kitchen personnel and placed it on the king's table. On royal pages see further below. The existence of slaves at the Hellenistic courts after Alexander is not in doubt.

²⁰³ For a different view: Herman 1997, 214; Ehling 1998, 104.

²⁰⁴ Polyb. 5.82.8; Liv. 37.41.1; App., *Syr.* 33.

²⁰⁵ Polyb. 15.25.37: ἐπὶ τοῦ ναυτικου; 4.87.8: ἐπὶ τοῦ πελταστων.

²⁰⁶ Jos., *AJ* 12.25 (Ptolemaios II). Polyb. 15.25.27 (Ptolemaios V). App., *Syr.* 11.2.9; Polyb. 5.41.6; 5.49.1; 5.49.5-6; 5.50.3; 5.52.1; 5.58.2; 8.21.2; 11.3.13-4 (Antiochos III). Diod. 34.1.1; 34.16 (Antiochos VII). Polyb. 4.23.5; 4.24.8; 5.2.1; 5.4.13; 5.16.5; 5.102.1; Diod. 28.2 (Philippos V). Other: App. 11.3.14; Jos., *AJ* 17.106; 17.132. Polyb. 7.5.2; 15.25.26; 16.22.10. Cf. Liv. 35.17.3, 42.50.1, 42.51.1 (*consilium*). A royal council existed in Argead Macedonian long before Philippos II (Walbank I, 470). On Ptolemaic and Seleukid councils see L. Mooren, 'Kings and courtiers: political decision-making in the Hellenistic states', in: W. Schuller ed., *Politische Theorie und Praxis im Altertum* (Darmstadt 1998) 122-33.

from their council's decisions, even as the council formally only advised the king. If a deceased king left a minor successor, the *sunedrion* could rule in his place.²⁰⁷ Still, the authority of the royal council was unofficial and informal; in literary sources the *sunedrion* appears as the single most important body in the government of the kingdoms, but the word is absent from inscriptions.

A *sunedrion* consisted of the king and the most powerful of his *philoï*, just as the council of Alexander consisted of representatives of the high nobility of Macedonia, the *hetairoi*. Ideally, these were men of the king's own choosing. In practice, however, the king did not necessarily have the last saying in the composition of the *sunedrion*. In case of disagreement the most influential person or faction could enforce a decision against the king's will. To the outside world, however, king and council would always present an image of unity. Polybios understood this when he added the following concluding sentences to a lengthy reconstruction of a meeting of Philippos V's council in 218/7 :

Finally the king spoke, if indeed we are to suppose that he gave his own opinion; for it is hardly believable that a seventeen year old boy was able to decide about such grave matters of the kingdom. It is, however, the duty of writers to attribute to the supreme ruler the expression of opinion which prevailed at his council, while it is open for the reader to suspect that such decisions and the arguments on which they rest are due to his associates and especially to those closest to his person.²⁰⁸

An important aspect of the ideal of equality was forthrightness.²⁰⁹ *Parrhēsia*, 'freedom of speech', was fundamental in Athenian democracy, but frankness of speech in itself was originally an aristocratic ideal, a central virtue in the Greek concept of friendship.²¹⁰

²⁰⁷ Polyb. 4.76.1, 87.7; 7.5.2-3; 15.25.26; 18.53.5; Caes., *BCiv* 3.105. One of the council-members was appointed guardian of the child-king (*epitropos*): Polyb. 15.25.21; 16.22.10; Diod. 30.15.1; 2 *Macc.* 3.7; 11.1; 13.2; Caes., *BCiv* 3.108 (*nutricius*).

²⁰⁸ Polyb. 4.24.1-2.

²⁰⁹ Curt. 3.12.16; Plut., *Alex.* 9; Polyb. 5.27.6.

²¹⁰ Konstan 1997, 93-4; A. Momigliano, 'Freedom of speech in Antiquity', in: P.P. Wiener ed., *Dictionary of the History of Ideas 2. Studies of Selected Pivotal Ideas* (New York 1973) 252-63. ²¹⁰ On *parrhēsia* and Classical democracy see I. Sluiter and R.M. Rosen eds., *Free Speech in Classical Antiquity*. Mnemosyne Supplement 254 (Leiden 2004), esp. the contribution of K. Raaflaub, 'Aristocracy and Freedom of Speech in the Graeco-Roman World', 41-61, tracing the development of

Typically, many passages in Plutarch's *Moralia* dealing with *parrhēsia* take the form of conversations between a king and a courtier. In a letter ascribed to Isokrates, the author praises the *parrhēsia* of the addressee, Diodotos, a former courtier of Philippos II, noting that:

Those rulers who have a praiseworthy earnestness of soul regard this [frankness] as useful, whereas those whose nature is weaker than the powers they possess despise it, believing that it would compel them to do what they do not want to do; they do not realise, however, that those who most dare to disagree concerning what is advantageous are the very ones who afford them the maximum capacity to do what they wish. For it stands to reason that monarchies ... cannot endure in power by relying on those who speak only to please. ... But if they put their trust in those who speak frankly for the best then much is salvaged even in situations that seem headed for ruin.²¹¹

The frankness of speech that was expected from a good courtier, even when it meant disagreeing with the king, is exemplified by the topos of the king who brings himself to ruin by not listening to his counsellors. To quote only example:

When his *philoī* advised him to wait for reinforcements ... he (Ptolemaios Keraunos) would not listen to their words. King Ptolemaios was killed and the entire Macedonian army was destroyed by the Celts.²¹²

Again, the reality may have been less ideal – as is suggested by another topos: the king who after a promising start is corrupted by power and becomes a tyrant, surrounding himself with sycophants and parasites:

oligarchic freedom of speech among equals (*isēgoria*) to its broader, democratic meaning as the recognition that 'everyone had a right to say everything', for which the term *parrhēsia* was introduced. On *parrhēsia* and democracy see now also A.W. Saxonhouse, *Free Speech and Democracy in Ancient Athens* (Cambridge 2006). In the meantime, the aristocratic ideal of frankness among equals of course did not altogether disappear, least of all in Macedonia.

²¹¹ (Ps.)Isocr., *Ep.* 4. Compare Kleitos' sneer at Alexander, urging him to allow the Macedonian Companions 'to speak out freely what [they] wished to say, or else not to invite to supper men who were free and spoke their minds, but to live with barbarians and slaves, who would do obseiance to his white tunic and Persian girdle' (Plut., *Alex.* 51.3).

²¹² Diod. 22.3.1.

[Then] the king (Antiochos III) held a council regarding the Roman War. There each tried to outdo each other in fighting-spirit, since each thought that he would win greater favour in proportion to the severity of his attitude towards the Romans, while others assailed the insolence of their demands, seeing that they were imposing terms upon Antiochos the Great King of Asia.²¹³

The royal council acted, in continuation of former Argead practice, as a tribunal in cases of treason against the king.²¹⁴ Again, this was an informal prerogative. The *sunedrion* was not a formal judicial court; its members tried their peers because treason was first of all violation of *philia*, and perhaps also because it was a noble prerogative to be tried by equals.²¹⁵ The *sunedrion* was also present when the king received foreign ambassadors.²¹⁶

Friends or flatterers?

The manner in which they behaved distinguished courtiers from non-courtiers. Rules of conduct form a central feature of court culture, the importance of which was already recognised by Elias, albeit he wrongly attributed to the king a free rein in manipulating court etiquette to his own discretion.²¹⁷ Polybios provides a rare description of the ideal Hellenistic courtier, in his portrayal of the Ptolemaic *philos* Aristonikos:

Aristonikos, a courtier of King Ptolemaios, was a eunuch but in his youth had become a *sunthropos* of the king. As an adult he proved to be more masculine in courage and character than eunuchs usually are. For he was a born soldier and spent most of his time in the company of other such men, and studying military matters. He was also very good in the art of conversation. In addition to that he was by nature benevolent (which is rare) and generous.²¹⁸

²¹³ Liv. 35.17.3-4.

²¹⁴ Diod. 19.46.1-4.

²¹⁵ Arr., *Anab.* 1.25.1 (*hetairoi*); Diod. 19.46.1-4; Polyb. 5.29.6; 8.21.2-3.

²¹⁶ Diod. 28.12; Polyb. 2.50.1-2; 4.23.4-5.

²¹⁷ Elias 1969, 135; cf. Duindam 1995, 97-101.

²¹⁸ Polyb. 22.22.1-5 *ap. Suda* s.v. 'Aristonikos'. The picture is highly reminiscent of the ideal courtier as depicted in Baldesar Castiglione's dialogue on etiquette from 1528: 'I believe his first duty is to know how to handle expertly every kind of weapon, either on foot or mounted, to understand all their finer points, and to be especially well informed about all those weapons commonly used among gentlemen.' A courtier should furthermore be 'courteous, compassionate, generous, affable and charming as a companion, lively and diligent in serving and forwarding the advantage and honour of

Erudition and *esprit* characterised the true courtier.²¹⁹ Good behaviour and sharp-wittedness were essential in the competition for favour and status. Hellenistic courtiers are often depicted as flatterers (*kolakes*) and parasites (*parasitoi*) who use words to please their royal hosts. The character of the flatterer, who would say anything to please a powerful host, is well known from Hellenistic comedy and moral writings from the imperial period.²²⁰ ‘At dinner I am a wit, and cause much laughter and praise my host’, says a parasite in a comedy of Epicharmos, and already Philippos II enjoyed being surrounded by men ‘who could say funny things’.²²¹ The image of the courtier as flatterer testifies to the importance of the art of conversation at the Hellenistic courts, especially during banquets and symposia. Josephus tells how a jester at the Ptolemaic court, ‘who was appointed for jokes and laughter at festivals’ was called upon by the guests during a symposium, and made jokes at the expense of one of the *philoï*; when this man retaliated with an even more clever joke, ‘the king admired his answer, which was so wisely made, and directed them all to make an acclamation, as a mark of their approval of his jest.’²²² And when Ptolemaios Philadelphos entertained Jewish scholars at his court, ‘he began to talk philosophically to them, and asked everyone of them a philosophical question ... and when they had explained all the problems that had been proposed by the king about every point, he was well-pleased with their answers.’²²³ The complexity and learnedness of court poetry, with its references to obscure versions of myths and ingenious literary allusions,

his friends’, and should have ‘knowledge of so many subjects that he can readily vary his conversation a great deal and adapt himself to the qualities of those with whom he has dealings.’ Cited after G. Bull’s translation, Harmondsworth 1967 (2nd abbr. edn. 1995) 11 and 25-6.

²¹⁹ Strootman 1993, 59. Various anecdotes about conversations between kings and philosophers attest to this: See e.g. Ath. 493e-494b; Diog. Laert. 50.7.177. Sharp-wittedness was also a necessity at the courts of the Ancien Régime, as apparent from the works of insiders such as Castiglione or Saint-Simon, and excellently illustrated by Patrice Leconte’s well-informed film *Ridicule* (1996) about the court of Louis XVI. As we have seen above, the young Judean aristocrat Joseph who travelled to Egypt to acquire privileges from the Ptolemaic king in Jos., *AJ* 12.17-32, was successful because he impressed the king with his intelligence and wit.

²²⁰ See esp. the collection of anecdotes in Ath. 235.

²²¹ Epicharmos CGF 96 *ap.* Ath. 235f-e; cf. Eupolis, *CAFI* 301 *ap.* Ath. 236f. Philippos II: Ath. 435c.

²²² Jos., *AJ* 12.4.9.

²²³ Jos., *AJ* 12.2.12.

give some idea of the level of sophistication that was required to take part in the table talk at court.²²⁴

Dress codes

‘Without clothing,’ Thomas Carlyle wrote in 1831, ‘the whole fabric of Government, Legislation, Property, Police, and Civilized Society, are dissolved, in wails and howls.’²²⁵ Ever since the pioneering work of Herbert Spencer,²²⁶ sociologists and anthropologists have been aware of the almost universal need for expressing one’s social status by displaying material status symbols, notably on ceremonial occasions. It goes without saying that clothing and other forms of personal adornment are instrumental in expressing status and identity. Clothing is communicative of a person’s social, economic or official position in society; it has the ability of moving others to deal with this person in the culturally appropriate manner. Clothing therefore expresses symbolic messages known and understood by others.²²⁷ Such

²²⁴ On aulic poetry see below, chapter 4.

²²⁵ T. Carlyle, *Sartor Resartus. The Life and Opinions of Herr Teufelsdröckh* (London 1869; orig. 1831) 59-60; cited after Schwarz (*op. cit.* below) 28.

²²⁶ H. Spencer, *Principles of Sociology* II (New York 1880).

²²⁷ Cf. P.G. Bogatyrev, *The Function of Folk Costume in Moravian Slovakia*. *Approaches to Semiotics* 5. Translated by R.G. Crun (The Hague 1971; orig. 1937) 83: ‘In order to grasp the social functions of costumes we must learn to read them as signs in the same way we learn to read and understand languages.’ This basic assumption was elaborated by A. Schwarz, ‘Uncovering the secret vice. Toward an anthropology of clothing and adornment’, in: Cordwell & Schwarz 1979, 23-46, at 23: ‘The ability of clothing to express certain principles and emotions, and move men to act in the cultural appropriate manner may be called its symbolic or rhetorical power; through their capacity to symbolize a social order, clothes are related to social action and communication in a dynamic way’. According to M.A. Roach and J.B. Eicher, ‘The language of personal adornment’, in: Cordwell and Schwarz 1979, 7-21, costume ‘suggests the behaviors (roles) of people on the basis of their ... multiple connections with each other and can, therefore, distinguish the powerful from the weak, the rich from the poor, ... the leader from the follower’. P. Bourdieu, *La distinction. Critique sociale du jugement* (Paris 1979), amalgamated the social function of clothing with his concept of ‘taste’. For a bibliography of the history and sociology of clothing see W. Winkelmoen, ‘Nieuwe textielhistorische literatuur’, *Textielhistorische Bijdragen* 31 (1991) 194-6. See further: M.J. Horn, *The second Skin. An Interdisciplinary Study of Clothing* (2nd edn. Boston 1975); T. Polhemus ed., *Fashion and Anti-Fashion. An Anthropology of Clothing and Adornment* (London 1978); S.B. Kaiser, *The Social Psychology of Clothing and Personal Adornment* (New York 1985); A.

messages are aimed at two audiences: members of the social group that one wishes to belong to, and non-members from whom one wishes to be distanced. In most societies to this day, individuals are morally obliged to dress in accordance with the social status allotted to them by society.²²⁸ The dynamics were usually not determined by legal prescriptions but by unwritten rules which were well known to all members of society and respected by most of them. Status markers could be monopolised by their expensiveness and rarity, by morality or even by legislation.²²⁹ In the monarchies of Early Modern Europe one could see that a man belonged to the court by the colour and cut of his tunic, and the ornaments he wore. The Ottoman court of the same period knew even stricter rules, concerning for instance the colour of caftans and the height of turbans. Through the medium of his costume the Ottoman courtier's status and the specific aulic duties he exercised were indicated.

The precise character of such codes at the Hellenistic courts is hard to determine due to lack of evidence. It is impossible to say what subtle signs indicated differences in rank and status among the *philoï*, what distinguished the important from the very important. Still, the general principles of court dress in the Hellenistic age can be reconstructed. Tradition was all-important. Contrary to the modern western practice, in which status symbols can be acquired by all social groups provided they can afford them, and the trend-setters are constantly at pains to find new ways of distinguishing themselves, status symbols in the ancient world were not dynamic and generally remained current for centuries. A fundamental aspect of the dress of *philoï* was that it was a derivation of the dress of the king. Not only was their dress basically the same as that of the king, *philoï* also received their clothing from the king.

Ribeiro, *Dress and Morality* (London 1986); R.P. Rubinstein, *Dress Codes. Meaning and Messages in American Culture* (Boulder etc. 1995).

²²⁸ Cf. G. Lipovetsky, *L'Empire de l'éphémère. La mode et son destin dans les sociétés modernes* (Paris 1987), who contrasts this with the gradual democratisation of clothing in the Western world since the French Revolution; it seems however that the main effect of this process of democratisation has been that people *voluntarily* dress in accordance with their social status.

²²⁹ M. Reinhold, 'On status symbols in the Ancient World', *CJ* 64.7 (1969) 300-4; cf. the important remarks by L. Bonfante in her introduction to J.L. Sebesta and L. Bonfante eds., *The World of Roman Costume* (Madison 1994) 3-10, at 5. In the Ottoman Empire before 1800 the wearing of furs expressed status, but specific furs were linked to court offices; only the sultan wore black fox: P. Mansel, *Constantinople. The City of the World's Desire, 1453-1924* (Harmondsworth 1995) 67.

Clothing was instrumental in constructing the cohesiveness of the *philoï* group, as by clothing in like manner the *philoï* expressed their loyalty to each other and to the king.²³⁰

What did a *philos* look like? It is difficult to tell what differences there were between the courts of the respective kingdoms. The overall picture is a high degree of similarity. The costume in which *philoï* appeared in public is fairly well known from written sources, mosaics and frescoes, although most of the pictorial evidence dates to the early Hellenistic period. The most distinctive elements were riding boots (*krepides*), hat (*kausia*), and short mantle (*chlamys*).²³¹ This means that *philoï* wore, at least on ceremonial occasions, the traditional costume of the Macedonian Companion aristocracy, just like the king himself.²³² *Chlamys* and *krepides* were used in the whole of Greece, but the combination was typical for aristocracies in Thessaly and Macedonia. Moreover, the Macedonian *chlamys* differed in shape and size from the Greek version. It was a short mantle in the shape of a semicircle,

²³⁰ The importance of clothing for group cohesiveness is a recurring theme in the essays collected in J.M. Cordwell and A. Schwarz eds., *The Fabrics of Culture. The Anthropology of Clothing and Personal Adornment* (The Hague, Paris, New York 1979). For instance I. Pokornowski, 'Beads and personal adornment' (pp. 103-17) argues that among the Yoruba of Nigeria and Benin the wearing of beads provides a feeling of unity; beads are also employed to validate the authority of the king, who expresses his association with society by wearing a beaded crown on ceremonial occasions; H.J. Drewal, 'Pageantry and power in Yoruba costuming' (189-230) also stresses the importance of clothing as a means of expressing allegiance in Yoruba society: 'Attire also often defines a person's membership in social, religious, or economic groups within the community and substantial amounts of money are devoted to ... outfits worn by all members on ceremonial occasions.' On group cohesiveness in general, see M.A. Hogg, *The Social Psychology of Group Cohesiveness. From Attraction to Social Identity* (New York etc. 1992).

²³¹ *Krepides*: Plut., *Ant.* 54.5; *Mor.* 760b; Hdn. 4.8. *Krepides* originally were sandals with straps as high as the knees, under which cloth was worn: E. Neuffer, *Das Kostüm Alexander des Grossen* (diss. Giessen 1929) 24. *Kausia* and *chlamys*: Polyb. 15.33.4; Plut., *Cleom.* 13.2; s.v. 'krepides' in: K.D. Morrow, *Greek Footwear and the Dating of Greek Sculpture* (Madison 1985). On Greek costume in general see G. Losfeld, *L'art grec et le vêtement* (Paris 1994), and J. Laver, *Costume in Antiquity* (London 1964).

²³² Macedonian *hetairoi* dressed this way are depicted on the Alexander Mosaic from Pompeii, the so-called Alexander Sarcophagus in the Archaeological Museum of Istanbul, the frescoes in the Eastern Tomb and Kinch Tomb at Lefkadia and the monument of Krateros in Delphi. The traditional costume of the king: Plut., *Mor.* 178d; *Ant.* 54.5; *Demetr.* 41.4-5, cf. Ath. 253d-254b; 535f; Val. Max. 5.1 ext. 4. Plut., *Ant.* 54.5; Eusthatios *ad Od.* 1399, Hdn. 4.8.1-2.

which was attached with a clap on one of the shoulders; the mantle originated in Thessaly or Macedonia as a rider's cloak and could also be worn over a cuirass. It is this variant of the *chlamys* that we see on the Alexander Sarcophagus and the mosaics of Pella.²³³ On the Alexander Mosaic Alexander wears a long-sleeved tunic under his armour, and this piece of cloth seems typical for Northern Greece and Macedonia as well. The Companion cavalrymen on the Alexander Sarcophagus likewise wear long-sleeved tunics over Greek-style chitons. Unlike the *chlamys*, the *kausia* was fully Macedonian – a piece of traditional ‘folk costume’ that originated long before the Hellenistic age. A *kausia* was a cap made of wool, leather, or felt and looking like a beret.²³⁴ In pre-Hellenistic Macedonia *kausiai* were worn by the ruling classes and had military connotations.

²³³ Neuffer 1929, 22; C. Saatsoglou-Paliadeli, ‘Aspects of ancient Macedonian costume’, *JHS* 113 (1993) 122-47, esp. 143. The evidence for the *chlamys* in Greek culture is discussed in L. Heuzey, *Histoire du costume antique* (Paris 1922) 116-41; cf. M. Bieber, *Griechische Kleidung* (Berlin 1928) 69. An important clue for the shape of the Macedonian *chlamys* is given by Plut., *Alex.* 26.5 and Plin., *NH* 5.62, who both compare the ground plan of Alexandria with the shape of a *chlamys*.

²³⁴ See especially Saatsoglou 1993, 122-47, who discusses written and material evidence. The material evidence is catalogued by P. Dintsis, *Hellenistische Helme* (Rome 1986). Because the word *kausia* is not mentioned in Greek literature before 326 BCE, much has been made of its origin. It has been related to the better known Thessalian *petasos* and has therefore often been translated as ‘broad-brimmed hat’; this identification is now discarded because it cannot be supported by material evidence. The *kausia* of the written sources has been identified also with the mushroom-shaped soldier's cap known from Hellenistic terracotta figurines; on the basis of this identification D.B. Thompson, *The Terracotta Figurines of the Hellenistic Period* (Princeton, N.J. 1963) 53-55, has suggested an oriental origin for the *kausia*. B.M. Kingsley took this to heart and argued that the *kausia* originated in Baktria and can be identified with the modern *chitrali*, the mushroom-shaped woollen cap worn by men in eastern Afghanistan and north-west Pakistan: B.M. Kingsley, ‘The “chitrali”. A Macedonian import to the West’, *Afghanistan Journal* 8.3 (1981) 90-3; ‘The cap that survived Alexander’, *AJA* 85 (1981) 39-46; ‘The *kausia* diadematophoros’, *AJA* 88 (1984) 66-8. It is more likely, however, that the *kausia*—mentioned in the sources mainly in relation to kings and aristocrats—looked like the berets depicted e.g. on Baktrian coins and the hunting mosaics of Pella; cf. E.A. Fredericksmeier, ‘Alexander the Great and the Macedonian *kausia*’, *TAPhA* 116 (1986) 215-27. A.M. Prestianni-Galliombardo, ‘*Kausia* diadematophoros in Macedonia. Testimonianze misconosciute e nuove proposte’, *Messana* n.s. 1 (1989) 1-13, at 9, has argued that the *kausia* was an exclusive royal head-gear that was introduced by Alexander himself. More probably the cap originated in the Balkans much earlier (already Neuffer 1929, 23-4) but made its debut in the Greek sources only after the Macedonian expansion under Philippos and Alexander, cf. Saatsoglou 1993, 145,

During the reigns of Philippos II and Alexander this attire was the distinctive dress of the Companion aristocracy. It remained in use throughout the Hellenistic age; in the kingdoms of the Antigonids, Seleukids and Ptolemies it was the standard costume of the court nobility.²³⁵ Courtiers of other kings may have followed suit, especially in the Attalid and Baktrian monarchies. Antigonid courtiers dressed in the Macedonian manner because Macedonia was the central power base of the Antigonid dynasty. Ptolemaic and Seleukid nobles dressed in the Macedonian manner because Macedonia was *not* the power base of these dynasties: the Macedonians living in Asia and Egypt were a privileged people who had all the more reason to make their ethnicity visible, in order to distinguish themselves, and to express allegiance with their compatriots and with the monarchy. The further away from Macedonia, it seems, the stronger the need to cling to Macedonian traditions. This is demonstrated by the fact that Baktrian kings appear on their coins wearing conspicuous *kausiai*, whilst Antigonid kings never bothered to be portrayed with it. Greek *philo*i perhaps wore Macedonian costume as well. Also Egyptians or Iranians who managed to gain access to the courts of the Ptolemies and Seleukids respectively, will have put on the prescribed clothing, just as they would assume Greek names.

By wearing Macedonian costume, courtiers also expressed allegiance to the non-noble *Makedones* who constituted the royal phalanxes. Plutarch relates how the ‘nationalistic’ feelings of these *Makedones* could be stirred by traditional dress:

who concludes that: ‘The new archaeological evidence reaffirms the reliability of the ancient sources, attributing [*kausia*, *chlamys* and *krepides*] to the Macedonians long before their campaign to the east. Therefore *argumenta e silentio* seem to be on the retreat in the face of ... new archaeological material being discovered in Northern Greece’. On the shape and material of the *kausia* see Saatsoglou 1993, 136-7. The *kausia* is best known from portrait coins of Greek-Baktrian coins; another fine example is the one worn by the young man depicted with an older woman on the Boscoreale Fresco, a Roman copy of a third century Greek original, who was for that reason in the past rendered a hellenistic king and queen, esp. Alexander IV and Olympias; F.G.J. Müller, *The Wall Paintings From the Oecus of the Villa of Publius Fannius Synistor in Boscoreale* (Amsterdam 1994), finds this wishful thinking and argues that the fresco depicts Achilles and Thetis, albeit dressed as Hellenistic aristocrats.

²³⁵ Plut., *Mor.* 760b; *Pyrrh.* 11.6, cf. *Demetr.* 44; *Eum.* 6.1-2, 8.6-7; *Ant.* 54.4-6; *Mor.* 760b; Polyæn. 5.44.5; Diod. 17.7.3; Onesikritos FGh 134 F 17a *ap.* Strabo 15.1.63-5, cf. Plut., *Alex.* 65. For the reliability of Plutarch as a source for Hellenistic royal dress: W.J. Tatum, ‘The regal image in Plutarch’s *Lives*’, *JHS* 116 (1996) 135-51. Cf. Bevan 1927 I, 119; Neuffer 1929, 22-7; Bickerman 1938, 32; Aymard 1953, 401; Saatsoglou-Paliadeli 1993, 137-9.

For the Macedonians longed for him [*sc.* Krateros] exceedingly, and if they should only see his *kausia* and hear his voice, they would go over to him with a rush, with all their arms.²³⁶

The fact that the Macedonian troops were to recognise Krateros by his *kausia* implies that the cap was not worn by the common rank and file but only by their commanders. The same conclusion may be drawn from the lion-hunt mosaic from Pella. The mosaic, dating to the Antigonid period, perhaps depicts the famous tale of how Krateros saved the life of Alexander during a lion hunt near Susa.²³⁷ The two young men are shown nude, but despite their ‘heroic nakedness’ and idealised, almost god-like features, both wear a *chlamys* and one of them a *kausia*, being the only attributes to make them recognisable as noblemen of the Macedonian court.

Still, the wearing of *kausiai* and *chlamydes* as such was not the prerogative of kings and courtiers. What qualified such clothing as aristocratic, was the use of purple dye. Purple was, together with the diadem, the attribute of royalty *par excellence*. There were various forms of purple, a dye made from sea snails in an extraordinary labour-intensive process, the most valuable, reddish variant being ‘royal purple’ or ‘Tyrian purple’. The sheer cost as well as tradition prohibited non-elite groups to wear it. In the ancient Near East the wearing of costumes dyed with royal purple was monopolised by kings and royal dignitaries; in Classical Greece ‘royal’ purple was associated with the gods. The use of purple dyes by Hellenistic kings and their courtiers referred to both traditions. The clearest indication that purple was the crucial badge of rank of Hellenistic courtiers is the fact that the Latin translation of *philos tou basileōs* is *purpuratus*.²³⁸ There is some evidence that apart from the king only *philoī* had the right to wear clothing that was in part dyed with royal purple of Tyre.²³⁹ The two young men

²³⁶ Plut., *Eum.* 6.1-2. Polyæn. 5.44.5 relates how the Achaimenid commander Memnon together with his officers put on *kausiai* to make some Macedonian soldiers believe that they really were their general Kalas and his staff.

²³⁷ Ph. Petsas, *Pella. Alexander the Great's Capital* (Thessaloniki 1978) 55; cf. 95-7 with figs 8 and 9, and 99-102 with figs 12-15. The same incident is commemorated on the votive monument of Krateros at Delphi.

²³⁸ Liv. 30.42.6; 32.39.8; 37.23.7; 37.59.5; 42.51.2. Cic., *Cat.* 4.12; *Tusc.* 1.102; Curt., 3.2.10; 3.13.13; 5.1.37; Vitruv. 2 *pr.* 1. Quint. 8.5.24.

²³⁹ Ath. 211b; Phylarchos *FGrH* 81 F 41 *ap.* Ath. 539e; *ibidem ap.* Ath. 540a. Ath. 211b.

on the lion hunt mosaic from Pella wear white *chlamydes* with red borders.²⁴⁰ Also remains of paint on the Alexander Sarcophagus show that Companion cavalrymen had red purple borders on their *chlamydes*. According to written evidence, the dress of later *philoï* was coloured with this dye as well.²⁴¹

Philoï received their purple clothing from the king. Purple dresses were perhaps the most prestigious gifts dealt out by kings to their courtiers. When Eumenes of Kardia once gave purple mantles and hats to his bodyguards, Plutarch comments that:

They were delighted to receive from him the same honours as kings bestow upon their *philoï*; for Eumenes was empowered to distribute purple *kausiai* and *chlamydes*, and this was a special gift of royalty among the Macedonians.²⁴²

When in 326 Onesikritos of Astypalaia was sent off as an ambassador to the Indian gymnosophists near Taxila, Alexander gave him a *chlamys* and a *kausia* as the tokens of his assignment.²⁴³ At the time 1 *Maccabees* was written, *kausiai* and *chlamydes* were still symbols of royalty in the Seleukid kingdom: when Antiochos Epiphanes lay dying in c. 164 and appointed a *philos* named Philippos as regent for his successor Antiochos V Eupator, who was still a minor, Philippos received the king's mantle and hat as badges of his office.²⁴⁴ We know from the same source that purple clothes were also given to allies and friends outside the court.²⁴⁵ Receiving such gifts was a mark of being accepted into the circle of the king's friends. This was instrumental in the king's efforts to control the exit and entrance of the *philoï* group.

²⁴⁰ Petsas 1978, 95-7. Cf. N. Sekunda, *The Army of Alexander the Great* (London 1984) 10.

²⁴¹ Ath. 211b; 539f; Diod. 17.77.4-5; Plut., *Eum.* 8.6-7; Justin. 12.3.8 (who adds gold embroidery to the purple dresses).

²⁴² Plut., *Eum.* 8.6-7.

²⁴³ Strabo 15.1.63-5.

²⁴⁴ 1 *Macc.* 6.15.

²⁴⁵ 1 *Macc.* 10.20 relates that the Makkabean leader Jonathan, an ally of Alexander Balas, was given the titles of *philos* and *adelphos* of the king, and received a purple dress and a golden wreath (*stephanos*); cf. 1 *Macc.* 10.62. Likewise Dorimachos, leader of the Aitolian League in the late third century, received a *kausia* and a *chlamys* when he became the ally of the Antigonid king in 221 (Polyb. 4.4.5).

3.5 Factions and Favourites

Theoretically, the king decided who would become a *philos*, and directed the distribution of offices and titles. The *philo*i depended on the king's grace for obtaining and preserving status at court. Assignments in the army and the government were ideally given on a temporal and *ad hoc* basis. As Polybios says, kings 'measured friendship and enmity by the sole standard of expedience.'²⁴⁶ Thus, kings tried to forestall the emergence of a hereditary, independent court aristocracy. An anecdote about Antigonos Gonatas exemplifies this ideal:

When a young man, the son of a brave father, but not himself having any reputation for being a good soldier, suggested the propriety of his receiving his father's emoluments, Antigonos said: 'My boy, I give money and presents for the excellence of a man, not for the excellence of his father.'²⁴⁷

In practice, however, royal power was never in the hands of the king alone. The Hellenistic kingdoms were governed by elites who were dependent on the monarchy as institution but not necessarily on the individual monarch. Kings often found it difficult to unseat a *philos* once he had acquired a position of power and influence. Philippos and Alexander had successfully pacified the hereditary nobility of old Macedonia; but in the course of the third century new aristocracies with hereditary prerogatives came into existence, and ancestry again became a criterion for status at court. The longer the kingdoms existed, the more the families of leading *philo*i—who were rewarded for their services to the crown with riches, estates and status—acquired sources of income and prestige of their own. This could be particularly troublesome when the royal title passed from a deceased king to his successor. If the succession had been pre-arranged by the former king, the transition to a new *sunedrion* might take place gradually and placidly, especially when the companions of the new king included sons of his father's *philo*i. Frequently, however, a new king would find it troublesome to replace the sitting members of the royal council with his own intimates.²⁴⁸ Attalos III at his accession allegedly killed all *philo*i of his father.²⁴⁹ Landed estates distributed among the friends of a king may in theory have been open to reconsideration by his successor, but in

²⁴⁶ Polyb. 2.47.5.

²⁴⁷ Plut., *Mor.* 183d.

²⁴⁸ For a contrary view see e.g. Hammond 1989, 55; Herman 1997, 215; Roy 1998, 111.

²⁴⁹ Diod. 35-35.3.

practice this was not so easy. Thus in a decree of Kassandros, the king confirms gifts of land made by Philippos II and Alexander III, even though Kassandros was an enemy of the latter.²⁵⁰ To be sure, even strong and able kings like Antiochos the Great or Philippos V took to secret negotiations, scheming and even murder to get their predecessors' men out of the way and replace them by their own friends. With the gradual development of a hereditary nobility of land-owning *philoï* it became increasingly difficult for kings to appoint confidants. They therefore needed to develop new ways to sideline or obligate office-holders.

Norbert Elias saw the Early Modern court as exclusively a centre of royal power. Recent studies have shown the limitations of royal power in the age of Absolutism even at the court. Duindam, in his critique of Elias' model, has noted that:

The monarch bestowed favors upon parts of the elite to bind them, and subsequently eliminated troublesome opponents in cooperation with those elites. The elite in turn interceded at court for its own clientele. The pyramids of clienteles kept the various parts of a territory together, ... [and] it was rare that the monarch was the sole source of income and prestige for nobles.²⁵¹

At the Hellenistic courts, too, *philoï* had obligations towards their own friends and relatives. Powerful *philoï* maintained retinues of their own.²⁵² The size of a *philos*' personal following, and the status of his *xenoi*, was indicative of his own standing and power.²⁵³ But being a patron also involved obligations to act in the interest of one's clients. Moreover, *philoï* often acted at court in the interest of their cities of origin.²⁵⁴ *Philoï* possessed sources of income,

²⁵⁰ Hammond 1989, 55, who, however, understands this decree as evidence of a new king's freedom to 'appoint his own selection of leading Companions'. For Kassandros' enmity towards Alexander see the interesting remarks in A.B. Bosworth's classic article 'Alexander the Great and the decline of Macedon', *JHS* 106 (1986) 1-12, esp. 11-2.

²⁵¹ Duindam 1994, 79.

²⁵² Plut., *Cleom.* 32.2; Diod. 34.3.1; Ath. 245a; Agatharchides *FHG* II 476 *ap.* Ath. 155d. According to Ath. 251c the philosopher Persaios, a *philos* of Antigonos Gonatas, even had a parasite of his own, a certain Ariston of Chios.

²⁵³ Herman 1997, 216; cf. Herman 1987, 151.

²⁵⁴ I. Savalli-Lestrade, 'Courtisans et citoyens: le cas des philoi attalides', *Chiron* 26 (1996) 149-81, discussing five examples of Attalid courtiers, shows that the activities of *philoï* were not only directed by the king's interests, but that also their relations with their *poleis* determined their actions.

power and status in the form of landed estates. This is a central paradox of the court: the land that had originally been rewarded to courtiers by the crown in order to bind them, inevitably made them less dependent on the crown.

The Hellenistic courts were fundamentally discordant – not only because of the endemic disputes over precedence among the sons and wives of the king, but also because *philoï* competed with each other for the king's favour.²⁵⁵ These two forms of power struggles were interwoven. *Philoï* joined forces in informal factions led by a powerful man or woman—a queen, a prince, a leading man from the *sunedrion*—to secure their position and to best their rivals. Important men tried to gather around them a following as large as possible, both as a source of power and as a tangible sign of their importance at court.²⁵⁶ For example in 203, the *stratēgos* Tlepolemos plotted against Agathokles, who was at that time the most powerful man among the Ptolemaic courtiers:

Tlepolemos, who wished to win over generals, commanders and lesser officers, entertained such men most lavishly at banquets; and on these occasions ... he would make remarks about Agathokles and his family, cautiously at first, then putting him down more openly, and finally flagrantly insulting him. ... As his guests always laughed with him and contributed something of their own witticism to his jokes, the matter soon reached the ears of Agathokles. Their enmity was now complete, and Agathokles lost no time in making insinuations against Tlepolemos himself, accusing him of disloyalty to the king and of planning to help [the Seleukid king] Antiochos take over control of the kingdom.²⁵⁷

²⁵⁵ As Lane Fox 1979, 431, commented on the court the Alexander: 'Men who love a powerful or popular man do not therefore love each other, and it is no surprise that Craterus, for example, hated Hephaistion, Hephaistion hated Eumenes and Eumenes hated the leader of the Shield Bearers [*sc.* Hephaistion].' Note that in this list the most powerful man is also the most hated. Cf. the fundamental remarks of Burke 1992, 58, on social groups: 'It cannot be assumed that every group is permeated by solidarity; communities have to be constructed and reconstructed. It cannot be assumed that a community is homogeneous in attitudes or free from conflicts'. On conflict as a characteristic of Ancien Régime courts: Duindam 1994, 28-30. On the instability of the Greek *oikos* in general: Cox 1998, 130-67.

²⁵⁶ Herman 1997, 216.

²⁵⁷ Polyb. 15.25.31-4; cf. 50.10-4; Plut., *Cleom.* 32.3. When Aristaios, 'one of the most intimate friends', wished to obtain freedoms for the Jews in Alexandria, he first secured the goodwill of two powerful *philoï*, Sosibios of Taras and Andreas, the captains of the guard; subsequently, when he

Through their involvement in the rivalry called ‘amphimetric disputes’ by Ogden, *philoi* could win a lightning career if the prince they supported succeeded to the throne, but risked exile or death when this was not the case. The philosopher Demetrios of Phaleron, for example, was imprisoned by Ptolemaios Philadelphos because he had backed Philadelphos’ half-brother in the struggle over the succession won by Philadelphos’ faction.²⁵⁸ Kings tried, for better or for worse, to profit from the rivalries between their *philoi* through the principle of divide and rule. Often, however, the king did not succeed in remaining a lofty arbiter but became himself a party in factional conflicts.

Antiochos the Great versus the *philoi*

The latter may be exemplified by the problems that confronted Antiochos III when he succeeded to the throne in 223 . Polybios provides a detailed, and well-informed, account of these events.²⁵⁹ The *sunedrion* inherited by Antiochos from his predecessor Seleukos III was dominated by the faction of a *philos* called Hermeias. This Hermeias was a more powerful and influential figure at the Seleukid court than the new king. Polybios makes it clear that it was Hermeias who made the decisions, repeatedly stating that Hermeias prevented Antiochos from appointing his own friends to important positions. All that the young monarch could do, was allying himself with a rival faction, centred round Epigenes, an experienced, older general. This resulted in a vicious power-struggle between Epigenes and Hermeias. The latter gained momentum when an army mutiny broke out because of arrears of pay. Because the new king’s treasury was still empty—there had not yet been a major campaign to acquire the necessary financial resources—Hermeias offered to pay the troops from his own funds, but demanded in return that Epigenes and his followers would be banished from the court:

The king was much displeased with this proposal ... but troubled as he was by Hermeias’ machinations and enthralled by the obligations of the court, and permanently surrounded by a

made his his petition before the king and the *sunedrion*, Sosibios and Andreas supported him, and persuaded to king to make a decree in accordance with Aristaios’ request (Jos., *AJ* 12.17-32).

²⁵⁸ Diog. Laert. 5.77-8.

²⁵⁹ Polyb. 5 *passim*; these events are also discussed by Herman 1997.

host of guards and courtiers, he was not even master of himself, so that he gave way and acceded to the request.²⁶⁰

Shortly after, Hermeias rid himself of his rival by accusing Epigenes of having sided with the rebel leader Molon. Producing a forged letter from Molon, Hermeias had Epigenes executed without even consulting the king: ‘The king was forced to admit that Epigenes had merited his fate, and the courtiers, though they had their suspicions, were afraid to utter them.’²⁶¹ It was only after Antiochos had achieved two resounding military victories—against Molon in Babylonia and against the Armenian king Artabazanes—that he had obtained enough prestige and wealth to stand up against Hermeias. Still, the removal of Hermeias’ and his men from the key positions at court and in the army was a hazardous undertaking. As he was constantly surrounded by dignitaries and commanders, and accompanied by Hermeias every single day, Antiochos had no opportunity to deliberate with his own confidants. A key role in the plot against Hermeias was played by the chief physician Apollophanes, the only courtier, apart from Hermeias, with whom the king could speak in private. Pretending that the king was seriously ill, ‘Apollophanes and his physicians relieved of their functions for a few days his usual administrative and military attendants’. During these days Antiochos secretly discussed matters with his own friends and Hermeias’ enemies. By pretending that he needed early walks in the cool of the morning to recover, Antiochos managed to lure Hermeias away from the army camp, where he was ambushed and stabbed to death by Antiochos’ friends. Messengers were sent to Apameia to order the execution of Hermeias’ family.²⁶²

A similar conflict accompanied the accession of Philippos V to the Antigonid throne in 218 . Like Antiochos III, Philippos had inherited a council dominated by the *philoï* of his predecessor, Antigonos Doson. The *sunedrion* became divided into two factions, both trying to win the favour of the new king – even though Doson ‘in his will ... had left orders how and by whom each matter was to be managed with the aim of leaving no pretext for rivalries and quarrels among the courtiers (περὶ τὴν αὐλήν)’.²⁶³ One faction was led by a certain Apelles, the other by Alexandros, the Captain of the Bodyguard, and Taurion, ‘minister of

²⁶⁰ Polyb. 5.50.4-5. Polyb. 26.1 and Diod. 31.16 criticise Antiochos IV for breaking the rules of court etiquette by fleeing from his *philoï* and conversing with the common people of Antioch; cf. Herman 1997, 204.

²⁶¹ Polyb. 5.50.14.

²⁶² Polyb. 5.56.1-15.

²⁶³ Polyb. 4.87.7.

Peloponnesian affairs'; Apelles was allied with Leontios, the Captain of the Peltasts, and Megaleas, the Chief Secretary.²⁶⁴ Initially, Apelles was triumphant: 'the governors and dignitaries in Macedonia and Thessaly referred all matters to him, while the Greek cities in voting gifts and honours made little mention of the king, but Apelles was all in all to them.'²⁶⁵ The king first secured the collaboration of Apelles' enemies, then publicly made known that Apelles had fallen into disfavour. Polybios makes it seem as if Apelles was at that moment at the height of his power:

After arriving with great pomp owing to the number of officers and soldiers who had flocked to meet him, [Apelles] proceeded immediately to the royal quarters. He was about to enter, as was his custom, when one of the guards, acting by orders, stopped him, saying that the king was engaged. Disconcerted by this unexpected affront, Apelles ... withdrew much abashed, upon which his followers at once began to drop away quite openly, so that finally he reached his private quarters accompanied only by his own servants. So brief a space of time suffices to exalt and debase men all over the world, and especially those in royal courts, for those are in practice like counters on a reckoning board. For they at the will of the reckoner are now worth a copper and now worth a talent, and courtiers at the nod of the king are at one moment universally envied and at the next universally pitied.²⁶⁶

Apelles, because of his prestige and power, 'was still invited to state banquets and received other such honours, but took no part in councils and was no longer admitted to the king's intimacy'. Apelles and several of their followers committed suicide; his remaining associates were put on trial before the *sunedrion* and the army assembly, on charges of cowardice and insult, and ultimately executed.²⁶⁷

The role of the favourite

As a counterweight to the power of settled *philoï*—whose privileges became increasingly hereditary especially after *c.* 200 —kings could promote 'favourites', *i.e.* outsiders who did not dispose of power bases (landed estates, wealth, hereditary privileges, *et cetera*)

²⁶⁴ Polyb. 4.87.5-8: ἐπὶ τῆς θεραπείας; ἐπὶ τῶν κατὰ Πελοπόννησιν; ἀ ἐπὶ τῶν πελταστῶν; ἐπὶ τοῦ γραμματείου.

²⁶⁵ Polyb. 5.25.5.

²⁶⁶ Polyb. 5.26.9-14.

²⁶⁷ Polyb. 5.26.15-29.6.

comparable to those of genuine courtiers. By making favourites their closest advisors kings were able to bypass the *sunedrion* with its settled members, and screen themselves off from the *philoï*.

The promotion of favourites is an all-time, almost universal principle of monarchic rule. The ideal favourite was elevated by the ruler to a position of power to which he himself had no title through noble descent or acquired social status, and that he could never have obtained without the king's grace, so that he was entirely dependent on the king for the preservation of his status. Preferably, a favourite would have no children to whom he could transmit his power, at least not officially.²⁶⁸ Thus, Achaimenid, Late Roman and Byzantine rulers patronised castrates, and the rulers of the Ancien Régime often favoured members of the clergy.²⁶⁹ The favourite would also take responsibility for unpopular measures, or take the blame when things went wrong. Hence the negative reputations of favourites, also in our sources for the Hellenistic period:

Philippos [V], the king of the Macedonians, had by him a certain knavish fellow, Herakleides of Taras, who in private conversations made many false and malicious charges against the *philoï* whom Philippos held in high esteem. Eventually Philippos sank so low in impiety as to murder five leading members of the *sunedrion*. From that point on his situation deteriorated, and by embarking on unnecessary wars he came near losing his kingdom at the hands of the Romans. For none of his Friends any longer dared speak their minds or rebuke the king's folly for fear of his impetuous temper.²⁷⁰

When Philippos' popularity dwindled because of his lack of success against the Romans, he blamed Herakleides for it, and had him locked up.²⁷¹

²⁶⁸ Burke 1992, 48.

²⁶⁹ On favourites at the courts of the Renaissance and the Ancien Régime see H. Elliott en L.W.B. Brockliss eds., *The World of the Favourite* (London 2000). On eunuchs as favourites in the Late Roman Empire: K. Hopkins, 'The political power of Eunuchs', in: *idem, Conquerors and Slaves* (Oxford 1978) 197-242.

²⁷⁰ Diod. 28.2; cf. Polyb. 13.4. Philippos two other favourites, Demetrios of Pharos and Aratos of Sikyon, were also Greeks (Polyb. 5.12.5, cf. 2.47.5).

²⁷¹ Diod. 28.9; Liv. 32.5. In 171 or 170, Antiochos IV put down riots in Antioch by sacrificing Andronikos, his vice-regent in Syria: Andronikos' purple robe was taken from him, after which he was given over to the angry mob to meet his death: 2 *Macc.* 4.30-8; P. van 't Hof, *Bijdrage tot de kennis van Antiochus IV Epiphanes, koning van Syrië* (Amsterdam 1955) 91-2. The same Andronikos

Hellenistic kings employed various sorts of favourites: exiles, defectors from rival courts, foreigners, eunuchs and—last but not least—women.

First, exiles and defectors: men who had, forcibly or voluntarily, abandoned their aboriginal social milieu, and became dependent on the favour of a new host.²⁷² The host, in return, offered security and a chance to gain status and influence. The most exemplary instance is Hannibal, who took refuge at the Seleukid court in 196 after his defeat by Scipio in the Second Punic War. Hannibal became a senior advisor of Antiochos III during the Seleukid-Roman war of 191-188.²⁷³ Although the Carthaginian commander was obviously an anomaly in the Seleukid *sunedrion*, distrusted and hated by the other *philoï*, Hannibal nevertheless enjoyed the full confidence of the king, who sought his advice in personal interviews and gave him important commands.²⁷⁴ The hunt that the Romans made for Hannibal secured his loyalty to Antiochos. Another example is Alexandros the Akarnanian, a former Captain of the Bodyguard or major-domo at the court of the Antigonid king Philippos V.²⁷⁵ After Philippos had been defeated by the Romans at Kynoskephalai, Alexandros attached himself to the Seleukid court, where he made an exceptional career, becoming a

had been responsible for the murder of the son of the preceding king Seleukos IV, in whose name Antiochos had for a short while ruled as regent; see Mørkholm 1966, 45. According to Diod. 30.7.2, Andronikos was killed on account of this murder, which probably had been ordered by Antiochos.

²⁷² The prominence of exiles at court is also stressed by O’Neil 2003, 516: ‘Such men did not have an independent power base and were reliant on royal favour for their influence’; cf. Habicht 1958, 9; Le Bohec 1985, 323. Plutarch informs us that when Kleomenes of Sparta together with his followers fled to Alexandria, Ptolemaios III Euergetes welcomed him and sought to win him with kindness and honours; the king furthermore promised Kleomenes that, as soon as the opportunity arose, of course, he would send him back to Greece with sufficient ships and money to regain his kingship; meanwhile, Ptolemaios gave him an annual pension of 24 talents, the greater part of which Kleomenes spent to win support among ‘the other Greek refugees who were in Egypt’ (Plut., *Cleom.* 32.3).

²⁷³ Liv. 34.42.6-14: *comite et consiliario eodem ad bellum*; cf. 37.45.16; Polyb. 21.17.

²⁷⁴ Distrusted by the *philoï*: Liv. 34.14.4-5, 19.1; 41.2-3, 42.5-14; cf. App., *Syr.* 10. Trusted by the king: Diod. 29.3; Liv. 34.19.7, 42.6-14; 36.6.7, 15.2, 41.2, cf. 34.7.1-21; 37.8.3, 24.4. A similar career was that of Demetrios of Pharos: having lost his petty kingdom in Illyria to the Romans in 219, Demetrios made his escape to the court of Philippos V, whose advisor he became; Demetrios was a born scapegoat: accused by the Romans of having been the aggressor in the Second Illyrian War, he was later blamed for having urged Philippos to make war on Rome; for his career see Polyb. 2.10-11, 16-19; 5.101-8; 7.12.

²⁷⁵ Polyb. 4.87.5; 4.87.8: ἐπι τῆς θεραπείας. Cf. Liv. 35.18.1-8.

member of the royal *sunedrion* specialised in Greek and Roman matters, and serving the king as a general during the war in Greece in 191 BC.²⁷⁶ The admiral of Antiochos' fleet during the war with Rome, Polyxenidas of Rhodes, who had a seat in the *sunedrion*, was also an exile.²⁷⁷ Following the Roman occupation of Greece in 191 Antiochos III offered hospitality to many Greek leaders, mainly Aitolians, who had fought the Romans; they were merciless delivered to their enemies at the Treaty of Apameia in 188.²⁷⁸

Also, men could go over from one king to another on a more voluntary basis – because the former ruler had violated the unwritten laws of *philia*, or because friendship with a rival king was believed to be more rewarding. When an influential *philos* changed sides, members of his own personal network of friends followed him.²⁷⁹ Such apparent 'treason' was consistent with the principles of *xenia*.²⁸⁰ The offence of having violated the original friendship prevented a return to the former ruler and therefore secured such men's loyalty. An interesting case is the career of Theodotos the Aitolian, a Ptolemaic *philos* who became a favourite of Antiochos the Great. As the Ptolemaic governor of Koile-Syria, this Theodotos had successfully defended the northern entrances to his province against the superior forces of Antiochos in the first year of the Fourth Syrian War (219-217). However, as own his king, Ptolemaios IV, failed or refused to give him proper rewards and honours for his services, Theodotos was deeply insulted. He retaliated by sending a letter to Antiochos, offering to come over to his side with his entire following, and to surrender to him the cities that were in his power. Antiochos accepted. Theodotos took possession of Ptolemaïis in the name of the Seleukid king and even dispatched a force to occupy Tyre. Ptolemaios reacted by sending troops from Egypt to lay siege to Theodotos in Ptolemaïis, but these had to retreat when Antiochos arrived with his army.²⁸¹ Theodotos reward was a lightning career at the Seleukid court. Already the following winter he was given the command of all garrisons in Koile-Syria, and in the campaigning season of 218 held several important commands in the

²⁷⁶ Liv. 35.18.2; 36.11.6, 20.5.

²⁷⁷ Liv. 37.10.1; App., *Syr.* 21; cf. Liv. 36.43.4-7.

²⁷⁸ Liv. 36.12.4; 37.45.17; Polyb. 21.17.7.

²⁷⁹ Polyb. 5.70.10.

²⁸⁰ Herman 1987, 8.

²⁸¹ Polyb. 4.37.5; 5.40.1-3, 61.3-6, 61.8-9, cf. 5.62.2. Several important Ptolemaic officers followed Theodotos to the Seleukid court, cf. D. Gera, 'Ptolemy, son of Thraseas and the Fifth Syrian War', *AncSoc* 18 (1987); J.D. Grainger, *Hellenistic Phoenicia* (Oxford 1991) 98.

Seleukid field army.²⁸² At the Battle of Raphia in 217 he commanded the 10,000 Silver Shields, the Seleukid elite infantry corps.²⁸³ On the eve of this battle, Theodotos made himself a name by a daring action: sneaking into the Ptolemaic army camp in the dead of night with only two companions, he found his way to the Royal Pavilion, killed the guards, tried (unsuccessfully) to assassinate king Ptolemaios, and returned alive and unharmed – a feat that seems to have been inspired more by his personal desire for revenge than by a wish to impress Antiochos, whose favour he already had secured.²⁸⁴ The last time we hear of Theodotos the Aitolian is during the war with Achaïos (216-213 BC), when, together with two other generals, he led the decisive assault on the besieged citadel of Sardis.²⁸⁵

Another type of favourite was the social outsider. A well-known instance is the remarkable rise of Peukestas at the court of Alexander. Peukestas, belonging at best to the lesser Macedonian nobility, was an infantry officer for whom Alexander, in defiance of tradition, created an eighth *sōmatophulax* office.²⁸⁶ Peukestas soon after became satrap of the Persis and remained one of Alexander's most loyal collaborators until well after the king's death. A similar devotion to Alexander characterised his secretary Eumenes of Kardia. As a Greek, Eumenes was an anomaly in the top ranks of the Macedonian court, but Alexander nonetheless favoured him, and his loyalty to the Argead house remained proverbial even after Alexander's death. The promotion of Greeks at the Argead court, in opposition to ethnic Macedonians, goes back to Philippos II. But with the enormous influx of Greeks to the Hellenistic courts in the age of the Diadochs, the dichotomy between Greeks and Macedonians dwindled. At the Seleukid and Ptolemaic courts of the later Hellenistic period non-Greeks, notably Iranians and Egyptians, turn up as favourites, as well as eunuchs.²⁸⁷ At the Ptolemaic court for instance we encounter a certain Aristonikos—the ideal courtier discussed in a previous section of this chapter—who was a prominent *philos* of an unknown

²⁸² Polyb. 5.66.5, 68.9-10, 69.3.

²⁸³ Polyb. 5.79.3.

²⁸⁴ Polyb. 81.1-7.

²⁸⁵ Polyb. 7.16.1-18.10.

²⁸⁶ Arr., *Anab.* 6.28.3-4; cf. Berve no. 634. The fact that the *sōmatophulax* and later king Lysimachos, although he was certainly a Macedonian (Paus. 1.9.5; cf. Just. 15.3.1), could be branded a Thessalian *peneste* by his enemies (Theopomp. *FGrH* F 84 *ap.* Ath. 260a) indicates that he, too, may have risen on the social ladder in an extraordinary manner.

²⁸⁷ The relative importance of such men contrasts sharply with the fact that Egyptians in general were conspicuously absent from the Ptolemaic court, cf. O'Neil 2006, 17-8.

Ptolemaios of the second century BCE; he was both an Egyptian and a eunuch.²⁸⁸ There is also an unidentified Egyptian from Memphis, known from the hieroglyphic grave-stele of his grandmother Thatot, where it is stated that he was ‘in the king’s service and transmitted reports to the magistrates; the king preferred him to his courtiers for each secret counsel in the palace.’²⁸⁹ Between 169-4, Ptolemaios VI had an Egyptian favourite called Petosarapis, known also by the Greek name of Dionysios. Diodoros says that Petosarapis wielded greater influence at court than anyone else; he also says that Petosarapis tried to stir rebellion and tried to win control of the kingdom himself.²⁹⁰

The Seleukid Demetrios II (145-139 and 129-125) relied on a general called Dionysios the Mede, perhaps a eunuch, and both Antiochos VII (139-129) and Antiochos IX (113-95) favoured a eunuch called Krateros.²⁹¹ Still eunuchs were not a common presence at the Ptolemaic and Seleukid courts,²⁹² albeit they were relatively less rare at the courts of the

²⁸⁸ Polyb. 22.22.1-5 *ap. Suda* s.v. ‘Aristonikos’. After the death of Kleopatra I, the Ptolemaic kingdom was for a short while ruled by Lenaios, a freedman, and the eunuch Eulaios, who acted as regents for the young Ptolemaios VI (Van ‘t Hof 1955, 50). Cf. O’Neil 2006, 18, listing Jewish officials in Ptolemaic service, among them Onias and Dositheos, to whom Ptolemaios Philometor is said to have entrusted his entire army; Onias, perhaps the same as the high priest known from 1 and 2 *Maccabees*, who had been removed from office by Antiochos IV, later supported Kleopatra II in her struggle against her brother Ptolemaios VI (Jos., *Ap* 2.49; cf. Fraser 1972, 83, 222; Hölbl 2001, 190).

²⁸⁹ J. Quaegebeur, ‘The genealogy of the Memphite high priest family in the hellenistic period’, in: D.J. Crawford *et al.* eds., *Studies on Ptolemaic Memphis*. *Studia Hellenistica* 24 (Louvain 1980) 43-82, at 78-9; cf. Turner 1984, 126-7.

²⁹⁰ Diod. 31.15.1-4.

²⁹¹ Diod. 33.28.1; *RIG* no. 1158. O’Neil 2006, 18, draws attention to the fact that in Hellenistic Egypt the designation *Perses* was not necessarily a precise ethnic, but was used to describe non-Greeks with a Hellenised identity, cf. J.F. Oates, ‘The status designation Πέρσης, τῆς ἐπιγόνῆς’, *YCS* 18 (1963) 69, 109. Diodoros’ ‘Mede’ is probably an even less precise designation of ethnicity.

²⁹² Eunuchs at Hellenistic courts: Curt. 6.6.8; Porph. *FGrH* 260 F 20; (Seleukid, 2nd half 2nd century); Liv. 35.15.4 (Seleukid, 193); Diod. 30.15.1 (Ptolemaic, 169); Caes., *Civ.* 3.112 (Ptolemaic, c. 50). Livy and Curtius are suspect: the latter informs us that Alexander’s palace was filled with ‘365 concubines ... attended by a herd of eunuchs, also accustomed to prostitute themselves’, and Livy claims that Antiochos III had his own son murdered by eunuchs, ‘who normally serve kings by committing such crimes.’ The presence of eunuchs at court goes back to the Achaimenid Empire; Alexander’s trusted eunuch Bagoas (Curt. 10.1.22-38; cf. Berve no. 195) was originally a favourite of King Darius III: he was thus an outsider in more than one respect. In Hellenistic Greek culture eunuchs

non-Greek (Iranian) kingdoms of the Hellenistic period.²⁹³ When they do turn up—*viz.* the above mentioned Aristonikos, Krateros, and Dionysios—it is clear that they are favourites.²⁹⁴ The ideal favourites, however, were neither foreigners nor eunuchs, but women.

For various reasons, queens were considered the most trustworthy persons to whom power could be delegated, especially when a king was on campaign far from the geographical centre of his kingdom.²⁹⁵ For instance when Antiochos III was campaigning in the Aegean, having his eldest son with him, his consort Laodike represented him as monarch elsewhere, maintaining diplomatic contacts with the cities of Asia Minor on his behalf and having authority over the royal treasury:

Queen Laodike to the council and people of Iasos, greetings. Having often heard my brother recall the help he constantly provides to his friends and allies, and how when he recovered your city which had been afflicted by unexpected natural disasters, he restored to you your freedom and your laws, and for the rest he intends to increase the citizen body and bring it to a better condition; and since it is my policy to act in accordance with his zeal and eagerness and because of this to confer a benefaction on those citizens who are destitute, which would be of general advantage to the entire people, I have written to Strouthion, the financial official (*dioikētēs*), to have brought to the city every year for ten years 1,000 Attic medimnoi of corn to be delivered to the peoples representatives. ... If you continue to be (well) disposed towards my brother and in general towards our house as is fitting, [and] gratefully remember all our benefactions, I will try to help in securing in every way the other benefits I intend to confer,

primarily served as priests of *e.g.* Kybele, Dea Syria and Hekate, but these cults are unrelated to the courts, cf. A.D. Nock, 'Eunuchs in Ancient Religion', in: *idem, Essays on Religion and the Ancient World* (Oxford 1972) 7-15.

²⁹³ P. Guyot, *Eunuchen als Sklaven und Freigelassenen in der griechisch-römischen Antike* (Stuttgart 1980) 92-120.

²⁹⁴ In the late fourth century eunuchs were also entrusted with the care of treasures; Alexander placed the citadels and treasuries of Babylon and Persepolis under the command of the Iranians Bagophanes (Berve no. 197) and Tiridates (Berve no. 754), who probably were eunuchs. Also Philetairos, who guarded the Lysimachid, later Seleukid hoard at Pergamon until his revolt in 283 was a eunuch; E. Kosmetatou, 'The Attalids of Pergamon', in: A. Erskine ed., *A Companion to the Hellenistic World* (Oxford 2003) 159-74, esp. 158-9, argues that Philetairos was not only a eunuch, but also a native Paphlagonian.

²⁹⁵ Strootman 2002.

acting in accordance with the wishes of my brother. For I know that [he] is very eager to bring about the restoration [of the] city. Farewell.²⁹⁶

Queens held an ambiguous position in the Hellenistic kingdoms. On the one hand they were outsiders in the male world of the government and army, on the other hand central figures in the royal families. In the letter to Iasos we see the queen in her role as manager of the *oikos*. As consort of the reigning king and mother of his son(s), having a central place in the *oikos*, the queen was part of *basileia*, impersonating royal authority. Because of polygamous marriage—she could in principle be replaced—the mother of the heir apparent could be expected to be a loyal ally of the reigning king, and to regard the interests of her husband’s family as her own. A queen was promoted to this cardinal position by conferring on her a diadem and the title of *basilissa*. As Macurdy has argued, the title *basilissa* (instead of the common *basilinna*) when found on the coins of queens who were acting as regents for an absent husband, or for minor sons, ought to be understood as ‘female king’ rather than as ‘the wife of the king’.²⁹⁷ Indeed, the role of queens was not simply confined to ‘female’ responsibilities like public and private cult or the internal management of the *oikos* – as regents they necessarily took over the male duties of their husbands or sons, transgressing the traditional borders between the feminine and the masculine, sometimes even playing a leading role in the male domain *par excellence*: the battlefield.²⁹⁸

In Laodike’s letter to Iasos, the bond between the king and his principal consort is emphasised by the queen’s designation of her husband as ‘brother’ – an expression of fictive kinship related to the actual kinship between king and queen in the Ptolemaic family.²⁹⁹ Just a

²⁹⁶ Austin 156; *SEG* 26, 1226 (c. 195). The ‘natural disasters’ probably refers to an earthquake.

²⁹⁷ Macurdy 1932, 8; cf. Carney 1991. According to W. Huss, ‘Das Haus des Nektanebis und das Haus des Ptolemaios’, *AncSoc* 25 (1994) 111-8, *basilissa* could also mean ‘princess’, as there is epigraphic evidence for a ‘*basilissa* Ptolemaïs in the Ptolemaic kingdom; however, the title may be used here for the same reason as the title *basileus* was used to designate a crown prince (see above).

²⁹⁸ For example Olympias fought a battle against the Macedonian army of Philippos Arrhidaios, and later commanded troops against Kassandros; Arsinoë III accompanied her brother and husband Ptolemaios IV at the Battle of Raphia, together; and Kleopatra VII was personally in command of her fleet at Actium; cf. Blok 2002, 240, on the image of the ‘fighting queen’ Artemisia, who is presented as both masculine and feminine in the *Histories*.

²⁹⁹ In his correspondance from the field, Antiochos III likewise emphasised that Laodike was his other self by calling her ‘our sister and queen’, cf. Austin 151 and 158. One may perhaps compare here the

king's son could be appointed heir apparent by awarding him a central place in the government and the army, and the title of *basileus*, the *basilissa* was raised to power by granting her a central place in royal cult, court ceremonial or panegyric.³⁰⁰ Therefore, when a king died or was taken prisoner, leaving only minor sons, the principal wife frequently was able to step into the breach, drawing on her husband's prestige and her own status as mother of the successor.³⁰¹

pre-eminence of women at the top of Italian mafia clans, in particular the family-based Neapolitan Camorra and Calabrian 'Ndrangheta (but in sharp contrast to the Cosa Nostra of western Sicily, which is based on a rigid hierarchical structure of elected members rather than family ties, and where women's role is traditionally confined to propaganda): there, wives, mothers and sisters fulfill a strikingly similar role (as well as being liable to comparable negative judgments by outsiders). In her fascinating book *Mafia Women* (2nd ed., London 1998), Clare Longrigg describes how the Neapolitan gangster Raffaele Cutolo, who ruled 'by force of personality' from his prison cell for thirty years, 'put together a trusted group of directors, led by his sister Rosetta. ... Giuseppe Marrazzo, the writer who helped create the Cutolo myth, implied an incestuous relationship between brother and sister' (12), and some even state that Rosetta was the real leader of the Cutolo clan (14-5). 'But perhaps the greatest mark of Rosetta Cutolo's intelligence, and the reason she survived, ... is that she did not try to take her brother's place: she remained in the background, taking care to give the impression that she only acted on his behalf' (33). Concerning Carmela Giuliano, the wife of Luigi Giuliano, known as *'o re*, a member of the Neapolitan police commented that: 'Her husband is a king, but she is the one who wears the trousers. When he is in prison she does everything. *People feel the boss's authority in her presence*' (44, my italics).

³⁰⁰ Cf. C. Wikander, 'Religion, political power and gender. The building of a cult image', in: P. Hellström and B. Alroth eds., *Religion and Power in the Ancient Greek World* (Uppsala 1996) 183-8. Ptolemaic queens figure relatively notably in the poetry of Kallimachos, e.g. fr. 392 (on the marriage of Philadelphos and Arsinoë, but dedicated to the latter), fr. 228 (on Arsinoë's apotheosis), *Epigram* 51 (in which Berenike I is compared with Charis), as well as the *Coma Berenices*, and *Victoria Berenices*.

³⁰¹ Concerning Classical Athens, V. Hunter, 'The Athenian widow and her kin', *Journal of Family History* 14 (1989) 291-311, remarks that wives 'knew the financial details of their husband's *oikos* to the point, particularly after his death, having managerial control of the estate, [and] it was her task 'to keep her husband's estate intact against encroachment by kinsmen or neighbors' (p. 300, cited from Cox 1998, 74).

3.6 The Royal Pages

An important group of persons at the Hellenistic royal courts were the *basilikoi paides*, or royal pages: age groups consisting of youths between about their fourteenth and eighteenth years.³⁰² The pages were to the royal court what ephebes were to a *polis*. They were the sons of nobles, including the king's own sons. They were educated and trained at court, and waited on the king. It was originally an Argead institution, continued in the kingdoms of the Antigonids, Seleukids and Ptolemies 'until the kings from whom the Romans many years later took away all power'.³⁰³ There is some evidence that a similar institution for girls existed at the Ptolemaic court.³⁰⁴ Although the institution of *basilikoi paides* had its roots in pre-Hellenistic Macedonia, the education of these youths—whose age corresponds to that of ephebes in Hellenistic Greek cities—was also in keeping with current Greek educational practices, viz. *paideia* and *ephēbeia*.³⁰⁵ Pages were important for court culture for two

³⁰² The common Greek term is βασιλικοὶ (δὲ) παῖδες or simply παῖδες; Curtius and Livy literally translate as *regii pueri*; alternative designations encountered in Curtius are *puerorum regia cohors* (10.7.16) and *nobiles pueri* (10.5.8); Alexander's pages are also referred to as 'bodyguards': σωματοφυλακίαι (Diod. 17.65.1), *custodia corporis* (Curt. 5.1.42).

³⁰³ Curt. 8.6.6. Berve I, 39, disputes the continuation of the institution because 'es scheint [nicht] glaublich, dass diese eng makedonische, durchaus philippische Institution unverändert, gleichsam als Fremdkörper, in die neue Herrschaft übernommen ward'; but the distinct Macedonian character makes continuation all the more plausible. *Basilikoi paides* under the Diadochs: Curt. 10.8.3; Diod. 28.3, 29.5; 19.91.4; Plut., *Eum.* 3.5; cf. Billows 1997, 246-50. At the Ptolemaic court: Polyb. 15.33.11; cf. Mooren 1975, 2-7 and 52-80; Fraser I, 101-2; Herman 1980/81, 103-49. Seleukids: Polyb. 5.82.13; 30.25.17; 31.21.2; 2 *Macc.* 9.29; cf. Bevan 1901, 283-4; Bickerman 1938, 38. Antigonids: Polyb. 15.33.11; Liv. 44.43.5; 45.6.7-8. Mithradatids: Plut., *Pomp.* 36.4.

³⁰⁴ Polyb. 15.33.11 mentions 'some young girls who had been Arsinoë's σύντροφοί. In the Grand Procession of Ptolemaios Philadelphos were 500 παιδίσκαι—'young girls' or female pages?—dressed in purple chitons with gold girdles. (Ath. 200 e).

³⁰⁵ The age of *paides* and ephebes varied from place to place. In classical Athens *paides* were roughly between 12 and 17 years old and ephebes between c. 18 and 20. In the Hellenistic age a more distinct dichotomy between primary and secondary education evolved; civilian *paides* were then usually under 14 years old, and ephebes between 14 and 18; in Hellenistic times, too, intellectual education for girls became more common among civic elites. Ex-ephebes were called *neoi*, (young) adults; the corresponding aulic title presumably was *neaniskos*, as we know that the Ptolemaic courtier and poet Kallimachos, a scion from a leading family of Kyrene, made his literary debut when he was a

reasons: because, as hostages, their presence at court was a means to control and pacify the nobility,³⁰⁶ and because kings normally recruited their principal collaborators among the men together with whom they themselves had been pages, their boyhood friends so to speak.

Origins

Detailed evidence for royal pages concerns mainly the court of Alexander the Great. Because of the so-called Pages Conspiracy—an attempt to murder Alexander in 327—the institution of *basilikoi paides* at the Argead court has received ample treatment by Alexander's biographers, in particular Arrian and Curtius.³⁰⁷ The classic text is Curtius 8.6.2-6:

It was the custom for the Macedonian nobility to entrust their grown-up sons to the kings for the performance of duties comparable to the services of slaves. They took turns keeping watch at night at the door of the king's bedchamber, and let in his women through an entrance other than that watched by the armed guards. They also took the king's horses from the grooms and presented them for the king to mount; they accompanied him in the hunt and in battle; and they were educated in all aspects of the liberal arts. They regarded it as a great honour that they were allowed to wait on the king at his table.³⁰⁸ No one had the right to flog them save the king. This fellowship formed, as it were, a training school for the commanders and officials of the Macedonians, and from it came the kings whose descendants many generations later lost all their power to the Romans.³⁰⁹

νεανίσκος τῆς αὐλῆς (Cameron 1995, 3-5). For Macedonian antecedents see E.D. Carney, 'Elite Education and High Culture in Macedonia', in: W. Heckel and L.A. eds., *Crossroads of History. The Age of Alexander* (Claremont 2003) 47-63.

³⁰⁶ Grainger 1992, 6.

³⁰⁷ For the evidence for royal pages at the Argead court see N.G.L. Hammond, 'Royal Pages, personal pages, and boys trained in the Macedonian manner during the period of the Temenid monarchy', *Historia* 39.3 (1990) 261-90; cf. Hammond 1994, 40-4; Heckel 1992, 237-98. On the Pages Conspiracy: Hammond 1981, 196-99; Bosworth 1993, 118.

³⁰⁸ *Praecipuus honor habebatur quod licebat sedentibus*, lit. 'were allowed to sit'; see however Cameron 1995, 83 n. 82: 'But the King and his Friends *reclined*. The point is that pages *sat* while their elders reclined. Only adult males were allowed to recline.'

³⁰⁹ Curt. 8.6.1-6; cf. 5.1.42; 8.6.4; 10.8.4; Arr., *Anab.* 4.13.1. Cf. Aymard 1953, 403-4; Hammond 1989, 56 n. 21.

Arrian writes that it was Philippos II who had first created a pages corps:

[Philippos] was the first who ordered that the sons of Macedonian nobles who had reached the age of *paides* should be sent to the royal court; and besides general attendance on his person, the duty of guarding him when he was asleep had been entrusted to them.³¹⁰

On the basis of this passage, modern historians have assumed that Philippos copied the practice from the Achaimenid court, where according to Xenophon a similar institution existed.³¹¹ However, as Bevan already noted, such an institution might easily have started in any monarchic state.³¹² There is indeed evidence for the presence of pages in pre-Hellenistic Macedonia dating back to the late fifth century BCE.³¹³ Hammond explains Arrian's claim by suggesting that Philippos established 'the final form for the school', but that it was 'invented' much earlier. Although this surely makes sense, it remains questionable whether the institution was ever wilfully invented at all. It seems more likely that it developed from a traditional form of fosterage that gradually became institutionalised, although of course it never became a 'school' in the modern sense.

Organisation and duties

The *basilikoi paides* were young aristocrats who carried weapons and possessed horses.³¹⁴ In Alexander's time they were organised in the same manner as the Companion cavalry. We are informed that in 331 the pages corps at Alexander's court consisted of two hundred youths, subdivided in units of fifty youths each, corresponding to the tetrarchies and *ilai* of the Companion cavalry.³¹⁵ In a procession staged by Antiochos IV in c. 165 there marched 600 royal pages.³¹⁶

³¹⁰ Arr., *Anab.*, 4.13.1; cf. Curt. 8.6.2.

³¹¹ Xen., *Cyr.* 8.6.10 and *Anab.* 4.13.1; references to modern literature in Hammond 1990, 261 n. 2.

³¹² Bevan 1902 I, 123; so also Berve I, 39; cf. the arguments added by Briant 1994, 298-302.

³¹³ Collected in Hammond 1990, 261-4; cf. Hammond 1989, 56 with nn. 22-3.

³¹⁴ Curt. 5.1.42; 8.6.2-3; 10.5.8, 8.4; Arr., *Anab.* 4.13.1, 16.6; Diod. 17.65.1; 19.27.3, 29.5; Val. Max. 3.3 *ext.* 1. cf. Diod. 17.79.5.

³¹⁵ Diod. 19.28.3 and 19.29.5. Cf. Hammond 1989, 56 with n. 24. When in 331 a fresh levy was sent from Macedonia to Alexander in Babylon, the pages marched eastward in a fifty strong squadron (Diod. 17.65.1; Curt. 5.1.42). Hammond 1990, 265-6, argues *contra* Berve I, 37, that this was the first time that pages arrived at Alexander's army camp; however, the royal pages were as a rule educated at

The main tasks of the pages at Alexander's court was to wait on the king, serve as his bodyguards, and to guard his personal belongings.³¹⁷ When on guard duty, the pages were under the command of one of the seven *sōmatophulakes*.³¹⁸ They rode with the king in battle and during the hunt, and thereby acquired military experience.³¹⁹

After Alexander *basilikoi paides* probably came from leading families in the kingdom's provinces, and were the sons of *philoï* and foreign *xenoi*. The king's own children, too, were *basilikoi paides* during their adolescence. It is not known on what grounds other boys were admitted to the pages corps. Neither is it possible to say whether also non-Macedonian and non-Greek magnates sent their sons to court, as one would expect particularly in the Hellenistic Near East. It would have been an excellent way to create bonds between indigenous princely dynasties and the Seleukid house, and given the wide-spread practice of dispatching sons as hostages it is likely that it happened indeed. Evidence, however, is meagre. There is one famous instance: Mithradates, the son of Ariobarzanes, an Iranian prince in the entourage of Antigonos Monophthalmos, of whom it is said that he had been a 'youth companion' and of the same age as Antigonos' son Demetrios; but the fact that King Antigonos considered this Mithradates a threat to his rule, and therefore wished to execute him, is perhaps of more significance here.³²⁰

The pages were under the supervision of a court dignitary usually called *tropheus*, Foster-Father. The office of *tropheus* was a position of great honour already at the court of

court, and Alexander's army camp *was* the court. Shortly after Alexander's death, in 322, Eumenes of Kardia had 200 pages with him. At the Battle of Paraitakene in 317 Eumenes fielded two squadrons of fifty pages (Diod. 19.27.3), against his opponent Antigonos Monophthalmos' three such units (Diod. 19.29.5); both commanders stationed the pages near themselves.

³¹⁶ Polyb. 30.25.17; cf. Walbank III, 611.

³¹⁷ Curt. 8.6.21; 10.8.3; Arr., *Anab.* 4.13.1-4; Diod. 17.65.1, 79.5.

³¹⁸ Curt. 8.6.22; Arr., *Anab.* 4.13.7.

³¹⁹ Arr., *Anab.* 4.13.1-2, 16.6; Curt. 5.1.42; 8.8.3; Diod. 16.93.4; 19.27.3, 29.5. Cf. A.S. Chankowski, 'L'entraînement militaire des éphebes dans les cités grecques d'Asie mineure à l'époque hellénistique: nécessité pratique ou tradition atrophée?', in: J.-C. Couvenhes and H.-L. Fernoux eds., *Les Cités grecques et la guerre en Asie Mineure à l'époque hellénistique. Actes de la journée d'études de Lyon, 10 octobre 2003* (Paris 2004) 55-76, who stresses the effective military role played by aristocratic ephebes in the defence of the polis and on the battlefield.

³²⁰ παῖς ἐταῖρος: Plut., *Demetr.* 4.1. This Mithradates—an ancestor of Mithradates Eupator—later founded the royal dynasty of Pontos.

Philippos II.³²¹ Even after their accession to the throne, kings normally held their former *tropheus* in esteem, addressing him as ‘father’ in correspondence.³²² A good example is Krateros, a courtier of Antiochos IX, who had been the king’s *tropheus* and was honoured by his former pupil with an impressive series of aulic offices and honorific titles: ‘Foster Father of Antiochos Philopator; First Friend of King Antiochos; Chief Physician and Chamberlain of the Queen’.³²³ The *paides* who were brought up together with the king were afterward honoured as the king’s *suntrophoi* or Foster-Brothers, and addressed one another as ‘brother’.

Education

The *tropheus*—the aulic counterpart of the civic *paidonomos*—was not himself the teacher of the pages. Learned men and other skilled professionals were appointed as tutors to train the pages in multifarious skills. The education was both physical and intellectual. The royal princes and young nobles were prepared for their later tasks as military commanders and administrators, as well as trained in all the liberal arts.³²⁴ The best known example of such a teacher is Aristotle, who was invited to the court of Philippos II when Alexander had reached the age of thirteen and his education together with other pages began. Aristotle taught the

³²¹ Plut., *Alex.* 5.

³²² Polyb. 31.20.3; Plut., *Ant.* 5.31; *OGIS* 148, 256; 1 *Macc.* 11.1, 11.31-2; Jos., *AJ* 12.127, 12.148, 13.126-7, 148; Diod. 33.4.1. Cf. Hammond 1989, 57; Berve I, 38; Bevan 1902 II, 283, 302; Bevan 1927, 236.

³²³ τροφεὺς Ἀντιόχου Φιλοπάτρος τῶν πρώτων φίλων βασιλέως Ἀντιόχου καὶ ἀρχίατρος καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ κοιτῶνος τῆς βασιλείσσης: *RIG* no. 1158. The text comes from the base of a statue of Krateros found in Delos, perhaps his native city. On him: App., *Syr.* 68; Jos., *AJ* 13.271; Eus. 1.257; Porphyrios, *FGrH* 260 F20.

³²⁴ This was already the case at the Argead court: Curt. 5.1.42 and 8.6.4. The education of pages will not have differed much from the education of *paides* from civic elite families in the Hellenistic Greek cities; even, developments and innovations in educational practices in the Hellenistic age may have started at the courts. The curriculum known to have been taught to elite children in the cities included philosophy, literature, writing, recitation, and sometimes music and the writing of verse, as well as various branches of sport. See E.D. Carney, ‘Elite Education and High Culture in Macedonia’, in: W. Heckel and L.A. eds., *Crossroads of History. The Age of Alexander* (Claremont 2003) 47-63. Generally in elite education: M.L. Clarke, *Higher Education in the Ancient World* (London 1971); N.M. Kennell, *The Gymnasium of Virtue* (1995); R. Criboire, *Gymnastics of the Mind. Greek Education in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt* (Princeton 2001).

pages mainly philosophy and politics.³²⁵ He was not a *tropheus*—Alexander’s foster-father was Leonidas, a kinsman of his mother Olympias—nor even was he the only tutor at Philip’s court.³²⁶ Neither was it exceptional that Alexander was educated by a tutor of such standing, or that as an adult Alexander appeared as a man of learning who enjoyed the works of poets like Telestos and Philoxenos, discussed atomic theory with Anaxarchos, and quoted Homer.³²⁷ Kassandros, the son of Antipatros, who had been a page together with Alexander, knew the *Iliad* by heart too.³²⁸ Later kings also did their best to attract intellectuals of renown to their courts to tutor the princes and other pages. Alexander himself appointed Aristotle’s pupil Kallisthenes as tutor of the pages. Ptolemaic pages received their intellectual education from the scholars who worked in the Museum of Alexandria, and this may well have been the principal reason why this institution, as well as similar institutions in the other kingdoms, was founded.³²⁹ The pages at the court of Ptolemaios Soter were educated by, among others, Strato, and at the court of Ptolemaios Philadelphos by Aristarchos, Apollonios of Rhodes and perhaps Kallimachos.³³⁰ Antigonos Gonatas brought the stoic philosopher Persaios to his court for the same reason. Furthermore, prominent representatives of major philosophical schools—Aristotle, Zeno, Kleantes and many others—wrote treatises on the art of kingship for the benefit of the king’s children. Perhaps sons of kings were even sent abroad for higher education after their training as a page had ended.³³¹

Conclusion

Even when the royal pages were indeed ‘quasi-hostages for their fathers’ good behaviour’, it will have been above all honourable to have one’s son enrolled in the corps, and to have him become a personal valet of the present, and perhaps a foster-brother and companion of the future king. Conversely, it was prestigious for a king, too, to be served and guarded, not by

³²⁵ Plut., *Alex.* 7.

³²⁶ Plut., *Alex.* 5.

³²⁷ Poetry: Plut., *Alex.* 8. Atomism: Diog. Laert. 9.60-3; cf. Plut., *Alex.* 28.

³²⁸ Ath. 620.

³²⁹ *P.Oxy* 1241; cf. Fraser I, 330-3; Green 1990, 86 with nn. 27 and 28.

³³⁰ On the probability that Kallimachos was a tutor of royal pages: C. Meillier, *Callimaque et son temps. Recherches sur la carrière et la condition d’un écrivain à l’époque des premiers Lagides* (Lille 1979) 9-21.

³³¹ Antigonos Gonatas was educated by Zeno in Athens. Antiochos Grypos also studied in Athens as a youth (App., *Syr.* 68); the Attalids perhaps sent their sons to Rhodes for further study (Polyb. 31.31).

mere servants and soldiers, but by sons of nobles. Pages revealed the magnitude of a king's power, since by putting their sons under the care of the king the fathers publicly acknowledged his sovereignty.

Bringing up the children of powerful men at court, under the custody of the king, cut off from their families, was a means to create a loyal elite and to shape noble identity.³³² The loyalty of pages to the royal house was proverbial. Only the pages together with their commanding *sōmatophulax* were trusted enough to guard Alexander's bedchamber when he was asleep, and pages were the last to remain loyal to Perseus after the Battle of Pydna.³³³ The bonds of loyalty between pages and the princes with whom they were brought up were very strong. Kings preferably recruited their closest *philoī* from the ranks of their former fellow-pages. Such men were the king's *suntrophoi*, 'foster-brothers', a form of fictive kinship that creating loyalty and mutual moral obligations for life. The mutual loyalty between Alexander and Hephaistion was proverbial. But an identical friendship existed between Antiochos the Great and his youth companion Antipatros. The Macedonian Antipatros was the most prominent member of the Seleukid court next to the king during Antiochos' entire reign; he commanded the prestigious right flank in the Battles of Raphia and, almost thirty years later, Magnesia (together with the young crown prince Seleukos). In 190 he was sent, together with Zeuxis, to Sardis as an ambassador to negotiate peace with the Romans, with a mandate to accept terms in the name of the king. Antipatros also led the embassy sent to Rome to ratify the Treaty of Apameia.³³⁴ On the other hand, the institution of

³³² Duindam 1994, 30.

³³³ Liv. 45.6.7-8.

³³⁴ Raphia: Polyb. 5.79.12, cf. 5.82.9; Magnesia: Liv. 37.41.1; Embassy to Sardis: Polyb. 21.7.9, 16.4; Liv. 37.45.5-6; embassy to Rome: Liv. 37.51.10, 55.3; 56.8. Antipatros was also present as a cavalry commander at the Battle of Panion in 200 (Polyb. 16.18.7) and in 217 led an embassy to Ptolemaios IV to negotiate peace after the Seleukid defeat at Raphia (Polyb. 5.87.1). On his title: Polyb. 5.79.12: βασιλέως ἀδελφοῦς, and 5.87.1: ἀδελφίδος. Livy's claim (37.41.1; 37.55.3) that Antipatros was 'the son of Antiochos' brother' is surely a mistranslation of Polybios, as Antiochos himself was only about 25 years old at the time of the Battle of Raphia, *pace* Bevan 1902 II, 109, 111. The assumption that Antipatros was a son of Antiochos' older brother and predecessor on the throne is also implausible as it would give him a better title to the throne than Antiochos himself. The fact that Polybios nowhere in Book 5 recounts how Antipatros became a member of the court (as he does for all other leading friends of Antiochos), and the long time span of his collaboration with Antiochos, leaves no doubt that he was of the same age as the king and probably had been a page together with him, as the designation

the corps of *basilikoi paides* may in one respect also have endangered the personal domination of the king over his court: if the *paides* were indeed (in part) the sons of *philoï*, the pages system was tantamount to the emergence of an hereditary aristocracy at the royal courts, and thus may have gradually undermined the kings' freedom in choosing their friends.

adelphos already implies. He may have owed the king's remarkable confidence to having been among the group of friends who together with the young king plotted against Hermeias (Polyb. 5.56.13).

IV

Cultural and Scientific Patronage

4.1 The Birdcage of the Muses

In the Hellenistic world royal courts were the focal points of cultural and scientific developments. Notably in the third century BCE, literature, technology, philosophy, and visual arts flourished due to generous patronage by kings, queens, princes and courtiers.¹ The Ptolemaic court at Alexandria was the greatest centre of art and learning in the Hellenistic east, followed, at some distance, by the peripatetic courts of the first three Antigonids and early Seleukids, and later for a short while also the Attalid court at Pergamon.

Characteristic of Hellenistic court patronage was its preference for experiment and innovation.² Protected and encouraged by kings, Eratosthenes calculated the circumference of the earth, Aristarchos formulated the unorthodox theory that not the Earth but the Sun was the centre of the universe, Hero built a steam engine, Euklides and Archimedes innovated mathematics, Herophilos and Erasistratos caused a revolution in medical science by charting the human vascular and nervous system on the basis of empirical research.³ Also in the field

¹ The English language unfortunately knows no equivalent of the Dutch term *mecenaat* or German *Mäzenat*, unless otherwise stated, in this chapter 'patronage' will be used to denote the sustenance and protection of artists, poets, scholars, and scientists by courtiers and members of the royal family.

² R. Strootman, 'Mecenaat aan de hellenistische hoven', *Lampas* 34.3 (2001) 187-203. I would like to thank dr. M.P. Cuypers for many inspiring discussions about the nature and aims of Hellenistic poetry during our collaboration for the course 'Literary patronage in Alexandria and Rome' for the Classics Department of Leiden University in 1998-1999.

³ On Herophilos and his innovation of medicine see H. von Staden, *Herophilus. The Art of Medicine in Early Alexandria* (Cambridge 1989).

of literature there was an inclination to experiment and a preference for originality.⁴ Kallimachos formulated new standards for poetry, Theokritos and his followers developed bucolic literature, Apollonios reinvented epic, and Aratos and Nikandros introduced the quasi-scientific didactic poem. And to complete this enumeration: also technology, geography, ethnography, historiography, and philosophy thrived at the courts of the Hellenistic kings.⁵

A comparison, made by Dutch scholars, of courtly patronage in various cultures and periods has shown—against the prevailing view that investments in culture increase in times of crisis—that court patronage is in general most successful in periods of political and economical stability.⁶ The Alexandrian court in the first half of the third century BCE fits this pattern perfectly, and the other courts of that age to a lesser extent as well.

The importance of the royal court for Hellenistic literature and science is more often acknowledged in present scholarship. This is a new development. Until recently Hellenistic literature was usually considered to be *l'art pour l'art*, art for art's sake with no social relevance, produced in ivory towers offered by kings to poets for apparently no other reason than that it pleased them to do so.⁷ Hellenistic poets wrote poetry for other poets. Their work

⁴ See B. Effe, 'Klassik als Provokation. Tradition und Innovation in der alexandrinischen Dichtung', in: W. Vosskamp ed., *Klassik im Vergleich. Normativität und Historizität europäischer Klassiken* (Stuttgart and Weimar 1993) 317-30. Cf. M. Hose, 'Der alexandrinische Zeus. Zur Stellung der Dichtkunst im Reich der ersten Ptolemäer', *Philologus* 141 (1997) 46-64, esp. 46-8. To denote the Greek literature of the last three centuries BCE I will speak of 'Hellenistic' and not of 'Alexandrian' literature; no such genre ever existed in reality. The designation 'Alexandrian poetry' should be reserved for poetry written in the city of Alexandria – itself a very diverse whole ensemble of styles and genres. Cf. G. Zanker, *Realism in Alexandrian Poetry. A Literature and its Audience* (London 1987) for an even narrower definition, *sc.* only the poetry of Kallimachos and his followers, excluding Apollonios and Theokritos.

⁵ It should be noted that cultural life in the Greek *poleis*, and cities in general, did not cease; literature thrived outside the courts too. Only the courts were relatively more successful in this respect.

⁶ J.T.P. de Bruijn, W.L. Idema, F.P. van Oostrom eds., *Dichter en hof. Verkenningen in veertien culturen* (Utrecht 1986).

⁷ So for instance Fraser 1972, I 312 and Green 1990, 84. Unlike the study of Roman poetry, regarding which patrons-client relations have long been, and still are, extensively studied; cf. e.g. H. Bardon, *Les empereurs et les lettres latines* (Paris 1940); Woodside, M., 'Vespasian's patronage of education and the arts', *TAPhA* 73 (1942) 123-9; P. White, 'The presentation and dedication of the *Silvae* and the Epigrams', *JRS* 64 (1974) 40-61; M.L. Clarke, 'Poets and patrons at Rome', *G&R* 25 (1978) 46-54; K. Quinn, 'The poet and his audience in the Augustan age', *ANRW* II 30.1 (1982) 75-180; M. Morford,

had no social or cultural relevance and, ‘going far beyond the bounds of good taste’,⁸ was of less value than the literature of the Classical Age.⁹ Hellenistic science, too, has long been considered brilliant but useless.

Crucial to the perception of Hellenistic poetry as socially and culturally irrelevant has been an epigram on the *mouseion* at Alexandria during the rule of Ptolemaios II Philadelphos, written by the poet Timon, who sneered that

‘Nero’s patronage and participation in literature and the arts’, *ANRW* II 32.3 (1985) 2003-2031; R.R. Nauta, ‘Keizer Nero en de dichters’, in: De Bruijin et al. 1986, 17-37; S. Franchet d’Esperey, ‘Vespasien, Titus et la littérature’, *ANRW* II 32.5 (1986) 3040-86; K.M. Coleman, ‘The emperor Domitian and literature’, *ANRW* II 32.5 (1986) 3095-3111; B.K. Gold ed., *Literary and Artistic patronage in Ancient Rome* (Austin 1987); P. White, *Promised Verse. Poets in the Society of Augustan Rome* (Cambridge, Mass., and London 1993); R.R. Nauta, *Poetry for Patrons. Literary Communication in the Age of Domitian*. Mnemosyne Supplements 206 (Leiden 2002). The study of Roman literary patronage has been boosted due to the influential conceptual model developed by R.P. Saller, *Personal Patronage under the Early Empire* (Cambridge etc. 1982), cf. R.R. Nauta, ‘Maecenaat en censuur in de vroege Romeinse keizertijd’, *Lampas* 19 (1986) 34-76.

⁸ E.A. Barber, ‘Alexandrian literature’, in: CAH (1928) 249-83, at 271, in a paragraph aptly titled ‘Pedantry’.

⁹ ‘The extension of Macedonian control ... marked the end of an epoch; and literary decline accompanied political decay.’ This view, here expressed by D.E.W. Wormel, ‘Alexandrian poetry’, in: D.R. Dudley and D.M. Lang eds., *The Penguin Companion to Classical and Byzantine, Oriental and African Literature* (Harmondsworth 1969) 22-3, at 22, goes back to U. von Willomawitz-Moellendorf, *Hellenistische Dichtung in der Zeit von Kallimachos* (Berlin 1924). This German classicist took a sincere interest in Hellenistic poetry and tried to excite critical interest especially by presenting it as *l’art pour l’art*,⁹ elaborating the romantic notion of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century that only art for art’s sake was real art. This notion can still be found in textbooks, e.g. A.W. Bulloch’s introduction to Hellenistic poetry in the authoritative *Cambridge History of Classical Literature. Volume 1, Part 4: The Hellenistic Period and the Empire*, P.E. Easterling and B.W. Knox eds. (Cambridge etc. 1989) 1-58, and even quite recently scholars have argued that Hellenistic court poetry was entirely devoid of political or social meaning, cf. e.g. E.-R. Schwinge, *Künstlichkeit von Kunst. Zur Geschichtlichkeit der alexandrinischen Poesie* (Munich 1986), and A. Kerkhecker, Μουσέων ἐν τολάριον – Dichter und Dichtung am Ptolemäerhof, *A&A* 43 (1997) 124-44.

In the thronging land of Egypt
 There are many who are feeding,
 Many scribblers on papyrus,
 Ever ceaselessly contending,
 In the birdcage of the Muses.¹⁰

When this text is cited as proof of contemporary disapproval of royal patronage, the fact that Timon himself served a monarch is usually passed over in silence. Timon was a *philos* of Antigonos Gonatas, the enemy of Ptolemaios Philadelphos, and the epigram is the product of competition between courts, claiming that Gonatas' poets are better than those of Philadelphos.¹¹

Since some decades classicists have been reconsidering the 'birdcage'. Hellenistic literary texts are now more often related to the social and cultural contexts in which they were produced and consumed, in particular the court.¹² Still, many problems remain to be solved.

¹⁰ Timon fr. 12; *ap* Ath., 1.22d. Eur., *Hel.* 174, uses the word *mouseion* to denote 'the place where [birds] sing', and Timon is probably playing with this double meaning. For the *mouseion* of Alexandria see below.

¹¹ Yet another interpretation is given by Green 1990, 87, who assumes that Timon wrote against the *mouseion* out of rancour because 'he had failed to get a sinecure there himself'.

¹² An early attempt at such an approach is Frederick Griffiths' *Theocritus at Court* (Leiden 1979). Many others have since followed. Of particular importance is the work of Gregor Weber, who has rooted Alexandrian poetry solidly in its historical context, convincingly correlating the production of poetry to festivities, ceremonies, and other courtly events, esp. in the meticulous study *Dichtung und höfische Gesellschaft. Die Rezeption von Zeitgeschichte am Hof der ersten drei Ptolemäer* (Stuttgart 1993); cf. id., 'The Hellenistic rulers and their poets. Silencing dangerous critics?' *AncSoc* 29 (1998-99) 147-74; 'Poesie und Poeten an den Höfen vorhellenistischer Monarchen', *Klio* 74 (1992) 25-77; and 'Herrscher, Hof und Dichter. Aspekte der Legitimierung und Repräsentation hellenistischer Könige am Beispiel der ersten drei Antigoniden', *Historia* 44 (1995) 283-316. A comparable approach of historians at court is B. Meissner, *Historiker zwischen Polis und Königshof. Studien zur Stellung der Geschichtsschreiber in der griechischen Gesellschaft in spätklassischer und hellenistischer Zeit* (Göttingen 1992). Of interest in this respect is also the work of Susan Stephens, who investigates political ideology in Ptolemaic court poetry: 'Callimachus at court', in: M.H. Harder ed., *Genre in Hellenistic Poetry*. *Hellenistica Groningana* 3 (Groningen 1999) 167-85; 'Writing Epic for the Ptolemaic Court', in: M.A. Harder et al. eds., *Apollonius Rhodius*. *Hellenistica Groningana* 4 (Louvain 2001) 195-215; and esp. *Seeing Double. Intercultural Poetics in Ptolemaic Alexandria* (Berkeley

What exactly was the place and status of artists, poets, scholars and scientists in the culture and social structure of the court? For what reasons did they prefer the court to the *polis*? What motives did rulers have for patronising arts and sciences on a large scale, and why did they stimulate innovation? And, concerning poetry: how can we explain that most of the now extant court poetry was not directly concerned with kingship or court life?

Usually studies of Hellenistic patronage concentrate on a single craft, mainly literature, and isolate it from other disciplines.¹³ I believe however that even if one only wishes to understand the nature and meaning of Hellenistic court poetry it also the position of physicians, painters, and technicians must be taken into consideration.

This chapter is divided into five parts. I will first discuss the main questions which at present dominate the debate about Hellenistic literature and its relation to the court; next the origins and historical development of Hellenistic patronage will be outlined. The second subchapter focuses on the question why the Hellenistic monarchies invested so much in the arts and sciences. What were the advantages for the monarchy? How can we make sense of, say, the invention of machines or the development of such literary genres as bucolic poetry and mime in the context of court culture? The third subchapter is concerned with the motivation of artists and intellectuals to work for kings. What advantages were in it for *them*? I will argue that artists, scholars and writers were not employees, but *philoï*, their relation with the king being formalised by means of *philia* and *xenia*. After a subchapter on the ideological bearings of scholarship and philosophy at court, encomiastic court poetry will be discussed. What messages did such texts convey about contemporary notions of imperial rule and the legitimisation of kingship?

Hellenistic court poetry: l'art pour l'art?

Various new interpretations of Ptolemaic literary patronage have been put forward in the past two decades. Graham Zanker stresses the Greekness of Alexandrian poetry, and explains the Ptolemies' concern for Greek culture as caused by a general feeling of alienation among their Greek and Macedonian subjects in Egypt: poetry helped to give the Greeks in Alexandria and

2003). Also the supposed *artistic* inferiority of Hellenistic poetry has been challenged, most fervently by G.O. Hutchinson, *Hellenistic Poetry* (Oxford 1988).

¹³ In only one case science: T.W. Africa, *Science and the State in Greece and Rome* (New York, London, Sydney 1968). Examples from the field of literary studies are discussed further on. An extensive bibliography on Hellenistic poetry is maintained by M.P. Cuypers for Leiden University at www.gltc.leidenuniv.nl.

Egypt a new sense of cultural belonging.¹⁴ E.-R. Schwinge, although he does relate Alexandrian poetry to the court, simply finds poetry incompatible with the appreciation of political power: any poetical laudation of kings and queens must therefore have ironical undertones, and between the lines the monarchy was criticised, not praised.¹⁵ A. Kerkhecker dismisses the existence of a substantial genre of ‘court poetry’ altogether by narrowing its definition.¹⁶ Instead, he argues that Alexandrian poetry was a kind of by-product of Ptolemaic patronage: writers were attracted to the Ptolemaic court as Museum scholars whose main task was ‘scientific’; in their spare time these scholars wrote learned *l’art pour l’art* poetry (‘Fussnotendichtung’). Alan Cameron argues the opposite, namely that Alexandrian poetry was produced for the general public and had a public relevance similar to that of literature in Classical Athens; in other words: it was written *at* court, but not *for* the court.¹⁷ This view is hard to reconcile with the learned and complex nature of the poetry of, say, Apollonios or Kallimachos – an objection that can also be raised against the comparable standpoint defended by Zanker.

Admittedly, it *is* difficult to see an immediate social or political relevance in most of the preserved court poetry. Only a minority of it is panegyric. Hence, critics focus on encomiastic poetry, or try to decipher ‘hidden’ encomiastic messages in other texts, often by relating Alexandrian poetry directly to the monarchic ideology of pharaonic Egypt, and sometimes with complete disregard of the evidence from the Seleukid and Antigonid kingdoms.¹⁸ But how can we account for the popularity at the royal court of such genres as

¹⁴ G. Zanker, ‘The nature and origin of realism in Alexandrian poetry’, *A&A* 29 (1983) 125-45.

¹⁵ Schwinge 1986. When, for instance, a contemporary of Kallimachos reads Call., *Ep.* 51, in which queen Berenike is praised as the fourth Grace, Schwinge assures that we can be certain that he ‘beschliesst den Lektüre mit einem verstehenden, weil den Preis in seiner Ambivalenz durchschauenden Lächeln’ (Schwinge 1986, 72). Similarly, J.B. Burton, *Theocritus’ Urban Mimes. Mobility, Gender, Patronage* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London 1995) 134, suggests that there may be an ironic undertone in Theokritos’ description of the royal Adonis Festival in *Idyll* 15.

¹⁶ Kerkhecker 1997, defining ‘court poetry’ as either occasional poetry for courtly events (‘Literatur bei Hofe’) or poetry about court life or the person of the king (‘Literatur über den Hof’).

¹⁷ A. Cameron, *Callimachus and his Critics* (Princeton 1995).

¹⁸ T. Gelzer, ‘Kallimachos und das Zeremoniell des ptolemäischen Königshauses’, in: J. Stagl, ed., *Aspekte der Kultursoziologie* (Berlin 1982) 13-30; L. Koenen, ‘Die Adaption ägyptischer Königsideologie am Ptolemäerhof’, in: E. van ’t Dak ed., *Egypt and the Hellenistic World* (Louvain 1983) 143-90; R. Merkelbach, ‘Das Königtum der Ptolemäer und die hellenistischen Dichter’, in: N.

bucolic poetry, mime, riddle poems or pattern poems? Only Weber has seriously tried to solve this problem. He argues that the king derived prestige from literary patronage as such, irrespective of a poem's substance.¹⁹ Weber presumably is right. However, in order to fully understand the social function and cultural meaning of Hellenistic poetry, the contents of poems should not be dis-regarded. I will return to these problems in the following subchapter. First the evolution and principal characteristics of Hellenistic patronage of the arts and sciences need to be outlined, including a brief discussion of the *mouseion* at Alexandria.

Historical evolution of Hellenistic court patronage

The practice of patronage at the Hellenistic courts was rooted in Greek and Macedonian traditions. Naturally, also the courts of the Achaimenids and their predecessors had harboured poets and artists. But the distinct Greek character of Hellenistic patronage compels us to look for its origins in the world of the Greek *poleis* and foremost to Argead Macedon.²⁰

Greek artistic patronage flourished notably in the heyday of tyranny in the seventh and sixth centuries.²¹ Archaic poets and philosophers often read their work in an aristocratic context, especially the *symposion*, because through an aristocratic audience fame and prestige could best be obtained, as well as, if necessary, an income. Of the early patrons, the Samian oligarch Polykrates was by far the most magnificent. His entourage included poets, physicians, architects, and sculptors.²² Other tyrants who were renowned for their cultured courts were Hipparchos of Athens, Hieron I and Gelon of Syracuse, and Arkesilas of Kyrene.²³ In the fifth century collective bodies of citizens, rather than individuals, supported

Hinske ed., *Alexandrien. Kulturbegegnungen dreier Jahrtausende im Schmelztiegel einer mediterranen Großstadt* (Mainz 1981) 27-35; P. Bing, *The Well-Read Muse. Present and Past in Callimachus and the Hellenistic Poets* (Göttingen 1988); S.A. Stephens, 'Egyptian Callimachus', in: *Callimaque. Entretiens sur l'Antiquité Classique* 48 (Geneva 2002) 235-69; idem, *Seeing Double. Intercultural Poetics in Ptolemaic Alexandria* (Berkeley 2003); S. Noegel, 'Apollonius' *Argonautika* and Egyptian solar mythology', *CW* 97 (2003/2004) 123-36. For a more careful approach of the supposed Egyptianising tendency in Alexandrian poetry see Hunter 2003, 46-53.

¹⁹ Weber 1992 and 1993.

²⁰ So also Weber 1992, 77.

²¹ For an overview of literary patronage in pre-Hellenistic Greece, with emphasis on Pindar, see B.K. Gold, *Literary Patronage in Greece and Rome* (Chapel Hill and London 1987) 15-30.

²² Gold 1987, 19 with nn. 19-22.

²³ *Ibid.* 20-1, 22-3.

the arts. In Athens, patronage by the *dēmos* included the commissioning of great building projects—the Athenian Parthenon being the high peak—which manifested the confidence and power of the *polis* instead of boosting the prestige of aristocratic families.²⁴ In the Hellenistic Age, private benefactors re-established their position as the principal patrons of the arts in the Greek cities.

Meanwhile, in monarchic Macedon, the Archaic tradition of court patronage continued in the Classical period.²⁵ At the end of the fifth century, king Archelaos—whose policy it was to present himself as a philhellene and a benefactor of the Greeks—entertained famous Greeks at his court. These included the poets Euripides, Agathon, Timotheos, and the painter Zeuxis.²⁶ After a period of political instability of some forty years, Philippos II was the next Macedonian monarch who earned himself a reputation as a magnanimous patron of the arts. Philippos attracted to his court *i.a.* the comedy poet Anaxandrides,²⁷ and hired Aristotle to tutor his son Alexander and the royal pages. The court of Alexander was also a prominently cultured one.²⁸ Alexander himself was noted for his knowledge of Greek literature—in particular the works of Homer, Pindar, and Euripides—and for his interest in science and philosophy. During Alexander's campaigns in Asia, a large band of poets, historians, and scientists followed him, among them the prominent intellectuals Anaxarchos and Pyrrho.²⁹ Like Alexander, the Diadochs were accompanied on their campaigns by writers and

²⁴ L. Kallett-Marx, 'Accounting for culture in fifth-century Athens', in: D. Boedeker and K. Raaflaub eds., *Democracy, Empire and the Arts in Fifth-Century Athens* (Cambridge, Mass., 1998) 43-58.

²⁵ For a comprehensive overview of court patronage in pre-Hellenistic Macedonia see Weber 1992.

²⁶ *Ibid.* 64-5. Green 1990, 84 with n. 19; Borza 1992, 173. Euripides wrote a tragedy *Archelaos* for the king.

²⁷ Hose 1997, 50.

²⁸ For a comprehensive discussion of the evidence for poets, artists and scholars at Alexander's court see Berve 1926 I, 65-81.

²⁹ The cultural and scholarly entourage of Alexander further included the philosopher Onesikritos of Astypalaia, the engineer Diades, the physician Philippos of Akarnania, the historian Kallisthenes of Olynthos, and the poets Agis of Argos, Anaximenes of Lampsakos, Pranichos, Pyrrhos of Elis, and Choirilos of Iasos (Weber 1992, 67-8; cf. Berve 1926 I, 71). Of the many poets known to have formed part of Alexander's peripatetic court, no (reference to) important works have remained: they either produced bad poetry, or (which is more likely given the rather peripatetic nature of Alexander's court) occasional poetry; Weber 1992, 76, ascribes the lack of poetic output of Alexander's court 'nicht zuletzt an seinen dezidierten Anforderungen und Eingriffen.'

historians, like the epigrammatist Leonidas, a client of Pyrrhos, and the historian Eumenes of Kardia, who worked for the first three Antigonids.

The third century was the golden age of cultural and scientific patronage. Artists and poets were given commissions on a grand scale. Scientists, astronomers, mathematicians, and physicians were allowed a free hand to pursue their investigations. Vast sums were spent on ambitious building projects, including not only the building of temples, palaces and other monuments, but the planning of entire cities. Some artists' work concerned kingship in a direct manner: palaces had to be built and adorned with sculptures and wall paintings; kings and queens had to be portrayed; laudatory poems had to be written; *philois* and other guests of the kings had to be entertained during symposia; philosophical treatises were needed to demonstrate that autocratic monarchy was the best form of government.

In the Hellenistic period, kings and courtiers of course did not possess an all-embracing monopoly on stimulating artistic and scientific creativity. Many alternatives to royal patronage remained, as cultural life in the Greek *poleis* did not change dramatically. Literature thrived also outside the courts; civic festivals still included poetic contests for poets and playwrights.³⁰ But Hellenistic writing from the *poleis* is now all but completely lost.³¹

³⁰ Particularly Athens, home of the Academy and Lyceum, remained a major centre of learning, albeit, it seems, with royal support (Diog. Laert. 4.38-9; cf. 5.67). The stoics Zeno and Theophrastos preferred the prestigious Athenian Lyceum to court life, although they accepted the protection and the odd commission of Antigonos Gonatas (Diog. Laert. 7.6 and 5.37). Strato in his later years gave up his position as head of the Alexandrian Museum to succeed Theophrastos as head of the Lyceum (Diog. Laert. 5.58). In other cities members of the local elite, oligarchs and petty rulers acted as patrons. Poets and playwrights still took part in literary contests at civic festivals. In fact, the kings' own policy of founding new *poleis* increased the opportunities for finding patronage other than that of the kings. Theophrastos claimed that philosophers were true citizens of the world who could find employment in any country (Vitr. 6.2); indeed, the wandering philosopher, who travelled from one city to another, working as a teacher and teaching cosmopolitanism, became a common figure in the Hellenistic cities, cf. P. Parsons, 'Identities in diversity', in: Bulloch *et al.* 1993, 152-70, esp. 156. The celebrated cynic Bion of Borysthenes made a career out of teaching, giving lectures, and enjoying hospitality throughout the Greek world, and only in his old age accepted an invitation of Antigonos Gonatas to become part of his entourage.

³¹ R.L. Hunter, 'Literature and its contexts', in: A. Erskine ed., *A Companion to the Hellenistic World* (Oxford 2003b) 477-93, esp. 477-9.

But neither cities nor individuals were able to keep up with the kings, who far outdid all others in the magnificence and scale of their patronage and building programs. Kings may not have patronised the majority of *all* the Greek writers and thinkers, but particularly in the third century they did patronise the majority of the most famous and most important ones. This is what Philostratos meant when he described the Ptolemaic court as ‘a dining table in Egypt to which the most distinguished men in the world are invited.’³²

The most successful patrons in Alexandria were the first three Ptolemies: Ptolemaios I Soter, Ptolemaios II Philadelphos, and Ptolemaios III Euergetes. Their principal rivals were Seleukos I Nikator, Antiochos I Soter and Antigonos II Gonatas. The court of Gonatas included Aratos of Soli, Persaios, Bion of Borysthenes, Alexandros the Aitolian, Antagoras of Rhodes, Menedemos of Eretria.³³ Some names of renown are recorded for the early Seleukid court as well: the architect Xenarios, responsible for the elaborate city designs of Antioch and Laodikeia;³⁴ the sculptor Eutykhides of Sikyon, a pupil of Lysippos, who made the famous Antioch Tyche;³⁵ the physician Erasistratos; and the historian Berossos. From c. 274 to 272, Antiochos I entertained Aratos of Soli at his court for some years. Later Seleukid kings were well-known as patrons of philosophers.³⁶ Antiochos III was the protector of the poet Euphorion.³⁷ However, with their court firmly settled at Alexandria and their vast wealth, the early Ptolemies had a decisive advantage over their peripatetic Seleukid and Antigonid antagonists. The Ptolemaic court became crowded with ‘philologists, philosophers, mathematicians, musicians, painters, athletic trainers, and other specialists’.³⁸ Many of these were attached to the *mouseion* founded at Alexandria by Ptolemaios I (see below). When Ptolemaios III died in 221, Alexandria gradually lost her unequalled status as the world’s centre of art and learning. Nevertheless the names of several important writers of the later Hellenistic period are connected with that city, including the bucolic poets Moschos and Bion, the technologists Philo of Byzantium and Hero of Alexandria, and the philologist Lysianas. In

³² Philostr., *VS* 1.22.524. This is reflected in a story told about the Athenian playwright Philemon (368/60-267/63): on his deathbed Philemon had a vision of nine girls leaving his house, and this was believed to be symbolic of the Muses having left Athens (Diod. 23.6).

³³ Diog. Laert. 2.110; 4.46; 7.6.9; 9.110; Plut., *Mor.* 1043c. Cf. Hose 1997, 62 with n. 98.

³⁴ Downey 1963, 31-2.

³⁵ *Ibidem*, 35.

³⁶ Bevan 1902 II, 276-7.

³⁷ *Suda*, s.v. ‘Euphorion’. Cf. Bevan 1902 II, 276.

³⁸ Ath. 4.184b-c.

fact, Alexandria remained a cultural and scientific centre far into the Roman era. But now other centres emerged or re-emerged to rival Alexandria: Athens, Pergamon, Rhodes, Antioch, Rome.³⁹ In the second century the court of the Attalids, too, rose to prominence as a centre of patronage. The Attalids offered their hospitality to celebrities such as the philologist Krates of Mallos, and the poets Apollodoros of Athens and Nikandros of Kolophon. The latter, whose works on farming and bee-keeping influenced Virgil, is now mainly remembered as the author of two, typically Hellenistic, didactic poems: *On Poisonous Animals* and *Antidotes to Poison*. Antiochos IV Epiphanes, victor in two campaigns against the Ptolemies, also managed to turn his court into a leading centre of Greek artistic activity.⁴⁰ New rivals of the Macedonian kings appeared. In the first place the non-Greek, but Hellenized monarchs of Asia Minor, who increasingly manifested themselves as benefactors of Greek culture during the second and first centuries, and secondly philhellene Roman aristocrats who brought Greek intellectuals, willing or unwilling, to Italy. Moreover, non-royal Greek private persons tried to outdo royalty. When at the beginning of the second century the personal library of Theophrastos, including some original manuscripts of Aristotle, was put up to auction, it was not bought for the royal libraries of Alexandria or Pergamon, but by a civilian named Apellikon of Teos. Even Athens experienced a modest cultural renaissance. This happened in 145 after the seizure of power by Ptolemaios Physkon, who forced all members of the *mouseion* who had backed the losing side in the dynastic struggle that preceded his *coup* to leave Alexandria and settle elsewhere.⁴¹

³⁹ Hose 1997 argues that the patronage of Greek literature at the Ptolemaic court was deliberately terminated in the second century because the dynasty was by then able to legitimise itself through the ‘power of tradition’ and therefore was no longer in need of literary propaganda; however, the (relative but not dramatic) decline of Ptolemaic cultural and scientific patronage after the rule of Ptolemaios III may have had more to do with the loss of the Ptolemies’ hegemony over the eastern Mediterranean and conflicts among the Ptolemies, which destabilised the court. On Rhodes as a centre of learning see K. Bringmann, ‘Rhodos als Bildungszentrum der hellenistischen Welt’, *Chiron* 32 (2002) 71-82. For Attalid patronage see Hansen 1971, 390-433.

⁴⁰ Bevan 1902 II, 276.

⁴¹ Ath. 4.184c.

The *mouseion* of Alexandria

The focus of Alexandrian scholarship was the *mouseion* or Museum with its fabled library.⁴² The *mouseion* was both an institution and a building, although the library was kept in various places throughout the city, including the Serapeion. It was here that scholars are said to have been given a free reign. But the *mouseion* did serve a practical purpose: the education of the royal children and royal pages.

The Museum was founded by Ptolemaios Soter, who appointed as its first president (*epistatēs*) Demetrios of Phaleron, former tyrant of Athens and a peripatetic philosopher of some renown; Demetrios was also commissioned to set up a library, which was attached to the institution of the Museum or formed part of it.⁴³ Soter's successor Ptolemaios Philadelphos turned the Museum into the celebrated centre of learning for which it is now remembered. The Museum was still operational when Strabo visited Alexandria at the end of the first century BCE. According to Strabo the Museum was part of the royal district of the city (*basileia*), and he describes it as a huge complex of buildings and gardens:

The Museum also forms part of the *basileia*; it has a covered promenade, an arcade with recesses and seats and a large house in which is the dining hall of the learned members of the Museum. This association of men shares common property and is headed by a priest of the Muses, who used to be appointed by the kings but is now appointed by Caesar (Augustus).⁴⁴

In Classical Greece a *mouseion* was both a sanctuary of the Muses and a school.⁴⁵ Whether or not the Alexandrian Museum was inspired by Plato's Academy or Aristotle's Lyceum, as is

⁴² On the *mouseion* and library of Alexandria see Fraser 1972, I 312-9; L. Canfora, *The Vanished Library. A Wonder of the Ancient World* (London 1989); A. Erskine, 'Culture and power in Ptolemaic Egypt. The Museum and Library of Alexandria', *G&R* 42 (1995) 38-48; R. McLeod, *The Library of Alexandria. Center of Learning in the Ancient World* (London 2000). Ancient libraries in general: L. Casson, *Libraries in the Ancient World* (New Haven 2001).

⁴³ Euseb. 5.8.11; Plut., *Mor.* 1095d; Aristeeas 1.10. The connection of library and *mouseion* follows, apart from the involvement of Demetrios with both, from the fact that Strabo 17.1.8, our main source for the buildings and institutions of the Alexandrian palace district, does not mention the library, whereas he does mention the *mouseion*; other sources neither make a distinguish between the two.

⁴⁴ Strabo 17.1.8. No remains of the *mouseion* have been found.

⁴⁵ A *mouseion* originally was a temple sacred to the Muses, and as such a place that was both their seat of residence, and a sanctuary where they were worshipped. The most famous pre-Hellenistic *mouseion*

sometimes contended (both were called *mouseion* too),⁴⁶ its magnitude was unprecedented. And whether or not the surviving accounts of the number of books owned by the Ptolemies, are exaggerated, the library of Alexandria was by far the largest collection of books the world had ever seen.⁴⁷

Despite its fame, next to nothing can be said about the Museum with any certainty. The association comprised primarily philologists and other professional scholars, rather than creative artists, although they could be both. The Ptolemies supported them at least by providing meals, lodgings, servants, and pleasant surroundings to work in – not to mention an inspiring intellectual and highly competitive atmosphere.⁴⁸ Their work was dedicated to the Muses, as the original sacred character of the *mouseion* had not become obsolete in Hellenistic times: an annual festival for the Muses was held in the Museum and its *epistatēs* also bore the responsibilities of a priest.⁴⁹ The latter was normally also the official first tutor of the royal children and the pages.⁵⁰

Other dynasties maintained similar albeit less brilliant institutions. The Seleukids had a library and a *mouseion* at Antioch.⁵¹ If they had one in Antioch, there probably also was one

was on Mount Helikon: a temple adorned with the statues of famous artists where the manuscripts of such celebrities as Hesiod were kept (Ath. 14.629a). There also was a temple of the Muses at Athens (Paus. 1.25.8). As the Muses are best worshipped with music, song, dance, and words, these sanctuaries became cultural centres already in the Classical period, often comprising a library, and the word also came to mean ‘school’, although this does not imply that its religious character was lost in the course of time (Fraser 1972, I 312).

⁴⁶ Diog. 4.1; cf. Ath. 5.187d; Plut., *Mor.* 736d. Cf. Hose 1997, 51-2; Green 1990, 85.

⁴⁷ The *Letter of Aristeas* claims that Demetrios of Phaleron began the library with 200,000 volumes and hoped to see it grow to at least half a million; cf. Gell., *NA* 7.17.3. Concerning the burning of part of the Library’s holdings by Caesarean troops in 48/7 BC, Ammianus Marcellinus (22.16.13) claims that no less than 700,000 scrolls were lost in the fire, against Seneca’s estimated 400,000 (*Tranq.* 9.5). Caesar’s misconduct in Alexandria did not put an end to the library’s pre-eminence: Antonius replenished the depleted collection with 200,000 scrolls from the library of Pergamon; the library survived more fires and it was not until 651 CE that it was finally destroyed by troops of the Arabian conqueror ‘Amr ibn al-‘Ās.

⁴⁸ Call. fr. 191 Pfeiffer; Timon fr. 12, see above p. 191-2.

⁴⁹ Strabo 17.1.8; Vitruvius 7 *pr.* 8. Cf. Fraser 1972 II, 467 n. 34.

⁵⁰ *P.Oxy* 1241. Known tutors of the royal princes and pages include Philitas of Kos, Strato of Lampsakos, Apollonios of Rhodes, Aristarchos of Samothrake, cf. Delia 1996, 41-51, esp. 49.

⁵¹ *Suda*, s.v. ‘Euforion’; Malalas 235.18-236.1. Cf. Downey 1961, 132.

in Seleukeia on the Tigris, if not elsewhere as well. The Attalid library at Pergamon boasted at least 200,000 volumes.⁵² The library of the Antigonids was splendid enough to be eagerly claimed by Aemilius Paullus as his personal booty after the defeat of King Perseus in 168.⁵³

4.2 Prestige and competition

Patronage of arts and sciences by rulers is an almost universal phenomenon. For the rulers of the Ancien Régime patronage of art and science ‘seemed ... to have a moral and political dimension and to be part of statecraft.’⁵⁴ And at the courts of Renaissance Italy ‘the practice of art patronage and art collection, were obviously regarded as activities related, but not secondary, to the exercise of power, [and] were considered operational expenses.’⁵⁵ The dichotomy of on the one hand autonomous art, and on the other hand art serving political, propagandist purposes, is a modern convention. Galileo Galilei, as one historian put it, ‘fixed one eye on the moons of Jupiter and the other on his patron’.⁵⁶ Historians studying early modern Europe recognise that during the Renaissance and the Ancien Régime royal patronage guided the emergence of modern science and art (Lytle & Orgel 1981; Kent et al. 1987; Moran 1991a; Biagioli 1993; Griffin 1996).⁵⁷ In the study of Hellenistic culture, however, the traditional notion that art and science are incompatible with political power still prevails.

⁵² Plut., *Ant.* 58.

⁵³ Plut., *Aem.* 28.

⁵⁴ A. Stroup, ‘The political theory and practice of technology under Louis XIV’, in: Moran *op.cit.* below, 211-34, at 211.

⁵⁵ F. Gardini, ‘The sacred circle of Mantua’, in: Bertelli *et al.* 1986, 77-126, at 93. The Ottoman sultans of the Renaissance period went even further. Patronage of literature was an institutionalised, almost bureaucratic part of Ottoman government, involving a large body of ‘state poets’ who received regular salaries from the crown, while financial officials carefully administered the expenditures, cf. B. Flemming, ‘Turkse dichters en hun patroons in de vijftiende en zestiende eeuw’, in: De Bruijn *et al.* 1986, 167-81, esp. 170-1.

⁵⁶ B.T. Moran, ‘Patronage and institutions. Courts, universities, and academies in Germany: An overview, 1550-1750’, in: Moran 1991, 169-83, at 169.

⁵⁷ G.F. Lytle and S. Orgel eds., *Patronage in the Renaissance* (Princeton 1981); W.F. Kent, P. Simons, J.C. Eade eds., *Patronage, Art, and Society in Renaissance Italy* (Oxford and New York 1987); B.T. Moran ed., *Patronage and Institutions. Science, Technology, and Medicine at the European Court,*

What, then, was the social function and cultural meaning of court patronage? Why did rulers find it so important? For what reasons did they encourage innovation, and even the pursuit of unorthodox ideas? Regarding literature, the question will be raised why kings patronised especially Greek writers. What was the significance of the promotion of Greek culture by Macedonian kings who ruled largely non-Greek populations? I shall identify five motives – five advantages for the monarchy, which together may explain the prominence of arts and sciences at the heart of Hellenistic imperialism.⁵⁸ I have labelled them usefulness, prestige, competition, accumulation and Hellenism.

Usefulness

Obviously, much of what was produced was practical in a direct manner. This was the case first of all with the encouragement of the study of ballistics for the sake of improving military technology.⁵⁹ Philo the technician wrote that in Ptolemaic Alexandria technicians ‘were heavily subsidised because they worked for ambitious kings who appreciated craftsmanship’⁶⁰ In the early Hellenistic period the techniques of making catapults and other siege machinery improved rapidly, as well as the development of fortifications and warships—the latter became bigger and bigger in a ceaseless arms race between the kingdoms—inducing F.W. Walbank to write that ‘warfare was basic and fundamental to all major powers of the hellenistic age and it is not surprising that this was reflected in the patronage and direction of military technology’.⁶¹ Hero fitted it all neatly in an ideological framework when in the introduction to a treatise on ballistics he stated that the development of military technology

1500-1750 (Rochester, NY, and Woodbridge 1991). M. Biagioli, *Galileo, Courtier. The Practice of Science in the Culture of Absolutism* (Chicago and London 1993); D. Griffin, *Literary Patronage in England, 1650-1800* (Cambridge 1996).

⁵⁸ The arguments in this subchapter were earlier expressed in Strootman 2001, and in a lecture for the Oikos-study group ‘From Alexandria to Rome’ in Groningen in 1999; I would like to thank Annette Harder and Ruard Nauta of Groningen University for inviting me to attend these sessions.

⁵⁹ Fraser 1972, I 429.

⁶⁰ *Belop.* 50.29. On patronage of technology in Alexandria, and the function of the mouseion in this respect, see G.E.R. Lloyd, *Greek Science after Aristotle* (London 1973) 3-7; Africa 1968, 46-67.

⁶¹ Walbank 1981, 195. For technical aspects see E.W. Marsden, *Greek and Roman Artillery. Part 1: Historical Development* (Oxford 1969), and the illustrations in D.B. Campbell, *Greek and Roman Siege Machinery, 399 BC-AD 363* (London 2003). Extant ancient studies of ballistics are collected in E.W. Marsden, *Greek and Roman Artillery. Part 2: Technical Treatises* (Oxford 1971).

was necessary to secure *ataraxia*, the Stoic notion of absence of disturbances, thus linking his own work with the peace warranted by the monarchy.⁶²

The work of artists, too, served basic practical needs of the court: designing palaces, decorating these with frescoes, mosaics and sculptures; portraying the king and queen for coins; writing poetry for royal festivals and celebrations;⁶³ entertaining courtiers, guests and ambassadors. A wealth of occasional poetry written for the court must have existed which has not been preserved. Against this background the erudite but at first sight irrelevant content of much court poetry should be understood: its social relevance was partly to entertain the king and his courtiers during symposia and banquets,⁶⁴ offering them subjects for debate and hence opportunities for competition, and binding them together as a social group. Even those poems in which we *do not* find (or understand) ‘hidden’ encomiastic messages may be classified as court poetry. The inventive, humorous character of epigrams; virtuoso and erudite bucolic poetry, so typical for the early Hellenistic period; the preference for obscure versions of myths and learned allusions to Homer or Hesiod; the preference for rare words; the obsession with far-away lands and the mythical past – they are all features of typical court poetry, written for the sake of a self-confident, educated upper class distancing itself from others by its erudition and time for leisure.⁶⁵ By means of allusions and suggestion court poets prompted the audience, as it were, to ‘decode’ the text.⁶⁶ To quote only one example, the pattern poem ‘Syrinx’, attributed to Theokritos:

⁶² Hero, *Belop.* 71. Cf. Marsden 1971, 19; Green 1990, 479.

⁶³ Poetry for royal festivals: Weber 1993, 165-82; Zanker 1987, 24-5; Griffiths 1979, 120. Cf. Mineur 1984, 10

⁶⁴ On court poetry as sympotic poetry: Cameron 1995, 71-7. Sympotic poetry at the Seleukid court: Ath. 155b; 211d; 555a.

⁶⁵ It is not surprising that pastoral poetry in the Roman Empire, from Virgil onward, was easily turned into a vehicle for ruler praise; cf. G. Binder, ‘Hirtenlied und Herrscherlob’, *Gymnasium* 96 (1989) 363-5, who perhaps undermines his own argument by emphasising the non-monarchic nature of Theokritos’ bucolic work.

⁶⁶ Cf. G. Zanker, *Modes of Viewing in Hellenistic Poetry and Art* (Madison, WI, 2004), who takes into consideration also description of objects and visual art in poetry as a means of allusion. E.A. Barber in the volume on the Hellenistic period of the 1928 *Cambridge Ancient History*, unwittingly hits the nail on the head when he says disapprovingly that ‘the *Alexandra* is one vast riddle’ and expresses his amazement that even Kallimachos ‘does not spare his audience. Thus in his elegiac *Victory of Sosibius*, he refers to the victor on the strength of his Isthmian and Nemean successes as “twice-

The bedmate of nobody, mother of the warmonger,
 bore the nimble pilot of the stone-swapped's nurse;
 not the horned one fed by the son of the bull,
 but the once-heart-burning for the P-less Itys,
 named whole but is double, loves a girlish
 split-voice, wind-blown child of the sound,
 who made a sharp sore for the Muses,
 violet-crowned, to sing his hot desire,
 conquered the parricide-like army,
 drove them out of Tyre's maiden,
 to whom this Simichid Paris
 gives the blind's fold blight
 which enjoy, man-treading
 a gadfly of Lydia's queen,
 fatherless thief's son,
 box-legs, delights in,
 plays sweet tunes
 to your mute girl,
 an unseen
 Kalliope.⁶⁷

This is indeed 'one vast riddle', more like a cryptogram than a poem. The answer to all the riddles is invariably 'Pan'. But the fun of it obviously was not to give the answer, but to clarify the question. Whether 'Syrinx' was written by Theokritos or not, this kind of erudite riddle poetry is aristocratic, leisure class poetry. It is not surprising that the genre matured at the symposia of the early Ptolemaic court, where courtiers competed in learning, wit and

crowned hard by both children, the brother of Learchus and the infant who was suckled with Myrine's milk." A hard nut to crack without a mythological dictionary!' (p. 271). Interestingly, it was in this period that (mythological) dictionaries were first made. It is likely that Lykophron's notoriously difficult *Alexandra* is not an example of Alexandrian poetry, but a product of the Attalid court: see E. Kosmetatou, 'Lycophron's *Alexandra* reconsidered. The Attalid connection', *Hermes* 128 (2000) 32-53.

⁶⁷ Cited after A. Holden, *Greek Pastoral Poetry* (Harmondsworth 1974) 197. The ascription of this poem, preserved in the *Palatine Anthology*, to Theokritos is uncertain.

poetry, discussing seemingly ‘irrelevant’ or light-hearted topics *as if* they had all the time in the world. At the Seleukid court it was ‘customary’ that courtiers discussed scholarly and literary topics during symposia,⁶⁸ exactly like the Arcadian herdsmen do in the pastoral poems of Theokritos and Bion:

Spring, Myrson, or winter, autumn or summer, which do you prefer? ... Come, tell me. We’ve plenty of time for a chat.⁶⁹

An example of the social relevance of court poetry is also Theokritos’ fifteenth *Idyll*, better known as ‘The Adonia’. In this mime two immigrant Alexandrian women, Gorgo and Praxinoa, together with their children and a slave, proceed to the palace for the annual Adonia Festival in the royal gardens, organised by Arsinoë Philadelphos. As the crowd slowly progresses, the two women praise the rule and *tryphē* of Ptolemaios and Arsinoë. But they themselves are portrayed with typical aristocratic contempt for the ‘middle classes’. They babble. They have a Dorian accent. They complain about their good-for-nothing husbands, discuss pecuniary matters, are fearful of snakes and (royal) horses, quarrel with their fellow-citizens, jump the queue. But as soon as anything royal comes into view, Gorgo and Praxinoa are overwhelmed with admiration for the splendour of the court:

Gorgo: ‘Praxinoa, come here! Look at those tapestries, see how fine they are and how graceful. Fit for a god, don’t you say?’ Praxinoa: ‘Lady Athena, what craftsmen they must have been to make these, what artists to draw the lines so true. Those figures stand and move as if they are really alive.’

Immediately after these words of praise it is time to laugh again, when a man turns up, saying:

Be quiet you stupid woman! Stop that ceaseless chatter. Like turtledoves you are! I swear your oohs and aahs will be the end of me.⁷⁰

The mocking tone subsides only when a professional singer of the court starts chanting a hymn to Adonis. This hymn, parenthetically praising queen Arsinoë as Aphrodite incarnate,

⁶⁸ Ath. 211d.

⁶⁹ Bion 3.1-8.

⁷⁰ Theocr., *Id.* 15.125-32 and 138-41.

was of course earlier composed by Theokritos, sung in actuality at the Adonis Festival, and later incorporated in *Idyll* 15.⁷¹ By ridiculing the reactions of the common *politai*, who for one day in a year are allowed into the palace gardens, the courtiers for whom this poem was intended distanced themselves from the bourgeoisie below the court circles, and by laughing at its expense, their group cohesion was boosted.⁷²

In a similar manner we may understand why Hellenistic *mechanikoi* so often developed machinery and illusionist devices with seemingly no other purpose than to impress – ‘a collection of elaborate mechanical toys [and] curiosities [of] complete irrelevance’, as Peter Green puts it.⁷³ But Hellenistic technology was not irrelevant. Amazing inventions such as Ktesibios’ pneumatic organ or Hero’s robot in the shape of Herakles, which could automatically shoot an arrow at a hissing serpent, were functional in the context of the court; again, as amusement and subjects for debate. In fact, the presentation of *automata* and other amazing devices is a familiar phenomenon at many courts throughout history. But the technological principles demonstrated by means of these so-called ‘toys’ were also applied to more practical purposes.⁷⁴ Ktesibios’ twin-cylinder water-pump—presented at court in the

⁷¹ For a historical discussion of the hymn see R.L. Hunter, ‘Mime and mimesis: Theocritus, *Idyll* 15’, in: M.A. Harder, R.F. Regtuit, G.C. Wakker eds., *Theocritus*. Hellenistica Groningana 2 (Groningen 1996) 149-69, esp. 158-66.

⁷² H. Boutellier, *Solidariteit en slachtofferschap* (diss. VU Amsterdam 1993), stellingen: ‘Niet wat we mooi vinden bindt ons, maar wat we afwijzen.’ It is apparent from the poem that only Greek citizens are allowed to attend, and that Gorgo and Praxinoa are well-to-do, but not elite women. The poem has in the past been taken as evidence for the emancipation of women in Ptolemaic Alexandria, see e.g. F.T. Griffiths, ‘Home before lunch. The emancipated woman in Theocritus’, in: H.P. Foley ed., *Reflections of Women in Antiquity* (New York 1981) 247-73; Burton 1995, 145. However, the occasion for which Gorgo and Praxinoa leave the house without their husbands is the celebration of a religious festival, and from lines 27-37 it is clear that these women still are not expected to go to the market to do the shopping.

⁷³ Green 1990, 478-9.

⁷⁴ K.D. White, ‘“The base mechanic arts”? Some thoughts on the contribution of science (pure and applied) to the culture of the Hellenistic Age’, in: Green 1993, 220-32, with references to further literature about the functionality and diverse applicability of Hellenistic mechanics. Automata were also used in public celebrations to impress the crowd; for instance the Grand Procession of Ptolemaios Philadelphos (below, chapter 5.4) included a seated statue of the nymph Nysa, nurse of Dionysos which ‘could rise up automatically without anyone putting his hands to it, and after pouring a libation of milk from a gold saucer it would sit down again’ (Ath. 5.198f). A. Schürmann, *Griechische*

form of a musical instrument—and in particular the water-lifting device invented by Archimedes for Ptolemaios Philadelphos could be used for irrigation,⁷⁵ a most tangible contribution of the king to the fertility of the land.

Prestige

As mentioned above, G. Weber has explained the absence of direct references to the monarchy in most court poetry by proposing that kings derived prestige from literary patronage as such, irrespective of a poem's content. As we just saw, content *does* matter, however, albeit in a way different from the explicit allusions Weber was thinking of. But the main thrust of the argument is surely right. By accommodating the arts and sciences at his court a king met several of the requirements for being an ideal ruler. He proved to be hospitable, benevolent and generous. The accumulation of art and knowledge in the house of the king, a form of *tryphē*, moreover added to his charisma as a rich and wise man by association.

In the Renaissance, the connection between politics and the arts was sustained by a theoretical basis in the ideal of the 'learned prince'. The ruler combined *potentia* and *sapientia*, that is, political power and wisdom. Rulers aimed at this ideal for the sake of prestige. Both Castiglione's *Cortigiano* and Machiavelli's *Il principe* stress the importance of acquiring a good reputation by impressing one's social environment, playing a social role regardless of one's 'real' preferences or qualities. Machiavelli stresses especially the political use of cultural patronage, advising that 'a prince ought to show himself a lover of ability, giving employment to able men and honouring those who excel in a particular field'. But above all, Machiavelli goes on, 'a prince should endeavour to win the reputation of being a

Mechanik und antike Gesellschaft (Stuttgart 1991), argues that the inventions of Ktesibios, Hero, Archimedes and others were widely used in society, e.g. in mining, in harbours, or in construction; she also argues that the Hellenistic dynasties, notably the Ptolemies but others as well, deliberately promoted technological research for precisely this reason. Cf. C.J. Tuplin and T.E. Rihll eds., *Science and Mathematics in Ancient Greek Culture* (Oxford 2002). The mathematician Pappos of Alexandria (fourth century CE) informs us that the *mechanikoi* of the school of Hero found it a necessary part of their work to invent *θαύματα*, useless but amazing things, as well as practical devices; cf. W. Swinnen, 'Over technologie in Alexandrië', *Hermeneus* 57 (1985) 152-161, esp. 152-3.

⁷⁵ Diod. 1.34.2; Strabo 17.1.52; Vitruvius 10.6.1-4.

great man of outstanding ability [himself]'.⁷⁶ Thus, sponsoring art, literature, and science was one way to publicly demonstrate the taste, learnedness, and wisdom of the ruler, but better still was philosophising or writing oneself. The Renaissance period may have been the apogee of the cult of the learned prince, but it was no exclusive Renaissance, or European, phenomenon. Throughout history, rulers dabbled in science and literature. Princes like Charles d'Orléans, John I of Brabant, Süleyman the Magnificent, or Lorenzo de' Medici, also called the Magnificent, were not only great patrons of the arts, but poets of some distinction themselves.

The Hellenistic period likewise had its learned princes. Being wise (*sophia*) and shrewd (*phronēsis*) were standard claims of Hellenistic kingship. For this reason the best of teachers were hired to tutor princes and pages.⁷⁷ Indeed, several Hellenistic rulers were not merely patrons but personally involved in literature, scholarship, or historiography. Alexander was called 'a philosopher in arms' by a contemporary, but the same can be said of many other

⁷⁶ *The Prince*, translated by George Bull (Harmondsworth 1961) 121. Cf. W. Eamon, 'Court, academy, and printing house. Patronage and scientific careers in late Renaissance Italy', in: Moran 1991, 125-50, esp. 32; Biagioli 1993, 2 with n. 4.

⁷⁷ Evidence for Aristotle as Alexander's tutor is collected in Green 1990, 86 n. 26. Alexander's first tutor was a certain Lysimachos the Akarnanian who was favoured by Alexander because he nicknamed him 'Achilles' (and himself 'Phoenix', after Achilles' tutor): Plut., *Alex.* 5.8; 8.2; 26.1-2; Arr., *Anab.* 1.12; Plin. *NH* 7.108; Athen. 537C; Onesicr. *FGrH* 134 F 38. In an inscription from Ephesos, Attalos II praised his nephew's tutor, emphasising literary skills and moral worth: *Inschriften von Ephesos* no. 202, after Roy 1998, 113, who notes also the association of two statues of Ptolemaic kings with statues of poets and philosophers in the sanctuary of Sarapis at Memphis (Zanker 1995, 172-3), and comments that 'beyond the immediate historical or political circumstances this is clearly a celebration of universal learning as a quality of the good ruler' (p. 113 n. 24). Kallisthenes, pupil and nephew of Aristotle, was in charge of the *basilikoi paides* at Alexander's court. Another pupil of Aristotle, Demetrios of Phaleron, was *epitropos* of the children of Ptolemaios Soter and Eurydike, teaching them general philosophy and the philosophy of kingship. Soter's children by Berenike (including the later king Ptolemaios Philadelphos) were educated *i.a.* by Strato, Philetas, and Zenodotos, cf. Bulloch 1989, 198-200. Persaios, a student of Zeno and a philos of Antigonos Gonatas tutored Gonatas' son Halkyoneus, and Eufantes of Olynthos was the tutor of Antigonos Doson. Some of the philosophers who were employed by kings to educate their sons and pages wrote treatises on kingship to instruct their pupils in the art of ruling (see below).

kings.⁷⁸ Ptolemaios Soter was a historian, his account of Alexander's campaigns counts as one of the most authoritative sources for the subject.⁷⁹ He is also known to have written a tragedy called *Adonis*.⁸⁰ Ptolemaios Philadelphos was an 'amateur' scientist,⁸¹ and the same was said of Attalos III. Antiochos VIII wrote poetry in the style of Nikandros; Galen quotes some verses from his poem on poisonous snakes.⁸² Often, kings created epigrams and short poems in the context of symposia. Thus, Philippos II improvised a lampoon on Demosthenes during a drinking-bout after his victory at Chaironeia.⁸³ Three epigrams on the appearance of Aratos' *Phainomena*, by Leonidas, Kallimachos and Ptolemaios II are extant, and Ptolemaios Euergetes and Philippos V are known epigrammatists as well.⁸⁴ King Artavazd II of Armenia (55-31) wrote plays and other literary compositions in Greek.⁸⁵

Competition

Famous men at court were walking status symbols. They played an important part in the competition between royal courts. Kings tried to outdo each other in appropriating the most famous men, and in the beginning the Ptolemies seem to have won most of the time. Many anecdotes, mainly in Diogenes Laertius, feature philosophers who refused to come to a royal court, although most of these did maintain bonds of *philia* with royal families. Antigonos

⁷⁸ Onesicr. FGrH 134 F 17a. Alexander, it was said, was eager to learn about atomism and infinity, and enjoyed discussing these with Anaxarchos of Abdera, a student of Demokritos who accompanied him on his campaigns in Asia (Plut., *Alex.* 8.28; Diog. Laert. 9.60).

⁷⁹ Ptolemaios may have subtly magnified his own part in Alexander's campaigns, and left out the darker sides of his predecessor's reign, but his books were nevertheless considered to be the most reliable source by Arrian (*Anab.*, pr. 1). C.B. Welles, 'The reliability of Ptolemy as an historian', in: *Miscellanea di studi alessandri in memoria di A. Rostagni* (Turin 1963) 101-16, acknowledges Ptolemaios' tendency to exaggerate his own role, but finds the bias understandable and unimportant. For a more critical approach see A.B. Bosworth, 'Windows on the truth', in: *id.*, *Alexander in the East. The Tragedy of Triumph* (2nd ed.; Oxford 1998) 31-65; cf. R.M. Errington, 'Bias in Ptolemy's History of Alexander', *CQ* 19 (1969) 233-42.

⁸⁰ *TrGF* I, 119. Also Ptolemaios Philopator probably wrote tragedies (Mineur 1985, 128).

⁸¹ Cameron 1995, 83; Green 1990, 84; Mineur 1985, 128.

⁸² Gal. 14; cf. Plin. *HN* 20.264.

⁸³ Plut., *Demosth.* 20.3.

⁸⁴ Cameron 1995, 83, who suggest that the epigrams were written for a contest at a royal symposium.

⁸⁵ C. Burney and D.M. Lang, *The Peoples of the Hills. Ancient Ararat and Caucasus* (London 1970) 201.

Gonatas put pressure on Zeno, founding father of stoic philosophy, to join his court. Zeno turned down the invitation and sent his pupil Persaios instead.⁸⁶ Gonatas did, however, succeed in enticing Alexandros the Aitolian away from the Ptolemaic court. Conversely, Antiochos I for some years stole, or borrowed, Aratos from the Antigonid court.⁸⁷ The Ptolemies tried to persuade the celebrated Theophrastos to give up Athens for Alexandria (Theophrastos instead sent his pupil Strato), and tried to acquire Stilpo, head of the Megarian philosophical school.⁸⁸ When the Indian king Bindusara, son of Chandragupta, once asked Antiochos Soter to send him a sophist, the Seleukid king refused,⁸⁹ even though the two rulers maintained good relations.⁹⁰ One source even claims that Ptolemaios Soter was prepared to use force to bring philosophers to his court,⁹¹ and Aristophanes of Byzantium was reputedly locked up in Alexandria when it came out that he planned to join the Attalids.⁹²

Patronage was a continuation of war with other means.⁹³ Just as kings would send athletes or horses to the games, so too they would compete with one another in poetry, scholarship and science. For this reason, kings were looking for *quality*, for the best poets and philosophers, and were not particularly keen on docile propaganda-makers. In my view this policy also accounts for the innovative nature of notably Alexandrian literature and scholarship. In the past it has been believed that Greek poets and scholars who worked for monarchs bartered away their integrity and freedom. However, even a brief glance at the evidence suffices to see that the opposite was the case: there had never been so much intellectual and artistic freedom in the Greek world as at the royal courts of the Hellenistic

⁸⁶ Diog. Laert. 7.6-9; cf. Plut., *Mor.* 1043c.

⁸⁷ Downey 1961, 87 with n. 3; Bevan 1902 II, 276 with n. 4. At the request of king Antiochos, Aratos prepared an edition of the *Odyssey* and the *Iliad*.

⁸⁸ Zeno: Diog. Laert. 7.6; Theophrastos: Diog. Laert. 5.37; Strato: Diog. Laert. 5.37; Stilpo: Diog. Laert. 2.115.

⁸⁹ Ath. IV 184b-c.

⁹⁰ G. Woodcock, *The Greeks in India* (London 1966) 50-2.

⁹¹ Diog. Laert. 2.115.

⁹² Vitruvius 7 *pr.* 5-7.

⁹³ The competitive nature of court patronage was emphasised by Kruedener 1973, 21-2, regarding the courts of Early Modern Europe, where ‘ein heftiger Wettbewerb entbrannte, ein Konkurrenzkampf, der sich ... vorwiegend auf dem Felde der festlichen Kunst abspielte und zu dem die verschiedene Disziplinen wie Musik, Dichtung, Malerei, Architektur zum dekorativen Gesamtkunstwerk vereinigt ins Treffen geführt wurden’.

Age. There opportunities existed to freely do and say things that public morality in the Classical *polis* would have made difficult, if not entirely prohibited. The early Ptolemaic court in particular was a safe haven for intellectuals with unorthodox, even subversive views. The philosopher Theodoros of Kyrene, called Atheos, the Blasphemer, was expelled from Athens because of his alleged denying of the existence of the gods, but a later notorious ‘atheist’, Euhemeros of Messene, found a warm welcome at the court of Kassandros and later in Alexandria, where he was encouraged rather than thwarted.⁹⁴ At the court of Ptolemaios II, Aristarchos of Samos developed his revolutionary heliocentric theory, even though this theory was widely criticised, not only on scientific, but especially on moral grounds.⁹⁵ And the Ptolemies enabled the physicians Herophilos and Erasistratos to perform systematic dissections of human cadavers – a practice that was as unique and progressive as Aristarchos’ hypothesis, and provoked similar hostile reactions.⁹⁶

Poetry, in particular epigram, could be used to celebrate victories over other rulers and dynasties, or simply malign rivals. We already saw the epigram by the Antigonid courtier

⁹⁴ Diog. Laert. 2.102-3; Ath. XII 611b; Cic., *Tusc.* 1.102. Cf. M. Winiarczyk, ‘Theodoros ὁ ἄθεος’, *Philologus* 125 (1981) 64-94. Euhemeros of Messene propagated the view that the Olympian gods were originally ancient kings who had been deified (*FGrH* 63 *ap.* Diod. 6.1.2-10), and this blurring of the distinction between man and god can also be understood, ‘according to taste’, as advancing a rationalisation of atheism (S. Hornblower, s.v. ‘Euhemerus’ in *OCD*, p. 567). Euhemeros in Alexandria: Fraser 1972 I, 289. Greek words for ‘atheism’ were οὐνομίζειν, ‘not recognizing the gods’, and ἀναίρεῖν, ‘to remove the gods’; ἄθεος denoted impiety or being abandoned by the gods, cf. R. Parker s.v. ‘Atheism’ in *OCD*, p. 201.

⁹⁵ Diog. Laert. 7.174. The main scientific argument against the heliocentric hypothesis, was that it conflicted with empirical observation; philosophical and moral objections were put forward first of all by Kleanthes, who held that the theory conflicted with astral, *i.e.* divine, determination. Aristarchos’ hypothesis was hardly influential until the Renaissance, and Africa 1968, 66, may be right in supposing that the idea was only recorded *because* it was subversive. The only astronomer who perhaps accepted, and used, Aristarchos’ ideas was his near contemporary Seleukos of Seleukeia on the Red Sea, who tried to explain the ocean tides by accepting the notion of a rotating earth: Strabo 1.1.9; 16.1.6; Plut., *Mor.* VIII 1006c. On the revival of heliocentrism in the Renaissance see O. Gingerich, *The Book Nobody Read. Chasing the Revolutions of Nicolaus Copernicus* (New York 2004).

⁹⁶ It was rumoured that with the approval of the king, Herophilos performed vivisection on convicted criminals: Celsus, *De Med.*, pr. 23-4. Cf. H.F.J. Horstmanshoff, ‘Sectie en anatomie in Alexandrië’, *Hermeneus* 57 (1985) 142-51, esp. 150-1.

Timon, ridiculing the Alexandrian *mouseion*. Similarly, Kallimachos put down the Seleukids by writing that ‘The Assyrian river (*sc.* the Euphrates) has a broad stream, but carries down much filth and refuse on its waters’.⁹⁷ At a state banquet in 336 shortly before Philippos II’s planned invasion of Asia, the king’s guests were entertained by a popular actor, Neoptolemos, who sang verses pertaining to the Persian campaign, ‘rebuking the wealth of the Persian king, great and famous as it was, and suggesting that it could be overturned some day by fortune.’ And when (probably) Leonidas of Taras wrote the votive inscription for the Celtic shields which Pyrrhos dedicated to a Thessalian deity after he had defeated Antigonos Gonatas, the poet both celebrated his patron’s victory over the barbarians and belittle Gonatas’ martial qualities:

These shields, now dedicated to Athena Itonis,
 Pyrrhos the Molossian took from the fearless Celts
 after defeating the entire army of Antigonos: no great wonder:
 the Aiakids are valiant spear-fighters, now as well as in the past.⁹⁸

Accumulation

The hunt for knowledge had yet another political purpose. Knowledge denoted power, control.⁹⁹ As one epigram to Lorenzo de’ Medici proclaimed: ‘Because you know everything, O Medici, you are all-powerful.’¹⁰⁰ Also the Hellenistic kings’ efforts to control culture and knowledge were not unlike their efforts to control territory, wealth, and manpower. It included control not only of various forms of art and science, but also of the knowledge of nature and culture in various, preferably far away countries. For this reason exotic plants and animals were gathered in the palace gardens of Alexandria.¹⁰¹ The animals were presented to the

⁹⁷ Call., *Hymn* 2.108-9.

⁹⁸ Plut., *Pyrrh.* 26.5. The epigram is also preserved in Paus. 1.13.2 and Diod. 22.11, and has been ascribed to Leonidas of Taras, cf. Nederlof 1940, 190 n. 7. Aiakos is the ancestor of the *hērōs* Pyrrhos-Neoptolemos, Achilles’ son, who was the founder of Pyrrhos’ dynasty; when Celtic mercenaries in his own service desecrated the royal tombs at Aigai in 274, Pyrrhos’ reputation was badly damaged (Plut., *Pyrrh.* 26.6-7). On Pyrrhos’ ‘Celtic’ victory propaganda see Strootman 2005a, 114-16.

⁹⁹ Eamon 1991, 39; cf. Griffin 1996, 39-44.

¹⁰⁰ *Sic sapis, o Medices, omnia sicque potes*. Cited after Eamon 1991, 32.

¹⁰¹ Ath. 654. The early Ptolemies are known to have organised, since *c.* 280 BCE, expeditions of exploration into Africa, mainly along the sea routes through the Red Sea, with the aim of acquiring

public during the Ptolemaia Festival. In this context one may also think of Berossos' *Babyloniaca*, a history of Mesopotamia commissioned by Antiochos I, Manetho's *Aegyptiaca*, the same for Egypt, and the translation of the *Thora* that Ptolemaios II ordered.¹⁰² Josephus has Ptolemaios Soter say that his main motivation for having this translation made was his eagerness to do 'a work glorious to myself.'¹⁰³ Thus, the accumulation of knowledge at court showed how far-reaching and all-embracing royal power was. It made the court appear as a microcosm, the place where the whole world came together, including the best poets and scholars of the entire (Greek) *oikoumene* whose fame stretched far beyond the borders of actual, political control.

Collecting books was yet another means of accumulating and controlling knowledge, a form of symbolic attainment of the world. According to Josephus, it was Ptolemaios Soter's ambition 'to gather together all the books that were in the inhabited world.'¹⁰⁴ Tradition has preserved several tales about the eagerness of the first Ptolemies to obtain books, colourful accounts of their almost maniacal efforts to lay their hands on them.¹⁰⁵

Hellenism

This brings us to one last, but fundamental, characteristic of court patronage: its overall Hellenic nature.¹⁰⁶ Non-Greek artists, writers, and scholars were almost completely absent

elephants and exotic animals. Cf. M.J. Versluys, 'Op jacht in het land van de zwarte mensen. Het jachtfries van een graftombe in Marissa', *Hermeneus* 66.5 (1994) 314-9, at 317-8; L. Casson, 'Ptolemy II and the hunting of African elephants', *TAPhA* 123 (1993) 247-60. Scenes from the Grand Procession have been associated with the Nile Mosaic from Palestrina: F. Coarelli, 'La pompe di Tolomeo Filadelfo e il mosaico nilotico di Palestrina', *Ktema* 15 (1990) 225-51; A. Steinmeyer-Schareika, *Das Nilmosaik von Palestrina und eine Ptolemäische Expedition nach Äthiopien* (Bonn 1978) 52-97. On depictions of Egypt in Roman art see now the excellent treatment by M.J. Versluys, *Aegyptiaca Romana. Nilotic Scenes and the Roman Views of Egypt*. Religions in the Graeco-Roman World 144 (Leiden 2002).

¹⁰² W. Orth, 'Ptolemaios II. und die Septuaginta-Übersetzung', in: H.-J. Fabry and U. Offerhaus eds., *Im Brennpunkt: Die Septuaginta. Studien zur Entstehung und Bedeutung der griechischen Bibel* (Stuttgart 2001) 97-114.

¹⁰³ Jos., *AJ* 12.49, cf. 12.55.

¹⁰⁴ Jos., *AJ* 12.20.

¹⁰⁵ Examples are collected in Green 1990, 89; cf. Africa 1968, 62.

¹⁰⁶ I am aware that most scholarship of the past decades assumes the opposite, notably regarding Ptolemaic court poetry. For instance Merkelbach 1981, 27-35, argued that Kallimachos and Theokritos

from the courts. And when they were present—Berossos, Manetho, the translators of the *Septuaginta*—they wrote in Greek. Alexandrian poetry is distinguished by its depreciation of anything Egyptian. In other words, kings protected not just science and culture, but *Greek* science and culture. Likewise, they promoted the study of the Greek past. Alexandrian philologists studied ‘classic’ poetry, in particular Homer. Hellenistic poets were obsessed with the Greek mythological legacy. The main difference between Classical and Hellenistic literature, is that the latter tended to smooth the regional differences among the Greeks. Thus they redefined Greek culture in the light of a new, more cosmopolitan world view.

The Hellenism of the court was instrumental in creating an imperial elite culture, intensifying a process of Hellenisation that was also at work in the *poleis*, independently from the kingdoms. In world history, court culture has often served to tie together local elites, creating coherence in culturally and ethnically heterogeneous empires, and binding these elites to the political centre by ‘the power of memory, of imagination, and of language’.¹⁰⁷ Hellenism defined who did, and who did not, participate in the imperial order.¹⁰⁸

endeavoured to develop an interpretation of Ptolemaic monarchy that combined Greek and Egyptian concepts of kingship. A kindred view has been put forward by Stephens 1999, 167-85, who claimed that Kallimachos’ *Hymn to Zeus* was written for the celebration of the Egyptian Heb-sed festival, an annual celebration of the birth and accession of Horus; the equation of Horus with Zeus, however, is quite implausible. W.H. Mineur, *Callimachus’ Hymn to Delos* (Leiden 1984) 10-8, connects yet another poem of Kallimachos to Egyptian tradition; but apart from one *possible* mention of Egypt (‘the two countries’) as being *part* of the Ptolemaic empire, the *Hymn to Delos* contains no reference to Egypt, let alone to pharaonic ideology (Hunter 2003, 168).

¹⁰⁷ Burke 1992, 57.

¹⁰⁸ Cf. A. Mehl, ‘Die antiken Griechen: Integration durch Kultur’, in: K. Buraselis and K. Zoumboulakis eds., *The Idea of European Community in History. Conference Proceedings II* (Athens 2003) 191-204, shows how in the Hellenistic periods non-Greeks strove after ‘the Greek way of life’, signified by membership of the gymnasium. Conversely, those who were excluded from the imperial order often reacted by accentuating indigenous culture; this was the case in Judea in the 160’s, when an orthodox version of Jewish culture was constructed in opposition to the Hellenised allies of the Seleukids, as is apparent from 1 and 2 *Maccabees*; cf. 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.

The focal point of that imperial order was the court. It was here that Greek culture was reinvented to become a universal imperial culture. It happened at all the courts in a very similar manner, due to mutual influences and competition. It was continued at the court of the indigenous kingdoms of the later Hellenistic Age: Pontos, Bithynia, Hasmonean and Herodian Judea. Even the Numidian king Mikiopsa, a contemporary of the emperor Augustus, ‘was the most civilised of all the Numidian kings, and lived much in the company of cultivated Greeks whom he summoned to his court. He took great interest in culture, especially philosophy’.¹⁰⁹

By concerning themselves with Greek culture on a grand scale, and in the centres of their kingdoms, Macedonian rulers presented themselves as protectors and benefactors of the Greeks. In part, they did so because the Greek (and Macedonian) populations formed the cornerstones of Macedonian imperial rule. Moreover, this Hellenism had a distinct ‘cosmopolitan’ character that transgressed the multifarious cultural and linguistic zones of the Hellenistic states. It could thus contribute to cohesion in states which were characterised by their political, ethnical, and cultural heterogeneity. Cosmopolitan Hellenism transgressed also the borders of states. It created a certain sense of world unity. This may be what the historian Menekles of Barke meant when around 200 he boasted that Alexandria had become the teacher to all the Greeks and barbarians.¹¹⁰

4.3 Bonds between patron and client

In this subchapter I will argue that cultural and scientific patronage was an organic part of court society. The poets, scholars, and scientists working for the king were for the most part not his employees, but genuine courtiers, *philoī tou basileōs*. Some prominent men of letters even belonged to the upper echelons of the court. Conversely, members of the *sunedrion* often distinguished themselves as philosophers or (occasional) poets. Competition was the principal force that encouraged poets and others to create.

This point of view runs counter to the notion that poets, scholars, or artists working at a court were the king’s servants, giving up their integrity and demeaning themselves to the writing of laudatory poems, philosophical tracts in defence of monarchic rule, and produced

¹⁰⁹ Diod. 34.35. Note the correlation between ‘civilised’ and ‘Greek’.

¹¹⁰ Fraser I, 517-18, with II, 165 n. 324.

only second-rate works.¹¹¹ In older scholarship we often find painstaking efforts to disconnect Hellenistic poetry and science from the court. Thus in a handbook on post-classical Greek science we are assured that ‘there were many scientists who received no help whatsoever from rich patrons. Many of those who did scientific work were no doubt men of means.’¹¹² However, the idea that the principal motive for seeking patronage was material benefit is erroneous. To be sure, many poets and philosophers were men of means too, and there were many opportunities to make a living outside the court.

Modern depreciation of royal patronage may in part be attributed to the nineteenth-century ideal of the artist as an independent individual. But the notion was popular in Antiquity too. Greek intellectuals of the imperial period blamed their Hellenistic predecessors for dancing attendance to kings, and praised those who refused to do so. They relished in anecdotes about philosophers outwitting kings in private conversations. Athenaios for example dismissed the members of the Alexandrian Museum altogether as parasites.¹¹³ Diogenes Laertius relates with approval how the philosopher Stilpo of Megara went into hiding when he learned that Ptolemaios Soter intended to bring him to Alexandria.¹¹⁴ According to another popular story, Anaxarchos of Abdera, an expert in atomic theory, bartered away his scientific integrity by his efforts to please the ‘amateur’ philosopher Alexander.¹¹⁵ Called back to order by an Indian wise man, Anaxarchos repented and rigorously abandoned court life.¹¹⁶ Other stories give the impression that the association with kings was not only intellectually restrictive, but even physically dangerous. The physician Chrysippos was beaten like a slave at the Ptolemaic court for some obscure affront.¹¹⁷ His was a better fate still than that of the philologist Zoilos, who was crucified for having offended

¹¹¹ See for instance Africa 1968: ‘In the Hellenistic age, many scientists exchanged independence for the patronage of kings’ (p. 2), and ‘learned the arts of discretion and subservience’ (p. 48); Green 1990, 241, sees ‘blatant flattery’ every time that Theokritos mentions the name of Ptolemaios Philadelphos, and concludes that ‘there is always a price to be paid for patronage’; Schwinge 1986, 40-82, holds that kings repressed free poetry but believes that the poets in turn criticised the kings between the lines.

¹¹² Lloyd 1973, 6.

¹¹³ Ath. VI 240b; XV 677e.

¹¹⁴ Diog. Laert. 2.115.

¹¹⁵ Plut., *Alex.* 8, 28, 52; Diog. Laert. 9.60. An alternative explanation will be given later on.

¹¹⁶ Plut., *Alex.* 8, 28, 52; Diog. Laert. 9.60-3.

¹¹⁷ Diog. Laert. 7.186.

Ptolemaios Philadelphos.¹¹⁸ The aforementioned Anaxarchos was tortured to death when he fell into the hands of a Cypriot prince whom he had once offended.¹¹⁹ But the most horrible fate of all befell the poet Sotades of Maroneia. Sotades had mocked the incestuous marriage of Ptolemaios Philadelphos and his sister Arsinoë with the infamous line: ‘You are pushing the prong into an unholy fleshpot’.¹²⁰ Sotades fled the court but was hunted down by Philadelphos’ admiral Patroklos; when he was finally caught, the poor soul was locked up inside a leaden chest and thrown into the sea.¹²¹ The message is clear: kings are short-tempered despots, and intellectuals should better refrain from criticising them and, preferably, keep their distance altogether.

But do anecdotes like these really prove that royal patronage was oppressive and demeaning? They do not, of course. Even if we accept the stories about Chrysippos, Zoilos, Anaxarchos, and Sotades as historical fact, these stories are about kings taking revenge for personal insults. They are not about whimsical tyrants who oppress criticism as such. As we have seen in section 3.4, free speech was a cardinal virtue of court society. We can be sure that no king ever *forced* a poet to write poetry.¹²² Poets lauded kings in encomiastic texts because they believed in it – because they themselves were part of the monarchic system, deriving status and privileges from it.

¹¹⁸ Vit. 7.8-9.

¹¹⁹ Diog. Laert. 958-9.

¹²⁰ trans. Green 1990, 82; Cameron 1995, 18, translates more freely but also more to the point: ‘It’s an unholy hole he’s shoving his prick in’. For a discussion of these lines and their various possible explanations see Cameron 1995, 18-20; on Sotades in general see: M. Launey in *REA* 47 (1945) 33-45.

¹²¹ Plut., *Mor.* 11a; Hegesandros *ap.* Ath. XIV 620f-621a.

¹²² Poets and other intellectuals flocked to the court out of ‘free will’. There are several examples of men who worked for more than one royal patron. Aratos of Soli not only worked for Antigonos Gonatas but also for some time joined the court of Antiochos I; Alexandros the Aitolian was the guest of both Ptolemaios Philadelphos and his enemy Gonatas; Erasistratos worked first for the Seleukids, then for the Ptolemies (Plut., *Demetr.* 38); Theokritos, though he mainly worked for Philadelphos, addressed one of his poems to Hieron of Syracuse (*Id.* 16); Archimedes visited Alexandria and presented his celebrated water screw to the Ptolemaic family, although he is first of all known as a *philos* of Hieron. A study of the relation between Dutch writers and their patrons in the first half of the twentieth century has shown that the patrons (both private persons and institutions) had no influence on the content of the work of the writers whatsoever: H. van den Braber, *Geven om te krijgen. Literair mecenaat in Nederland tussen 1900 en 1940* (Nijmegen 2002).

As mentioned above, in the Renaissance the impetus for progress in art and science came from princely patronage. Galileo dedicated his astronomical discoveries to Cosimo II de' Medici, just as Johannes Kepler dedicated his to the emperor Ferdinand II.¹²³ They did so in the expectation that some kind of material or immaterial reward would be returned. Yet men like Galileo and Kepler, as well as many other clients of Renaissance rulers, were innovative, even unorthodox thinkers, whose integrity is beyond doubt. It appears, then, that the early modern court did not restrict artists and scientist, but, on the contrary, provided them with chances and encouragement. It is for this reason that Vasari advised artists who desired freedom to join a prince's court, where they would no longer be dependent on the demands and restrictions of the public art market.¹²⁴ As I have asserted previously, Hellenistic art and science was stimulated towards innovation and exploration by royal patronage.

Another important aspect is the fact that the sources show no indication that artists and intellectuals at court formed a special category as distinct from 'normal' courtiers. To all account they were first of all *philoi* of the king. It was not exceptional that philosophers or other writers were given political, diplomatic or military responsibilities. For instance the scholar Onesikritos of Astypalaia—a pupil of Diogenes and the author of an account of Alexander's campaigns—served Alexander as a navigator in India, and in 325/4 was lieutenant to the admiral Nearchos. The philosopher and statesman Demetrios of Phaleron was a political advisor of Ptolemaios Soter; as a courtier Demetrios even became involved in faction conflicts after Soter's death.¹²⁵ Hieronymos of Kardia worked both as an historian and as a military commander for the Antigonids. Antigonos Gonatas appointed the stoic philosopher Persaios as commander of the Akrokorinthos citadel.¹²⁶ Many philosophers served as diplomats.¹²⁷ The celebrated architect Sostratos of Knidos, builder of the Pharos

¹²³ P. Findlen, 'The economy of scientific exchange in early modern Italy', in: Moran 1991, 1-24 with nn. 3 and 4; M. Biagioli, 'Galileo's system of patronage', *History of Science* 28 (1990) 1-61; W.B. Asworth jr., 'The Habsburg circle', in: Moran 1991, 137-67: 137. Interestingly, Copernicus' *De Revolutionibus orbium coelestium* (1543), banned by the Church in 1616 because of its heliocentrism, was dedicated to pope Paulus III.

¹²⁴ In a similar vein Aristotle advised the wise man to 'fall in love, take part in politics and live with a king' (Diog. Laert. 5.31).

¹²⁵ Diog. Laert. 5.77-8. He chose the losing side and was later imprisoned by Ptolemaios Philadelphos.

¹²⁶ Plut., *Aratus* 18, 23; Diog. Laert. 7.9.36; Ath. 4.162b-d, XIII 607a-f. The stoic however failed to hold his ground against Gonatas' enemy Aratos of Sikyon.

¹²⁷ Fraser 1972 I, 557; Weber 1993, 424.

Lighthouse, served his patron Ptolemaios Philadelphos as an ambassador.¹²⁸ Conversely there are many examples of ‘normal’ courtiers who were also writers, like Nearchos, Alexander’s admiral, who wrote on India and the Indian Ocean, or Samos, a leading *philos* and *suntrophos* of Philippos V, who was also a famous poet.¹²⁹

Theokritos and Hieron

If poets, artists and intellectuals were not servants, what was the nature of their relationship with the king? There is one piece of contemporary evidence that is most illuminating in this respect. This is Theokritos’ sixteenth *Idyll*, better known as ‘The Graces’. *Idyll* 16 is principally an encomium for the Sicilian ruler Hieron II. It is also a request for a gift and an attempt of the poet to be accepted by Hieron as *philos*. As a consequence, the poem provides valuable first-hand information regarding the relation of king and poet. Because Theokritos came from Syracuse,¹³⁰ it is usually held that the poem was written at the beginning of his career, and that he moved to Alexandria because Hieron was not interested.¹³¹ That is possible, but the poem itself does not warrant this conclusion.

Idyll 16 is one of Theokritos’ finest, but also one of his most puzzling works.¹³² A striking feature of the poem is its virtuosity—a blend of Homeric stateliness with colloquial language, folksong and mime—as if the poem’s very language, as Griffiths has proposed, was meant to advertise Theokritos’ professional skills and versatility.¹³³ Theokritos also cunningly evoked the styles of Bakchylides and Pindar. Both had enjoyed the patronage of Hieron’s namesake and predecessor, the fifth century Syracusean tyrant Hieron I, a ruler who was

¹²⁸ Ath. 5.203c-e.

¹²⁹ Polyb. 5.8.6.

¹³⁰ Theocr., *Epigr.* 27.

¹³¹ Bulloch 1989, 30; Green 1990, 240 with n. 59. Theokritos’ principal patron was Ptolemaios II Philadelphos: the poet refers relatively often to Philadelphos and his family (*i.a.* in *Id.* 7.93; 14.59-64; 15.46-9, 94-5), and among his extant works there is one encomium to that king (*Id.* 17), as well as a fragment of a poem entitled *Berenike*. A further indication that Theokritos was connected with the Ptolemaic court, is his apparent familiarity with the Alexandrian palace in *Id.* 15.

¹³² Secondary literature on Theokritos is vast and expanding. For a selective list: Bulloch 1989, 205-6; or see the comprehensive bibliography at www.gltc.leidenuniv.nl. Historical approaches to *Idyll* 16: Griffiths 1979, 9-50; L.-M. Hans, ‘Theokrits XVI. Idylle und die Politik Hierons II. von Syrakus’, *Historia* 34 (1985) 117-25; Gold 1987, 30-7.

¹³³ Griffiths 1979, 9.

particularly renowned for his protection of the arts.¹³⁴ Theokritos now urges the second Hieron to support poetry too, in particular the poetry of Theokritos. You must keep your money moving, he tells the ruler:

What is the use of money that is hoarded away in great piles in some chest? A wise man uses his wealth, first taking care of his own needs, and then of those of, say, a poet. Many dependants and relatives count on his generosity. He sacrifices offerings on the altars of the gods. He is a generous host, guests are always welcome at his table. ... But most of all he honours the servants of the Muses.¹³⁵

With these words Theokritos is not encouraging Hieron to become hospitable. The presentation of the ruler as a generous host who entertains many guests in his house is any Hellenistic ruler's self-image. Theokritos merely asks to be invited too. Such a straightforward request is by no means ignoble. Kallimachos, in the concluding prayer to his *Hymn to Zeus* (91-6), also bluntly asks Ptolemaios Philadelphos for a reward. By alluding to Pindar, who had praised the hospitality of the first Hieron's hearth,¹³⁶ Theokritos embeds his request in the moral complex of *xenia*, guest-friendship, with its ideals of generosity, gift exchange, and reciprocity. Throughout the poem, Theokritos plays with the double meaning of *charites*, 'graces', as favours and as goddesses; the latter impersonate poetry, so that it becomes clear that Theokritos offers his writings to Hieron as gifts, for which he expects gifts in return. As we have seen in chapter 3.3, *xenia* and *philia* were the fundamentals of court society. Theokritos reminds Hieron of the fact that hospitality and generosity are more than social obligations – they are also honourable, and therefore advantageous to Hieron himself. As everyone knew, an honourable man was *qualitate qua* a magnanimous man who dealt out gifts in order to gain greatness and prestige.¹³⁷ The higher one's status, the greater one's generosity was expected to be. This was a central Greek virtue and particularly important in aristocratic households, notably the court.

But apart from the prestige to be gained from hospitality and generosity, Theokritos mentions yet another reason why Hieron should extend his *xenia* to include the poet Theokritos. The argument is as simple as it is, by modern standards, presumptuous (but

¹³⁴ Griffiths 1979, 9; on Hieron's I patronage of the arts see Gold 1987, 21-30.

¹³⁵ Theocr., *Id.* 16.28-38.

¹³⁶ *Pyth.* 1.88, 3.69, cf. 3.71 and *Ol.* 1.10-1.

¹³⁷ Cf. e.g. Arist., *Eth.Nic.* 4.2.

unpretentiousness was of course *not* a central Greek virtue): reward me, and you'll buy yourself immortality.¹³⁸ After all, who would ever have remembered the long-haired sons of Priam, or Achilles, or wandering Odysseus, had not Homer put their deeds into words? Now, thanks to poetry, not only the old heroes are remembered, but even Odysseus' swineherd has become famous. Hieron—'the Achilles of our age', as Theokritos calls him—also needs a poet to immortalise his heroic exploits and spread his glory 'across the Skythian Sea' (*i.e.* as far as the world border), so that:

Your name will forever live on gloriously, even when Death takes you away to deep and dark Hades, so that you will not languish honourless on the shores of cold Acheron, bewailing your fate as though you were some common labourer with hands blistered by wielding a spade, and having inherited nothing but tears.¹³⁹

However, the praise that Hieron actually receives from Theokritos is rather commonplace. Hieron is a great man who vanquishes his enemies and brings a new Golden Age.¹⁴⁰ No specific battle or heroic feats of this new Achilles are mentioned.¹⁴¹ But Theokritos is not yet finished. As Griffiths has noted, the poet states in what follows that in the Greek notion of reputation (*kleos*) the words count as much as the deeds: only praise sung by a *great* poet will for all posterity reach such a large and wide-spread audience that the poem's protagonist will be truly immortalised.¹⁴² Conversely, the ambitious poet is in need of a *great* subject matter to

¹³⁸ Modern commentators have often been surprised by the poet's frankness; as one translator commented: 'It is not easy to beg with dignity, but Theocritus ... does so with remarkable and unexpected success' (Gow 1953, 63). But Theokritos' apparent frankness is *parrhēsia*, a virtue that was central to *philia* and *xenia*, and therefore not remarkable at all.

¹³⁹ Theocr., *Id.* 16. 39-44.

¹⁴⁰ On the ideological aspects of *Idyll* 16 see below, subchapter 4.5.

¹⁴¹ This may be due to the fact that Theokritos wrote *Idyll* 16 when Hieron was still a tyrant and had not yet routed the Mamertines at the Longanos River, the victory which made him a king in *c.* 265, whereafter he started his long and unusually peaceful reign. The absence of the word βασιλεύς in itself is no proof for an early date of this poem, cf. R.L. Hunter, *Theocritus and the Archaeology of Greek Poetry* (Cambridge 1996) 83. To be sure, Theokritos did not become the author of a new *Iliad*.

¹⁴² Griffiths 1979, 14.

attain fame.¹⁴³ In other words: the prestige of the poet will, in a sense, be added to the accumulated prestige of the patron, and *vice versa*.¹⁴⁴

Several conclusions concerning the aims of literary patronage may be inferred from *Idyll* 16. First, the hospitality and generosity offered to a poet is in itself honourable and boosts a king's reputation. After all, beneficence was one of the central virtues of the ideal Hellenistic king. Second, poetry is the means *par excellence* to make the deeds of kings public and spread reputations to the edges of the earth.¹⁴⁵ Third, the patron may profit from the fame of the poet with whom he maintains a patronage relationship. But most importantly, *Idyll* 16 shows that the relation between patron and poet was defined in terms of *xenia*, and that this relationship was *reciprocal*.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴³ Griffiths 1979, 14, suggests that Theokritos alludes to Pindar and other poets of old because their relation with Archaic tyrants was likewise characterised by mutual benefit.

¹⁴⁴ Cf. Griffiths 1979, 14: 'Pindar's victory in songs mirrors that of his patrons in sport; both parties are immortalized equally through their poetic relationship.' A similar notion of mutuality one also encounters in Renaissance literary patronage, cf. J.P. Guépin, 'Ariosto, de ideale hofdichter', in: De Bruijn *et al.* 1986, 93-113: 112: 'De poëzie adelt de geschiedenis, de geschiedenis verleent ernst aan de poëzie' ('Poetry ennobles history, history lends earnestness to poetry'). Compare also these lines of the Turkic poet Fuzuli (c. 1495-1556), addressing his patron the Ottoman governor of Baghdad: 'I give you a splendid shelter, a house of everlasting gaiety. I make you a tall building that is like Paradise and the Garden of Eden. Yes, choose this as your dwelling-place until the Youngest Day, and loiter undisturbed in this garden of pleasures. By God! This work is certainly not a bad work, and it will suffice, if one desires a famous name. This is my goal: that your name will be immortal in this world, so that ... both me and you, will be spoken of by everybody.' Cited after Flemming 1986, 171. It is noteworthy that authors of the Roman period equated the prestige resulting from the writing of literature with glory earned by political and military achievements, e.g. Aristid. *Or.* 50.49 and Arr., *Anab.* 1.12.5; cf. J.J. Flinterman, *Power, Paideia and Pythagoreanism* (Amsterdam 1995) 45-51, esp. 51.

¹⁴⁵ Cf. lines 121-2: 'And let poets take up the great glory of Hieron and proclaim it abroad past the Skythian sea'.

¹⁴⁶ When Ptolemaios VI Philometor was driven from Alexandria and fled to Rome, the king took up residence in the house of the painter Demetrios the Topographer, who had been his guest in Alexandria (Diod. 31.18.2; Val. Max. 5.1.1): king and artist were each other's *xenoi*, and this presupposed a *mutual* obligation to offer hospitality and assistance. Diodoros writes that Philometor lived in humble circumstances but it is unlikely that an artist who had given up the protection of a king for a better position in Rome was a poor man.

Reciprocity

The reciprocal nature of patronage is repeatedly stressed in *Idyll* 16. Whatever it was that Theokritos hoped to get from Hieron apart from his friendship, he expected it to come as a gift, or rather as a *return gift*, since he had first offered the ruler a poem. The morality of *xenia* prescribed that if Hieron accepted, he would be obliged to reciprocate. In the same vein Eratosthenes dedicated his mathematical treatise *On the Duplication of the Globe* to Ptolemaios III and another, untitled, treatise to Arsinoë II,¹⁴⁷ and the botanist Krataios named a newly discovered medicinal herb *mithridatia* after his patron Mithradates Eupator.¹⁴⁸ Archimedes, when he visited Alexandria, offered his host Ptolemaios Philadelphos the design of a new water screw, which was successfully employed to improve the fertility of the Nile Valley.¹⁴⁹ Gifts could be refused. The poet Antiphanes once read from a new comedy of his to Alexandros Balas, ‘who, however, made it plain that he did not like it altogether’ – a rather dreadful sign of royal disfavour.¹⁵⁰ Conversely, a king could himself ask for a gift, in which case we come close to what we would now call a commission. A royal request probably lay behind Berossos’ *Babyloniaca* and Manetho’s Egyptian history.

What were the benefits for the poets, scholars and scientists who offered their work to kings? Of course one must first think of material rewards, as gift exchange is also a form of economic exchange.¹⁵¹ But perhaps more importantly, gift exchange was also a mechanism to determine the social status of both giver and receiver. This means that the value of rewards was in part immaterial. Hegesianax received a gift of money *and* a court title from Antiochos the Great as a reward for having entertained the king and his *philoï* by reciting his work.¹⁵² The Epicurean philosopher Diogenes received status gifts, including the costume of a *philos*, from Alexandros Balas.¹⁵³ Here again there is no substantial difference with other courtiers.

¹⁴⁷ Ath. 27b.

¹⁴⁸ Plin. *HN* 25.26.62.

¹⁴⁹ Diod. 1.34.2; Strabo 17.1.52; Vitruvius 10.6.1-4.

¹⁵⁰ Ath. 555a.

¹⁵¹ Ptolemaios Soter gave Strato of Lampsakos the astronomical sum of eighty talents in return for tutoring his son (Diog. Laert. 5.58). Also Aristotle was richly rewarded for his services to the Argeads (Athen. 398e; Sen., *Dial.* 27.5; Diog. Laert. 5.12-6; Gell., *NA* 3.17).

¹⁵² Demetrios of Skepsis *ap.* Ath. 155b. The same Hegesianax served Antiochos III also as an envoy; he was sent to Greece in 196 to negotiate with Flaminius (Polyb. 18.50.4-5; App., *Syr.* 6).

¹⁵³ Ath. 211d.

And the Ptolemaic title of *epistatēs*, ‘head of the *mouseion*’,¹⁵⁴ was an aulic title, not unlike other functional titles like chamberlain, *epitropos*, or master of the hunt. Consequently, we may infer that the production of literature or scholarship was instrumental in obtaining access to the presence of the king, or more precisely, being admitted to royal banquets and symposia. This in turn was a means to acquire status, favours, or privileges, not only for oneself but also for one’s family or friends. Participation in royal banquets is to all likelihood also the background to a notorious anecdote about Ktesibios of Chalkis; when he was asked by someone what he had gained from working for the Ptolemies, Ktesibios replied: ‘free meals!’¹⁵⁵

Competition and innovation

The court was the epicentre of power. It was a place where the lines separating the hierarchical layers of society could be crossed. But to win the favour of the king—or the queen, a prince, or an important *philos*—one had to attract attention and dispose of a network of personal contacts.¹⁵⁶ Other *philoï* to all likelihood acted as brokers.¹⁵⁷ This challenged men to prove their worth and demonstrate their skills, in one word, to *distinguish* themselves. And as the focal point for the presentation of work was the banquet and the symposium, one also had to prove that one was able to *entertain*. Anaxarchos of Abdera used his knowledge of atomism to gain access to Alexander, who was much interested in theories about infinity and enjoyed discussing these with Anaxarchos. Competition among poets accounts largely for the mannerism and erudition of Hellenistic literature, with its almost snobbish allusions and its partiality for obscure myths and rare words. One reason why the work of court poets was so subtle and intellectual was the necessity to distinguish oneself before an audience of courtiers

¹⁵⁴ Strabo 17.1.8.

¹⁵⁵ Ath. 4.162e-f.

¹⁵⁶ One extant poem is dedicated to a courtier of high rank, Kallimachos’ *Victory of Sosibios*. Kallimachos wrote his *Victory of Berenike* for Berenike II, sister and wife of Ptolemaios III; it is possible that Theokritos wrote *Idyll* 15 for queen Arsinoë II, who had organised the Adonia Festival the poem describes. Meissner 1992 also contends that historians found their way to court via social networks, *c.q.* upper-class *xenia*.

¹⁵⁷ The evidence does not allow reconstruction of such relations; on brokers at the Roman imperial court see P. White, ‘*Amicitia* and the profession of poetry in early imperial Rome’, *JRS* 68 (1978) 74-92, and notably R.R. Nauta, *Poetry for Patrons. Literary Communication in the Age of Domitian* (diss. Leiden 1995) 305-92.

– an audience that was critical and perceptive, and longed to be confirmed in its self-image as an educated upper class. Taking this into consideration, we can easily understand why even propaganda texts could become literary masterpieces, like Theokritos' encomium for Ptolemaios Philadelphos or Kallimachos' *Hymn to Zeus*.

The entire set-up predicated on competition, not unlike the competition among other courtiers at all. Hence the envy that according to some sources spoiled the atmosphere at the *mouseion*.¹⁵⁸ Rivalry could even be formalised as open contest, when for instance poets and courtiers competed by writing epigrams on the same subject.¹⁵⁹ Competition induced technicians to build ingenious *thaumata*, mirabilia, to entertain courtiers at symposia or to impress the king's subjects during festivals. Technologists needed to invent things, preferably amazing machines and *automata*. Deinochares designed a magnetic device to make a cult image of Arsinoë Philadelphos float in the air, a plan that was actually executed.¹⁶⁰ In *From Alexander to Actium* Peter Green has collected many such marvels, a list worth quoting from to give some impression of what was going on at court:

Ktesibios' water clock ... was clearly splendid entertainment: puppets emerged, propelled by rack and pinion, black and white cones were turned to show the time, pebbles or balls were dropped into a bronze basin to count the hours, and at noon horns were blown by some kind of pneumatic device. Even more astonishing was the presentation, in Hero's automatic puppet theatre, of the drama Nauplius, with dolphins playing round a ship that sank in a storm, lured onto the rocks by wreckers, leaving Ajax to swim ashore and be greeted by an epiphany of Athena amid thunder and lightning.¹⁶¹

With the successful demonstration of such *thaumata* a technician could win esteem and praise from courtiers or king, which in turn improved one's status. Here we may think of an epigram written by the Alexandrian courtier Hedylos of Samos (c. 270) in which Ktesibios is lauded for making a rhyton in the form of the Egyptian god Bes which produced a trumpet-sound when used; in the poem, Hedylos invites his fellow-courtiers to go and see the rhyton in the

¹⁵⁸ Green 1990, 87, speaks of 'backbiting jealousy and paranoia' and draws parallels to his own professional environment.

¹⁵⁹ Cameron 1995, 83.

¹⁶⁰ Fraser 1972 II, 168. See also the interesting reconstruction of this device in M. Pfrommer, *Königinnen vom Nil* (Mainz am Rhein 2002) 61-75.

¹⁶¹ Green 1990, 479.

temple of Arsinoë Zephyritis where it was exhibited.¹⁶² Competition for favour was a driving force behind such technical innovation, and can also help explain the experimental nature of Hellenistic literature and art.¹⁶³

The court provided, on a regular basis, an audience that was both educated and influential. Poetry and treatises were read, inventions were demonstrated, new ideas proposed. This happened notably at symposia and other festivities, when the king entertained guests and courtiers.¹⁶⁴ Of course, not all court poetry aimed exclusively at court circles.¹⁶⁵ Some of it was certainly written for a broader audience of Greek *politai* and *Makedones*, for example epigram, inscribed at sanctuaries, or hymns sung during festivities such as the *Hymn to Adonis*, incorporated in Theokritos' *Idyll* 15. We can be sure however that most of it was in the first instance written for an elite circle of educated royal friends, who were eager for new things and returned the most prestigious gifts. Competition for honour and prestige was a major drive in the life of a Greek poet, and to be associated with such an elite milieu increased one's status more than success among lower levels of society. The members of the upper level of the court society had their own networks of *xenoi* and maintained relations with their

¹⁶² Swinnen 1985, 153.

¹⁶³ The agonistic nature of Hellenistic science was also recognised by R. Netz, *The Transformation of Mathematics in the Early Mediterranean World: From Problems to Equations* (Cambridge 2004), who sees an intense and sudden rise of competition at the beginning of the Hellenistic Age: 'the space of [mathematical] communication [became] an arena for confrontation, rather than for solidarity. The relation envisaged between works is that of polemic. A Greek mathematical text is a challenge' (p. 62, cited from the review by Anne Mahoney for BMCR 04.10.25). On poetic competition esp. in Archaic and Classical Greece see D. Collins, *Master of the Game. Competition and Performance in Greek Poetry* (Cambridge, MA, 2005); and for the Ptolemaic court S. Barbantani, 'Competizioni poetiche tespiesi e mecenatismo tolemaico. Un gemellaggio tra l'antica e la nuova sede delle Muse nella seconda metà del III secolo a.C. Ipotesi su SH 959', *Lexis* 18 (2000) 127-73.

¹⁶⁴ Weber 1993, 165-70; Cameron 1995, 71-103.

¹⁶⁵ The audience of specifically Alexandrian poetry is a much debated question, cf. *i.a.* Griffiths 1979, Zanker 1987, and Cameron 1995. Griffiths and Zanker identify only Ptolemaic royal *philoï* as the intended audience for Alexandrian poetry, since, as Zanker says, Alexandrian poetry because of its complexity obviously was not written for 'the urban masses of Alexandria' (p. 18); Cameron adds that 'no one in pagan antiquity ever wrote (non-dramatic) poetry for such an audience'. But does this leave 'small audiences of highly cultivated patrons' as the only alternative (p. 56)? It certainly was not necessary to understand all allusions and hidden meanings to appreciate Alexandrian poetry, and not *all* Alexandrian poetry is incomprehensible.

families' cities of origin. The court was the nucleus of an international elite infrastructure through which poems or ideas could circulate throughout the Hellenistic world.

4.4 Royal studies: new images of the world in scholarship and philosophy

Various academic disciplines were prominently practised at court: philosophy, astronomy, historiography, ethnography and geography – genres that in themselves were not typical court genres, but nevertheless flourished at the courts.¹⁶⁶ They reveal the efforts, characteristic of this period, to develop views of the universe and the world as an integrated whole, an idea closely connected with the ideology of boundless empire of the Macedonian kingdoms.

Philosophy

The most obvious gift a philosopher could present to a king, was a philosophical tract on kingship. Although a comparable genre was known in pre-Hellenistic Mesopotamia and Egypt, the background to the Hellenistic *Fürstenspiegel* was mainly Greek philosophy.¹⁶⁷ The notion of ideal rulership was developed by writers such as Plato, Xenophon, Aristotle, and Isokrates. But the treatise *Περὶ βασιλείας*, 'On Kingship', flourished notably in the Hellenistic age. The aim of such texts was twofold. First they were meant to instruct (future) kings in the art of ruling, or in the art of giving the impression that one was a wise, just and legitimate ruler. Second, by spreading such texts among a wider audience, kingship was propagated. Unsurprisingly, many, if not all, of these texts were written in a patronage context. One of the first to do so, was Aristotle, who wrote two treatises on kingship at the court of King Philippos II for the instruction of Alexander.¹⁶⁸ The life of Alexander himself

¹⁶⁶ On the relations between kings and philosophers see H.-J. Gehrke, 'Theorie und politische Praxis der Philosophen im Hellenismus', in: W. Schuller ed., *Politische Theorie und Praxis im Altertum* (Darmstadt 1998) 100-21.

¹⁶⁷ P. Hadot, 'Fürstenspiegel', *RE* 8 (1972) 555-632, esp. 556-68.

¹⁶⁸ Arist., fr. 646/8, 658 Rose. Cf. Plut., *Mor.* VI 329b; Strabo 1.4.9; *Vita Aristotelis Marciana* fr. 430, 15 Rose. Aristotle also wrote treatises for Alexander: *On Kingship* and *In Praise of Colonies*; he possibly also wrote two works called *The Glories of Riches* and *Alexander's Assembly*, both of them undatable, cf. M. Brocker, *Aristoteles als Alexanders Lehrer* (Berlin 1966) 30. The question whether Aristotle's biological studies were in part based on material sent to him by Alexander is dealt with i.a.

became an example for later kings.¹⁶⁹ Thus, Onesikritos of Astypalaia, a philosopher who worked at the court of Alexander, wrote an idealised life of Alexander, following the model of the *Cyropaedia*, Xenophon's moral biography of the world conqueror Cyrus the Great. An extant fragment of this lost work in Strabo—dealing with Alexander's conversation with the Indian gymnosophists—presents Alexander as the ideal philosopher-king of Platonism.¹⁷⁰ Representatives of all major philosophical schools wrote treatises on kingship, with the exception of the cynics. Most are now lost (including those written by Zeno, Kallisthenes, Kleanthes, Sphairos, Persaios) and of others only fragments have survived (Ekphantos, Diotogenes, Sthenidas).¹⁷¹

Stoic philosophers worked most fervently on the theme of ideal kingship, and indeed kings favoured stoic philosophy most of all. The stoic image of a cosmic order held together by a single divine power was a perfect model for the rule of kings. In the Stoic cosmology, Zeus was the central, active principle of cosmic harmony. A similar role was ascribed to the king on earth: the king was the pivot of terrestrial order, whose task it was to guarantee peace, justice, and prosperity. The fundamental stoic principle that the arrangement of the world was divinely ordained was useful too. The ideal state as perceived by Zeno, the founding father of Stoicism, was almost indistinguishable from the official royal view of the world as empire.¹⁷² Zeno was a *philos* of Demetrios Poliorketes, whose son, the later king Antigonos Gonatas, he educated.¹⁷³ Gonatas himself used to discuss matters of state with stoic advisors and it was said that they actually influenced his decisions.¹⁷⁴ At least two of these, Persaios and Kleanthes, wrote tracts on kingship for Gonatas.¹⁷⁵ At the later Antigonid court, the philosopher and tragedian Euphantes of Olynthos was tutor and subsequently friend of Antigonos III Doseon, to whom he dedicated a treatise *On Kingship*.¹⁷⁶ The stoic Sphairos,

by J.S. Romm, 'Aristotle's elephant and the myth of Alexander's scientific patronage', *AJPh* 110 (1989) 566-75, who answers this question negatively, as the title indicates.

¹⁶⁹ Hadot 1972, 589. Besides that of Alexander, the life of Herakles was also reworked by philosophers to become an example for kings: Diog. Laert. 6.16.104.

¹⁷⁰ Strabo 15.63.65.

¹⁷¹ Collected in L. Delatte, *Les traités de la royauté d'Ephante, Diotogène et Sthénidas* (Liège 1942).

¹⁷² See H.C. Baldry, 'Zeno's ideal state', *JHS* 73 (1959) 3-15.

¹⁷³ Tarn 1913, 223.

¹⁷⁴ Diog. Laert. 2.143.

¹⁷⁵ Hadot 1972, 589.

¹⁷⁶ Diog. Laert. 2.110.

another author of propaganda traits, enjoyed the patronage of the Spartan king Kleomenes, and later of Ptolemaios III and Ptolemaios IV.¹⁷⁷ Even cynic philosophy accepted and defended kingship as part of a fixed arrangement of social and political roles in society, a view that was propagated by *i.a.* Bion of Borysthenes, another courtier of Gonatas.¹⁷⁸ The concept of *parrhēsia* again is important here. From the Classical period down to the Imperial age, ritualised frankness of speech defined the philosopher's attitude towards those wielding power.¹⁷⁹ This made them valuable counsellors for rulers. But most of all *parrhēsia* was important to uphold the honour of the philosophers as free men, and the honour of the king as a virtuous ruler.

Astronomy

The stoic view of the cosmos was deeply influenced by a science that flourished especially in the Hellenistic age: astronomy. From the first Ionic philosophers to Aristotle, the Greeks, like any people, had always been interested in the heavenly bodies, but in the late fourth and early third centuries the study of the heavens acquired a new quality and was influenced by Babylonian astronomy.¹⁸⁰ Royal courts played a crucial role in this development. Greek interest in Babylonian astronomy was part of a broader interest in the world resulting from the Greeks' widening horizon, creating new forms of geography and ethnography. Kings took a keen interest in astronomy and stimulated research in this field. Following the example of Alexander, the Seleukids opened up Babylonian knowledge to the Greek world by their

¹⁷⁷ Diog. 7.177, 185; Plut., *Cleom.* 11. Cf. Hadot 1972, 589; Africa 1968, 62.

¹⁷⁸ Diog. Laert. 2.46-57.

¹⁷⁹ J.-J. Flinterman, 'Sophists and emperors: A reconnaissance of sophistic attitudes', in: B.E. Borg, *Paideia. The World of the Second Sophistic* (Berlin and New York 2004) 359-76, esp. 361-4; see p. 362 n. 10 for more literature on *parrhēsia* as a defining aspect of philosophers' attitudes *vis-à-vis* kings and emperors.

¹⁸⁰ F. Boll, 'Die Entwicklung der Astrologie auf klassischen Boden', in: C. Bezold, F. Boll, W. Gundel, *Sternglaube und Sterndeutung. Die Geschichte und das Wesen der Astrologie* (4th edn; Leipzig and Berlin 1931) 15-28, esp. 21-3. I prefer the term 'astronomy' to 'astrology'. The ancient Greeks and Babylonians saw no discrepancy between a scientific and a metaphysical approach to the stars. Even Aristotle, *Met.* 8.1074b, believed in the divinity of the heavenly bodies. Babylonian astronomy was metaphysical as well. To be sure, even in the modern age, Copernicus and Galileo, the acknowledged founding fathers of scientific astronomy, hardly distinguished astronomy from what we would now call astrology (Africa 1968, 65).

patronage of Chaldean wise men.¹⁸¹ The most important—or most legendary—of these was the priest, horoscoper and writer Berossos, who worked for Antiochos I. The Seleukid policy of promoting Babylonian astronomy laid the foundations of Hellenistic astronomy.¹⁸²

Soon other royal houses encouraged astronomy as well. The Ptolemaic court was home to some of the more ‘scientific’ manifestations of astronomy. Important were Aristarchos of Samos, who theorised a short-lived heliocentric view of the solar system, and Hipparchos of Nikaia, whose systematic study of the movement of the stars laid the foundations of the grand astronomical synthesis of Claudius Ptolemaios in the second century CE.

It is only a small step from the harmonious arrangement of the heavens in astronomical theory, via Stoic cosmology, to royal ideology. One interesting case of kingship and astronomy coming together was the discovery by Ptolemaios Euergetes’ court astronomer Konon of a new constellation near Leo. The discovery of this constellation was at once incorporated in royal ideology: it was presented as literally new, being a lock of hair that Euergetes’ queen Berenike had promised to offer to the gods in exchange for the safe return of her husband from the Third Syrian War; the deposition of the hair in the temple of Aphrodite-Arsinoë at Zephyrion, we can be sure, had been a public ceremony. Kallimachos thereupon produced a panegyric, ‘The lock of Berenike’, in which it was related how the lock had miraculously disappeared from the temple and through divine intervention was deified and placed among the stars.¹⁸³ The constellation was named the Lock of Berenike, which name it still has today, and became a crucial aspect of the cult of Berenike that subsequently developed.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸¹ Diod. 2.31.2; App., *Syr.* 58. Cf. Eddy 1961, 115 n. 30.

¹⁸² It was said that Berossos later moved to Kos where he gave lectures in astronomy; the Athenians honoured him with a statue, and later tradition credited him with the invention of a common sundial (Burstein 1978, 5).

¹⁸³ Two papyrus fragments of ‘The Lock of Berenike’ have been found; the rest of the poem is known only from a Latin imitation by Catullus (66), cf. P. Bing, ‘Reconstructing *Berenice’s Lock*’, in: G. Most ed., *Fragmente sammeln* (Göttingen 1996) 78-94: 94.

¹⁸⁴ K.J. Gutzwiller, ‘Callimachus’ Lock of Berenice. Fantasy, Romance, Propaganda’, *AJPh* 113 (1992) 359-85, draws attention to the fact that the constellation ‘discovered’ by Konon had in fact already been described by Aratos (*Phaen.* 146); Gutzwiller expresses a rather cynical view of Kallimachos’ and Konon’s contributions to Ptolemaic propaganda: ‘Konon’s part in the hoax was simply to find a suitable place for the lock in the sky; he decided upon a cluster of stars that Aratus had

The preoccupation with astral phenomena in Hellenistic royal ideology, in particular the comparison of the king with the sun, is discussed elsewhere in this book. Astronomy could be employed to underpin the philosophical notion that kingship was part of a divine, cosmic order. This ideology is evident from the *Phainomena* of Aratos of Soli, the literary showpiece of the Antigonid court under Gonatas.¹⁸⁵ This long didactic poem offers an all-embracing view of the universe as a well-ordered, balanced unity. The poem is more philosophical than scientific, and contains many mythological elements. Aratos does not explicitly refer to his patron Gonatas in the text, but in the allegorical introduction he describes Zeus in terms of universal rule – not only in the heavens, but on earth as well:

From Zeus let us begin, he, whom we mortals never leave unmentioned; full of Zeus are all the roads, all city squares, full the oceans and the harbours: in every way we all have need of Zeus.¹⁸⁶

The praise of Zeus Kosmokrator is followed by a long poetical celebration of the Golden Age and the rule of Justice.¹⁸⁷ Thus the association with monarchy is evident from the start.

Historiography, geography and ethnography

As we have seen, Theokritos says in *Idyll* 16 that the best thing a poet can do for a king is to immortalise his name and glorify his heroic deeds. It has often been argued that Hellenistic poetry existed for a large part of (now lost) epic, dealing not only with mythological and legendary subjects, but also with the achievements of contemporary kings. Little Hellenistic epic has been preserved, however. The only epic poem to have survived in its entirety, Apollonios' *Argonautika*, is a mythic tale, not about Hellenistic kings at all, although its

a few years earlier proclaimed nameless. Callimachus had the more difficult task of fleshing out the myth in an appealing literary form' (p. 373).

¹⁸⁵ Aratos is also known to have written an encomium and a marriage hymn for Gonatas (Green 1993, 141-2).

¹⁸⁶ Aratus, *Phaen.* 1-4.

¹⁸⁷ Lines 98-136. Cf. Hose 1997, 62: 'der Zeus des Arat ist ... ein absoluter Göttermonarch, der sein ganzes Reich vollständig beherrscht – und durch eine unüberbrückbare Distanz von den Beherrschten getrennt ist.'

relevance for the Ptolemaic monarchy is now increasingly better understood.¹⁸⁸ The idea that epic about the deeds of Hellenistic kings was a prominent genre, first put forward by Ziegler in 1934, was therefore later rejected by many.¹⁸⁹ Recently however, new (papyrological) evidence suggests that Ziegler may have been right after all,¹⁹⁰ and that such once-famous works like Choirilos' epic of Alexander, written in the king's lifetime,¹⁹¹ or Simonides' *Galatika*, celebrating Antiochos I's victory over the Celts, are only the top of the iceberg.¹⁹² Such epic texts created an image of the king as an Homeric hero, a blend of myth and history.

A more subtle way to heroise kings was through the writing of history. Many historians found employment at royal courts.¹⁹³ Kallisthenes of Olynthos wrote a history of Alexander, which was strongly propagandistic. It lauded Alexander as the champion of Hellenic culture, glorified his military achievements, and defended his claims to divine paternity. Kallisthenes also wrote a history of the preceding period for Alexander; it was called *Hellenika* and ended with Alexander's birth in 356. Such histories mixed history with myth. In a sense, court historians were the real epinicians of the Hellenistic Age.

Characteristic of court historiography was also the interest in other cultures and far-away countries.¹⁹⁴ Although not a new phenomenon at all, a relative abundance of travel

¹⁸⁸ See for instance S.A. Stephens, 'Writing Epic for the Ptolemaic Court', in: M.A. Harder *et al.*, eds., *Apollonius Rhodius* (Louvain 2001) 195-215.

¹⁸⁹ K. Ziegler, *Das hellenistische Epos: ein vergessenes Kapitel griechischer Dichtung* (Leipzig 1934). Ziegler's suggestion has been challenged notably by Cameron 1995, but was accepted by Zanker 1987, 1-2.

¹⁹⁰ See now the important survey by S. Barbantani, *Φάτις νικηφόρος. Frammenti di elegia encomiastica nell'età delle Guerre Galatiche*. Supplementum Hellenisticum 958-969 (Milano 2001). I would like to thank dr. Barbantani for kindly drawing my attention to her work.

¹⁹¹ Zanker 1987, 1; Weber 1992, 67-8; Berve 1926 I, 71.

¹⁹² Suda s.v. 'Simonides'; cf. Barbantani 2001, 208-14. Several other Greek poets of the third century are said to have composed epic poems called *Galatika*, of which fragments remain, cf. Rankin 1987, 99; Barbantani 2001, *passim*.

¹⁹³ See B. Meissner, *Historiker zwischen Polis und Königshof: Studien zur Stellung der Geschichtsschreiber in der griechischen Gesellschaft in spätklassischer und hellenistischer Zeit* (Göttingen 1992).

¹⁹⁴ For a general discussion of the new interest in the world, especially during Alexander's reign, see K. Geus, 'Space and Geography', in: Erskine 2003, 232-45. See further K. Brodersen, *Mastering the World. Ancient Geography* (London 1999). Geography and ethnography in Ptolemaic Alexandria: Fraser 1972 I, 520-53; II 750-90.

accounts by Nearchos, Pytheas and Megasthenes bear witness to a growing interest for geography and ethnography in the early Hellenistic period. Kings' interest in geography and ethnography is manifest from the expeditions kings sent off to explore strange new lands, and from the presence of geographers and non-Greek scholars at court. Berossos has already been mentioned. His *Babyloniaca* was a chronological account of the mythic and historical past of the world through Babylonian eyes, and a general introduction to Babylonian culture as a whole.¹⁹⁵ Its three books were written in Greek and dedicated to Antiochos I Soter in c. 281.¹⁹⁶ Following the Seleukid example, Ptolemaios I Soter or Ptolemaios II Philadelphos encouraged the Egyptian priest Manetho to write an *Aegyptiaca*, also in Greek, and likewise making Egyptian knowledge available to Greeks (and to modern egyptologists as well, since Manetho's arrangement in thirty dynasties is still used as a chronological framework).¹⁹⁷ To the same category belongs the translation of the Thora at the court of Ptolemaios Philadelphos.

Greek geography and ethnography were often integrated in historical writing. Hieronymos of Kardia used his experiences as a military commander for a digression in his *Histories* about Arabia.¹⁹⁸ Significantly, especially the regions untouched by Hellenistic

¹⁹⁵ S.M. Burstein, *The Babyloniaca of Berossus* (Malibu 1978) gives both a translation of the extant parts of *Babyloniaca*, and a good general introduction to Berossos and his work. A. Kuhrt, 'Berossos' *Babyloniaka* and Seleucid rule in Babylon', in A. Kuhrt and S. Sherwin-White eds., *Hellenism in the East* (London 1987) 32-56, discusses the ideological aspects of the *Babyloniaca* in view of the establishment of Seleukid rule in Babylonia. A comprehensive edition and translation of both Berossos and Manetho is G. Verbrugge and J.M. Wickersham, *Berossus and Manetho. Native Tradition in Ancient Mesopotamia and Egypt* (Ann Arbor 1996).

¹⁹⁶ Burstein 1978, 5.

¹⁹⁷ For the priority of Berossos to Manetho see Burstein 1978, 4 n. 2. Manetho became a legendary figure in due course. That the *Aegyptiaca* was written for the court can *i.a.* be conjectured from the fact that six books of didactic hexameters on astrology, the Ἀποτελεσματικά ('Forecasts'), written probably in the second and third century by various authors, were dedicated 'to Ptolemaios' to support the false claim that these were written by Manetho.

¹⁹⁸ A.B. Bosworth, 'Hieronymus' ethnography: Indian widows and Nabataean nomads', in: idem, *The Legacy of Alexander. Politics, Warfare, and Propaganda under the Successors* (Oxford 2002) 169-209.

imperialism attracted attention; information about unknown lands even was invented.¹⁹⁹ K. Geus has pointed out the lack of distinction between empirical knowledge, legend, and even fiction in Hellenistic geographical writing: ‘Above all, there grew a sizeable body of utopian literature: the writings of such as Hekataios of Abdera, Euhemeros of Iamboulos, and the legends about the fantastic voyages of Alexander. ... Fictitious travelogues and ethnographic accounts about peoples living at the edges of the world [are] characteristic of this literature.’²⁰⁰ The Seleukids were particularly interested in India and the Indian Ocean, the Ptolemies in Africa and Arabia. Both dynasties made efforts to explore sea and routes, and to obtain knowledge of the earth and of the customs, wildlife, and flora, in far away lands. Private traders, royal expeditions, and embassies brought back such knowledge and the palace gardens filled with exotic beasts and plants.

Preoccupation with exotic, rare and stupendous things evidently had a political dimension. By bringing together things from the entire known world, preferably from its fringes, monarchies demonstrated how far their power reached and that their court was the world’s epicentre. Berossos and Manetho made knowledge of the history and culture of conquered peoples available to Greeks, and symbolically integrated them in the Greek-Macedonian imperial commonwealth.²⁰¹ Alexandria was abundantly adorned with Egyptian spolia—sphinxes, obelisks, pharaonic statues—connoting Ptolemaic dominance over wealthy Egypt.²⁰² Geographers, notably the great Eratosthenes of Kyrene, meanwhile strove to bring

¹⁹⁹ Geus 2003, 242; both Strabo and Arrian claim that the Macedonians deliberately falsified geographical information in order to promote the glory of Alexander (Strabo 11.7.4; Arr., *Anab.* 5.3.2-3; *Ind.* 5.10).

²⁰⁰ Geus 2003, 242.

²⁰¹ Appropriation of foreign knowledge served a similar purpose for Hellenistic imperialism as oriental studies did for European colonialism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries; it was in like manner characterised by a mix of veritable intellectual interest and political legitimisation. On this ambiguity of modern imperialism see of course E.W. Said, *Orientalism. Western Conceptions of the Orient* (London 1978).

²⁰² Underwater archaeologists have in recent years recovered obelisks of Seti I, columns of Ramesses II, sphinxes of Sesostris III and Psammetichos II. Cf. J.-Y. Empereur, ‘Travaux récents dans la capitale des Ptolémées’, in: *Alexandrie: Une mégapole cosmopolite*. Cahiers de la Villa Kérylos 9 (Paris 1999) 25-9; for illustrations see Grimm 1998, and the coffee-table book L. Foreman, *Cleopatra’s Palace. In Search of a Legend* (1999).

together the totality of the earth, with all its aspects, into a single scientific system.²⁰³ The ambition and scale of such endeavours reveal the massive pretensions of Hellenistic imperialism. The court was the centre of this all-embracing imperial order, the place where knowledge of the entire world was gathered.

4.5 The poetics of power: the ideology of Ptolemaic panegyric

Most literature produced by the courts was not directly concerned with kingship as such. This has often led scholars to the rash conclusion that most of it was not connected with the monarchy or the court.²⁰⁴ But as I have argued above, non-laudatory poetry usually concentrated on topics favoured at court, for example etiological myth of bucolic fantasy. Enough ruler praise has been preserved to be certain that this also was a cardinal theme in Hellenistic court poetry. Below we will have a look at the substance of these texts, albeit admittedly the evidence stems mainly from early Hellenistic Alexandria.

Much of the outright panegyric poetry may have been lost since it was often occasional poetry, perhaps never meant to be written down at all. Still, enough of it has remained to descry some returning motives in panegyric poetry; the most notable of these is

²⁰³ Fraser 1972 I, 34, 100; On Eratosthenes: P.M. Fraser, 'Eratosthenes of Cyrene', *ProcBritAcad* (1970) 176-207; K. Geus, *Eratosthenes von Kyrene* (Munich 2002). Eratosthenes, a genuine *homo universalis* who also wrote philosophical, mathematical, and philological tracts, a *Geography* in three books, in which he divided the earth on a mathematical base into areas (*sphragides*, literally 'seals', a term borrowed from land measurement terminology). His revolutionary measurement of the circumference of the earth in *On the Measurement of the Earth* still counts as a stunning scientific feat. Mnaseas of Patara (or Patrai), perhaps a student of Eratosthenes active in Alexandria around 200, likewise wrote a grand synthesis of geographical, ethnographical, historical and mythological subjects covering the entire world; see now P. Cappelletto, *I frammenti di Mnasea. Introduzione testo e commento* (Milano 2003).

²⁰⁴ Thus e.g. Taeger 1957 I, 373-80, who finds no reference to 'official ruler cult' in the Alexandrian poets and Aratos. Deification of rulers can however be found in *i.a.* Kallimachos' *Lock of Berenike* and Theokritos' *Idyll* 17, and it is certainly mistaken to disconnect aulic poetry from 'official' ideology (if such a category existed at all). Rather, court poetry, esp. panegyric, ought to be seen as part of Hellenistic royal ideology, not as merely reflecting it.

the image of the whole world as one empire.²⁰⁵ Explicit laudatory texts included panegyric,²⁰⁶ paeans, epinician odes, and epic. Epigrams also could be appropriate gifts to please kings and courtiers, and to celebrate special events or successes of the dynasty. Ruler praise and imperialist propaganda was often incorporated in other poetry, which also tended to concentrate on topics associated with monarchy. Theokritos, for instance, wrote poems on the ‘royal gods’ Herakles and Dionysos (*Idyll* 24 and 26). In the *Aitia*, Kallimachos’ collection of poems on origins (but also on evolution and progress), Herakles figures prominently as well, emphasising his role as saviour and culture hero, bringing civilisation to barbarians.²⁰⁷ Apollonios’ depiction of Jason as *primus inter pares* of the Argonauts perhaps reflected the position of the early Ptolemies *vis-à-vis* the members of their *sunedrion*.²⁰⁸ A more obvious connection with imperial ideology is the image of the Argonauts’ travelling to the ends of the earth, leaving a trail of sacred objects and rituals wherever they go, and the crucial theme of tension between order and chaos.²⁰⁹ The *Aitia* includes tales about (political and cultural)

²⁰⁵ For older literature on the theme of world empire in Hellenistic panegyric see Hunter 2003, 168 (*op.cit.* below); the same theme is also noticeable in (late) Roman panegyric, cf. U. Asche, *Roms Weltherrschaftsidee und Aussenpolitik in der Spätantike im Spiegel der Panegyrici Latini* (Bonn 1983); cf. R. Rees, *Layers of Loyalty. Latin Panegyric, AD 289-307* (Oxford 2002) 88-9.

²⁰⁶ I use ‘panegyric’ or ‘encomium’ as general terms to denote a poem in praise of a person c.q. a king or queen. For a discussion of the technical difference between various forms of Greek laudatory poetry—praise (ἔπαινος), encomium (ἐγκώμιον), panegyric (πανηγυρικός), epideictic (ἐπιδεικτικός)—see D. Russell, ‘The panegyrist and their teachers’, in: M. Whitby ed., *The Propaganda of Power. The Role of Panegyric in Late Antiquity* (Leiden, Boston, Cologne 1998) 17-49, esp. 18-21. For the courtly context of the Argonautica see R.L. Hunter, *The Argonautica of Apollonius* (Cambridge 1993) 152-69.

²⁰⁷ Harder 2005, 246.

²⁰⁸ Hose 1997, 60. The monarchic intent of the *Argonautika* remains a matter of debate; Apollonios’ Jason at any rate does not provide a very inspiring heroic model, cf. R. Hunter ‘Le “Argonautiche” di Apollonio’, in: M. Fantuzzi and R. Hunter, *Muse e modelli. La poesia ellenistica da Alessandro Magno ad Augusto* (Rome and Bari 2002) 121-75, esp. 130-7. Also Herakles’ role is difficult to connect with the monarchy because he is not the leader.

²⁰⁹ Notably the peoples living around the Black Sea are presented by Apollonios as far removed from Zeus (sc. civilisation), signified by their rejection of *xenia* in their dealings with the Argonauts, cf. B. Pavlock, ‘The Black Sea Peoples in Apollonius’ Argonautica’, in: G.R. Tsetschladze ed., *Greek and Roman Settlements on the Black Sea Coast* (Bradford 1994) 14: ‘In the case of Aeëtes, the impiety towards Zeus is most pervasive, and his implicit challenge to Zeus’s authority is portrayed in the

expansion, as well as the promise of a Golden Age.²¹⁰ Four encomiastic poems of Theokritos have stood the test of time.²¹¹ We have (fragments of) seven panegyric poems, three panegyric intertexts in hymns, and epinician odes for two courtiers and a queen of Kallimachos.²¹² Kallimachos and Theokritos were active at the Ptolemaic court under Ptolemaios II Philadelphos and Ptolemaios III Euergetes. Euphorion, court librarian of Antiochos III, wrote an eulogy of Seleukos Nikator,²¹³ and a poem for a certain Hippomedon, perhaps the known courtier of Ptolemaios III.²¹⁴ Epigrams dedicated to the prominent Ptolemaic *philoï* Kallikrates and Sostratos by Poseidippos have survived,²¹⁵ and anagrams of the names Ptolemaios and Arsinoë by Lykophron.²¹⁶ There is also the notorious Athenian Hymn to

narrative by a significant cluster of images of Giants and Gigantomachy.’ The images of Gigantomachy and Titanomachy were employed to propagate the ideal of the king as vanquisher of barbarians and champion of order and civilisation; on Giants/Titans in Hellenistic poetry, esp. the *Hymn to Delos*, see Mineur 1984, 171-185; cf. Hunter 1993, 162-9. For a systematic analysis of the itinerary of the Argos see R.J. Clare, *The Path of the Argo. Language, Imagery and Narrative in the Argonautica of Apollonios of Rhodes* (Cambridge 2002) 33-83, and 119-72 for the homeward journey; on order-disorder as a theme in the *Argonautika* see pp. 231-60. Cf. J.J. Clauss, ‘Cosmos without imperium: the Argonautic journey through time’, in: M.A. Harder et al., eds., *Apollonius Rhodius* (Leuven 2000) 11-32. It is furthermore noteworthy that Argo is also a heavenly sign (M.P. Cuypers in BMCR 2005-05, 25).

²¹⁰ Harder 2005, 246.

²¹¹ *To Hieron* (Id. 16), *To Ptolemy Philadelphus* (Id. 17), *Hymn to Berenice* (fr. 3 G), and *Marriage of Arsinoë* (SH 961; this poem has also been ascribed to Poseidippos). All of Theokritos’ encomiastic texts are comprehensively discussed in W. Meineke, *Untersuchungen zu den enkomiastischen Gedichten Theokrits* (diss. Kiel 1965).

²¹² Panegyrics: *The Lock of Berenike* (fr. 110 Pfeiffer), *The Wedding of Berenike* (fr. 392 P.), *The Deification of Berenike* (fr. 228 P.), *Elegy to Magas and Berenike* (fr. 388P.), the *Charites Epigram* (Ep. 51, in praise of Berenike the wife of Ptolemaios III), *Hymn to Delos*, and *Hymn to Zeus* (the latter two in praise of Ptolemaios II). The intertexts are in *Hymns* 1, 2, and 4. Epinician odes: *Victory of Sosibios* (fr. 384 and P.Oxy 1793, 2258), *Victory of Polykles of Aigina* (fr. 198 P.), and *Victory of Berenike* (SH 254-269); cf. cf. T. Fuhrer, ‘Callimachus’ epinician poems’, in: M.A. Harder, R.F. Regtuit, G.C. Wakker eds., *Callimachus* (Groningen 1993) 79-97.

²¹³ *Suda*, s.v. ‘Euphorion’.

²¹⁴ Euphorion, fr. 174 Pfeiffer (CA 58), and fr. 30 P. (CA 36).

²¹⁵ Fraser 1972 I, 557; Weber 1993, 424.

²¹⁶ ἀπὸ μέλιτος, ‘Of Honey’, and ἴον Ἡραός, ‘Violets of Hera’ (Mineur 1985, 128).

Demetrios Poliorketes of Hermokles, of whom also two fragments of *paeans* to Antigonos Monophthalmos are extant.²¹⁷

From Zeus to Ptolemaios

We already encountered the comparison of Zeus, the principle of divine harmony, with the king, the principle of world order, in philosophical, especially Stoic writing. This belief is present in court poetry as well, being for instance a pivotal element of Aratos' poetic cosmology. It is also essential in Theokritos' seventeenth *Idyll*, an encomium for Ptolemaios Philadelphos.²¹⁸ This poem pays much attention to Philadelphos' birth and the deification of his parents, and probably was written for either a birthday celebration or, which is more likely, the anniversary of the apotheosis of Ptolemaios Soter and Berenike *c.q.* the celebration of the Ptolemaia Festival (below, section 5.4). In the opening lines of the poem Theokritos sings:

With Zeus let us begin and with him, Muses, let us end,
for in our song and praise he is supreme among the immortals.
But when singing of men let Ptolemaios be named first,
last and throughout, for he is the most excellent of men.²¹⁹

Zeus is King of Heaven, Ptolemaios King of the World. Later in the poem, Theokritos refines this notion. When Ptolemaios was born, he says, 'the heavens opened' and a great eagle descended, 'a bird of omen, a sign from Zeus'. Three times the eagle cries above the cradle, thus making it known that Ptolemaios is Zeus' chosen one.²²⁰ At that point Theokritos has described how his father, Ptolemaios Soter, has acquired a place among the gods on Mount Olympos after his apotheosis:

Now the Father has even made him equal in honour to the blessed
Immortals and a golden throne in the house of Zeus

²¹⁷ Hermokles, SH 491, 492. The Hymn to Demetrios will be discussed in chapter 5.3.

²¹⁸ On this poem R.L. Hunter, *Encomium of Ptolemy Philadelphus* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London 2003).

²¹⁹ Theocr., *Id.* 17.1-4.

²²⁰ *Ibid.*, 79-84.

was made for him.²²¹ Beside him in friendship sits Alexander,
 destroyer of the Persians, the god of the glittering crown.
 Facing him the seat of Herakles the Kentaur-killer
 has been established, made from solid adamant;
 here he joins in feasting with the heavenly ones,
 rejoicing above all in the sons of his sons
 from whose limbs the son of Kronos has lifted old age,
 and his own descendants are called immortals now.²²²

Ptolemaios has bequeathed to his son a limitless empire and inexhaustible wealth, making the Ptolemaic *oikos* the symbolic centre of the world:

(...) All the sea and all the land
 and the rushing rivers are subject to Ptolemaios.
 Huge numbers of horsemen gather around him,
 huge numbers of shield-bearing warriors clad in glittering bronze.
 He is more wealthy than all other kings together,
 such riches arrive each day at his sumptuous *oikos*
 from all directions (...).²²³

Where Philadelphos rules, there is peace:

(...) His people can work their fields in peace,
 for no enemy crosses the teeming Nile by land
 to raise the battle cry in towns that are not his,
 no enemy jumps ashore from his swift ship
 to seize with weapons the cattle of Egypt.
 Too great a man is settled in those broad fields,
 golden-haired Ptolemaios, skilled with the spear.²²⁴

²²¹ For δόμος ἐν Διὸς οἴκῳ as Mount Olympos see Hunter 2003, 112-3.

²²² Theocr., *Id.* 17.16-25. For the significance of Herakles in Ptolemaic ruler cult see Huttner 1997, 124-45; cf. Hunter 2003, 116-7.

²²³ Theocr., *Id.* 17.91-6.

²²⁴ Theocr., *Id.* 17.97-103.

The image of the king as a ‘spear-fighter’ was central to the ideology of all Hellenistic kingdoms. The king was an Homeric hero, whose personal bravery as a *promachos* brought his kingdom victory.²²⁵ In lines 5-8 Theokritos declares that he will celebrate the ‘marvellous deeds’ of Ptolemaios like earlier have honoured the deeds of heroes. In lines 53-56 Ptolemaios is even directly compared with Diomedes and Achilles, both of them great spear-fighters too, and the latter once, like Ptolemaios now, the best of men.

In the *Hymn to Zeus*, Kallimachos, too, compares the rule of Ptolemaios Philadelphos to the rule of Zeus.²²⁶ Kallimachos presents Philadelphos as the only real king on earth because he is Zeus’ chosen one:

From Zeus come kings. ... You [Zeus] gave them cities to protect. And you yourself are seated in the citadels of the cities to judge those who rule their people badly, and those who rule well. You have bestowed on them wealth and abundant prosperity – on all of them, but not in equal measures. This you can clearly judge from our ruler, for he far outweighs all the others. In the evening he accomplishes what he has thought of in the morning. Indeed, the greatest things in the evening but the lesser as soon as he thinks of them. But the others need a whole year to accomplish such things, and some other things not even in one. Others, again, you prevent from accomplishing anything at all, and you utterly frustrate their ambitions.²²⁷

In the *Hymn to Delos* Kallimachos equates his king with Apollo.²²⁸ In the Hymn, Kallimachos relates how the pregnant Leto is moving towards the isle of Kos to give birth to Apollo, when suddenly a voice comes from her womb:

²²⁵ For the heroic ethos of kings see chapter 1.4.

²²⁶ J.J. Clauss, ‘Lies and allusions. The address and date of Callimachus’ *Hymn to Zeus*’, *CA* 5.2 (1986) 155-7, argues that Kallimachos presented this poem—which focuses on Zeus’ birth and enthronement—to Philadelphos on (the anniversary of) his accession as co-regent in 285/4; see nn. 3-5 for a discussion of alternative views.

²²⁷ Callim., *Hymn* 1.78-88.

²²⁸ R. Pretagostini, ‘La nascita di Tolomeo II Filadelfo in Teocrito, *Idillio* XVII e la nascita di Apollo in Callimaco, *Inno a Delo*’, in: G. Arrighetti and M. Tulli eds., *Letteratura e riflessione sulla letteratura nella cultura classica* (Pisa 2000) 157-70. On the *Hymn to Delos* in general see W.H. Mineur, *Callimachus, Hymn to Delos* (Leiden 1984). Kallimachos probably wrote the poem between 271 and 265 for Ptolemaios Philadelphos’ birthday or the anniversary of his accession; the two occasions were only two weeks apart and may have been celebrated simultaneously in one feast: Mineur 1984, 10-8. W.W. Tarn, *Antigonos Gonatas* (Oxford 1913) 211-41, has suggested that the

Mother, do not give birth to me there. I am not displeased with the island, nor do I begrudge it, as it is beautiful and has good pasture grounds, like any other; but another god [*sc.* Philadelphos] has been promised to her by Fate, one of the sublime lineage of the Saviours: under his power, not unwilling to be ruled by a Macedonian, will be the two lands and the countries that lie on the sea, as far as the ends of the earth, where the swift horses always carry Helios.²²⁹

Again, Ptolemaios' power is unlimited: it stretches from sunrise to sunset.²³⁰

Peace and prosperity

Another significant theme that is—indirectly—present in the *Hymn to Zeus*, is the connection of the king with the fertility of the land, a wide-spread notion in the Ancient World. Kallimachos places the birth of Zeus not on Crete, but gives preference to a myth according to which Zeus' birthplace was Arkadia. Arkadia, until then a dry and inhospitable country,

Hymn was not commissioned by Philadelphos, but by his wife Arsinoë as a 'birthday present'. E. Cahen, *Les hymnes de Callimaque* (Paris 1930) 281-3, and C. Meillier, *Callimaque et son temps. Recherches sur la carrière et la condition d'un écrivain à l'époque des premiers Lagides* (Lille 1979) 180-91, believe that the Hymn was ordered by the Delians, to be performed on Delos.

²²⁹ Callim., *Hymn* 4.162-70. This Hellenistic technique of employing mythological spokespersons in encomiastic contexts, perhaps an invention of Kallimachos, was carried over to Roman panegyric: K. Coleman, 'Apollo's speech before the Battle of Actium: Propertius 4.6.37-54', in: A.F. Basson and W.J. Dominik eds., *Literature, Art, History. Studies on Classical Antiquity and Tradition. In Honour of W.J. Henderson* (Frankfurt am Main 2003) 37-45; on Kallimachos' influence on early Roman panegyric see also A. Gosling, 'Political Apollo: From Callimachus to the Augustans', *Mnemosyne* 45.4 (1992) 502-12; W. Wimmel, *Kallimachos in Rom. Die Nachfolge seines apologetischen Dichtens in der Augusteerzeit* (Wiesbaden 1960); cf. R.L. Hunter, 'Epilogo romano', in: Fantuzzi & Hunter 2002, 533-65.

²³⁰ Hunter 2003, 168, notes that the reference to 'the two lands' (ἀμφοτέρῃ μεσόγεια, presumably Upper and Lower Egypt) is 'one of the few now commonly accepted "Egyptianizing" references in the Hymns'; remarkably, Hunter, although normally critical about such interpretations, also accepts an Egyptian origin of the sun symbolism. Bing 1988, 30-35, notes the instances where the disorderly world before Apollo is contrasted with the peace and harmony that follow the birth of the god; in my view this is also the meaning of the association of Apollo's with Ptolemaios' birth.

enjoys instant fertility when Zeus is born, and turns into a land of bliss.²³¹ In Theokritos' encomium for Philadelphos images of fertility and good fortune abound:

Wealth and good fortune are his in abundance;
vast is the land that he rules and vast the sea.
Countless countries and countless races of men
raise their crops thanks to the rain sent by Zeus,
but none is so fruitful as Egypt's broad plains
where the flooding Nile drenches and breaks up the soil.²³²

Theokritos' sixteenth *Idyll* ('To Hieron') emphasises the causal connection between kingship on the one hand, and the prosperity, peace, and harmony of the land on the other, even more explicitly. The poet first describes a confused, violent world in which greed prevails over honour, war over peace, and the barbaric Carthaginians have the better of the civilised Greeks. The coming of Hieron, Theokritos prophesises, will change everything. He will restore peace and order to Sicily. See how the Carthaginians already tremble for fear as the warrior Hieron girds himself for battle, 'with a crest of horsehair shadowing his gleaming helmet.' Only a handful of barbarians will be left alive, to return to Africa and spread the fame of Hieron 'with tidings of the deaths of loved ones to mothers and wives.' When all this has been done, Theokritos beseeches the gods to

Grant that the original inhabitants may repossess their cities, and restore what has been destroyed by the hands of foes. May the soil be tilled again and bring forth crops, while bleating sheep in countless numbers grow fat upon the pastures. ... May fallows be ploughed and become fertile, while the cicada, watching the shepherds in the midday sun, makes music in the foliage of the trees. May weapons rust under cobwebs and may the battle-cry become a forgotten sound.²³³

²³¹ Call., *Hymn* 1.18-35. Kallimachos defends his preference for the Arkadian version, by saying that the Cretans' claim that their country was Zeus' birthplace cannot be true because Cretans are liars (9-10).

²³² Theocr., *Id.* 17.77-83.

²³³ Theocr., *Id.* 16.88-97.

The idyllic, pastoral world that Theokritos conjures up is reminiscent of the Golden Age at the beginning of time in Greek mythology, an earthly paradise also known from Mesopotamian and Israelite mythology.

To bring peace, war must first be waged. Chaos has to be defeated to secure order. A common theme in royal ideology was the presentation of the king as vanquisher of barbarians. Although in *Idyll* 16 the Carthaginians are brought up as the barbarian foes,²³⁴ the archetypal enemies of the Hellenistic order were the Celts. Antigonos Gonatas used his victories over the Celts to legitimise his usurpation of the Macedonian throne, and both Antiochos I and Attalos I styled themselves *sōtēres* after they had defeated the Asian Galatians in battle. In 276 Celts had invaded Greece but were defeated at Delphi. The victory was attributed to the intervention of Apollo himself.²³⁵ The mythic saving of Greece figures also in Kallimachos' *Hymn to Delos*, but Kallimachos manages to give Ptolemaios Philadelphos part of the honour, although the Ptolemaic king had no part in it at all, when Apollo, still speaking from inside Leto, prophecies that:

A time will come when both he [*sc.* Philadelphos] and I shall fight the same battle, when against the Greeks a barbaric sword is raised, a Celtic Ares, the later born Titans, who from the edge of the earth ²³⁶ will approach fast as snow and in numbers equal to the stars. ... The strongholds and villages of the Lokrians and the Delphic heights and the Krissaian plains and the gorges of the mainland will be trampled underfoot from all directions. [The Delphians] shall see thick smoke coming from their neighbours; and not just from hearsay, but from the temple they shall see from afar the bands of enemies, and then beside my tripod the swords and the shameless necklaces and the hateful shields ... Part of those shields shall be my price, whereas the other [shields], which saw their masters perish in the fire, shall be placed by the Nile, as the great booty of a king who did all he could. Future Ptolemaios, I give you these prophecies, and you will praise in the days that are yet to come the prophet, who was still in his mother's womb.²³⁷

²³⁴ On anti-Carthaginian *topoi* in *Idyll* 16 see Hans 1985, who traces Theokritos' images back to 'official' Syracusean propaganda. Note that Pindar, to whom Theokritos continually alludes, related the Syracusean defeat of the Carthaginians to the myth of the Titans (*Pyth.* 1).

²³⁵ On Celts and kings see below, chapter 1.4.

²³⁶ ἐσπέρου ἐσχατόωντος, 'the uttermost west'.

²³⁷ Callim., *Hymn* 4.171-90.

What ‘Apollo’ is referring to here, is the suppression of a mutiny of Celtic mercenaries in Philadelphos’ own army during the First Syrian War (274-271). Ptolemaic forces had managed to isolate the mutineers on an island in the Nile, and then destroyed them by setting the island’s vegetation on fire.²³⁸ Thus, Kallimachos was able to equate Philadelphos’ triumph in Egypt with Apollo’s victory in Greece. Both were saviour gods who delivered the world from the barbarians. Simultaneously, Philadelphos betters his rival Antigonos Gonatas, whose victory over the Celts in the Battle of Lysimacheia (277) had given him the prestige to become master of Macedonia. In the *Hymn to Delos*, only Apollo is credited with the victory in Greece, and Gonatas’ name is not mentioned. Moreover, in the *Hymn to Apollo* Kallimachos writes:

Whoever fights against the blessed gods, fights with my king;
 whoever fights against my king, fights with Apollo.²³⁹

Presenting the king as the earthly champion of the gods was not the privilege of the Ptolemies alone. Philippos V used a famous poem on Zeus by his *suntrophos* Samos, son of Chrysogonos, to claim the same. In 218 the Antigonid king had demolished Thermos, holy place of the Aitolians, in retaliation of some sacrilegious act of the Aitolian League. When the army departed, a line from Samos’ poem was left behind as graffito on a ruined wall:

Seest thou how far the divine bolt hath sped?²⁴⁰

This simple line had far-reaching implications. It compared Philippos’ military activities with the lightning striking down, and thus implicitly associated Philippos with Zeus. It presented Philip’s power as boundless, reaching even to the remotest of places. It presented Philippos as a just ruler who punishes the wrongdoers on behalf of the supreme god, for whose wrath no-one can hide anywhere.

²³⁸ Paus. 1.7.2.

²³⁹ Call., *Hymn* 2.26-7.

²⁴⁰ Polyb. 5.8.5-6.

4.6 Conclusion: The ivory tower

In this chapter we have looked at forms and functions of artistic and scientific patronage at the Hellenistic royal courts. Two principal questions were raised: 1) for what reasons did artists, scholars, and scientists strive after a place at court, and 2) what motives did rulers have for patronising the arts and sciences?

I have argued that the place of artists, scholars, and scientists at the royal court was not fundamentally different from that of other courtiers. They were not forced to become the 'servants' of kings; there remained various other opportunities for them to work and make a living. They flocked to the court for the same reason as other courtiers did: because at court status, power and privileges could be obtained, and artistic stimulus to boot. Their relationships with the kings were characterised, not by submission, but by reciprocity, especially the exchange of prestige. Although the court supplied artists with subjects, there was only limited patron guidance, and clients were left free to pursue their own goals. For many of these men, their roles as courtiers was integral to their science or art, and these two aspects cannot be separated. Competition between poets, scholars offers one explanation for the often unorthodox and innovative nature of their work.

The appreciation of kings and their *philoï* lent authority to works of literature or philosophy. *Philoï*, and notably the king himself, were certified arbiters of taste. Because of their rank and education they qualified as judges of quality and merit, and their approval contributed to legitimate new ideas and art forms. Everyone knew that Alexander had his portraits made only by Lysippos, who therefore clearly was the greatest sculptor alive. Conversely, the fame of the artists and scholars was added to the prestige of the patron. Works of art were offered to kings and courtiers as gifts and subsequently became their possessions.

Patronage was significant for two of the basic functions of the court: the court as a stage for the cult of kingship, and the court as the focus of competition with other dynasties. In cultural and scientific patronage the two functions merged. The splendour of a court's system of patronage was clearly meant to increase the glory of the king and his dynasty, and to humiliate his rivals. Moreover, some forms of art were suitable for explicit propaganda. This was the case with literature, historiography and the visual arts. But all forms of patronage also had more oblique ideological significance.

Because kings tried to outdo each other in the magnificence of their patronage, there was a strong tendency to strive for new and amazing things. Progress in science, technology, and culture gave prestige to the patrons, and kings thus had good political reasons to stimulate

experiment and innovation. Competition also underlay the specific interest of the court in military technology, *viz.* the development of artillery, siege engines and warships. It should be remembered that *vis-à-vis* cities kings were the champions of freedom – specifically of *autonomia*, *eleutheria* and *dēmokratia* if a city was Greek. It is not surprising therefore that kings were, too, the champions of freedom in the field of the arts and sciences. It was important for a king not to be looked upon as a repressive tyrant.

World Empire and Golden Age

The court supplied poets and philosophers with typical aulic topics and forms: aetiology, dynastic history, pastoral fantasy, urban mime, panegyric, sympotic epigram, ‘Fürstenspiegel’. And of course mythological subjects that could be directly or indirectly associated with kingship or empire: Herakles as *sōtēr*; barbarians living on the world’s edge; military victory over barbarians; the battle between the Gods and the Titans (or Giants); the primordial Golden Age; Greek colonisation myth; Apollo and Zeus. The diversity of topics favoured at court come together in two main themes: the ideal of universal empire and the promise of a golden age. Claims to universality can be recognised first of all in the association of terrestrial monarchy with the heavenly kingship of Zeus, and in the comparison of royal rule with the power of the sun. In the next chapter we will see that universal empire was also a *Leitmotiv* in the ceremonial and ritual representation of monarchy.

Closely related to the dream of world empire is the promise of a (new) golden age. Here, too, the image of the sun is relevant. As in many other Near Eastern cultures, Hellenistic kingship was believed to be connected with the prosperity, even the fertility of the land. Moreover the ruler was presented as a divine or semi-divine saviour, whose military prowess safeguarded peace. The shepherd symbolised the peaceful life. In bucolic poetry the world is idealised as a place of bliss and tranquillity, where the vicissitudes of love are the main worry of men and gods alike. Also in the *Argonautika*, herdsmen are associated with an idyllic world of order and peace. The pastoral communities that the Argonauts encounter during their voyage are sometimes deliberately reminiscent of Hesiod’s description of the mythic Golden Age.²⁴¹ As we have seen, the promise of a new Golden Age is also prominent in Theokritos’ *Idyll* 16 and 17, in Kallimachos’ *Hymn to Delos*, and in Aratos’ *Phainomena*. In other literary texts the opposite of the royal order is put to the fore: the barbarian, peripheral Other who

²⁴¹ H. Bernsdorff, *Hirten in der nicht-bukolischen Dichtung des Hellenismus*. Palingenesia 72 (Stuttgart 2001) 66-89; cf. e.g. *Argon.* 2.649-60; 4.964-78.

threatens civilisation but is vanquished by Herakles or the king, or voluntarily adopts Hellenic culture. A cardinal trait of much court literature is its emphasis on the progress and expansion of civilisation. This is particularly the case with Kallimachos' collection of poetry, the *Aitia*. For instance Kallimachos' poems about Herakles concentrate on his role as saviour and culture hero; Herakles defeats monsters and pacifies barbaric peoples by introducing Greek culture.²⁴² And this brings up one last, but fundamental characteristic of court patronage: its distinctive, deliberate Hellenic character.

Hellenism and empire

Non-Greek artists, writers, and scholars were almost completely absent from the courts. Notable exceptions such as Berossos, Manetho, and perhaps Seleukos of Seleukeia,²⁴³ prove the rule, especially since they, too, used the Greek language for their writings. 'Alien wisdom', such as Babylonian astronomy, was neatly incorporated in Greek philosophy or science. Kings also promoted the study of the Greek past. Alexandrian poets were intensely interested in the (mythic) origins of Greek culture. They integrated in their works an enormous variety of mythological, geographical, historical, and religious material, making good use of the vast knowledge collected in the royal library. In the Alexandrian *mouseion*, philologists meticulously studied the poets of the Greek past, notably Homer. It would be anachronistic to understand the obsession of the Alexandrians with the Greek legacy as a form of nationalism. It would also be wrong to attribute it to some idealist concern on the part of the monarchy for a supposed feeling of homesickness or culture shock among Greeks living 'abroad'. Such an explanation cannot be applied to Mediterranean *poleis* like Alexandria or Antioch, where Greeks formed both the upper class and the majority of the population. Court poetry was definitely not aimed at the whole of the Greek population, but only to well-educated upper classes, first of all royal *philoï*. The *philoï* were of mixed origin, but they

²⁴² Harder 2005, 246.

²⁴³ 'Theopais Babylon: een multiculturele stad in de Hellenistische tijd', *Lampas* 38.3 (2005) 198-213, esp. 208-9, listing several ethnic 'Chaldeans' who became famous among the Greeks as astronomers and philosophers; the most notable of these was Diogenes of Seleukeia on the Tigris, a Babylonian who became head of the Athenian Stoa in the middle of the second century BCE (Strabo 16.1.16; Plut., *Mor.* 1.5.328d); his Babylonian name perhaps was Uballissu-Bēl. The others are the astronomers Naburianos (Nabu-rimanni), Kidenas (Kidinnu) and Soudinos (Strabo 16.1.16), and maybe the stoic Apollodoros of Seleukeia (Nabu-iddin?). Whether these men, too, were connected with a royal court is unknown.

united by a shared ‘high’ culture. Finally, and most importantly, if court poetry indeed in the second instance reached an educated audience of regional and civic upper classes, as I have proposed, this is inclusive of Hellenized *non*-Greeks, who had a multiple—e.g. Greek-Egyptian, Greek-Babylonian, Greek-Jewish—identity because their elite status in part depended on their loyalty to the empire.²⁴⁴

Unlike Classical Greek literature, Hellenistic literature tended to smooth out national and tribal differences between the Greeks, and reinvented Greek culture in the light of a new, more cosmopolitan world view in which there was also place for Hellenized non-Greeks. At the same time the Hellenism of the court was a noticeable elitist culture. The combination of these two aspects may help to clarify the purport of the promotion of Hellenistic culture at the royal courts.

First, Hellenism was instrumental in the creation of group cohesion and identity among the royal *philoï*. Particularly the courtiers at the early Antigonid, Ptolemaic, and Seleukid courts had disparate origins. They were ethnic Macedonians, various types of Greeks, as well as the odd Iranian, Egyptian, or Illyrian. A shared elite culture bound them together. This culture should of necessity be pan-Hellenic, acceptable and understandable for all. Moreover, by their appreciation of difficult and erudite matters, courtiers elevated themselves above other social groups – more or less analogous to the way that palace architecture accentuated the aloofness of king and court by the physical separation of the palace from the city in which it stood (see section 2.1). The utilisation of knowledge and taste as a means of distancing is noticeable in most court societies in world history: ‘The court, shielded from the outside world, ... projects an image of itself as mysterious and inaccessible; its power is enhanced by [the] double aim of seeming both very learned and very glorious.’²⁴⁵

At the same time culture served as an instrument to give cohesion to the empire. Imperial states normally administer territories and populations indirectly, *viz.* through contacts with regional and local elites, and the Hellenistic empires were not exceptional in this respect. Just like the Austrian emperors favoured High German culture to unite their *Vielvölkerstaat* at the top level of society, and the multi-ethnic elite in the Ottoman Empire was united by Ottoman culture and language—a blend of Persian, Arabian, Byzantine, and Turkic influences—so, too, did Hellenistic kings employ a generic, non-national form of Greekness

²⁴⁴ For multiple identity see above, n. 98 on p. 131.

²⁴⁵ S. Bertelli, ‘The courtly universe’, in: S. Bertelli, F. Cardini, E. Garbero Zorzi eds., *The Courts of the Italian Renaissance* (Milan 1986) 7-38, at 17.

as a culture of empire. It was specifically Hellenism that was promoted, partly because the kings and most of their courtiers had Macedonian or Greek roots, partly because Greek cities formed the cornerstone of Macedonian imperial rule. By concerning themselves with Greek culture on a grand scale, rulers presented themselves as philhellenes. Moreover, the Hellenism of the court had a distinct cosmopolitan character that transgressed the multifarious cultural and linguistic zones of the Hellenistic world, and could also be adopted by non-Greeks. The evidence for second century Judea—1 and 2 *Maccabees*, Flavius Josephus—makes clear that at the regional level Hellenic culture was specifically adopted by upper class families who derived status political prevalence from royal favour; at the same time, those Judean families who failed to profit from the imperial system tended to oppose Hellenism on the rebound, and conspicuously embraced autochthonous local culture. Thus Hellenism, in states that were characterised by political, ethnical, and cultural heterogeneity, contributed to a sense of imperial commonwealth, a certain sense of world unity even. Royal patronage of Greek art, poetry, and scholarship made it manifest that the royal court was the heart of this unifying culture.

Hellenistic poetry was not *l'art pour l'art*. Neither was there any *science pour science*, for that matter. But both science and poetry *were* produced in, and for, an ivory tower: the ivory tower of the court and its various satellites in the province.

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, 'Περσικόν δε κάρτα ο 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 (*anaktētēria*) 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 Instituts 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 Herrschaftsantritts 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 πρόρρορον 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': (θερραπευόντοι).

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 *θεόνοος* 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 *θεόνοος* as a *pars pro toto* for 'heaven', as in e.g. Aesch., *Eum.* 229 and Theocr., *Id.* 7.93 (*Διὸς θεόνοος*). Cf. E. Honigmann, s.v. 'Θεόνοος', 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 θεόνοος* 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 (στέφανη), on another a gilded horn, on still another a gold wreath (στέφανος), 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.

VI

Synthesis: A Golden Age

*You think that you are sitting in a state of peace,
but all the land is in the grip of war*

Kallinos 1.4 ¹

War

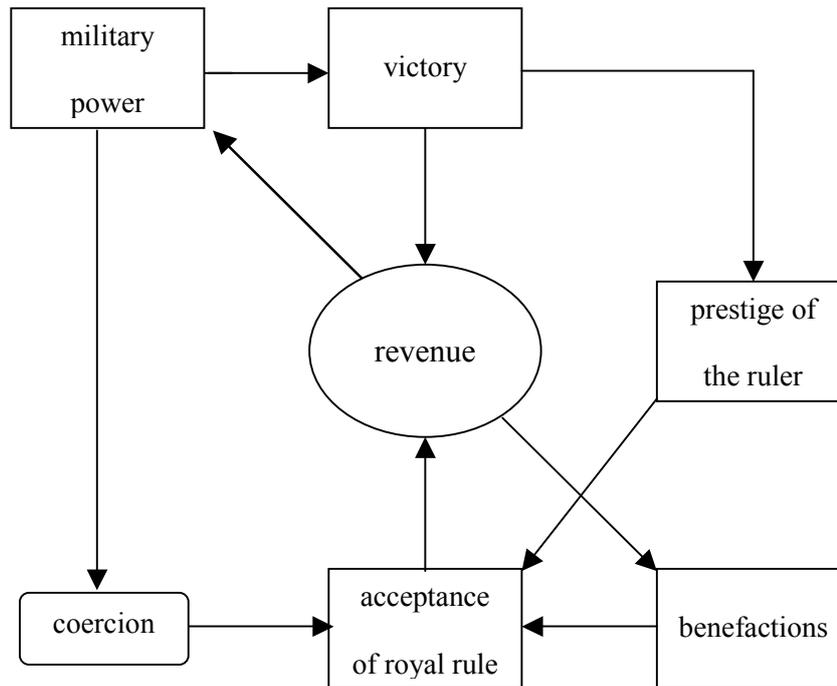
At the beginning of this book it was emphasised that military power was the foundation of Hellenistic kingship (section 1.3). From a modern perspective, monarchic rule seems to be no more than coercion dressed up as protection and benediction. Using force of arms, kingdoms acquired control over material and human resources, especially by coercing or intimidating cities into paying tribute, preferably in silver, needed to pay the army.² Warfare in itself could be directly profitable, too, as it brought in marketable slaves and other spoils. The capital thus acquired was used first of all for the upkeep or expansion of military means, and secondly for other expenditures necessary to sustain the empire, such as benefactions in cities, the distribution of gifts to friends and the upkeep of courtly splendour.

This simple scheme, however, is complicated by the fact that even for monarchies with formidable armies and fleets, subjugating substantial numbers of cities by force alone is all but impossible. Had Alexander been compelled to besiege every single city in the Middle

¹ trans. D. Gerber, *Greek Elegiac Poetry* (Cambridge 1999) 19.

² For the revenues and expenditures of the Seleukid monarchy see now Aperghis 2004. Aperghis' challenging hypothesis is that the Seleukids pursued a deliberate policy to stimulate economic growth in the cities, and introduced a monetary economy in the Near East in order to increase the monarchy's revenue in silver.

East, the conquest of the Persian Empire would have lasted a century or so, if not failed entirely. Although Alexander occasionally made examples—Thebes, Tyre—he conquered most of his empire by defeating the Persian king in battle and by exploiting the prestige he derived from these victories. Warfare, in other words, was not only profitable economically but ideologically as well, producing both revenue and prestige:



This explains why the court was in essence a military organisation, as was argued in section 3.3. It also explains why monarchic propaganda focussed on military matters. The tenet of this propaganda was the principle that military success justifies monarchic rule. As we have seen in chapters 1 and 5, Hellenistic kings derived legitimacy from theatrical militarism, presenting themselves as epic warriors who seemed to be able to single-handedly resolve the outcome of battles.

In the philosophy and practice of Hellenistic kingship, mythic imagery was more than allegoric. The use of divine images in the ornamentation of palaces, the mythical *tableaux vivant* in the Grand Procession of Ptolemaios Philadelphos, the ritualised heroism of kings on the battlefield, the commissioning of victory panegyric in epic form, the employment of Homeric stereotypes in encomiastic poetry – it all added up to an image of the exploits of contemporary kings being no less ‘epic’ than the deeds of kings in the age of heroes.

‘Alexander regarded the *Iliad* as a handbook of the art of war’, Plutarch writes, precisely encapsulating the indistinction of myth and history that was typical of monarchic ideology.³ In other words, in Hellenistic kingship past and present, myth and history merged.⁴

³ Plut., *Alex.* 8.3. Alexander ‘took with him’, Plutarch continues, ‘a text annotated by Aristotle, which became known as “the casket copy”, and which he always kept under his pillow, together with his dagger’ – and which he conspicuously showed to his army and court, we can be sure. The casket belonged to the spoils taken from Darius after Issos, and was regarded ‘as the most valuable item of all’; Alexander in turn kept in it *his* ‘most precious possession’ (Plut., *Alex.* 26.1).

⁴ As regards the indistinction of history and myth Lord Raglan, *The Hero* (London 1936) 194, could still write that the defining difference between a mythic and historical hero, is that the first only fights in single combat, seldom has companions, and never commands armies. Today however it is more accepted that the divide between history and myth is a modern convention. Paul Veyne, *Did the Greeks Believe in their Myths?* (Chicago 1988; orig. French 1983) 42, answers the question in the title with a definite ‘yes’: ‘absolutely no one, Christians included, ever expressed the slightest doubt concerning the historicity of Aeneas, Romulus, Theseus, Heracles, Achilles, or even Dionysus; rather, everyone asserted this historicity’. Cf. R.A. Segal, ‘Introduction’, in idem ed., *Hero Myths* (Oxford and Malden 2000) 1-37, esp. 9: ‘The connection between myth and history is blurry. To begin with, a traditional kind of hero might have lived but be credited with exaggerated deeds or attributes. A brave soldier becomes fearless; a kindly soul becomes saintly. Strength typically becomes omnipotence: knowledge becomes omniscience. Indeed, mere bravery, kindness, strength, or knowledge would not suffice. Heroic qualities must be magnified to the point of divinity.’ An interesting case study is N.K.Y. Ho, ‘Cantonese opera in a rural setting: Observations on village drama’, in: G. Aijmer and Å. Boholm eds., *Images and Enactments. Possible Worlds in Dramatic Performance* (Gothenburg 1994) 113-34, showing how in contemporary China theatrical plays with mythical subject matter about the eternal battle between good and evil are regarded as true history by the audience. In other words, as far as the Greeks were concerned, the mythical age of the heroes formed part of history, their ‘classical period’. Cf. E. Visser, *De goede oude tijd* (Groningen 1976), showing that in Hellenistic and Roman times the Greeks’ notion of a classical age was not directed towards the fifth century: the real golden age was the heroic age of epic, when men were stronger and better than ‘today’ – a view already present in Homer (e.g. *Il.* 1.271-2; 5.303-4), and of course in the Archaic idea of successive mythic ages in e.g. Hesiod. Cf. K. Bassi, ‘The semantics of manliness in Ancient Greece’, in I. Sluiter and R.M. Rosen eds., *Andreia. Studies in Manliness and Courage in Classical Antiquity* (Leiden 2003), demonstrating that literature of the Classical period often nostalgically looks back to the Homeric world as a time of true manliness, using the word *andreia* to denote the *lack* of manliness among contemporary men.

Alongside the ritualised display of military power the exhibition of wealth derived from victory was also a key element in the self-presentation of the monarchies. The munificence of Hellenistic kings was proverbial.⁵ Lavish gifts to cities and temples served not only as a mechanism to bind them to the empire, but also were a form of ritual display,⁶ demonstrating the king's success as a war leader and hence his ability to protect and support his subjects.

Empire

Evaluating the history of the Diadochs in the *Life of Pyrrhos*, Plutarch wrote:

For how men to whose rapacity neither sea nor mountain nor uninhabitable desert sets a limit, men to whose inordinate desires the boundaries which separate Europe and Asia put no stop, can remain content with what they have and do one another no wrong when they are in close touch, it is impossible to say. Nay, they are perpetually at war, ... and they treat the two words war and peace like current coins, using whichever happens to be for their advantage, regardless of justice; for surely they are better men when they wage war openly than when they give the names of justice and friendship to the times of inactivity and leisure which interrupt their works of injustice.⁷

Plutarch's critical assessment of the Diadochs' motives is pithily expressed in the word *πλεονεξία* ('rapacity'), *i.e.* the craving for expansion at the expense of others, a vice he attributed in particular to Pyrrhos.⁸ However, just like the vanity and pomposity ascribed to Hellenistic kings by pro-Roman authors was in fact a negative interpretation of *tryphē*, so too was the greed that according to Plutarch characterised these kings ultimately derived from their own self-presentation as triumphant conquerors.

Following in the footsteps of Babylonian, Assyrian and Persian kings, the Macedonian emperors of the Hellenistic period presented themselves as world rulers, claiming the entire

⁵ Cf. Heinen 1983, 116-21 (Ptolemaic *tryphē* as a condemnatory topos in Roman propaganda).

⁶ T. Linders, 'Ritual display and the loss of power', in: P. Hellström and B. Alroth eds., *Religion and Power in the Ancient Greek World. Proceedings of the Uppsala Symposium 1993*. Boreas 24 (Uppsala 1996) 121-4. For the king as benefactor in general consult Bringmann 2000.

⁷ Plut., *Pyrrh.* 12.2-3.

⁸ Nederlof 1940, 58. The word appears also at 7.3 en 9.6, cf. 23.2 and 30.3.

oikoumenē as their dominion and accepting no other kings as their equals.⁹ Hence the association of earthly kingship with the all-embracing heavenly rule of Zeus. We find for instance on the reverse of a series of coins of Antiochos VIII, struck between c. 121 and 96, a picture of Zeus Ouranios stretching out his right hand in a gesture of omnipotence.¹⁰ In his right hand the King of Heaven holds the sun and in his left hand a royal sceptre. Above his head a moon is depicted and the whole picture is framed by a victory wreath. The obverse, of course, shows the portrait of the earthly king Antiochos. And already in the late fourth century a fresco was commissioned in Athens for the Demetria Festival, depicting Demetrios Poliorketes enthroned on the *oikoumenē*, presumably pictured as a sphere.¹¹

The ideal of universal empire was communicated through the use of cosmic symbols: the zodiac, the moon and, above all, the sun, symbol of almighty and eternal power.¹² Such symbolism had antecedents in Greece, Egypt and the Near East. But in the Hellenistic empires the sun became an emblem of kingship more than in any of the preceding monarchies, finding expression for instance in the use of radiant crowns attached to a king's diadem, as depicted on coins and in all probability worn in reality during ceremonial occasions. When Darius offered Alexander half of his empire, 40.000 talents *and* his daughter, Alexander allegedly

⁹ As was emphasised in chapter 1.3, ideological claims do not necessarily conform to historical reality. Of course, the Hellenistic kings' relentless pursuit of expansion was increasingly unsuccessful, but claims to universal dominance were never mitigated, and conquest remained the principal task of rulers throughout Hellenistic history, as the examples of Philippos V, Antiochos III and Kleopatra VII make evident. An ambiguous but characteristic feature of Hellenistic imperialism is the fact that alongside the formal ideology that there can be only one 'real' ruler of the *oikoumenē*, Antigonid, Seleukid and Ptolemaic kings treated each other as equals in diplomatic contacts (see above, section 1.3).

¹⁰ On this gesture see H.P. L'Orange, *Studies in the Iconography of Cosmic Kingship in the Ancient World* (Oslo 1953) 139-70.

¹¹ Ath. 535f. See MacCormack 1981, 127-32, for the Imperial Roman image of the emperor enthroned or standing on a *globus*, though here principally used for deceased emperors; in Christian iconography of the later Roman Empire the *oikoumenē*-globe was turned into a throne for Christ.

¹² Kingship as reflection of the sun in the Near East: R. Eisler, *Weltenmantel und Himmelszelt. Religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen zur Urgeschichte des antiken Weltbildes* (Munich 1910); L'Orange 1953; P. Calmeyer, 'Der "Apollon" des Dareios', *MDAI(I)I* 22 (1989) 125-30; W. Nagel and B. Jacobs, 'Königsgötter und Sonnengottheit bei altiranischen Dynastien', *IA* 29 (1989) 337-89; Goodenough 1928, 78-83; W.W. Tarn, 'Alexander Helios and the Golden Age', *JRS* 22 (1932) 135-60; Grant 1972, 142-4; Śnieżewski 1998, 135-8.

replied that ‘the universe (*kosmos*) cannot be governed by two suns nor the world (*oikoumenē*) by two masters’.¹³ In a poem of Hermodotos, Antigonos Monophthalmos was praised as ‘the offspring of the sun’,¹⁴ just like the Seleukids claimed that Seleukos I was the son of Apollo. And the so-called Star of Vergina, used as an heraldic emblem also by the Seleukids, presumably is a sun as well, to be understood as a symbol of universality rather than a ‘national’ Macedonian emblem.¹⁵

The image of a Sun King whose rule enlightens the whole world and who promises the coming of a Golden Age became—from Imperial Roman notions of cosmic rulership to Louis XIV’s self-presentation as ‘roi soleil’—one of the most enduring influences of Hellenistic kingship in later ages.¹⁶

Representation

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

¹³ Diod. 17.54; cf. Plut., *Mor.* 180c: ‘But he made answer to Darius that the earth could not tolerate two suns, nor Asia two kings’.

¹⁴ Plut., *Mor.* 182c.

¹⁵ Seleukid ‘Vergina’ stars appear as heraldic emblems on the Seleukid shields depicted on the friezes in the *temenos* of Athena at Pergamon. Even the ostentatious display of gold in the *pompē* of Philadelphos may have had a solar connotation, as the association of gold with the sun is common in many Near Eastern cultures, including Greece. In New Kingdom Egypt, the golden jewellery and regalia worn by the pharaoh—who was not without reason called the Golden One or the Mountain of Gold That Brightens All The Lands—symbolised his status as the son of Re, the sun-god; the hieroglyph for ‘gold’ was a beaded necklace, augmented by a falcon or a solar disk to signify ‘Golden Horus’ or ‘Gold Sun’: H.W. Muller and E. Thiem, *Gold of the Pharaohs* (Ithaca 1999) 60.

¹⁶ On ‘cosmic’ rulership in Rome and Byzantium see S. Weinstock, *Divus Iulius* (Oxford 1971) 371-84; MacCormack 1981, esp. pp. 17-61; L’Orange 1953 *passim* (the latter being showing also continuity in the Sassanian Empire). At his accession in 1653, which marked the end the violent and chaotic period of the Fronde, Louis XIV performed as a dancer in the *Ballet de la nuit*, playing the role of the ‘triumphant sun’ who chased away the chaos of the night: L. Utrecht, *Van hofballet tot postmoderne dans. De geschiedenis van het academische ballet en de moderne dans* (Zutphen 1988). For the revival of the concept of universal empire in Renaissance Europe: F. Bosbach, *Monarchia Universalis. Ein politischer Leitbegriff der frühen Neuzeit* (Munich 1985).

spheres of influence. In neither of these kingdoms kings could easily appeal to a common set of social values endorsed by all the subjects. As was shown in chapter 3, kings presented themselves in accordance with local expectations, preserving and further developing various traditions of kingship. Still, an umbrella ideology of empire which was overall Hellenistic was developed to create a sense of commonwealth of the nations under the rule of the king.

The court functioned as the unifying centre of these heterogeneous empires. The accumulation of knowledge of the entire world at court was a means to demonstrate political supremacy, a symbolic conquest of the *oikoumenē* as it were. At the same time, the court was a centre for the spread of culture to the periphery. The Hellenistic imperial elites were Hellenic in terms of culture and values. This does not necessarily mean that the courts were hermetically closed to indigenous people. We cannot rule out the possibility that, alongside the odd favourite, substantial numbers of non-Greeks formed part of the court under Greek names, particularly in the later period. However, if this was indeed the case, then it is not their presence itself which is significant but the fact that they assumed Greek names and, we can be sure, embraced Hellenistic court culture. It was not racial prejudice on the part of the Greeks that made the courts so Greek, but the conscious or unconscious tendency to develop an imperial identity for the elite, which is a characteristic of territorial empires throughout history. The typical Greco-Macedonian culture determining the identity of the Hellenistic courtiers, manifest in for example clothing and court literature, distinguished the rulers from the ruled, like Greek culture in general distinguished the privileged from the common subjects in the Seleukid and Ptolemaic empires. At the same time 'Hellenism' lend coherence to these culturally heterogeneous empires by means of a culturally homogeneous ruling group. This group not only dominated the imperial centre, *i.e.* the court, but also monopolised a widespread network of strategic positions in the provinces (*satraps, stratēgoi*). Conversely, local elite members who were allied to the king often assumed a partly Hellenized identity to shape their allegiance to the empire. Thus Hellenistic culture tied the imperial elites together, not unlike 'Ottoman' culture united the magistrates, civil servants and military of the Ottoman sultans at the top level, even though they could be Serbs, Turks, Greeks, Arabs or Albanians. Ottoman court culture was a blend of the Persian and Byzantine court culture, with the addition of Turkish and Arabian elements. The Hellenistic royal courts, albeit to a somewhat lesser degree, were cultural melting-pots as well.

Royal patronage played an important role in the creation of imperial culture (chapter 4). The court supplied poets and philosophers with typical aulic topics and forms: aetiology, dynastic history, pastoral fantasy, urban mime, panegyric, sympotic epigram,

‘Fürstenspiegel’, and of course mythological subjects associated with kingship or empire: Herakles in his role as civiliser and *sōtēr*; barbarians living at the world’s edge; military victory over said barbarians; the battle between the Gods and the Titans (or Giants); the primordial Golden Age; Greek colonisation myth; Apollo, Zeus and Dionysos.

Peace

In chapter 5 we saw that ceremonial entries and royal processions amounted to the presentation of the victorious ruler as the bringer of peace, prosperity and justice.¹⁷ The emphasis on victory, the ostentatious display of military and economic power, connected the ceremony of entry with the ideology of the ruler as a manifested *sōtēr* who has conquered the forces of chaos and darkness to bring peace.

The eschatological promise of a better world, a new Golden Age, was closely related to the dream of world empire. Like many other Near Eastern forms of kingship, Hellenistic kingship was believed to be connected with the prosperity, even the fertility of the land. Moreover the ruler was presented as a divine or semi-divine saviour, whose military prowess safeguarded peace. Thus, in bucolic court poetry the world is idealised as a place of bliss and tranquillity, where the vicissitudes of love are the main worries of men and gods alike. The image of the shepherd symbolises the peaceful life. In Apollonios’ *Argonautika* herdsmen are associated with an idyllic world of order and peace; the pastoral communities that the Argonauts encounter during their voyage are sometimes deliberately reminiscent of Hesiod’s description of the mythic Golden Age.¹⁸ The promise of a Golden Age is also prominent in Theokritos’ *Idyll* 16 and 17, and in Kallimachos’ *Hymn to Delos*. In these poems, the connection between the reign of the king and the peaceful world is immediate; in *Idyll* 16 images of a mythic Golden Age are even directly connected with Hieron’s (expected) triumph over the Carthaginians. In other literary texts the opposite of the royal order is put to the fore: the barbarian, peripheral ‘other’ who threatens civilisation but is vanquished by the king and subsequently adopts Hellenic culture.¹⁹ The equation of actual victory over barbarians with

¹⁷ 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.

¹⁸ H. Bernsdorff, *Hirten in der nicht-bukolischen Dichtung des Hellenismus*. Palingenesia 72 (Stuttgart 2001) 66-89; cf. e.g. *Argon.* 2.649-60; 4.964-78.

¹⁹ The emphasis on the progress and expansion of civilisation is particularly evident in Kallimachos’ *Aitia*, in which the poems about Herakles concentrate on his role as saviour and civiliser: Herakles

the mythic triumph of the gods over Titans or Giants bestowed on kings an aura of being divine *sōtēres* who saved the world from Chaos. Even hunting could be understood as a cosmological act of saving: dangerous beasts eliminated, the civilised world purged from threats, and order imposed.²⁰

The peace and order kings promised were often real, as kings would in actuality protect cities who submitted to their rule and act as arbitrators in inter-city and inner-city conflicts. Consequently, the Golden Age that kings promised could result in *real* peace and prosperity. On the other hand, the practice of kingship and imperialism was also the single most important cause of war in the Hellenistic world.²¹

defeats monsters, pacifies barbaric peoples and introduces Greek culture in far-away lands (Harder 2005, 246).

²⁰ D. Leyten, 'Ordering en legitimatie', in: H.J.M. Claessen, *Macht en majesteit. Idee en werkelijkheid van het vroege koningschap* (Utrecht 1984) 36-43, esp. 38. Cf. R.D. Barnett, *Assyrian Palace Reliefs in the British Museum* (2nd edn.; London 1974) 32; H. Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods. A Study of Ancient Near Eastern Religion as the Integration of Society and Nature* (2nd ed.; Chicago 1978) 3.

²¹ The success of Hellenistic royal propaganda extends to our own time. A reviewer of N.G.L. Hammond's *The Genius of Alexander the Great* (Chapel Hill 1997), was surprised to find that 'the book projects an unqualified positive image of Alexander, which is favourable in a strikingly modern way: from this volume the picture of Alexander the peacemaker emerges, who brings prosperity' (see e.g. p. 50); Csaba A. La'da in *Mnemosyne* 52 (1999) 757-61, at 759. For the real horrors of Alexander's peacemaking mission see F.L. Holt, *Into the Land of Bones. Alexander the Great in Afghanistan* (Berkeley and Los Angeles 2005).

Summary

In the Hellenistic empires of the last three centuries BCE new forms of court culture and political ideology developed. The Hellenistic kings adapted and shaped as their own their Greek, Macedonian and Persian legacy to create a monarchy that was both neither 'western' nor 'eastern'. Appropriated by Parthian kings and Roman emperors alike, the culture and ideology of the Hellenistic courts eventually influenced the evolution of royal ideology and court culture in western Europe and the Islamic East.

In this first complete study of the Hellenistic royal court, all aspects of court culture are discussed in correlation: the social, cultural and formal aspects of court society, palace architecture, royal patronage of the arts and sciences, ceremonial, and monarchic representation. The focus is on the three principal Macedonian dynasties: the Antigonids (Macedonia and Greece), Ptolemies (Egypt and the eastern Mediterranean) and Seleukids (Asia Minor, the Near East and Iran). Due to intermarriage, diplomatic contact, a shared Macedonian background and a shared Achaimenid legacy, the court culture of these empires was more similar than is commonly assumed.

In Chapter 1, 'Court, kingship and ideology', the methodological and theoretical framework is set out, using recent literature about court culture, imperialism and political representation in other cultures and periods. The Hellenistic court is defined as a social phenomenon, perceived by contemporaries as the extended family (*oikos*) of the king. Hellenistic kingship is defined by the centrality of war and conquest in both ideology and practice.

Chapter 2, 'Palaces', discusses the architecture and decoration of royal residences, accentuating the ideological implications, particularly regarding the ambiguous connection of (royal) palace and (autonomous) city.

Chapter 3, 'Court society', discusses the social, formal and political aspects of the court. At the centre of the court was the royal family. Hellenistic monarchy was not an impersonal state but an inheritable personal possession; the driving force behind royal politics therefore was not *raison d'état* but the interests and honour of the family. Although there was no official crown prince, there were informal ways to designate a successor, notably by investing him with kingship (*basileia*) during his father's lifetime. The exceptional importance of women at the Hellenistic courts is explained from their role in the transmission of the in-

heritance (further on a second explanation is given: the elevation of queens to the centre of power as ‘favourites’).

The focus then shifts to the courtiers, the so-called Friends of the King (*philoī tou basileōs*). It is shown how social relations at court were determined by the Greek moral complex of *philia* (ritualised friendship) and *xenia* (guest-friendship), with the accompanying practice of gift-exchange. The system of court titles hierarchising Hellenistic court society is described as ‘a form of formalised informality’. The *philoī* served the royal family first of all as military commanders, since there was no formal disconnection of the royal *oikos* and the armed forces. The *philoī* furthermore functioned as intermediaries between court and subjects. Because they retained bonds with their families and cities of origin, and disposed of patronage networks of their own, the king was able to exert influence through his friends; conversely, elite families and cities could exert influence at court through the *philoī*. The *philoī* community consisted predominantly of Greeks and Macedonians. Kings not always controlled the composition of their court. When kings were confronted with powerful, consolidated *philoī* aristocracies, they turned to promoting dependent ‘favourites’, and this accounts for the prominence of powerful non-Greeks and eunuchs at court, particularly in the later Hellenistic period. The chapter ends with a discussion of royal pages (*basilikoi paides*).

In Chapter 4, ‘Cultural and scientific patronage’, it is argued that poets, scholars and scientists who worked at court were not in the king’s service but had their own place in the complex of *philia* relations. They offered their work to members of the royal family and high-ranking courtiers as gifts; these gifts, if accepted, would generate favours, privileges and honours. Obtaining prestige was more important than earning money. Moreover, the international personal networks of important courtiers were instrumental in the diffusion of writings and new ideas. The remarkable preference for innovation in art, literature and science witnessed at the early Ptolemaic court was caused by competition for favour and the necessity to attract attention in order to be invited at royal symposia. The subject matter of Hellenistic court literature—pastoral poetry, urban mime, the preference for obscure myths and rare words—reflected the tastes of the courtly leisure class. The principal theme in encomiastic poetry was the ideal of world empire and the presentation of imperial rule as a new Golden Age of prosperity and concord. The court was perceived as the unifying centre of the world, the zenith of civilisation. Ethnography, historiography and geography, too, enhanced the imperial notion of the *oikoumenē* as a coherent whole. Court culture was fundamentally Greek, and the Hellenism of the court, adopted by local aristocracies collaborating with the monarchy as well, was instrumental in the creation of a sense of unity in these heterogeneous empires.

Chapter 5, 'Ritual and ceremonial', deals with public representation: inauguration rituals, burial, wedding ceremonies, ceremonial entries into cities, religious festivals and processions. Ritual and ceremonial emphasised the divinity of the ruler, particularly his role as a victorious saviour bringing peace, prosperity and order.

A fundamental characteristic of Hellenistic kingship is the adaptation of royal representation to various local traditions. For instance the Ptolemies were inaugurated as *basileus* in Alexandria and as pharaoh in Memphis, and the Seleukids participated in the Akitu Festival in Babylon as if they were Babylonian kings. Thus, Hellenistic monarchy had many faces. This, however, does not mean that the Ptolemies were pharaohs in the first place or that the Seleukid Empire was in essence an 'eastern', non-Greek kingdom: above the local level there was an umbrella form of imperial representation which was truly 'Hellenistic', intermixing different traditions of kingship in a Greco-Macedonian framework.

In the last chapter, 'Synthesis: A Golden Age', it is argued, contrary to prevailing opinion, that the Hellenistic monarchies followed the example of their Mesopotamian, Persian and Egyptian predecessors of claiming absolute rulership over world empires without limits. But as they also incorporated more 'individualistic' (or: 'western') aspects of kingship taken from Greco-Macedonian tradition, the Hellenistic empires developed a form of monarchical representation that was suitable to serve as the foundation for the imperial ideology of the Roman emperors who succeeded them.

The Appendix discusses the costume of the king and three regalia: the royal diadem, the sceptre and purple dye. In Appendix, 'The king's costume', it is argued that the standard dress of Hellenistic kings was derived from the costume and armour worn by the Macedonian nobility in Alexander's time. This costume was made kingly by the use of precious materials signifying royalty, notably purple. In Appendix 2, 'The diadem', it is argued that the principal badge of royalty was neither a Greek victory wreath nor an 'eastern' crown but a new badge, created by Alexander and the Diadochs, in which Greek and eastern traditions were combined to appeal to all subjects regardless of their ethnicity. In Appendix 3, 'the royal sceptre', it is argued that the Hellenistic variant of the generic monarchic sceptre was shaped like a spear or lance, referring to the concept of *doriktētos chōra* and the king's capacity as a warrior protecting his subjects. In Appendix 4, 'Purple', it is argued, against the view expressed by Reinhold (1970), that purple under certain circumstances indicated kingship in the pre-Hellenistic Near East, just as it indicated divinity in Classical Greece.

Appendix: Regalia

1. The king's costume

The costume of the king was basically the same as the costume of his *philoī*.¹ At first sight it even seems as if the costume of the courtiers was a derivation of the costume of the king. At closer look, reality appears to be more complicated. Examples set by the monarchy had to be followed by those who wished to share in royal power, but those who shared in royal power presumably exercised influence on its forms as well. Moreover, the Macedonian costume worn by king and *philoī* alike was in the first place a traditional costume, as the king's behaviour was controlled by cultural conventions. A strong king could to some degree alter existing conventions, but he could not introduce completely new ones. Not even Alexander ever managed, or wished to do that. As the king's apparel was based on (supposed) tradition it hardly changed during the centuries. The ultimate standards were set in the age of the Diadochs, a time of profound change for the Macedonians. But it was the example set by Alexander that determined the forms. Alexander did so, *not* by introducing new standards for a monarch's outward appearance by his much discussed adoption of Oriental royal symbolism, but rather by his failure to do so.

‘As soon as Alexander was master of Asia,’ Athenaios writes, ‘he started wearing a Persian robe.’² This, of course, is an all too simple impression of things. Alexander may have attempted to create a new royal attire by blending Oriental and Macedonian elements—presumably an bot more than attempt to homogenise *public* court ceremonial by ending the ambiguity of having to be dressed an a Macedonian *basileus* before Macedonians and as a Persian Great King before Iranian aristocrats—but he certainly did not ponderously trade in Macedonian customs for Oriental ones, as the ancient anti-Alexander tradition claims.³ However that may be, Alexander's Macedonian followers saw enough proof of offensive Orien-

¹ Plut., *Mor.* 178d; Plut., *Demetr.* 41.4-5, cf. Ath. 253d-254b; Plut., *Ant.* 54.5; val. Max. 5.1 ext. 4. For the *philoī*'s costume see pp. 160ff. Sources often express the notion of a specific ‘royal costume’ (*basilikēn esthēta*; *stolē basilikē*, cf. e.g. Diod. 29.32 and 32.15.5). The young man on the fresco from Boscoreale, painted after a Hellenistic original, perhaps from a palace, is dressed as an Hellenistic king, and has for this reason been identified as *i.a.* Alexandros IV (and the woman Roxane) and Antigonos Gonatas. F.G.J. Müller, *The Wall Paintings From the Oecur of the Villa of Publius Fannius Synistor in Boscoreale* (Amsterdam 1994), has argued that what we have got here is mythic rather than an historic scene, namely Achilles mourning over Patroklos, with the woman being Thetis. This makes the painting all the more interesting: an Hellenistic portrait of Achilles dressed as a contemporary king.

² Ath. 535f.

³ Plut., *Alex.* 45; Diod. 17.77.5; Curt. 6.6.4-5. Alexander wearing Persian and Median dress: Diod. 17.77.5; Plut., *Alex.* 45; *Mor.* 329 f-330a; Curt. 6.20; Arr., *Anab.* 4.9.9; 7.6.2; Just. 12.3.8; cf. Arr., *Anab.* 4.7.4.

talism in Alexander's behaviour to make it the central moot point in the Opis Mutiny of 324, which, together with the *proskynesis* debacle at Baktra, some three years earlier, finally forced the king down on this issue.

Alexander's Orientalism is a complex problem. His wearing of Oriental royal dress probably wasn't in the first place meant for a Macedonian audience at all. It was rather aimed at the former court aristocracy of the Achaimenid kings whose sovereign he had become and whose co-operation he needed.⁴ However, when he was among his Macedonians companions, Alexander was a Macedonian. He never lead his Companion cavalry into battle wearing stately Persian gowns, nor is it likely that he wore such clothes while addressing the Macedonian infantry or in private conversations with his friends and staff. After all, Alexander wasn't as ignorant of Macedonian sentiments as to adopt the tiara (*kidaris*), the principal sign of royalty of the Persian king.⁵ Instead, he started wearing a diadem, a simple cloth headband, which was accepted as the principal emblem of Alexander's new monarchy by Greeks and non-Greek alike because, although *referring* to diverse traditions, it was in its final form a *new* token of kingship (see below). Alexander also used the most expensive form of purple dye, known in the east as 'royal purple, more abundantly than Greeks and Macedonians were accustomed to, again without complaints. 'Royal' purple had no oriental connotations in the eyes of Macedonians and Greeks, who knew it as a dye befitting the gods; the peoples in the east, for their part, were long used to understanding royal purple as a sign of royalty; in their eyes it neither was something alien (see below). Although Alexander may have been more keen than his successors to create a new iconography of power to break with the Macedonian kingship of his forefathers,⁶ the symbols he used to demarcate the beginning of a new era were always one way or other encased in Macedonian or Greek culture.⁷ Yet we may be confident that Alexander all in all went too far in the eyes of the Macedonian opposition and some of his biographers. Therefore, when the Diadochs became kings in their turn and had to undertake the arduous task of creating an iconography and

⁴ Plut., *Mor.* 329f-330a praises Alexander for reconciling the Iranian nobility. Already Neuffer 1929, 37-8 suggested that Alexander adopted two distinct royal attires after the death of Darius, an Achaimenid and a Macedonian one, which he wore on different occasions. Berve 1938, 148-50, holds that Alexander at first adopted the Achaimenid royal dress but later switched to a mixed Persian-Macedonian dress, whilst Ritter 1965, 41-55, argues that Alexander never wore a Persian royal costume at all but started wearing the supposed mixed costume right away.

⁵ Eratosthenes *FGrH* 241 F 30 = Plut., *Mor.* 329f-330a says that Alexander, although he did wear *some* Persian articles of dress, did not adopt the tiara, the long-sleeved upper garment (*kandyn*), nor the trousers (*anaxyridas*), but made himself a costume that was a mixture of Persian and Macedonian elements.' A similar mixed costume is described by Plut., *Alex.* 45. Furthermore, Plut., *Alex.* 45, says that Alexander, although he started to wear *some* Persian articles of dress, he did not adopt the entire Achaimenid royal costume because this was 'altogether barbaric and strange'.

⁶ Smith 1988, 58-9.

⁷ Cf. E.A. Fredricksmeyer, 'Alexander the Great and the Macedonian *kausia*', *TAPhA* 116 (1986) 215-27, esp. 227: 'the *kausia* was ... demonstratively Macedonian. Thus, Alexander's dress gave symbolic expression to the nature of his new Kingship of Asia. Rather than being a new Oriental monarchy, it was a creation *sui generis*, in which Macedonian and Persian elements were combined, but in which, in the balance, the Macedonian-Greek component prevailed.'

ideology of empire to meet the requirements of the new political constellation, they knew that this was like walking a tightrope, remembering all too well how Alexander had failed: they all knew that they had to prevent being accused of ‘Orientalism’ and ‘despotism’ at all cost. It is therefore no surprise that they had a distinct preference for keeping up Macedonian appearances, aiming at securing the loyalty of the Macedonians, not to mention their probable personal ethnocentric sentiments. During the first Diadoch War, the Macedonian troops favoured Krateros because they remembered that he had openly resisted to Alexander’s Orientalism; years after Alexander’s death, the soldiers still considered Krateros, who conscientiously wore a Macedonian *kausia* to intensify these feelings, a man ‘defending the manners of their country’.⁸ The later Antigonid, Seleukid and Ptolemaic kings, dependent as they were on the loyalty of the Macedonian troops who constituted the core of their armies, wore the traditional *krepides*, *kausia*, and *chlamys*.⁹ These elements of Macedonian costume cannot be considered regalia in the strict sense of exclusive symbols of royalty—(Macedonian *philoï* wore the same—and the attire presumably was not worn on every occasion.¹⁰ For this reason the *kausia* is almost never shown on official ruler portraits nor on coins, with the exception of some Baktrian kings, who, being physically cut off from the Mediterranean, apparently felt more strongly inclined to express their ethnicity than other monarchs.¹¹ However, in written sources which were not part of official propaganda but reflections of the author’s sense of reality, *kausiai* often turn up. *Chlamydes*, on the other hand, appear quite often on official Hellenistic ruler statues¹² and portrait coins.¹³ Some Hellenistic kings imitated Alexander in his coiffure and his behaviour.¹⁴ The most important example given by Alexander, however, was that he kept his

⁸ Plut., *Eum.* 6.1-2.

⁹ See e.g. Plut., *Ant.* 54.5; Eusthathios, *ad Od.* 1399; Hdn. 4.8.1-2; Ath. 535f.

¹⁰ In the written sources, kings wearing a *kausia* always wear a diadem as well: Ath. 535f-536a; 537e; Aristoboulos *FGrH* 139 F 55; Eusth., *ad Od.* 1.122; Hdn. 1.3.1-3; Plut., *Ant.* 54.5. Cf. Ritter 1965, 55-62; Berve 1926 I 17; Neuffer 1929, 35.

¹¹ Baktrian royal *kausiai* are found on coins of Antimachos Theos (Dintsis 1986, 310, no. 295; 2), Demetrios II (Dintsis 1986, 310, no. 296), Apollodotos (P. Bernard, *AccInscrBellLettres*, *Comptes Rendus* [1974] 307) and Antialkidas (*SNG* 1965, no. 318-9).

¹² See Smith 1988: Macedonia: plate 70 no. 1 (Naples Alexander); Diadochs: cat. no. 4 (Papyri Demetrios), cat. no. 7 (Papyri ‘Krateros’); plate 70 no. 2 (New York ‘Demetrios’); Ptolemies: plate 70 no. 7 (Bonn Ptolemy); Seleukids: plate 71 no. 5-6 (Louvre ‘Balas’); *Attalids*: cat. no. 22 (Papyri Philetairos); Kommagene: cat. no. 97-8 (Nemrud Dağı, Antiochos I); plate 59, no. 1 and no. 2 (Antiochos I); unidentified: cat. no. 27 (Papyri Young Commander); plate 70 no. 5 (Naples Horned Ruler).

¹³ Argeads: Smith 1988, plate 74 no. 4 (Alexander). Ptolemies: Smith 1988, plate 75 nos. 1, 2, 4 (Ptolemy I), 3 (Ptolemy II), 9 (Ptolemy III), 10 (Ptolemy IV), 11 (Ptolemy V), 12, 15 (Ptolemy VI), 17 (Ptolemy VIII). Seleukids: *SNG* 8, no. 1067 (Demetrios I); *SNG* 4.8, nos. 5687-92, 5716-7 (Alexandros Balas), 5744, 5746-8 (Antiochos VII), 5762 (Demetrios II). *Attalids*: Smith 1988, plate 74 no. 14 (Eumenes II). Pontos: Smith, plate 77 no. 9 (Mithradates III). Bosphoros: Smith 1988, plate 77 nos. 19 (Rhoimetalkes), 20 (Sauromates II). Armenia: *SNG* 8, no. 1075 (Tigranes II). Baktria: *SNG* 1965, nos. 264, 269, 270 (Eukratides), 284-6 (Heliokles), 315-6, 318-20 (Antialkidas). Apparently, Macedonian costume became such a standard emblem of kingship that it was also adopted by non-Hellenic Hellenistic dynasties.

¹⁴ Coins are best proof of this. See also, for the Diadochs, Plut., *Pyrrh.* 8.1: ‘The other kings, they said, could only imitate Alexander in superficial details, ... the angle at which they held their heads, or the lofty tone of their

beard shaved.¹⁵ This practice was followed by all later Macedonian kings.¹⁶ Apart from stressing that they were the heirs of Alexander, kings may have shaved in order to evoke the eternal youthfulness of heroes and gods, like Apollo and Dionysos, both of whom were normally beardless in Greek iconography of the Hellenistic period.¹⁷ On portraits, kings usually appear as men ageing between twenty and thirty-five years of age.¹⁸ The godlike youthfulness of the kings was enhanced by their beardlessness. Another reason to shave, was that it distanced kings from Asians and Greeks.

Because the king's costume was basically the same as that of his *philoï*, rulers also had to find means to single themselves out among their following. They therefore made their dress more sumptuous, as Plutarch's famous description of Demetrios Poliorketes' appearance illustrates:

Not only did he possess elaborate clothing and diadems—*kausiai* with a double ribbon (δίμιτρος) and dresses of sea-purple interwoven with gold—but even his feet were clad in the richest purple felt embroidered with gold. One of his *chlamydes* had taken months to weave on the looms, a superb piece of work in which the Kosmos with the heavenly bodies were represented. It was still only half finished at the time of his downfall, and none of the later Macedonian kings ever presumed to wear it, although several of them had a taste for pomp and luxury too.¹⁹

This is reminiscent of a passage from Isokrates' compendium of advice to the Cypriote ruler Nikokles, written probably shortly after Nikokles' accession in 374:

speech.' Cf. Plut., *Alex.* 4; *Demetr.* 41.3. In general, however, the hairstyles of later kings differed from that of Alexander, with the main exception of Mithradates the Great, who was especially keen on presenting himself as an Alexander look-alike. Likewise, the Persians are said to have been fond of hook-nosed persons, 'because Cyrus, the best loved of their kings, had a nose of that shape' (Plut., *Mor.* 172e, cf. 821e).

¹⁵ As can be seen on all portraits of the king, with literary evidence added by Ath. 565a; Plut., *Mor.* 180b; *Perseus* 13.

¹⁶ With only four exceptions: the Antigonids Philippos V and Perseus, the Seleukid pretender Achaios and the Seleukid king Demetrios II in his second reign. Smith 1988. 46 n. 2, explains these exceptions thus: 'Philip V is probably evoking his great (bearded) namesake Philip II with whom he was keen to stress a blood relationship (Polyb. 5.10.10). Perseus is no doubt imitating his father. ... Demetrios II's long beard is clearly modelled formally on that of his former Parthian captors, He had lived at the Persian court and did not escape but was released with Parthian blessing to resume his throne. ... We know too little of Achaeus to interpret his beard. He was the uncle of Antiochus III and, as a usurper, may be a special case.'

¹⁷ Smith 1988, 46, points out that the image of Alexander was in a sense an image of eternal youth: 'Alexander not only shaved his beard, he had also died young, leaving no model for ageing kings for his successors (some of whom were extremely old).' Plut., *Mor.* 180b has recorded the anecdote that Alexander ordered his troops to shave off their beards before battle, explaining to a surprised Parmenion, 'that in battles there is nothing handier to grasp than a beard', cf. Plut, *Thes.* 3; Ath. 565a.

¹⁸ Smith 1988, 46-47.

¹⁹ Plut., *Demetr.* 41.4-5; cf. Ath. 535f-536a. The translation of δίμιτρος is ambivalent; *LSJ* gives 'with double mitre', as does the Loeb translation, but it may as well mean 'with double ribbons', in which it probably is a reference to Demetrios' diadem, worn around his *kausia*.

Be sumptuous (τρυφά) in your dress and personal adornment, but simple and severe (καοτερός), as befits a king, in your other habits, that those who see you may judge from your appearance that you are worthy of your rank, and that those who are intimate with you may form the same opinion from your strength of soul.²⁰

Isokrates' advice that a king should appear both sumptuous and modest may sound inconsistent, but it was exactly this ambiguity that was characteristic for the Hellenistic dynasties. Especially the expensive purple dye, with its distinct monarchic associations, could turn common clothing into robes of office.

Like the *philoi*, the ruler wore weapons. He wore armour in battle and on other public occasions.²¹ By his arms the king expressed his military capabilities and his natural right to rule over the lives of others. Naturally, a king possessed several sets of armour.²² The king's arms and armour could also be communicative of wealth, as the following passage from Plutarch may illustrate:

He [Alexander] put on his helmet his helmet, but the rest of his armour he had on as he came from his tent, namely a tunic made in Sicily which was belted around his waist, and over this a thickly quilted linen cuirass from the spoils taken at Issos. His helmet was made of iron and gleamed like polished silver, a work of Theophilos, and to this was fitted an iron ornament, set with precious stones. His sword, a marvel of tempering and lightness, was a gift of the king of Kittians. ... He also wore a cloak, which was even

²⁰ Isoc., *Nicochl.* 32. Cf. Goodenough 1928, 56-7.

²¹ Many such weapons and armour were found in the royal tombs at Vergina, all of which are of 'superb quality' (Hammond 1988, 217). The king in Tomb II was buried with a sword in scabbard, a short sword, a shield, a helmet, a cuirass, six spears and pikes of different size and shape, three pairs of greaves, and a *gorytus* with arrows; Tomb III (perhaps of Alexander IV) contained four spears, a cuirass, and a pair of greaves (Andronikos 1984, 202). Most interestingly, Tomb II contained the equipment of both a Companion cavalryman and a phalangite (Hammond 217-8). The first is not surprising, but the second raises questions: did this king actually fight as rank and file infantry, or were the phalangite's weapons mere symbolic? In Macedonian culture, burial gifts were not meant to be used in some afterlife, but symbolised accomplishments during lifetime (Hammond 1989, 218 with n. 6). To my mind, the infantry equipment must have been symbolic of the king's role as leader of the Macedonian army, consisting of both horse and foot, both nobility and free commoners. This, in turn, leads to the conclusion that even if a king really dressed as a phalangite to express his allegiance with the infantry, this does not imply that he actually fought as such in battle, as is also suggested by the fact that the richly decorated infantry shield found in Tomb II probably wasn't suitable to be used in battle, and can only be ceremonial (Andronikos 1984, 140; cf. Hammond 1989, 219); the arrows found in Tomb II add up to this conclusion: as Macedonian kings did not use bow and arrow but spears for hunting, this may be symbolic for the king's leadership of light-armed troops *c.q.* peltasts.

²² As is quite certain in the case of Alexander, cf. Hammond 1989, 222-3: after Alexander's death, one set of armour went to Alexandria and was buried with the king's corpse; another set remained in the treasury at Susa, was later used by Eumenes, and finally fell into the hands of Antigonos; and yet a third set, Hammond suggests, 'was taken from Babylon by Perdikkas, fell into the hands of Antipater at Triparadisus, and was taken by him to Macedonia in 320.' Hammond rejects the attractive hypothesis that with the finds in Tomb II at Vergina this last set has now been recovered, as was suggested by E.N. Borza, 'The royal Macedonian tombs and the paraphernalia of Alexander the Great', *Phoenix* 41 (1987) 105-21, 118.

more elaborate than the rest of armour; it was a work of Helikon, the ancient, and presented to him as a mark of honour by the city of Rhodes; and this too he was wont to wear in battle.²³

On the Alexander Mosaic from Pompeii, the king wears a rare and costly cuirass,²⁴ and on the Alexander Sarcophagus an eloquently forged helmet in the shape of a lion's head. That Alexander's helmet was conspicuous is confirmed by Plutarch, who relates that at the battle of the Granikos 'Many [Persians] rushed upon Alexander, for he was easily recognisable by his buckler and by his helmet, on either side of which was fixed a plume of wonderful size and whiteness'.²⁵ Pyrrhos, too, wore such an eye-catching helmet in battle in order to single him out as the king. During Pyrrhos' final confrontation with his archenemy Demetrios Poliorketes, the troops of the latter wanted to go over to Pyrrhos but at first could not find him:

By chance he had taken off his helmet. Then he remembered that the soldier's could not recognise him, and so he put it on again and was instantly recognised by its high crest and the goat's horns which he wore at the sides.²⁶

Beautifully adorned arms and armour were not merely badges of military command but badges of royalty as well. When Eumenes displayed the royal paraphernalia of Alexander on the king's empty throne, these included 'the armour that he had been wont to use'.²⁷ In his account of the strife over the succession in 323, Curtius mentions as Alexander's principal regalia a throne, a diadem, a purple robe, a signet-ring and weapons.²⁸ Especially helmets could be royal insignia. Alexander's helmets

²³ Plut., *Alex.* 32.5-6. Cf. Neuffer 1929, 30, who concludes from the divergent places of origin of parts of Alexander's armour '[dass Alexander] das Kostüm des siegreichen Eroberers zu tragen [scheint], der sich mit den Herrlichkeiten der Welt schmückt, die sich ihm darbietet oder die er zwingt.'

²⁴ Cf. the cuirass on the Tarsos Medallion, portraying an early Hellenistic ruler: A. de Longperier, *Revue Numismatique* 13 (1868) 313ff. This is perhaps Philippos II or Pyrrhos: M.B. Hatzopoulos and L. Loukopulos eds., *Philip of Macedon* (Athens 1980) 228; A.N. Oikonomides, 'The portrait of Pyrrhos king of Epirus in Hellenistic and Roman art', *AncW* 8 (1983) 67-72. The shoulder flaps of the cuirass are decorated with a Nike carrying Celtic spoils of war. In Tomb II at Vergina a like cuirass was found, made of iron, relieved by gold bands of ornamentation and decorated with gold lions' heads.

²⁵ Plut., *Alex.* 16.4. A similar early Hellenistic helmet with high plumes on the sides can be seen on the bust of the unidentified Diadoch from the Villa of the Papyri at Herculaneum (Smith 1988, cat. no. 7). Cf. Hammond 1989, 221. Likewise the Spartan regent Machanidas (c. 212-206 BC) was easily recognisable on the battlefield by his purple clothing and the trappings of his horse (Polyb. 11.18.1).

²⁶ Plut., *Pyrrh.* 11.5. A goat's horn can also be seen on a picture of a royal helmet on a coin issued by the Seleukid ruler Tryphon (*DAGR* s.v. 'Causia', fig. 1263). On the well-known portrait bust of Pyrrhos from the Villa of the Papyri at Herculaneum (now in the National Museum at Naples), the king wears a simple but beautiful helmet decorated with an oak wreath, probably a reference to Zeus of Dodona (Smith 1988, cat. no. 5). Compare the helmeted coin portrait of Pyrrhos in Oikonomides 1983, 71.

²⁷ Diod. 18.61.1.

²⁸ Curtius 10.6.4.

were commemorated on coins issued by him.²⁹ Later Hellenistic kings who had themselves portrayed with helmets worn over their diadems include Seleukos I, Ptolemaios X, Eukratides of Baktria, Philippos V and Perseus.³⁰ These however are all standard type helmets, differing from common Macedonian cavalry helmets only in their exquisite decoration. The king's armour, again, was embedded in tradition, only more richly decorated.

2. The diadem

All attributes and articles of dress worn by a king were *qualitate qua* insignia of royalty. 'Regalia' may be defined as articles of dress or other material objects which can be regarded as emblems of monarchy and are monopolised by a monarch, *i.e.* to be distinguished from insignia worn also be used by people only sharing in royal power. Regalia may be understood as symbolic objects symbolising and containing royal power. They have the ability to transform a mortal man or woman into a king or queen, thus becoming the embodiment of kingship. Regalia moreover have the ability to communicate charisma and status and to make ideological concepts visible. To understand the meaning of specific regalia, we should keep in mind that royal symbolism is in the last instance an adoption or adaptation of symbolic forms from normal society. All Hellenistic royal insignia, however exclusive or exceptional they may look, refer to familiar practices and symbols.

The main royal insignia in the Hellenistic world from the late fourth century BCE until the first century CE (and far beyond) were purple dye and the diadem. Besides the diadem, Hellenistic kings were equipped with sceptres and signet rings. These regalia had a more or less universal status and can be found in most Mediterranean and Near Eastern monarchies of earlier periods. Furthermore, the archaeological evidence shows a broad variety of divine paraphernalia: radiate crowns, wings, lion scalps, goat horns, bull's horns. The above mentioned regalia will for convenience be discussed separately; they were, however, interrelated and had only meaning when joined together on the body of the king. Purple already had a long tradition as a status symbol in both the Near East and the Aegean world. Purple dye existed in multifarious forms, and only one of these was an exclusive emblem of royalty. Being not an object, purple will be discussed in separately below. The diadem was as exclu-

²⁹ *SNG V 3* (London 1976) nos. 2604, 3064, and 3609. Compare the helmet-crowns of medieval German emperors, cf. J. Deér, 'Der Ursprung der Kaiserkrone', *Schweizer Beiträge zur allgemeinen Geschichte* 8 (1950) 75: 'Aus dem Helm ist eine juwelenartige Krone, aus der rangbezeichnenden Schutzwaffe ein Insigne der monarchischen Repräsentation geworden.'

³⁰ Seleukos: silver tetradrachm minted in Susa with bull's horns and ears placed on the temples, from the British Museum, see Green 1990, p. 27 fig. 11. Ptolemaios X wears a helmet on a clay sealing from Edfu, now in the Royal Ontario Museum (Green 1990, 548 fig. 169). Eukratides: *DAGR* s.v. 'Causia', fig. 1264. Philippos V: *Ibid.*, fig. 1262. Perseus: *Ibid.*, fig. 1261, cf. Dintsis 1986, 309, no. 292, who renders Perseus' head-gear a *kausia*.

sive as can be. Apparently it was a new symbol, introduced by Alexander as a personal ornament, and subsequently institutionalised as a generic royal emblem by the Diadochs.

The diadem was a rather simple object given its tremendous symbolic meaning.³¹ It was in essence an unassuming band of cloth tied about the head with a knot and two long, loose-hanging ribbons at the back.³² It was worn about the hair, above the forehead, i.e. different from to the Dionysian fillet worn by the god wore across the forehead. The diadem was white, purple or white with ornamentations made of purple or gold thread stitches. The diadem was a personal emblem, not transmitted from father to son. The bind obtained the quality of a royal diadem only after it had been tied round one's head. It is even possible that kings did not have one diadem only. On portrait coins, the diadem is made to look like an integral part of the body, with sometimes only the ribbons visible, literally fitting the man or woman adorned with it.³³ After the assumption of the diadem by the Diadochs in 306/5, its use became widespread, not only among the great Hellenistic dynasties of Antigonids, Seleukids and Ptolemies, but among any monarchic state of the Near East for many centuries to come.³⁴ In the course of the Hellenistic centuries the physical shape of the diadem remained more or less the same, although tending to become broader and more conspicuous.³⁵ The diadem could be worn

³¹ Not counting a continuous discussion about a 'diadem' found at Vergina, there is not much literature about the principal insignia of royalty in the Hellenistic world and beyond. There are two monographs: S. Grenz, *Beiträge zur Geschichte des Diadems in den hellenistischen Reichen* (diss. Greifswald 1914), and H.W. Ritter, *Diadem und Königsherrschaft. Untersuchungen zu Zeremonien und Rechtsgrundlagen des Herrschaftsantritt bei den Persern, bei Alexander dem Großen und im Hellenismus* (Munich and Berlin 1965). There is also much about the diadem in R.R.R. Smith, *Hellenistic Royal Portraits* (Oxford 1988) 34-40. A. Alföldi has discussed the origin of the diadem repeatedly in studies of Roman regalia, see esp. 'Insignien und Tracht der römischen Kaiser', *MdAI* 50 (1935); *Die monarchische Repräsentation im römischen Kaiserreiche* (Darmstadt 1970); *Caesar in 44 v.Chr. I* (Bonn 1985). Regalia in (European) history: P.E. Schramm, *Herrschaftszeichen und Staatssymbolik* (3 vols; Stuttgart 1954-1956).

³² The modern English meaning of the word 'diadem' (crown) has more than often led to confusion, particularly in a controversy over a crown found in Tomb II at Vergina, after Ph.W. Lehmann, 'The so-called tomb of Philip II: A different interpretation', *AJA* 84 (1980) 527-31, first suggested this metal item was a diadem. Although some problems regarding the Vergina 'diadem' remain unsolved—it may have been a metal *imitation* of a cloth diadem; it may have been worn *over* a cloth diadem as an ornament—it now seems certain that Lehmann's theory was incorrect since the genuine diadem was made of cloth and was worn as a simple head-band; see esp. the arguments in W.M. Calder, 'Diadem and barrel-vault: A note', *AJA* 85 (1981) 334-5; cf. Ritter 1984, 105-6; Smith 1988, 34-5.

³³ Not unlike the royal mantle in ancient Irish myth, which was always too big for one who was not destined to be High King in Tara, cf. M. Draak, 'Some aspects of kingship in pagan Ireland', in: *La regalità sacra* (Leiden 1959) 651-63, esp. 655.

³⁴ Including the Attalids, Baktrian and Indo-Greek dynasties, the kings of Kappadokia, Bithynia, Kommagene, Paphlagonia, Iberia, Armenia, Sophene, Pontos, Judea, Numidia, Mauretania, Thrace, and even the Parthian Arsakids. Parthian kings, like kings of Armenia and Kommagene, are often depicted with a diadem wrapped around a tiara. From Constantine the Great onward, Roman emperors, too, wore the diadem (Smith 1988, 38 with n. 59; Schramm 1955, 381). Through its use by Late Roman and Byzantine emperors, the diadem was to become the ancestor of the medieval and later European royal crown (Schramm 1955, 381).

³⁵ Smith 1988, 55.

in combination with a (purple) *kausia*, as is said explicitly of Alexander.³⁶ Although the combination of diadem and *kausia* perhaps became less common after Alexander, that does not mean that it was ‘abolished’, since later kings also wore *kausiai* and would never appear in public without a diadem. With the exception of some Baktrian kings, the combination of diadem and *kausia* is not found on portrait coins, probably for reason that the latter was not exclusively a sign of royalty.³⁷ Evidence for the diadem’s importance is provided by a plethora of literary and archaeological sources (notably coins).³⁸ In Greek historiography after Alexander, putting on a diadem or binding a diadem around one’s head (sometimes in combination with the assumption of purple garments) is the standard metaphor for the assumption of kingship itself.³⁹ Conversely, to put *off* a diadem is the standard metaphor for the downfall of kings, often used by ancient authors in the contexts of decisive battles, for instance those of Pydna and Tigranokerta, in which Perseus of Macedonia and Tigranes of Armenia respectively lost everything save their life.⁴⁰ When Demetrios Poliorketes died in Asia and his ashes were brought back to Macedonia, the urn containing his remains was decorated with purple cloth and a diadem.⁴¹

What did the diadem signify? Answering this question requires a closer look at the ongoing controversy over the *origin* of the bind. As I already noted, it was Alexander who introduced the diadem as an exclusive monarchic insignia.⁴² The question is: did he also invent it or did he derive it from a pre-existing equivalent with similar royal associations? This question has caused much debate. Apart from suggesting a pre-Hellenistic Macedonian origin, the diadem had been rendered an

³⁶ Aristoboulos *FGrH* 139 F 55; Arr., *Anab.* 7.22.2-4; Ephippos *FGrH* 126 F 5 = Ath. 537e.

³⁷ In the recent past, much has been made of the so-called *kausia diadematophoros* (Plut., *Ant.* 54.5); it has been argued that the combination was a regalia in his own right, but used by Alexander only, e.g. by Ritter 1965, 55: ‘Wie die Perserkönige das Diadem um die aufrechte Tiara getragen hatten, so trug Alexander es um die makedonischen Kausia. Seine königliche Kausia war wahrscheinlich purpurn. Aber auch Adlige trugen purpurne Kausien. Da andererseits das Diadem auch von den [Persischen] *suggeneis* ... getragen wurde, jedenfalls zur Xenophons Zeit von ihnen noch getragen war, ergibt sich, daß bei der neuen königlicher Kopfbedeckung Alexanders möglicherweise keiner der beiden Bestandteile für sich den König bezeichnete, sondern nur ihre Verbindung.’ However, the assumption that the *kausia diadematophoros* was exclusively worn by Alexander, serves only to cover up the relative absence of a royal *kausia* in later times, which can more plausibly be explained by accepting that it was *not* a regalia, and discards the evidence that kings after Alexander also sometimes wore *kausiai* and always diadem. Moreover, Ritter’s claim that the diadem was an Achaimenid emblem of royalty taken over by Alexander is debatable.

³⁸ Collected in Ritter 1965, *passim*.

³⁹ See e.g. Plut., *Mor.* 184a-b; Diod. 31.15.2; 36.2.4; Jos., *AJ* 196-7; *BJ* 1.671.5.

⁴⁰ Pydna: Plut., *Aem.* 23.1; Tigranokerta: Plut., *Luc.* 28.5-6. Other examples in Ritter 1965, 172-3.

⁴¹ Plut., *Demetr.* 53.2.

⁴² A view expressed by Grenz 1914, 36-8, but not accepted by Ritter 1965, 31-41. There is no evidence that the diadem existed in Macedonia before the reign of Alexander. For a summary of the discussion about a possible Macedonian origin of the diadem see Ritter 1984, 106-8 and Smith 1988, 35 with n. 35. Evidence for Alexander wearing the diadem e.g. Arr., *Anab.* 7.9.9; Diod. 17.116.4; 18.60.6-61.1; Curt. 10.6.4.

Achaemenid royal insignium, a Greek victory wreath and a symbol of Dionysos.⁴³ In what follows, these three theories will be briefly outlined.

(1) The word διάδημα—the noun formed from the verb διαδέω, ‘to bind round’—is first mentioned in Xenophon’s *Cyropaedia*. Describing Cyrus’ appearance on a ceremonial, public occasion, Xenophon states that the Persian king wore a ‘Median’ dress, including a diadem tied around the Persian tiara (or: *kidaris*).⁴⁴ The use of this diadem, however, was not restricted to the king (as it was in the Hellenistic age), but was also worn by members of the court nobility, the king’s *suggeneis*.⁴⁵ Thus, it was not regalia in the strict sense of an exclusive symbol of royal. Furthermore, the historicity of Xenophon’s view of Persian court customs is questionable; it is, at any rate, not supported by archaeological evidence from the Achaemenid Empire itself, even though there is abundant archaeological contemporary evidence for Persian regalia. Diodoros and Curtius, both drawing from the same vulgate source, state that Alexander took over his diadem from the Persian king, but here the same objection can be made.⁴⁶ The Persian origin of the diadem has been the most popular explanation; its main defender is Ritter, claiming that the combination of diadem and tiara was the genuine head-gear of the Achaemenid kings.⁴⁷ But the point is (apart from the meagre and suspect evidence): if the diadem really was an oriental emblem of royalty it is hardly feasible that it became such an extremely successful symbol among the Macedonian and the Greeks. Even if we accept a conscious *Verschmel-*

⁴³ For an overview see Smith 1988, 35-6, being strongly opposed to a ‘fictitious’ Achaemenid origin. So also E.A. Fredericksmeier, ‘Once more the diadem and barrel-vault at Vergina’, *AJA* 87 (1983) 99-102, but not Ritter 1984, 105-8.

⁴⁴ Xen., *Cyr.* 8.3.13; cf. Curt. 3.3.17.

⁴⁵ This sole attestation of a diadem before Alexander is made even more puzzling because of the lack of supporting archaeological evidence, cf. Smith 1988, 36. Given the fact that also the king’s *suggeneis* wore diadems, the diadem may have been a regalia in the sense of a symbol of royal power distributed among the nobility. At any case, it was not an exclusive regalia, reserved to the king. As far as head-dresses are concerned, this exclusive insignia will have been the tiara, a conical mitre that was worn by the king only (Xen., *Cyr.* 8.1.13) and, perhaps, the cylindrical crowns known from rock reliefs. On Achaemenid crowns, see H. von Gall, ‘Die Kopfbedeckung des persischen Ornats bei den Achämeniden’, *AMI* n.F. 7 (1974) 145-61, and W. Henkelman, ‘The royal Achaemenid crown’, *AMI* n.F. 28 (1995/6) 275-93. Also (Neo) Assyrian kings may have worn something similar to a diadem, though the Assyrian main regalia was, like the Persian, the tiara; cf. Smith 1988, 36 with n. 45. However, the (archaeological) evidence for a Near Eastern ‘diadem’ is disputable. Cf. D. Bänder, *Die Siegesstele des Naramsîn und ihre Stellung in Kunst- und Kulturgeschichte* (Idstein 1995) 187-8, 191-2; B. Hrouda, *Die Kulturgeschichte des assyrischen Flachbildes* (Bonn 1965) 43-4. On a wall painting from Mari, a king, wearing a tiara, receives from the hands of Ishtar a white sceptre and a red circular band, cf. the illustration in A. Parrot, ‘Les peintures du palais de Mari’, *Syria* (1937) 336; but it might as well be something else. In Plut., *Mor.* 173c Xerxes is given a diadem on his accession, but this probably reflects Hellenistic practice.

⁴⁶ Diod. 17.77.6; Curt. 6.6.4.

⁴⁷ Ritter 1965, 6-18, 31-62, and 125; cf. Ritter 1987, 290-301. So also Bosworth 1993, 158: ‘Alexander’s regular costume was the white-striped purple tunic of the Persian king ... and the Persian diadem’. Against this view: Alföldi 1985, 105-13 and Smith 1988, 35-6. The latter stresses the notable lack of support for this theory in the other literary sources mentioning the adoption of the diadem by Alexander; in Arrian’s description of the contents of Cyrus’ royal tomb (*Anab.* 6.29.5), based on the eye-witness account of Aristoboulos, a diadem is conspicuously absent.

zungspolitik in Alexander's later reign, than certainly the Diadochs and their successors, including the Antigonids in Macedonia (!), would have not chosen as their principal emblem of royalty a symbol that was primarily associated with Persian kingship.

(2) In a posthumously published collection of essays on Caesar's royal pretensions, Alföldi suggested that the diadem was derived from the Greek victory fillet: originally a reward for athletes and poets participating in games, it developed into a more general symbol of exceptional victory and merit, '[ein] Symbol für eine jede Höchstleistung und Überordnung', until 'diese echt griechische Formulierung der höchsten Geltung und sieghaften Führung auf den Staat und auf das eroberungsgierige Heereskönigtum bezogen wurde.'⁴⁸ Victory was indeed central to Hellenistic royal ideology and Alföldi's outline of how the Greek's preoccupation with agonistic competition influenced this is imposing. Still, we should be cautious to really identify the diadem completely with a victor's fillet: the victor's fillet is not called a *διάδημα*, and diadem and victory fillet are not similar in shape. Moreover, an exclusive Greek origin would not have had much appeal to the non-Greek subjects, and it is hard to understand how a more or less *common* head-band could have become an *exclusive* symbol of royalty.

(3) The association of the diadem with Dionysos stems from two sources: Diodoros and Pliny, who, drawing on the same unidentified Hellenistic author state that the kings took over the diadem from Dionysos, who wore it as a symbol of his Eastern conquests.⁴⁹ Again, the element of victory is in accordance with both theory and practice of Hellenistic kingship. We do know that Dionysos, the conquering god, was one of Alexander's favourite deities and later became just as important for the Seleukids and Ptolemies, and that his myth of conquest was elaborated at the Ptolemaic court. On the other hand we can propound to this theory basically the same objection as to the agonistic origin: it simply was a different sort of bind.⁵⁰

None of the proposed origins of the diadem is *in itself* persuasive. However, to find the historical origin of the diadem, as was said above, is only relevant as far as it can help us understand the meaning of the Hellenistic diadem. The objections raised against the respective theories of origin do not preclude that contemporaries *could* understand the diadem as referring to—not necessarily originating from—the agonistic fillet, the Dionysian head-band, and oriental royal insignia, or even something else that we have not yet found. Perhaps the Hellenistic diadem may even have referred to several meanings simultaneously, as is suggested by the divergent efforts of Diodoros, Curtius and Pliny to find an antiquarian background for the diadem. All that Alexander did, was binding a piece of cloth around his head and making this a symbol of his power. Presumably Alexander was well aware of the

⁴⁸ Alföldi 1985, 105-32. Against Alföldi's view see H.W. Ritter, 'Die Bedeutung des Diadems', *Historia* 36 (1987) 290-301, defending his own view that the diadem was Achaimenid: 'müßte sie revidiert werden, wäre dies eine Rückkehr zum Stand des 19. Jh.' (p. 290).

⁴⁹ Diod. 4.4.4; Plin. *N.H.* 7.191. Cf. Smith 1988, 37-8.

⁵⁰ On the differences in shape of the royal diadem and the Dionysian fillet see Smith 1988, 37 with n. 55.

associations it invoked, an effect that was both gratuitous and calculated.⁵¹ Thus the Greeks' association of the diadem with agonistic victory or with the victorious Dionysos were a more than welcome by-effect. The same is true of the possible association of the diadem with nobility and leadership among Alexander's Iranian subjects. Of greatest importance to Alexander, however, was the need to introduce a novel symbol for a new form of kingship, without arousing *any* of his subjects' aversion to change or to foreign culture. Thus, Alexander's diadem was at the same time familiar and new. With the assumption of the diadem, Alexander most of all introduced a token of kingship that was linked to his personal, charismatic and autocratic, rulership.⁵² It marked a break with the Macedonian tradition of a limited, hereditary kingship that probably knew no exclusive, distinguishing regalia. The traditional Macedonian kingship was already contested by the absolutist endeavours of Philippos II and perhaps some of his predecessors, but it was Alexander who brought royal monopolisation of power to a peak. Apparently he felt confident enough to do it more openly than any Macedonian king before him had done.

There is, however, a problem: Alexander's diadem is only attested in literary sources; on his portraits he never wears one.⁵³ This even true of the coins posthumously struck by the Diadochs. The old Macedonian monarchy presumably knew no distinct regalia. Therefore, there was no direct necessity for Alexander to wear one. For good political reason he chose to do otherwise and cautiously introduced a fillet symbolising his self-assurance as autocratic world ruler. However, Alexander's autocracy grew only gradually. He had to reckon with the opposition of the powerful Macedonian nobility as well as negative Hellenic sentiments concerning despots. It is possible therefore that Alexander's diadem was meant to be a transitional emblem, 'a plain and unassuming symbol,' as Smith puts it, which 'could have been worn casually at first and only later, with time, have taken on

⁵¹ Cf. Schramm 1956, 1068-72, who argues that attempts, inspired by the Romantic movement and the evolution theories of the Nineteenth Century, to find some linear evolution of medieval regalia, are fruitless: 'Bei keinen von ihnen kann die Rede sein von einer "Entwicklung". ... Anstoß zum Wandel gab vielmehr jeweils, daß ein Herrscher mit seiner Umgebung nach einem neuen oder besseren Zeichen für das suchte, was er verkörperte, daß er sich zu diesem Zwecke mit dem "auseinandersetzte", was Vergangenheit und Fremde für ihn bereit hielten, daß er das ihm passend Dünkende ... übernahm und in der von ihm geschaffenen Form an seinen Nachfolger weitergab oder daß er – wenn weder Vergangenheit noch Fremde ihm weiterhalfen – mit seinen Beratern etwas Neues ersann, was in den Einzelheiten sich da oder dort anlehnen mochte, als Ganzes aber die "Entwicklung" durchbrach.'

⁵² Smith 1988, 36 comes to a similar but more rigid conclusion: 'In "origin" it probably meant precisely nothing. In this lay its real value and success as a symbol. Originally empty of meaning, it could take on whatever significance Alexander gave it.' As I argued above, the diadem probably was *not* empty of meaning, although it was also *new*; cf. J.A. Boon, *Other Tribes, Other Scribes. Symbolic Anthropology in the Comparative Study of Cultures, Histories, Religions, and Texts* (Cambridge etc. 1982) 52-3, who points out that in any culture meanings assigned to symbols can be renegotiated in a dialectic with actual behaviour.

⁵³ Smith 1988, 37 n. 49, and 58-62. There are two, doubtful, exceptions to this rule: the Kyme and Getty Alexanders (Smith, cat.nos. 15 and 16) *may* have had diadems, a radiant one in case of the former, but a *tainia* is also possible.

significance and been transformed into an official insignia.⁵⁴ The institutionalisation of the diadem as the principal symbol of kingship (if that was what Alexander wanted it to become) was far from completed when Alexander died in Babylon in 323. It is unknown if Philippos Arrhidaios used the diadem.⁵⁵ It is certain, however, that when in 306/5 the Diadochs proclaimed themselves kings they used the diadem—which everyone knew as something Alexander had worn—as the central symbol of their new monarchies.⁵⁶ A shift in the diadem's meaning occurred. To Alexander, the diadem had been *personal*; with the Diadochs, the diadem became a generic symbol of royal power, appealing to *all* their subjects because it was new but based on tradition.⁵⁷

3. The royal sceptre

The sceptre as a symbol of power is common in many cultures. In Homer, the sceptre symbolised the authority of gods and kings.⁵⁸ In Classical Greece, gods and heroes, are depicted with long sceptres on

⁵⁴ Smith 1988, 36.

⁵⁵ The only indication that Arrhidaios wore a diadem is a rather indefinite passage in Curtius (10.8.20), according to which he 'took off the diadem' in offering to abdicate, but this could as well be a matter of speech. Ritter 1965, 62-70, argues in favour of a diadem for both Arrhidaios and Alexandros IV. Of neither of these kings, however, there are contemporary portraits with diadems.

⁵⁶ The literary sources are collected and extensively discussed in Ritter 1965, 78-127. The Diadoch's assumption of kingship is followed by a sudden abundance of archaeological evidence, both from ruler portraits and coins. Cf. the plates appendix in Smith 1988, including statues (mostly Roman copies of contemporary originals, namely cat. nos. 4 [Demetrios I], 9-12, 20 [unidentified Diadochs] and 21 [Seleukos]), and coins (pl. 75 nos. 1-2 [Ptolemaios], pl. 76 no. 1-3 [Seleukos]), all of them minted during their reigns.

⁵⁷ I do not agree with Ritter 1965, 126-7, who distinguishes between the diadem as a symbol of 'Asian' or 'universal' kingship for Alexander and Antigonos, and as a (geographically) limited kingship for the other kings: 'Antigonos übernahm das Diadem als Zeichen der Herrschaft über Asien in der Nachfolge Alexanders des Großen. ... Wenn auch Ptolemaios, Seleukos und Lysimachos sich zu Königen ausrufen ließen und das Diadem annahmten, bedeutete dies anders als bei Antigonos nicht den Anspruch auf Universalherrschaft, sondern sie wollten nur Könige der in ihrem Bereich lebenden Makedonen sein, und das Diadem war für sie nur Zeichen der Herrschaft über einen Teil Asiens' (cf. pp. 83-9; 91-5). Even in Smith 1988, p. 37, the popular but ill-founded distinction between different kinds of imperial pretensions among the Diadochs leads to some confusion: 'Although none of the Successors ever formally renounced the idea of a united empire, the diadem soon no longer symbolised kingship of all Asia, but only parts of it. The diadem, however, still ... meant kingship in Asia in the style of Alexander.'

⁵⁸ *E.g.* *Il.* II 101; VI 159 (Zeus); I 245; II 186; VII 412 (Agamemnon); II 256; 279 (Odysseus); X 321; 328 (Hector). Hence also the Homeric 'sceptred king' (*skēptouchos basileus*): *Il.* II 86; *Od.* II 231, VIII 41, 47. In Homeric council meetings, kings and chiefs, on rising to speak, were handed a sceptre by a herald: *Il.* I 234; XVIII 505; XXIII 568; *Od.* II 37. A similar use of the sceptre is found in Aesch., *Prom.* 761 (τύραννα σκηπτρόν), cf. 172, *Eum.* 626, and Soph., *OC* 425 (σκήπτρα καὶ θρόνου). On the use of sceptres in historical Archaic and Classical Greece not much is known; it was used by the Androklids of Ephesos (Strabo 14.633) but in general Archaic and Classical sceptres are found in a mythological context.

vase-paintings. Both Egyptian pharaoh's and Near Eastern kings were equipped with sceptres.⁵⁹ Royal sceptres belonged to the main regalia of Hellenistic kings too. Literary evidence is scarce but the available archaeological evidence provides some clues regarding the shape of the Hellenistic sceptre, which probably had the form of a spear (or simply *was* a spear), referring to the concept of *doriktētos chōra* and the king's capacity of a warrior protecting his subjects. Some of the remaining portrait statues of Hellenistic rulers originally had sceptres in their hands; the high position of the hand holding it suggest that sceptres were long, man-size or more than man-size in height.⁶⁰ On coins sceptres appear with two kinds of embellishments: spherical buttons and once a spearhead.⁶¹ A real (early) Hellenistic sceptre may have been recovered at Vergina; it is two metres long and wrapped in gold.⁶²

The verb *σκηπτροφορέω* means 'to rule over'. The sceptre was a badge of command, not symbolising authority as such but the *use* of authority. In an anecdote about Stratonikos, a famous harp-player in the service of Ptolemaios I Soter, Athenaios writes: 'When king Ptolemaios discussed with him the art of harp playing in an all too pedantic way, he said: "O king, a sceptre is one thing, a plectrum is something else."'”⁶³ Since sceptres are found in many civilisations of the Ancient World, they seem almost universal symbols. It is thus difficult, and not very relevant, to trace some kind of cultural and geographic origin for the Hellenistic sceptre.⁶⁴ Of more importance is the meaning the Hellenistic sceptre had for contemporaries, if there perhaps were more associations than the standard notion of 'authority'. It has been suggested that the sceptre was derived from the shepherd's crook and that it symbolised a king's pastoral duties towards his subjects, notably his duty to protect, as pastoral

⁵⁹ For an overview see M. Ebert, s.v. 'Stab als Würdezeichen', in: *Reallexikon der Vorgeschichte* 12 (1928) 313, and s.v. 'Szepter' in: *Reallexikon der Vorgeschichte* 14 (1928) 523.

⁶⁰ Particularly the Terme Ruler and the Bern Ruler (Smith 1988, cat. nos. 44 and 45). The Terme Ruler probably is a Seleukid king from the Middle Hellenistic period, perhaps Alexander Balas or Demetrios I; the Bern Ruler, dating to the Middle or Late Hellenistic period, has not been identified (Smith 1988, 164). Other ruler statues with long sceptres are the Getty Late Ptolemy (cat. no. 59), the Louvre Alexander (plate 70, nos. 3-4), the British Museum Ptolemy II and Arsinoë (plate 70, no. 6), the Baltimore Ruler (plate 71, no. 1), and the Louvre 'Balas' (plate 71, nos. 5-6).

⁶¹ Smith 1988, plate 75 no. 16 (Kleopatra I, with round buttons), plate 77 no. 19 (Rhoimetalkes of the Bosporos, with small button), plate 78 no. 8 (Juba I, with round button); *SNG* 1965, no. 330, 331 (Archebios of Baktria); Babelon, *Cat.d.mon.gr.,Rois de Syrie* nos. 1404, 1406 (Cleopatra Thea with Antiochus VIII). Spearhead: Smith 1988, plate 75 no. 11 (Ptolemaios V).

⁶² Hammond 1989, 219 with n. 10.

⁶³ Ath. 350a. In a funerary epigram for an officer called Apollonios mention is made of a 'War of the Sceptres', possibly the Ptolemaic Syrian Campaign of 103-101 BCE, or else referring to dynastic struggles during the reign of Ptolemaic VIII: W. Peek, *Griechische Vers-Inschriften* (Berlin 1955) no. 1151, line 12; *SEG* 39, nr. 1694, cf. *SEG* VIII no. 770 and *SEG* XXXIX no. 1694.

⁶⁴ The main objection to the often expressed idea that the Hellenistic sceptre came from the Orient, is not the fact that it lacks evidence, but that it is unnecessary because the sceptre was known in Greece as an insignia of power from at least the age of Homer.

staffs are fundamentally weapons.⁶⁵ In the Greek city states, a herald's staff was a token of friendship: sending a herald's staff to another city, meant an offer of peace, while sending a spear was a declaration of war (Polyb. 4.52.3). On the well-known limestone rock relief from Arsameia where Antiochos I of Kommagene shakes hands with Artagnes-Herakles, the king's long sceptre points downwards in a gesture of friendship and peace, its top, a spearhead presumably, hidden behind the god's right foot: The other end of the sceptre is decorated with a round ornament which may be a globus signifying the *oikoumenē* or a counterweight – or both: a globus-shaped counterweight. That this sceptre really is a spear is evident too from the hand grip in the middle of it.⁶⁶ On the coins of Menandros of Baktria the king is shown thrusting a spear or lance. The spherical buttons on sceptres seen on coins presumably likewise were spears or lances turned upside down, signifying peace.

Because sceptres were badges of authority they symbolically contained this authority.⁶⁷ They were magical or divine attributes. Kings, like gods, were not accountable for their deeds to anyone but themselves and their own laws. In Greek iconography Zeus and Hades carried sceptres symbolising their supreme authority in the divine realms of Heaven and Underworld inhabited respectively by the immortals and the dead. A Hellenistic king's sceptre stood for a similar kind of supreme authority in the world of mortals.

4. Purple

‘Therefore, O perverse man, do not attempt to be king before you have attained to wisdom. And in the meantime, it is better not to command others but to live in solitude, clothed in a sheepskin.’ Thus spoke Diogenes, the sage, to Alexander, the king. At these bold words, Alexander furiously replied:

⁶⁵ In *Il.* II 265-8 Odysseus beats up Thersites with his golden sceptre. Paus. 9.40.6. reports that the citizens of Chaironeia believed that they possessed the sceptre of Agamemnon and referred to this object, which they thought held divine powers, as δόρυ, ‘spear’; cf. Just. 43.3, calling the sceptre of Archaic Roman king *hasta*.

⁶⁶ Smith, 1988, plate 59 no. 1, cf. p. 104. Antiochos' royal costume is a mixture of Oriental (tiara, robe, leggings, shoes) and Macedonian (diadem, *chlamys*) elements. For the counterweight on (cavalry) lances see P.A. Manti, ‘The cavalry sarissa’, *AncW* 8.1-2 (1983) 73-80, 79.

⁶⁷ In the council of the Greeks beleaguering Troy, Agamemnon's golden sceptre, made by Hephaistos and a gift from Zeus, was elevated above the sceptres of the other kings (*Il.* I 277; IX 38, 99); therefore Odysseus, when attempting to stop routing warriors, uses not his own but Agamemnon's sceptre, which contained authority over *all* the Greeks (*Il.* II 186, 199). In the Achaimenid kingdom, sceptres were used to delegate (military) command: they were given by the king to invest one with authority reflecting the authority of the king; the evidence for this practice, however, is Greek: Hdt. 7.52; Xen., *Cyr.* 7.3.15; 8.1.38; 8.3.15; *Anab.* 1.6.11; cf. *Esther* 5.2. In the Germanic Kingdoms of Late Antiquity, royal sceptres were magical talismans. They were handed down from father to son and symbolised the divine ascendancy of the king's family (*Sippe*). Germanic sceptres were believed to provide protection and to give strength, cf. Schramm 1955, 262-78: ‘Der Stab galt gewiß als Zeichen dafür, daß sein Inhaber vom Heil seiner Sippe, seiner Ahnen getragen wurde, daß er ein Mann des Glücks und

‘You, do you bid *me*, Alexander, of the stock of Herakles, to put on a sheepskin? Me, the hegemon of the Greeks, the king of the Macedonians!’ ‘Surely’, answered Diogenes, ‘just as your ancestors did: was not Archelaos a goatherd and did he not enter Macedon driving goats? Now do you think he did this clad in purple rather than in a sheepskin?’⁶⁸ Central in this anecdote, related by Dio Chrysostomos 4.70-71, is the opposition of two articles of dress. On the one hand a purple garment, in Dio’s view the pre-eminent garb for one who is really kingly, raising him above the crowd ‘so as to make visible his greater importance and dignity’.⁶⁹ On the other hand a sheepskin, here an emblem of marginality.

The wearing of purple garments was held in high esteem, not only by Alexander and his successors but by many cultures around the Mediterranean and in the Near East, from the second half of the First Millennium BCE until the early Middle Ages. The purple pigment, made from live marine snails, was used to dye cloth, especially (unspun) wool, and was a status symbol. In the course of the first half of the First Millennium, Phoenicia, particularly the city of Tyre, became the pre-eminent centre for purple production, although it was also manufactured elsewhere, particularly in the Aegean.⁷⁰ The most valuable variant of the purple dye was called Tyrian purple.⁷¹ In the great imperial civilisations of the Assyrians, Persians, Macedonians and Romans, Tyrian purple was a token of kingship. Hence the use of ‘royal purple’ as a synonym of Tyrian purple, notably in relation to the Hellenistic monarchies.⁷² In the only comprehensive study of purple in the Ancient World, M. Reinhold rigorously disconnected purple from royalty, arguing that the dye had no exclusive royal connotation

gegen Unheil gefeit war. Der Stab war aber zugleich ... ein besonders hergerichteter zauberkräftiger Stab, mit einem ungewöhnlichen Maß [einer] Kraft begabt’.

⁶⁸ Archelaos became king of the Macedonians after he had thrown the treacherous Kisseus, a Macedonian king of dubious historicity, into the pit prepared for himself. Thereafter Archelaos followed an Apollo-sent goat, to the place chosen to found the city of Aigai; see Highness, *Fable* 219.

⁶⁹ Dio 2.49, cf. 47.25. It should be noted that in Dio’s Fourth Discourse on Monarchy, from which the above quotation was taken, Diogenes shows little appreciation for kings who rely on outward badges of royalty rather than on the worthiness of their soul, cf. 4.61; 4.71; of course, those who *are* worthy, may be dressed in purple as a token of this. See also 31.163; 34.29-30. Cf. Plut., *Mor.* 180e, an anecdote about Alexander: ‘When some commended the frugality of Antipatros, who, they said, lived a plain and simple life, he remarked: “Outwardly Antimatter is plain white, but within he is all purple”’.

⁷⁰ Myth associates the discovery of purple with the Tyrian numen Melkart (Pollux 1.45; cf. Ach. Tat. 2.11.4 ff.). The name ‘Phoenicia’ may be derived from ‘purple’, *i.e.* the Greek φοίνιξ / φοίνιος, ‘(blood) red’, cf. F.W. Danker, s.v. ‘Purple’, in: *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* vol. 5 (1992) 557-60; Against this view *i.a.* E. Wunderlich, *Die Bedeutung des roten Farbe im Kult der Griechen und Römer* (Giessen 1925) 105-8, with references the Greek origin of this etymology; cf. M.C. Astour ‘The origin of the terms Canaan, Phoenicia, and purple’, *JNES* 24 (1965) 346-50. On the production of purple in Phoenicia consult E. Lipinski, s.v. ‘Pourpre’, in: C. Baurain *et al.* eds., *Dictionnaire de la civilisation phénicienne et punique* (Turnhout 1992) 359-61.

⁷¹ Plin., *NH* 9.127, 137, 140; Strabo 16.2.23.

⁷² According to Reinhold, *op cit.* below, p. 8 n. 2, ‘royal purple’ was first used by Cicero in *Pro Scauro* 45, written in 54 BCE (*purpura regalis*), cf. *Pro Sestio* 57 (*purpura et sceptro et illis insignibus regiis*). It may be doubted that Cicero invented or even first used purple in this way; we encounter the use of ‘purple’ in the broader sense as ‘token of kingship’ already in Diod. 36.2.4 and 36.2.4, and in Polyb. 10.26.1. Moreover, the

in the Ancient Near East and could be worn as a status symbol by anyone rich enough to afford it.⁷³ Here it will be argued that Tyrian purple did have a distinct royal connotation in the Ancient Near East, the principal argument being that there were various different sorts of purple dye: most of these were worn by non-royals but the most expensive, probably blood red, variant was a symbol of royalty (or, in Greece and Rome, of divinity). After briefly discussing the production of purple and the variant purple dyes existing in Antiquity, we will have a closer look at the history of the meaning of purple in the Near East and Greece until the age of Alexander.

Because the knowledge of making purple was lost in Late Antiquity, purple has fascinated modern scholars since the nineteenth century. Most modern literature is concerned with technical aspects like the chemical structure of the pigment, the biology of the shell-fish used for its production and the archaeology of the purple industry. With the exception of Reinhold's study of 1970 and Heinke Stulz' study of purple in early Greece (1990), modern literature rarely deals with the social and political aspects of the dye.⁷⁴

Unlike the modern English usage, the Greek word 'purple', mostly πορφύρα, is not a colour but a dye, a purple-dyed cloth, or the purple-fish from which the dye is made. The purple pigment was produced in several shades, varying from yellowish green to violet-blue and from pale pink to dark red, the modern conception of the colour purple being only one of many possibilities.⁷⁵ Neither the

many attestations after Cicero often reflect older, Hellenistic practice, for example App., *Mith.* 1.5, cited by Reinhold, and Plut., *Aem.* 23.2, where purple is one of the signs of king Perseus' royal status.

⁷³ M. Reinhold, *History of Purple as a Status Symbol in Antiquity* (Brussels 1970). Cf. e.g. p. 71: 'The use of the color purple was never ... interdicted to private persons. It was used widely as a sacerdotal and cultic color and by private individuals as a form of luxury display. The determining factor in its use was economic ability to purchase this extremely expensive marine dye.' Reinhold's conclusions have also been contested in a review by F. Kolb in *Gnomon* 45 (1973) 50-8.

⁷⁴ H. Stulz, *Die Farbe Purpur im frühen Griechentum. Beobachtet in der Literatur und in der bildenden Kunst* (Stuttgart 1990). References to nineteenth century studies can be found in H. Blümner, *Technologie und Terminologie der Gewerbe bei den Griechen und Römern* I (2nd edn; Leipzig and Berlin 1912) 233. A good general account of the technical aspects of purple production is L.B. Jensen, 'Royal Purple of Tyre', *JNES* 22 (1963) 104-18. For an overview of publications on ancient purple and purple making until 1970 one may consult the footnotes in Reinhold 1970, 7 ff.

⁷⁵ Diocletian's Price Edict of 301 CE distinguishes no less than eight different qualities of purple-dyed cloth, with prices varying from 300 to 150.000 *denarii* per pound (24.1-12); cf. S. Lauffer, *Diokletians Preisedikt* (Berlin 1971) 167-8. The colours of purple are known from modern reconstruction and ancient sources; Vitruvius 7.13.1-3, distinguishes varying shades of purple in accordance with geographical location, stating that red purple comes from 'regions which are nearest to the sun' and leaden blue and black purple from more northern regions; cf. Diodorus 2.53.2, saying that in warm climates more bright and varied colours can be seen due to the influence of the sun, for example the purple-coloured coats worn in Syria. To my great benefit the Dutch language reserves the word 'paars' for violet-blue, using 'purper' in much the same way as the Greek. The reconstruction of the costume of Alexander and his Companions in N. Sekunda, *The Army of Alexander the Great* (London 1984), rendering ancient purple as purple in the modern English sense (with less support from the Alexander Sarcophagus and Mosaic than the accompanying text suggests). On colour in Greek and Hellenistic painting, esp. the use of valuable paints made from purple shell fish, see E. Berger, *Die Maltechnik des Altertums nach den Quellen, Funden, chemischen Analysen und eigenen Versuchen* (1904; 2nd edn. 1986) 258; H. Blümner, *Tech-*

Greek nor the Latin has different words for different shades of purple, using *porphura* and *purpura* respectively only to indicate the dye, not the colour. In rare cases it possible to make out from contextual information what kind of colour exactly is meant, distinguishing a crimson and violet/blue variant.⁷⁶ In Semitic languages different words are used to distinguish between red and violet purple, for instance in *Exodus* and *Numbers* where *'argâmân* and *tekêlet* often appear together, translated in *Lxx* as *porphura* and *huakinthos* / *huakinthinos*.⁷⁷ Another reason for wearing purple, was that it expressed wealth. According to Athenaios 526c, purple dye was worth its weight in silver. It was the difficult (and in case of Tyrian purple perhaps secret) production process that made purple dye so valuable.⁷⁸ Moreover, purple dye was colourfast, permitting washing on a regular basis.⁷⁹ The dye was obtained from marine snails of the *gastropeda* class, a species of particularly aggressive carnivorous shell-fish feeding on molluscs, in particular mussels. *Gastropeda* is commonly found in the waters of the entire Mediterranean. Most used for purple production were the genera *murex* (esp. *m. trunculus* and *m. brandaris*) and *purpura* (esp. *p. haemastoma* and *p. lapillus*).⁸⁰ The snails were caught in the

nologie und Terminologie der Gewerbe und Künste bei den Griechen und Römern IV (Leipzig and Berlin 1912) 497-8; E. Pfuhl, s.v. 'Purpur', in: *Malerei und Zeichnung der Griechen* III (Munich 1923) 940-2; I. Scheibler, *Griechische Malerei der Antike* (Munich 1994) 100-6.

⁷⁶ The sources often compare the colour of the most expensive variant of purple with (clotted) blood, for instance Plin. 9.126, who furthermore say that this kind of purple was the colour of a shimmering dark rose (*nigrantis rosae colore sublucens*). I.I. Ziderman, 'Seashells and Ancient Purple-dyeing', *Biblical Archaeologist* 53 (1990) 98-101, who reconstructed the production process in a laboratory, concludes that the dark red variant should be identified with Tyrian or 'royal' purple.

⁷⁷ Ziderman 1990, 101.

⁷⁸ Purple dye was like gold: similar colours could be produced from other sources than marine snails, in particular from plants, but not looking quite as brilliant; Danker 1992, 557, names e.g. henna, alkanet, archil, woad, and indigo, cf. Plin., *HN* 24.4; Strabo. 13.4.14 (630); 12.8.16 (578); Vitruvius 7.14.1-2; Dioscorides 4.46; *Od.* 6.53; Diodorus 3.69.1; 17.70.3. Among other alchemistic dyeing-recipes, *Papyrus Holmiensis* gives recipes for imitating purple: 'keep this recipe a secret', the author says, 'because the [imitation] purple has a unusual beautiful colour'; cf. O. Lagercrantz, *Papyrus Holmiensis. Rezepte für Silber, Steine und Purpur* (Uppsala 1913); H. Diels, 'Antike Chemie', in: *idem, Antike Technik. Sieben Vorträge* (Leipzig and Berlin 1920) 121-54, esp. 139.

⁷⁹ Danker 1990, 557, citing Cic., *Flac.* 29, who remarks that Denarius could look the peak of fashion with but one set of garments at his proposal; cf. Xen., *Oec.* 10.3.7 and Plut., *Alex.* 36. Several Greek and Roman sources describe the production of authentic purple as a monstrously intensive process. The *locus classicus* is Plin., *NH* 9.125-141; other important sources include Arist., *HA* 547a and Vitruvius 7.13.1-3; see Blümner 1912, 233-47, for a comprehensive overview, cf. Jensen 1963, 108.

⁸⁰ Plin., *HN* 9.128-130, gives an extensive account of the biology of several varieties of purple fish. It is possible that the exact recipe was a secret and that Pliny does not have all the details right. J. Doumet, *Étude sur la pourpre ancienne et tentative de reproduction du procédé de teinture de la ville de Tyr decit par Pline l'Antique* (Beirut 1980), initially failed to make purple when using the snails and procedure from Pliny's account; only after experimenting with small portions of purple substance obtained from other snails from the Levantine coast but not mentioned by Pliny the results became satisfactory, i.e. in accordance with the colour described by Pliny. Surviving mounds of shell waste, especially numerous and impressive around Sidon and Tyre, contain each a specific type of shell (Danker 1992, 558). The use of purple dye is not restricted to ancient Mediterranean civilisations: some prehistoric cultures of Britain and Norway coloured cloth (and perhaps also their bodies) with pigment extracted from yet another species, *thais lapillus*; Pre-Columbian Indians of Meso-America and Peru

early springtime when they gather in coastal waters for reproduction; they were caught before they started laying their eggs because some of the purple pigment passes into the egg capsules and disappears from the snail.⁸¹ The snails were gathered by divers, sometimes using complicated fishing devices such as wicker basket traps containing mussels, frogs, or animal flesh as bait. After crushing the shells, the part that produces the dye substances was removed from the living snails, salted for three days, and then cooked in stone pots or a leaden cauldrons. The cooking could go on for many days. Only after all the dross of flesh still attached to the purple substance had come boiling to the surface and had subsequently been skimmed off, the purple dye was ready for use.⁸² On average, of the total weight of raw material put into the cooking pot, only about six to seven percent remained after boiling.⁸³ It goes without saying that all this produced a nasty smell, making Strabo remark that although purple had made Sidon and Tyre rich, it had also made them unpleasant to live in.⁸⁴ Over the last two centuries attempts have been made to reconstruct the original Tyrian purple-dye. Friedländer first determined the chemical structure of the dyeing agent in *murex brandaris*.⁸⁵ Interestingly, Friedländer needed no less than 12,000 shell fish to isolate only 1.4 gram of purple pigment. From

used shell-fish of the *purpura patula* species for making dyes; and Indian people living along the coast of Eastern Mexico still use *purpura* shell-fish for dyeing their fabrics, see M. Seefelder, *Indigo* (Cologne 1982) 73-6.

⁸¹ Cf. Jensen 1963, 108: 'The mature egg capsules also contain a great deal of the ... dye which may have been a secret source utilised by the Phoenicians. These eggs are avoided by all fish and marine life and thus have great survival value.'

⁸² Seefelder, *op.cit.* above, describes how Indian tribes living along the Pacific coast of Mexico use a variant of the *purpura* shell-fish for dyeing their fabrics by a less complicated method. Instead of cooking the snails they more or less 'milk' them: immediately after being caught, the living animals are spread out over woollen cloth soaked in salt water; the snails are then besprinkled with lemon juice, to which they react by voluntarily secreting the purple pigment. The wool colours within a few minutes. After this, the purple-fish are thrown back into the sea still alive. A comparable similar practice was witnessed by Jensen 1973, 104, in modern Lebanon: at Sidon, on a spring afternoon in the 1950's, Jensen watched playing children who caught *murex* shell-fish for dyeing rags, also using lemon juice in the process. This was noticed earlier by L. Lortet, *La Syrie d'aujourd'hui* (Paris 1884) 127, cited by Jensen. Jensen suggests that given the complexity of the methods described by Pliny and his apparent ignorance of some aspects of purple processing (see above), this uncomplicated procedure may have been excluded by Pliny—who is concerned with biology, not industry—either because he did not know about it or because this kind of purple was a common one, inferior to the purple dyes more difficult to manufacture.

⁸³ Jensen 1963, 108.

⁸⁴ Strabo 16.2.23.

⁸⁵ P. Friedländer, 'Zur Kenntnis des Farbstoffs des antiken Purpurs aus Murex Brandaris', *Monatschrift für Chemie* 1820 (1907) 991-6; *id.*, 'Über den farbstoff des antiken Purpurs aus Murex Brandaris', *Berichte der Deutschen Chemischen Gesellschaft* 42 (1909) 765-70. Earlier attempts were made by H. Lucaze-Duthiers, 'Mémoire sur la pourpre', *Annales des sciences naturelles* 4.12 (1859) 5-84, and by A. Dedekind, 'La pourpre verte' & 'Recherches sur la pourpre oxyblatta chez les Assyriens et les Égyptiens', both in: *Arch.de zool.expériment.* 3.4 (1896) 467f. and 481f. resp; cf. *id.*, *Ein Beitrag zur Purpurkunde* (Berlin 1898). For later chemists investigating ancient purple see Jensen 1963, 109; for further references and a summary of results consult D.L. Fox, *Animal Biochromes and Structural Colors* (Cambridge 1953) 218-21. A somewhat more recent attempt is described by Doumet 1980, with useful colour plates illustrating the results.

these researches, it has become clear that different varieties of purple stems mainly from the different kinds of snails, in some cases mixed with one another, used in the process of dye making.

The history of purple production dates back to the early Second Millennium. It is now assumed that it was first processed by Minoan Cretans and Minoanised islanders on Kythera and Keos.⁸⁶ The Minoans exported the dye or dyed fabrics throughout the Aegean and eastern Mediterranean, where dye industries were subsequently set up.⁸⁷ Finds at Troy VI and Cyprus suggest the existence of an purple production industry in the first half of the Second Millennium.⁸⁸ From the early Aegean comes the first mention of ‘royal purple’, encountered on a thirteenth century linear B tablet from Knossos.⁸⁹ The first evidence for a purple dye industry in the Levant dates to *c.* 1500 BCE.⁹⁰ Almost all written sources from the early period of purple production in the Near East associate purple with royal courts. Already in the Fourteenth Century, the Hittite kings demanded, or at least accepted, purple as tribute from their vassals, in particular Ugarit, the most important centre for purple production in the Late Bronze Age.⁹¹ An inventory of gifts sent by king Niqmad of Ugarit to his overlord’s court at Hattushash lists several purple garments, meant not only for the Hittite king Shuppiluliuma I (*c.* 1357-1323) himself but also for his queen, crown prince and court officials.⁹² On Ugaritic tablets, we furthermore read about purple wool, a token of the wealth of the Ugaritic king, sent to Hattushash for a thanks-offering.⁹³ Indeed, in this period the word for ‘purple dye’, similar in Hittite and several eastern

⁸⁶ A Cretan origin of purple production was first suggested by G. Glotz, *The Aegean Civilisation* (London 1925) 177-8, on account of the mounds of shell waste found at Palaikastro; these mounds are dated to *c.* 1700-1600 BCE and include, among other species, *m. trunculus*, *m. brandaris*, and *p. haemastoma*; cf. D. Reese, ‘Palaikastro shells and Bronze Age purple-dye production in the Mediterranean basin’, *ABSA* 82 (1987) 201-6. Later, mounds with remains of *m. trunculus* and *m. brandaris* were excavated near Knossos, as well as at Kouphonisi and Mallia, cf. R.W. Hutchinson, *Prehistoric Crete* (Baltimore 1962) 239. This does not entirely prove the existence of a dye industry, as purple fish are also edible (*m. brandaris* reputedly tasting best), and the snails may also have been used as fish-bait. There is however some Linear B evidence for a dye industry, cf. R.R. Stieglitz, ‘The Minoan origin of Tyrian purple’, *Biblical Archeologist* 57 (1994) 46-54, dating the earliest evidence for a purple industry to *c.* 1750 BCE, as well as providing also a sketchy but useful summary of the study of Minoan purple in since Glotz.

⁸⁷ Reinhold 1970, 12-14; Danker 1992, 558.

⁸⁸ Reese 1987, 205.

⁸⁹ J. Chadwick and M.G.F. Ventris, *Documents in Mycenaean Greek* (Cambridge 1956) 321, 405; cf. Reese 1987, 204.

⁹⁰ Reinhold 1970, 9 n. 4.

⁹¹ The Archaeological remains of purple dye installations found at the harbour quarter of Ugarit have been dated to the 15th-14th centuries: C.F.A. Schaeffer, ‘Une industrie d’Ugarit – la pourpre’, *Annales Archéologiques de Syrie* 1 (1951) 188-92; F. Thureau-Dangin, ‘Un comptoir de laine pourpre à Ugarit’, *Syria* 15 (1934) 137-46. Other Levantine Bronze Age sites where purple industries were found include Sarepta, Tell Akko, and Tell Keisan, all in Phoenicia: N. Karmon and E. Spanier, ‘Remains of a purple dye industry found at Tel Shiqmona’, *IEJ* 38 (1988) 184-6.

⁹² Reinhold 1970, 10 n. 1.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

Semitic languages,⁹⁴ had a second meaning of ‘tribute’ in Ugaritic and Hittite.⁹⁵ Reinhold finds that this evidence does not warrant the conclusion that purple was a royal prerogative in the Late Bronze Age.⁹⁶ Kolb, however, observed that the double meaning of ‘purple’ / ‘tribute’ speaks in favour of this conclusion rather than against it.⁹⁷ Moreover, in the same period an even greater prestige value of purple is attested for the kings of Mitanni. A diplomatic document from the Amarna archives lists gifts sent by king Tušratta of Mitanni to Amenophis III (c. 1417-1379), including ‘one pair of shoes of blue purple wool’ (ii 29-32), ‘one garment of blue purple wool’ (ii 36), ‘one pair of sashes of red wool’ (ii 37-8), ‘one robe and one cap of blue purple wool’ (ii 41-2).⁹⁸ Unlike the before-mentioned Ugaritic purple sent to Hattushash, the purple attire from Mitanni was not dispatched to the pharaoh for customary diplomatic reasons but on the special occasion of a royal wedding, the marriage of Amenophis’ son to a daughter of Tušratta.⁹⁹ The list is long but amidst the abundance of gold, silver and ivory, the rare purple articles in this inventory, none of them mentioned more than once, stand out and were the contrary of ‘insignificant trifles in the vast number of varied presents’, as Reinhold calls them.¹⁰⁰ The status of purple in Mesopotamia during the Late Bronze Age and early Iron Age is poorly documented; we do know, however, that purple dye was exported from the Levant to Mesopotamia centuries before the emergence of the New Assyrian kingdom, when purple is mentioned more often in the sources.¹⁰¹

⁹⁴ Ugaritic: *’argmn*; Hittite: *arkamman*; Hebrew: *’argâmân*; Akkadian: *argamannu*. The word probably indicated the red-coloured variant of sea purple, whilst blue or violet purple can be identified with Hebrew *tekêlet*, Akkadian *takiltu* and Phoenician *tklt*: Lipinski 1992, 360; R. Gradwohl, *Die Farben im Alten Testament* (Berlin 1963) 66; Danker 1992, 557; A.A. Häussling and E. Hofhansl, s.v. ‘Farben / Farbensymbolik’, in: *Theologische Realenzyklopädie* vol. 11 (Berlin and New York 1983) 25-9, 26.

⁹⁵ As it is uncertain which meaning came first, it is usually assumed that the word acquired the meaning of ‘tribute’ only in the second instance, cf. Reinhold 1970, 11 n. 1; the opposite is suggested by W.F. Albright, ‘More light on the Canaanite epic of Aleyân Baal and Môt’, *BASO* 50 (1933) 13-20, esp. 15, arguing that the word is of Anatolian (Luyyan) descent and originally had the meant ‘tribute’, only becoming the name of a dye after being exported to Syria and Phoenicia where ‘murex shells were the principal material for tribute in the maritime towns’. Cf. Gradwohl, *op.cit.* above, p. 68: ‘Auch *argamannu* und *takiltu* sind im Akkadischen, ebenso wenig wie *’argâmân* und *tekêlât* im Hebräischen, von jeher heimisch gewesen, sondern sind als Lehnwörter zusammen mit dem Produkt übernommen worden.’

⁹⁶ Reinhold 1970, 11.

⁹⁷ F. Kolb, review of Reinhold 1970, *Gnomon* 45 (1973) 50-8, esp. 51.

⁹⁸ EA 22. Publications: H. Winckler and L. Abel, ‘Der Thronafel von El Amarna’, *Mitteilungen aus den Orientalischen Sammlungen der Königl. Museen zu Berlin* 1-3 (1889/90) 26; O. Schroeder, *Vorderasiatischen Schriftdenkmäler der Königl. Museen zu Berlin* 11-12 (Berlin 1915) 199. Translation: W.L. Moron ed., *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore and London 1992) 51-61; cf. S.A.B. Mercer ed., *The Tell el-Amarna Tablets* 1 (Toronto 1939) 85 nr. 21.

⁹⁹ For the political background see K.A. Kitchen, *Suppiliuma and the Amarna Pharaoh. A Study in Relative Chronology* (Liverpool 1962).

¹⁰⁰ Reinhold 1970, 12.

¹⁰¹ Caravans transporting purple from the Levantine coast to Mesopotamia, *i.c.* to the city of Nuzi (Yorgan Tepe) in eastern Mesopotamia, are attested as early as 1500 BCE (Reinhold 1970, 9 n. 4). The purple gifts Tušratta sent to Amenophis III were probably obtained from Ugarit, cf. C. Virolleaud in *Syria* 19 (1938) 132 n. 2. The Akkadian language distinguishes, apart from ‘red purple’ (*argamannu*) and violet-blue ‘dark purple’ (*takiltu*),

From the reign of Ashurnasirpal II (c. 883-859) until the reign of Ashurbanipal (c. 668-627) royal documents mention purple as tribute or booty.¹⁰² The spoils were certainly not kept behind closed doors: apart from the necessary offerings to the gods and the use of luxury goods in the construction of temples and palaces, royal tribute and booty was normally distributed among the king's relatives and higher palace officials.¹⁰³ A letter from the crown prince Sennacherib to his father, Sargon II (c. 721-705), documents such a distribution: the largest quantity of gifts was given to the king's nearest family, *sc.* the crown prince and the queen; their names are followed by those of the imperial *grandes*, listed in a strict sequence of a decreasing quantity and value of gifts received. The gifts are varied but always include, beside a quantity of silver, a garment – several persons at the bottom of the list receiving only that.¹⁰⁴ If these dresses were dyed with purple is unknown. Representations of kings and courtiers on bas-reliefs offer no clues: although it is certain that Assyrian sculptures originally were coloured, next to nothing has remained of the paints.¹⁰⁵ Garments received from the king as a gift of honour indicated status at the Assyrian court, similar to the better known practice of the Persian kings, who used to present those whom they wished to honour with valuable purple robes. A clue to the colour of the dresses of Assyrian kings and courtiers is given in *Ezekiel* 23.5-6 (cf. 27.24), a near contemporary source.¹⁰⁶ *Ezekiel* does not only mention the purple garments of Assyrian 'high officials' (or: 'courtiers'),¹⁰⁷ but—more interestingly—uses the expression 'clothed in purple' as a synonym for

several variants of purple coloured cloth, incl. 'blue purple wool', 'blue purple woollen cloth', and 'light blue purple cloth': H. Lutz, *Textiles and Costumes Among the Peoples of the Ancient Near East* (Leipzig 1923) 86.

¹⁰² Reinhold 1970, 14-5. Apart from these inventories, we read in the Annals of Ashurnasirpal III (col. I 53 ii 1.15): 'I coloured the mountain with blood, like wool': if red purple is meant here, it is applied in one of those typical formulas with which the Assyrians used to express their notion of ideal kingship. See also the letter in L. Waterman ed., *Royal Correspondence of the Assyrian Empire* (Ann Arbor 1930/36) nr. 347, in which an official informs his king on the processing of purple cloth in his palace, and by the 'Weavers of Ishtar of Arbela'.

¹⁰³ J. Bär, *Der assyrische tribut und seine Darstellung. Eine Untersuchung zur imperialer Ideologie im neuassyrischen Reich* (Neukirchen 1996) 19-26.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.* 23-5. On palace reliefs, figures representing courtiers usually follow the king's example in their dress and further outward appearance: R.D. Barnett and M. Falkner, *The Sculptures of Assur-nasir-apli II (883-859 B.C.), Tiglath-Pileser III (745-727 B.C.), Esarhaddon (681-669 B.C.) from the Central and South-West Palaces at Nimrud* (London 1962) 36.

¹⁰⁵ R.D. Barnett, *Assyrian Palace reliefs in the British Museum* (London, 2nd ed. 1974) 11; S.M. Paley, *King of the World. Ashur-nasir-pal II of Assyria 883-859 B.C.* (New York 1976) 10-1. Traces of white, black, and red coloured paint have been found; one relief depicting Ashurnasirpal II and a courtier, now in the British Museum (Nimrud Gallery, BM 124569), still shows that the shoes were once painted red (purple?).

¹⁰⁶ Chapters 1-24 of *Ezekiel* were conceived in Babylon during the reign of the Nebuchadnezzar II, between 593 and 586 BCE: Th.C. Vriezen and A.S. Van der Woude, *Literatuur van Oud Israël* (Katwijk, 8th edn. 1984) 236-7; for a full discussion of the date and historicity of *Ezekiel* see B. Lang, *Ezekiel. Der Prophet und das Buch* (Darmstadt 1981) 1-17, 32-56, and T. Krüger, 'Geschichtskonzepte im Ezechielbuch', *BZAW* 180 (1989) 139-98. I would like to thank Dirk Zwieter for translating this passage from the Hebrew.

¹⁰⁷ *Qerobim*, lit. '[those] who were near [the king]' or 'the near ones', *i.e.* courtiers having access to the king. I would like to thank Dirk Zwieter for translating this passage from the Hebrew. *Qerobim* is related to the Akkadian *qur(ru)bûti*, which has a similar meaning: W. Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 1-24* (Neukirchen 1979) 530-1. The

(royal) officials, not unlike the use of the word *purpuratus* for an (Hellenistic) courtier in Latin sources. In the same passage, these officials are specified as ‘commanders and governors’.¹⁰⁸ These may have bought their robes at their own expense, of course, but as the distribution of garments by the king was normal at the Assyrian court it is more likely that purple garments were emblems of delegated royal power. By the time that the Assyrian Empire collapsed, purple dye is also found in Babylonia, Phrygia and Lydia.¹⁰⁹ Although we do not know much about purple in the Neo Babylonian empire, its kings presumably followed the example of their Assyrian predecessors.¹¹⁰ The practice of distributing purple robes was subsequently adopted by the Achaimenids.¹¹¹ In the Persian empire the use of (Tyrian / ‘royal’) purple as a status symbol started with the king who wore purple himself and

word is sometimes read as ‘warriors’, e.g. by J.W. Wevers, *Ezekiel* (London etc. 1969) 180, and L.C. Allen, *The World Biblical Commentary: Ezekiel 20-48* (Dallas 1990) 43, who mistranslates ‘soldiers in purple uniforms’.

¹⁰⁸ The first word, *pahoth*, is used in the Old Testament for Assyrian and Babylonian military commanders, and, more frequently, for the satraps of the Persian kings: G.A. Cooke, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Ezekiel* (Edinburgh 1936) 250; the second word, *segânîm*, is a rather vague term, used for Assyrian, Babylonian and even Israelite officials, translated *στρατῶγοι* ἢ *Ἀξῆξ*, cf. W. Baumgartner, *Hebräisches und aramäisches Lexikon zum Alten Testament* (Leiden, 3rd rev. ed. 1967-83) 872b. The Hebrew Bible in general mentions purple often, but among the Israelites purple-dyed cloth was used principally for cultic purposes, being mentioned in the context tabernacle and altar furnishings in e.g. *Ex.* 25.4; 26-27 and *Num.* 4.6, cf. *Jos. AJ* 3.113.2; 3.124.4, and the prescribed clothing of the priests in *Ex.* 28. From the nineteenth century onward orthodox rabbi’s (by that time unaware of secular researches on purple) became interested in the issue of finding the real *tekêlet*, at first producing a blue dye from squids (a small squid-based *tekêlet* industry still flourishes in Israel today). The Jerusalem-based *Association for the Promotion and Distribution of Tekhelet* now claims to have reconstructed the biblical dye from *murex trunculus* – ‘true blue’ as they call it – and have produced and distributed thousands of purple praying *tsitsit* in an attempt to replace the white tassels which have been in use for about 1300 years, cf. B. Sterman, ‘Tekhelet’, on the Association’s homepage on the internet, *info@tekhelet.co.il*. (1996). A doctoral thesis by one of the most revered pioneers in this field, has, after nearly eighty years, recently been published: I. Herzog, *The Royal Purple and the Biblical Blue, argaman and tekhelet* (Jerusalem 1987), cf. the review by P.E. McGovern in *Isis* 81 (1990) 563-5. The Hebrew Bible says next to nothing, however, about the use of purple as a symbol of monarchy, not counting the purple decoration of Solomon’s Temple made by Tyrian craftsmen (2 *Chron.* 2.7; 2.14; 3.14), although Judges 8.26 mentions a Midianite king in northern Palestine wearing purple garbs. In the War Scroll purple appears in the battle dress of the priests (1 QM 7.11).

¹⁰⁹ Reinhold 1970, 16-7.

¹¹⁰ Cf. *Dan.* 5.7, where Belshazzar promises a golden necklace and a purple dress to the one who could understand the reading on the wall; dressed in purple, this person, the king announces, would become ‘third man in the kingdom’, this being perhaps not merely an honorific title but a real office, cf. E. Haag, *Daniel* (Würzburg 1993) 48-9. *Jos. AJ* 10.235 has incorporated the story, adding that the Chaldean (*i.e.* New Babylonian) kings were dressed in purple. Admittedly, one would rather expect this passage to reflect an Hellenistic, particularly Seleukid practice, but because giving golden necklaces is attested only for Median and Persian kings (*Esd.* 3.6; *Hdt.* 3.20; *Xen., Cyr.* 1.3.2, 2.4.6, 8.2.8, *Anab.* 1.5.8, 1.2.27), and not found in relation to the Seleukid court, J.J. Collins, *Daniel* (Minneapolis 1993) 247, suggests that this passage reflects an oriental practice.

¹¹¹ For the continuity of Mesopotamian royal symbolism and iconography in the Persian Empire see M. Cool Root, *The King and Kingship in Achaemenid Art. Essays on the Creation of an Iconography of Empire* (Leiden 1979); A. Kuhrt, ‘The Achaemenid Concept of Kingship’, *Iran* 22 (1984) 156-60; C. Nylander, ‘Achaemenid Imperial Art’, in M.T. Larsen ed., *Power and Propaganda. A Symposium on Ancient Empires* (Copenhagen 1979) 345-59; esp. on the adoption of purple: Reinhold 1970, 15.

distributed the privilege to do likewise as a favour among his nobles.¹¹² As far the Achaimenids are concerned, there can be no doubt that purple had definitely become a really royal dye.¹¹³ Aristoboulos, charged by Alexander with the inspection of Cyrus' violated tomb at Pasargadai in 324 BCE, wrote an eye-witness report of the burial goods he found inside, including red-purple 'Median' trousers, violet-purple robes and other articles of dress, 'some of purple, some of this colour, some of that'.¹¹⁴ All regalia accompanying Cyrus the Great into his grave—also a sword and precious stones are mentioned—were exposed on a couch covered up with 'Babylonian' carpets and purple rugs. A parallel between this picture and Xenophon's famous description of king Cyrus' outward appearance on a public ceremonial occasion: the king wore the upright tiara, a sleeved violet-purple upper garment, red-purple 'Median' trousers, and a purple tunic (the colour is not specified) with white stripes, the *chiton mesoleukos*.¹¹⁵ Xenophon makes it especially clear that, like the tiara, only the king was allowed to be clothed in the *chiton mesoleukos*: 'no one but the king may wear such a one'. Cyrus the Great, Xenophon says was the first to adopt this dress, although the *Cyropaedia* 6.4.1 reports a like outfit covering the body of another Iranian dynast, Cyrus' confederate Abradates, king of Susa.

After the Battle of Issos, one of Alexander's Companions said, 'the conqueror takes over the possessions of the conquered and they should be called his'.¹¹⁶ Because it symbolised Achaimenid power, purple was among the most highly prized booty Alexander wanted the Persians to yield. In Susa alone no less than 5,000 talents worth of purple was captured.¹¹⁷ During the sack of Persepolis in January 330, one month later, 'much silver was carried off and no little gold, and many rich dresses gay with sea-purple or with gold embroidery became the prize of the victors.'¹¹⁸ However, purple as a symbol of royal power was neither new nor alien for the Macedonians and Greeks. There was an established tradition in both Greece and Macedon to attribute to the dye a similar meaning as found in Near Eastern civilisations, although in the *poleis* these qualities were less flagrantly monarchic than in the Near eastern kingdoms. In the eyes of the Greeks, the wearing of purple garbs was associated with oriental despotism and decadence, because they associated it with religious cult.¹¹⁹ A Spartan law even

¹¹² Hdt. 3.84; Xen., *Cyr.* 8.2.8, 8.3.3; *Es.* 6.8; Jos., *AJ* 11.256-7.

¹¹³ Reinhold 1970, 18-9.

¹¹⁴ Aristoboulos = Arr., *Anab.* 6.29.5-6. Cf. Curt. 3.3.17-19, 4.1.23.

¹¹⁵ Xen., *Cyr.* 8.3.13, observing that the magnificence of Cyrus' appearance was 'one of the arts that he devised to make his government command respect'. Because of the tendentious design of the *Cyropaedia*, Xenophon's description of Cyrus' royal costume must be treated with some caution (as Reinhold 1970, 18 n. 3, cautions), but as this account is so comparable to Aristoboulos', Xenophon may have be describing a real Persian practice, although not necessarily from Cyrus' times.

¹¹⁶ Plut., *Alex.* 20.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.* 36. The total amount of coined money found in Susa was 40,000 talents.

¹¹⁸ Diod. 17.70.3.

¹¹⁹ Purple as oriental e.g. Ath. 12.528e. Cf. A. Alföldi, 'Gewaltherrscher und Theaterkönig, in: *Late Classical and Medieval Studies in Honor of Albert Mathias Friend jr.* (Princeton 1955) 15-55, 24-5; Reinhold 1970, 22-4, and 15: 'it is not accidental that purple wool and purple garments figure prominently in the myth of

forbade the wearing purple-dyed wool by mortals.¹²⁰ In the Fifth Century the Lakedaimonian king Pausanias and the Athenian Alkibiades started to wear purple robes as tokens of power. Pausanias—who also in other respects behaved like an autocratic despot when he was staying with his army in Byzantium—alienated himself from his fellow countrymen and was summoned back to Sparta, where he was condemned for high treason.¹²¹ Alkibiades, on the other hand, was admired when he appeared in the theatre wearing his purple robe.¹²² The difference probably was, that Alkibiades wore purple Greek clothes while Pausanias allegedly dressed as in a Median *stolē*. In both cases, however, purple dyed clothing made its wearer appear *exceptional*. In the Hellenistic Age purple became a symbol of royal power, drawing, again, on both Hellenic and eastern traditions. In the east purple had denoted kingship for centuries (although also other could wear it). In the Greek tradition purple was associated with the gods *and* had the ability to present a person as exceptional. Furthermore, it was an extremely costly material and therefore—like beautifully decorated weapons, or like the jewellery worn by queens—communicative of wealth, which, in itself, was a symbol of greatness. The Hellenistic kings later did not make the mistake Pausanias was said to have made: they used purple to dye, and thereby make royal, their traditional Macedonian garb.

Sardanapalos, the best known oriental figure among the Greeks and Romans, who is depicted as spinning wool together with his women folk.’

¹²⁰ See Reinhold 1970, 24 n. 3, for references.

¹²¹ Ath. 535e; cf. Thuc. 1.10.

¹²² Ath. 535c.

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Index

- Abradates, king of Susa, 381
- Achaios, 51-2, 70, 137, 176, 266, 271
- Achilles, 38-9, 43, 48-50, 105, 164, 209, 213, 222, 241, 351, 358
- Actium, 179-80
- Adea-Eurydike, see Eurydike
- Adonis, 194, 207, 210, 227, 326
- Aemilius Paullus, 34, 125, 202
- Aeneas, 351
- Agamemnon, 38
- Agartharchides of Knidos, 294
- Agathokles (Sicilian king), 137
- Agathokles (courtier of Philippos II), 96, 142
- Agathokles (Ptolemaic courtier), 169, 265-7, 272, 273-4
- Agathon, 196
- Agis of Argos (poet), 196
- Ahuramazda, 52
- Aiakos, 213
- Aigai (Vergina), 55, 59, 61-2, 72, 86-7, 89, 213, 261, 269, 306, 327, 342, Star of Vergina, 354
- Aī Khanoum, 55, 64, 69, 71, 72, 86, 89
- Akitu Festival, 278, 310, 347
- Aleppo, 63, 345
- Alexander the Great, 1, 6, 8, 15, 16, 20, 23, 32, 34, 36-8, 41-2, 46, 49-51, 59, 60, 63, 70, 76-7, 79, 80, 87, 93, 96, 97-101, 103, 105-7, 112, 115, 122, 124-6, 131, 132, 138, 139, 142, 145, 148-50, 156, 163-8, 176, 177, 182, 184, 186, 187, 196, 209, 210, 217, 219, 220, 225, 228-30, 233, 235, 240, 246, 252, 262, 268-70, 273-5, 281, 284, 290, 291, 294, 295, 307, 315, 318, 322, 323, 327, 330-333, 339, 340, 342, 343-5, 349, 350, 353, 358-70.
- Alexandria, 20, 35, 55-6, 65, 67, 73, 75-80, 86-9, 91, 110, 121, 141, 153, 186, 189-95, 198-201, 203, 206, 211-17, 220, 224, 235, 236, 248, 266, 269-70, 272, 277, 282, 283-8, 289, 303-5, 314-25, 326, 336
- Alexandros I Balas, 50, 108, 224
- Alexandros II Zabinas, 50
- Alexandros IV, Macedonian king, 32, 98, 280
- Alexandros V, Macedonian king, 280
- Alexandros Helios, 284, 286-7, 302
- Alexandros of Pherai, 62
- Alexandros the Aitolian, 198, 211, 218
- Alexandros the Akarnanian, 14, 172, 175
- Alexandros the Lynkestian, 99
- Alexandros the Molossian, 110
- Alkibiades, 382
- Amarna, 378
- Amenophis III, 75, 378
- Amun / Ammon, 52, 105, 321
- Amyntas III, Macedonian king, 60
- Anahita / Anat, 279, 295
- Anaxarchos of Abdera (philosopher), 186, 196, 210, 217-8, 225
- Anaximenes of Lampsakos (poet), 196
- andragathia*, 39
- Andreas (physician), 153
- Andreas (Ptolemaic courtier), 153
- andreia*, 39
- Antagoras of Rhodes, 198
- Antialkidas, Baktrian king, 360
- Antigoneia on the Orontes, 66-7, 281-2
- Antigonos I Monophthalmos, 41, 50, 66, 67, 104, 113, 124-5, 126, 134, 141, 184, 185, 239, 271, 279-83, 298, 299, 300, 301, 307, 354, 362, 370

- Antigonos II Gonatas, 33, 36, 34, 36, 41, 61-2, 114, 167, 169, 187, 192, 197, 198, 209, 210-11, 213, 218, 219, 229, 244-5, 267-8, 322, 358
- Antigonos III Doston, 32, 42, 46, 50, 113, 153, 172, 209, 336
- Antimachos Theos, Baktrian king, 360
- Antiocheia on the Orontes (Antakya), 20, 41, 55-6, 63-9, 76, 121, 198, 201, 248, 266, 270, 285-8, 293, 308, 341
- Antiocheia (Adana), 69
- Antiocheia (Mallos), 69
- Antiochos, father of Seleukos I, 105
- Antiochos, son of Antiochos III, 112, 114, 126, 262
- Antiochos I of Kommagene, 306, 325, 360, 372
- Antiochos I Soter, 41, 52, 63, 64, 65, 104, 112, 113, 114, 198, 211, 214, 218, 224, 231, 233-4, 244, 264, 278-9, 296, 323
- Antiochos II Theos, 73, 114, 118
- Antiochos III the Great, 8, 31, 32, 36, 38, 40, 42, 44, 45, 46-7, 52-3, 62, 64, 66, 70, 71, 104, 109-10, 112, 118, 122, 126, 128, 129, 137, 147, 148, 150, 152, 155, 158, 168, 170-2, 174-6, 178, 180, 188, 198, 224, 238, 262, 266, 271, 278-9, 290, 292, 294, 310, 312, 325-6, 341, 342, 353
- Antiochos IV Epiphanes, 12, 21, 50, 56, 63, 67, 69, 74, 108, 110, 118, 121, 152, 153, 155, 166, 171, 174, 177, 184, 187, 199, 260, 270, 279, 294-5, 298, 308-14, 328, 329, 330, 336-7
- Aphrodite, 88, 207, 231, 294, 300, 302-4, 307
- Antiochos V Eupator, 114, 166
- Antiochos VI Dionysos, 254
- Antiochos VII Sidetes, 102, 155, 177, 266, 268, 269, 334
- Antiochos VIII Grypos, 187, 210, 329, 342, 353
- Antiochos IX Kyzenikos, 110, 152, 178, 185, 343
- Antiochos X Eusebes, 50, 110
- Antiochos XII Dionysos, 50
- Antiochos XIII Asiatikos, 272
- Antiochos Hierax, 34
- Antipatros (regent), 101, 186, 280, 373
- Antipatros I, Macedonian king, 280
- Antipatros (Seleukid courtier), 128, 187-8
- Antonius, 3, 105, 108, 146, 201, 270, 283-7, 302-5, 329, 335, 379
- Apama, 134, 106
- Apameia, 55, 63, 65, 89, 171, 175, 188, 310, 312
- Apelles (Antigonid courtier), 172
- Apis Bull, 74-5, 277, 295
- Apollo, 41, 68-9, 102-3, 182, 241, 242, 244-5, 247, 301, 308-10, 314, 328, 354, 356, Apollo Soter, 41, 65, 82, 264, 361
- Apollodoros of Athens (poet), 199
- Apollodoros of Seleukeia (philosopher), 248
- Apollodotos, Baktrian king, 360
- Apollonios of Rhodes, 186, 190, 194, 201, 232, 237-8, 356
- Apollonios (Ptolemaic courtier), 144, 147
- Apollophanes (physician), 153, 177
- Appianos, 119, 315
- Araq el Emir, 73, 86
- Aratos of Soli, 190, 198, 210-11, 218, 231, 236, 239, *Phainomena*, 210, 232, 247
- Aratos of Sikyon, 173, 219, 290, 336
- Archelaos, Macedonian king, 60, 196
- Archelaos, Judean king, 269
- Archimedes, 189, 208, 218, 224
- Ares, 244
- aretē*, 39
- Argonautika*, 232, 237-8, 247, 356
- Ariarathes V of Kappadokia, 274-5
- Ariobarzanes I of Kappadokia, 267, 339
- Aristaios (Ptolemaic courtier), 170
- Aristarchos (astronomer), 186, 189, 212, 231
- aristeia*, 39
- Aristoboulos, 367, 381
- Aristodemos of Miletos, 281-2
- Aristonikos (Ptolemaic courtier), 158, 177-8
- Aristonos, 94, 97
- Aristotle, 30, 39, 137, 139, 186-7, 196, 199, 200, 209, 219, 224, 228-30, 345, 351

- Arkesilas, tyrant of Kyrene, 195
 Arrianos, 37, 38, 97, 182, 183
 Arsinoë II Philadelphos, 75, 116, 206-7, 180, 218, 224-8, 231, 238, 242, 270, 303, 305, 317, 323, 342
 Arsinoë III, 42, 142, 179, 265-6, 275
 Artavazd II of Armenia, 210
 Artaxerxes II, 70, 99
 Artaxerxes IV, 51
 Artemis, 68, 180, 299, 303, 309, 310, 314, Artemis of Ephesos, 299
 Ashurbanipal, 379
 Ashurnasirpal II, 379
 Aspasianos the Mede, 127
 Astarte, 303
 Atargatis, 303
 Athena, 41, 42, 81-4, 90, 206, 226, 280, 295, 299, 308, 323, 339, Athena Iolkia, 63, Athena Itonis, 34, 213, Athena Nikephoros, 41, 81, 82, 84, 322, Athena Polias, 81, 301
 Athenaios, 13, 87, 96, 123, 217, 314, 316, 318, 330
 Athens, 20, 194, 196, 199-200, 212, 280, 292, 298-301, 303, 353
 Attalos I Soter, 34, 81-2, 84, 244, 271, 292, 308
 Attalos II Philadelphos, 14, 82, 114, 209
 Attalos III Philometor, 82, 113, 167, 210, 293
 audiences and receptions, 330-8
 Augustus, see Octavian
aulē, 13-5, 58, 57
aulikoi, 13-4, 122
 Aulus Gellius, 44
 Ba'al, 295, 328
 Babylon, 20, 63-4, 104, 278-80, 291, 296-8, 340, 347, 344
 Bagoas, 100, 131, 178
 Bagophanes, 178
 Baktra (Balkh), 20, 55, 64, 69, 359
 Balakros, 132
 Barsine, 142
basileia (monarchy), 10, 12, 22, 32, 101-2, 113, 179, 271
basileia / *basileion* (palace), 14-5, 57, 68, *basileia* of Alexandria, 77-80
basilikoi paides, 97, 181-8
 Bēl, 296, see also Marduk
 Berenike I, 88, 140, 180, 194, 209, 317-9, 323
 Berenike II, 220, 225, 231, 236, 238
 Berossos, 198, 214-5, 224, 231, 234-5, 248
 Bes, 226
 Bevan, Edwyn, 118, 183, 252
 Bindusara, Mauryan king, 211
 Bion (poet), 199, 206
 Bion of Borysthenes (philosopher), 198, 230
 Borsippa, 103
 Boscoreale, 164, 358
 Boutros Ghali, Boutros, 140
 Briseïs, 38
 burial, 59, 63, 65, 84, 262-70
 Caesar, 3, 201, 285, 288
 Caesarea, 89
 Caesarion, see Ptolemaios XV
 Catullus, 231
 Celts, 33-4, 40, 42, 52, 61, 81-4, 157, 213, 233, 244-5, 271, 311
 Chaironeia, 375, Battle of, 112, 210
 Chandragupta, 211
 Chaos, 32, 83, 237, 244, 244, 264, 265, 320, 346, 354, 356-7
 Charis, 180
 Chariton of Aphrodisias, 293-4
 Choirilos of Iasos (poet), 196, 233
 Christ, 2, 283, 341, 353
 Companions, see *hetairoi*
 Corinth, 268, 322
 coronation ritual, 262-88
 crown prince, 111-114
 Cúchulainn, 47
 Cupids, 302, 303
 Curtius, 131, 139, 182, 295, 370

- Cyrus II the Great, 71, 100, 229, 279, 291, 341, 361, 367, 381
- Cyrus the Younger, 69
- Damascus, 63, 286
- Daphne (nymph), 68, 309
- Daphne (Harbiye), 12, 55, 68, 69, 121, 260, 308-14, 328
- Darius I the Great, 51, 70, 154
- Darius III, 1, 35, 37, 40, 49, 50, 51, 71, 97, 99, 131, 132, 290, 351, 353, 354
- Deinokrates (architect), 77
- Delos, 56, 103, 242-5
- Demeter, 300-301, 303
- Demetrias, 55, 59, 61-2, 89, 91, 268-9
- Demetrios, son of Philippos V, 274
- Demetrios I Poliorketes, 34, 35, 46, 47, 55, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 69, 90, 104, 113, 143, 185, 229, 239, 254, 261, 267-9, 279-82, 294, 298-301, 325, 333-5, 353, 361, 363, 366, *Hymn to Demetrios*, 299-80
- Demetrios II (Antigonid king), 50
- Demetrios I Soter (Seleukid king), 50
- Demetrios II Nikator (Seleukid king), 50, 64, 68, 89, 177, 361
- Demetrios of Phaleron, 123, 170, 200, 201, 209, 219
- Demetrios of Pharos, 173-4
- Demetrios of Skepsis, 149, 224
- Demetrios the Topographer (painter), 223
- diadem, 3, 35, 81, 165, 266, 268-71, 281-2, 340-1, 348, 353, 359, 363, 364-70
- Diades (engineer), 196
- Didyma, 310
- Dio Cassius, 263, 283
- Dio Chrysostomos, 76, 373
- Diodoros, 12, 141, 177, 260, 266, 272, 274-5, 340, 367, 368
- Diodotos (Tryphon), 31, 64, 254, 271
- Diodotos (Argead courtier), 157
- Diogenes (philosopher), 219, 224
- Diogenes Laërtius, 210, 217
- Diognetos of Seleukeia (admiral), 341
- Diomedes (hero), 241
- Dion, 291
- Dionysios I, tyrant of Syracuse, 68
- Dionysios II, tyrant of Syracuse, 15, 291
- Dionysios the Mede (Seleukid courtier), 177-8, 336-7
- Dionysos, 2, 42, 78, 88, 237, 283, 287, 297, 301-4, 310, 316-22, 346, 356, 361, 365, 367-9
- Doctorow, E.L., 95
- doriktētos chōra*, 38, 104, 371
- Dorimachos, Aitolian leader, 166
- Dorotheos (Ptolemaic courtier), 338
- Doura Europos, 86
- Douris of Samos, 282, 331
- Durkheim, Émile, 255-8
- Ekbatana, 55, 63-4, 69, 70, 71
- Eleusis (Egypt), 168, 336-7
- Elias, Norbert, 4, 8-9, 18, 26, 27, 139, 158, 168
- Ephesos, 76, 209, 299, 303-4
- Epigenes (Seleukid courtier), 170-1
- Erasistratos (physician), 154, 212
- Eratosthenes of Kyrene (astronomer), 189, 224, 235-6, 305
- Erigyos, 98
- Esagila, 269, 278
- Esarhaddon, 74
- Euhemeros of Iamboulos, 235
- Euhemeros of Messene, 212
- Euklides (mathematician), 189
- Eumenes of Kardia, 100, 133, 141, 166, 169, 176, 197, 184, 273, 340-1, 363
- Eumenes II Philadelphos, 42, 81-2, 84, 113, 308
- eunuchs, 100, 131, 173, 148, 158, 147, 177, 252
- Euphorion (poet), 198, 238
- Euphraios, 96
- Euripides, 196
- Eurydike (Adea), daughter of Philippos II, 116
- Eurydike, daughter of Lysimachos, 209

- Eutychides of Sikyon (sculptor), 198
 Euthydemus, ruler of Baktria, 53
 Ezida, 278
 Fabricius, 337
 Flaminius, 44, 125, 224, 336
 Fuzuli, 223
 Gaugamela, Battle of, 37, 43, 46, 51, 99, 131
 Gaza, Battle of, 340
 Geertz, Clifford, 255, 258-9
 Gelon, tyrant of Syracuse, 195
 Giants, 238, 247, 356-7
Gourob Papyrus, 289, 293
 Graces, 180, 221, 302, 303
 Granikos, Battle of, 37
 Hagen von Tronje, 47
 Halikarnassos, 58-9, 63, 76, 78, 89
 Hamadan, 71
 Hannibal, 44, 126, 174, 175
 Harpalos, 98
 Hattushash, 377, 378
 Hedylos of Samos (Ptolemaic courtier), 226
 Hegesianax (Seleukid courtier), 224
 Heine, Heinrich, 1
 Hekataios of Abdera, 235
 Hektor, 50
 Helios, 106, 242, 286
 Hephaistion, 39, 97, 98, 99, 139, 187, 263, 269
 Hera, 322, 342
 Herakleia, Battle of, 38
 Herakleides, courtier of Philippos V, 173-4
 Herakles, 2, 31, 34, 38, 41-2, 83-4, 86, 105, 207, 229, 237, 240, 247-8, 278, 295, 306, 322, 339, 343-4, 346, 356-7
 Herakles, son of Alexander, 107, 142
 Hermeias (Seleukid courtier), 121, 128, 147, 170-1
 Hermes, 319, 321
 Hermokles (poet), 239, 300
 Hero of Alexandria (technician), 189, 199, 203, 207, 208, 226
 Herod the Great, 86, 89, 269
 Herodion, 269
 Herodotos, 43, 116-7, 244-5
 Herophilos (physician), 154, 189, 212
 Hesiod, 201, 204, 247, 356
hetairoi, 45, 92-100, 124, 156, 311, 331-2, 359
 Hieron I, tyrant of Syracuse, 195, 220
 Hieron II, king of Syracuse, 39, 220-24, 243, 357
 Hieronymos of Kardina, 141, 219, 234
 Hipparchos, tyrant of Athens, 195
 Hippomedon (Ptolemaic courtier), 238
 Homer, 37-9, 49, 52, 138-9, 186, 196, 204, 215, 220, 222, 233, 241, 248, 350
 Horus, 215, 265, 275, 354
 hunting, 50, 87, 254, 322, 342-5
 Hydaspes, Battle of the, 133
 Iaddous (Yaddai), Judean high priest, 290
Iliad, 37-9, 47, 49, 351
 Inanna / Nanaia, 20, 279, 310
 inauguration, see coronation
 Ipsos, Battle of, 38, 46, 66, 104, 112, 134
 Ishtar, 278, 303
 Isis, 265, 275, 284, 287-8, 301-3
 Issos, Battle of, 37, 41, 43, 67, 94, 97, 295, 351, 362, 381
 Ister (Danube), 237
 Isokrates, 157, 228, 361-2
 Jason (hero), 237
 Jebel Khalid, 86
 Jericho, 86, 286
 Jerusalem, 20, 89, 290, 294, 295
 Jonathan (Yannai), Judean ruler, 106, 166
 Josephus, 141, 145, 154, 159, 214, 250, 269, 290, 294, 337-8
 Kalas, Macedonian general, 165
 Kallikrates (Ptolemaic courtier), 238
 Kallimachos, 180, 182, 187, 190, 194, 210, 213, 231, 237-8, 270, *Aitia*, 237, 248, 356, *Hymn to Delos*, 102-3, 241-2, 244-5, 247, 356, *Hymn to Zeus*, 90, 221, 226, 241-2
 Kalliope, 205

- Kallisthenes of Olynthos, 97, 186, 196, 229, 233
 Kallixeinos, 88-9, 314-8, 323, 339
 Kambyses, 74, 279
 Kassandreia, 59
 Kassandros, 59, 61, 168, 179, 186, 212, 280, 299
 Keos, 377
 Kleantes (philosopher), 187, 212, 229
 Kleitos, 37, 99, 100, 157
 Kleomenes (Spartan king), 46, 135-6, 174, 230, 326
 Kleopatra, daughter of Philippos II, 110, 306
 Kleopatra I, 107, 110, 118, 177
 Kleopatra II, 177, 327
 Kleopatra III Euergetis 'Kokke', 107, 110, 141
 Kleopatra IV, 107
 Kleopatra VII Philopator, 3, 8, 51, 79, 105, 108,
 110-11, 115, 146, 179, 251-2, 268, 270, 283-8,
 302-4, 329, 334-5, 353
 Kleopatra Selene, daughter of Kleopatra VII, 284,
 286, 302
 Kleopatra Selene, Seleukid queen, 107, 110
 Kleopatra Thea, 110-11
 Kleopatra Tryphaina, 107, 110
 Knossos, 377
 Konon (astronomer), 231
 Kore, 300-301, 303
 Krataios (physician), 154, 224
 Krateros, 162, 165, 345, 360
 Krateros, Seleukid courtier, 118, 177-8, 185
 Krates of Mallos (philologist), 199
 Kruedener, Jürgen von, 4, 8-12, 211, 260
 Ktesibios of Chalkis (technician), 207, 208, 213,
 225, 226
 Kynoskephalai, Battle of, 46, 175
 Kyrene, 128, 182, 195, 284, 286
 Kythera, 377
 Laodike, mother of Seleukos I, 65, 105
 Laodike, wife of Antiochos III, 178-80, 341
 Laodike, wife of Perseus, 342
 Laodikeia on the Sea (Latakia), 63, 65-6
 Laomedon, 98
 Leconte, Patrice, 159
 Leonidas (Spartan king), 135
 Leonidas (Argead courtier), 186
 Leonidas of Taras (poet), 197, 210, 213
 Leonnatos, courtier of Alexander, 97, 98
 Leonnatos, courtier of Pyrrhos, 38
 Leontios (Antigonid courtier), 172
 Leontiskos, brother of Ptolemaios I, 280
 Leto, 241, 244
 Liverani, Mario, 23-4
 Livy, 43, 188, 309-10, 329-30
 Louis XIV, 9, 54, 159, 354
 Louis XV, 142, 344
 Louis XVI, 159
 Lykophron (poet), 204, 205, 238
 Lysianas (philologist), 199
 Lysimacheia, 270, battle of, 43, 245
 Lysimachos, king of Thrace and Macedonia, 50, 96,
 97, 80, 105, 147, 176, 178, 269, 279, 345
 Lysimachos the Akarnanian, 209
 Lysippos (sculptor), 198, 246
 Machanidas, Spartan king, 48
 Macurdy, Grace Harriet, 116, 179
 Magarsos, 295
 Magas, king of Kyrene, 238
 Magnesia (Thessaly), 62-2
 Magnesia, Battle of, 43, 112, 155, 188, 310, 311,
 312
 Mallos, 69
 Manetho, 214-5, 224, 234-5, 248
 Marcus Antonius, see Antonius
 Marduk, 278, 296
 marriage, see wedding
 Masada, 86, 89
 Mausolos, 58-9, 78
 Mauss, Marcel, 145
 Mazaios, 99, 131, 132
 Megasthenes, 234
 Memnon of Rhodes, 142, 165

- Memphis, 20, 55, 73-5, 77, 141, 177, 265, 277, 279, 295, 297, 347, 355
- Menandros, Baktrian king, 372
- Menedemos of Eretria (philosopher), 198
- Menelaos, brother of Ptolemaios I, 280
- Miöza, 59-60
- Miletos, 56, 293-4
- Mitchell, David, 23, 54
- Mithradates I, king of Pontos, 185
- Mithradates III, king of Pontos, 341
- Mithradates VI Eupator, 6, 44, 45, 51, 110, 147-8, 150, 154, 224, 282, 292-3, 327, 337
- Mithradates I of Kommagene, 342
- Mobutu, 140
- Molon, 36-7, 46, 52, 53, 171, 271
- Monime, wife of Mithradates VI, 282
- Moon, 286, 288, 296, 309, 314, 353
- Mopsuestia, 55, 69
- Moreau, Gustave, 252
- Moschos, 198
- mouseion*, 79, 191, Ptolemaic Museum, 194, 198-9
- Muses, 192, 200-201, 205, 221
- Nabû, 278, 310
- Nanaia / Inanna, 20, 279, 310
- Naukratis, 55
- Nearchos, 100, 219, 220, 234
- Nebuchadrezzar II, 63
- Nektanebo, 133
- Neoptolemos (hero), 213
- Neoptolemos (actor), 213
- Neoptolemos (Argead courtier), 99
- Neoptolemos I, king of Epeiros, 110
- Nereïds, 302, 303
- Nergal, 295
- Nikandros of Kolophon (poet), 190, 199, 210
- Nikanor (Ptolemaic courtier), 338
- Nike, 31, 41, 82, 292, 323, 339
- Nikephoria Festival (Pergamon), 82, 305, 307
- Nikias (physician), 154
- Nikokles, Cypriote ruler, 361
- Nymphs, 68, 207, 309, 319, 321
- Nysa, 207, 319, 321
- Octavia, 108
- Octavianus, 79, 200, 216, 285, 304
- Odysseus, 222
- oikos*, 11, 13, 15, 92, 104, 108-9, 114, 118, 121, 179, 289, 334
- oikoumenē*, 12, 32, 214, 320, 353-5
- Olympias, 110, 116, 186, 164, 179
- Onesikritos of Astypaleia (philosopher), 166, 196, 219, 229
- Opis, 24
- Orobarzes, Parthian envoy, 339
- Orxines, 100
- Osiris, 275, 302, 304
- Oxarthes, 99
- Palaikastro, 377
- Pan, 40-41, 205
- Panion, Battle of, 112, 187
- Pantauchos, Macedonian commander, 47-8
- Papyrus Holmiensis*, 375
- paradeisos*, 60, 69, 87
- Parmenion, 96-99, 112, 122
- parrhēsia*, 156-7, 230
- Pasargadai, 70-1, 381
- Patroklos, 358
- Paullus, 34, 125, 202
- Pausanias, Spartan king, 305-282
- Peithon, 97, 98
- Pella, 55, 59-61, 72, 86-7, 90, 121, 163, 165, 345
- Pelousion, 55, 73, 336
- Perdikkas, 77, 97, 98, 340, 345
- Perdikkas III, Macedonian king, 96
- Pergamon, 56, 80-4, 89, 91, 129, 189, 199, 202, 261, 292, 305, 308
- Persaios (philosopher), 168, 187, 198, 209, 211, 219, 229
- Persephone, see Kore
- Persepolis, 70-72, 178, 331
- Perseus (hero), 105, 107

- Perseus (king), 35, 36, 41, 50, 62, 107, 187, 202, 254, 274, 342, 364, 366
- Petosarapis, 128, 177
- Peukestas, 97, 98, 100, 132, 176
- Philetairos, dynast of Pergamon, 153, 178
- Philetas (philosopher), 209
- philia*, 11, 93, 119, 136-9, 134, 143, 158, 175, 193, 210, 221, 289
- philoï tou basileōs*, 92-3, 97, 119-80
- Philippos II, 6, 15-6, 41, 60, 93-6, 100-101, 103, 105, 110, 124, 148, 157, 159, 164, 167-8, 176, 183, 185-6, 196, 210, 213, 228, 273-4, 306-7, 334, 342, 369
- Philippos III Arrhidaïos, 32, 370
- Philippos V, 8, 14, 31, 39, 46, 62, 82, 86, 107, 110, 121, 151, 155-6, 168, 171, 173-5, 210, 220, 245, 292, 296, 335, 337, 364
- Philippos, courtier of Antiochos III, 155
- Philippos, courtier of Antiochos IV, 166
- Philiskos (Ptolemaic courtier), 319
- Philo of Byzantion (technician), 199, 203
- Philostratos, Flavius, 125, 198
- Philotas, 95, 98-9
- Philoxenos (poet), 186
- Philopoïmen, 48
- Phoenix, 209
- Phylarchos, 330-33
- physicians, 118, 140, 153-4, 171, 185, 193, 197-8, 212, 217
- Pindar, 196, 220-21, 223, 244
- pompē*, 305-24
- Plato, 30, 200, 228-9
- Pliny, 368, 375-6
- Plutarch, 27, 34, 35, 37, 44, 47, 49, 86, 97, 123, 142, 143, 145, 148, 157, 164, 166, 251, 253, 260, 281, 283-4, 287-8, 299, 301-2, 326, 330, 333, 335, 339, 351, 352, 361-3
- Polybios, 8, 13, 31, 35, 39, 40, 43, 45, 53, 77, 78, 110, 121, 123, 127, 142, 150, 151, 155, 156, 158, 167, 170, 172, 265, 266, 270-1, 274, 310-11, 326, 329, 333
- Pompeius, 35, 339
- Popilius Laenas, 336-7
- Poseidippos (poet), 238
- Pranichos (poet), 196
- Priamos, 222
- Priapos, 322
- Prousius II of Bithynia, 82, 343
- Psammetichos, 235
- Ptah, 74-5, 277
- Ptolemaia Festival (Alexandria), 88, 214, 239, 305, 316-7, 324, 326
- Ptolemaios (geographer), 231
- Ptolemaios I Soter, 38, 73, 76, 77, 88, 98, 107, 123, 132, 140-1, 186, 198, 200, 210, 211, 214, 217, 219, 234, 239, 279-81, 294, 297, 316-8, 339, 371
- Ptolemaios II Philadelphos, 39, 75, 88, 107, 133, 142, 143, 159, 170, 186, 191-2, 198, 200, 206, 208, 210, 212, 214, 218, 220, 221, 224, 226, 234, 238, 239-42, 244, 308-25, 328, 338-9, 350
- Ptolemaios III Euergetes, 198, 210, 224, 230, 231, 238, 293
- Ptolemaios IV Philopator, 35, 40, 42, 75, 87, 140-1, 175-6, 230, 265, 270, 277, 333
- Ptolemaios V Epiphanes, 110, 147, 265-7, 270, 271-2, 274-5
- Ptolemaios VI Philometor, 128, 177, 265, 272, 276
- Ptolemaios VIII Euergetes (Physkon), 199, 272, 336
- Ptolemaios X Alexandros, 107, 328, 364
- Ptolemaios XI Alexandros, 107
- Ptolemaios XV Caesar (Caesarion), 284-7
- Ptolemaios Keraunos, 50, 157
- Ptolemaïis, 107, 179, 294
- Ptolemaïis (Cyrenaïca), 73
- Ptolemaïis (Egypt), 297
- Ptolemaïis (Palestine), 144, 175
- purple, 3, 147, 165-6, 372-82
- Pydna, Battle of, 41, 50, 59, 187, 366

- Pyrrho (philosopher), 196
- Pyrrhos, king of Epeiros, 8, 34-5, 38, 40, 43, 47-50, 105, 153-4, 126, 140, 197, 213, 283, 299, 352, 337, 343, 363
- Pyrrhos of Elis (poet), 196
- Pythagoras, 30
- Pytheas, 234
- queen, 114-8, 178-80
- Ramesses II, 52, 75, 235
- Raphia, Battle of, 8, 40, 42-3, 127, 153, 155, 176, 179, 187, 188, 323-4
- Re / Ra, 265, 354
- Rhodes, 81, 178, 187, 199
- Rhoisakes, 37
- Romulus, 351
- Roxane, 358
- Saint-Simon, 8, 159
- Salamis on Cyprus, Battle of, 280-1
- Salomé, 251-2
- Samos, courtier of Philippos V, 220
- Sarapis, 59, 209, 282-3, 304
- Sardis, 55, 63-4, 69, 70, 89, 176, 188
- Sargon II, 379
- Satyrs, 318, 320
- sceptre, 3, 269, 340, 348, 353, 364, 370-2
- Scipio Africanus, 174, 336
- Seleukeia in Pieria, 55, 63, 65-7, 293
- Seleukeia on the Tigris, 55, 63-4, 80, 121, 202
- Seleukos (son of Antiochos I), 114
- Seleukos I Nikator, 38, 41, 55, 59, 62, 63-7, 68, 69, 104, 105-6, 113, 124, 134, 198, 238, 264, 270, 279, 280, 296, 309, 332, 334, 354, 364
- Seleukos II Kallinikos, 50, 67
- Seleukos III Soter, 170
- Seleukos IV Philopator, 114, 126, 174, 188, 342
- Seleukos of Seleukeia (astronomer), 212, 248
- Sennacherib, 379
- Sesostris III, 235
- Seti II, 235
- Shuppiluliuma I, Hittite king, 377
- Sidon, 286, 375, 376
- signet-ring, 363-4
- Sikyon, 53, 290, 292
- Simonides of Magnesia, 52, 233
- Sin (Babylonian moon-god), 296
- Siwah, 73, 77, 321
- sōmatophulakes*, 97-100, 184, 125, 330-31
- Sosibios (Ptolemaic courtier), 265-6
- Sostratos (Ptolemaic courtier), 238
- Sostratos of Knidos (architect), 219
- Sotades of Maroneia (poet), 218
- Soteria Festival (Delphi), 82, 307
- Sparta, 335
- Sphairos (philosopher), 229
- Spithridates, 37
- Star of Vergina, 354
- Stilpo of Megara (philosopher), 211
- Stone, Oliver, 252
- Strabo, 65, 74, 77-80, 200, 229
- Strato of Lampsakos (philosopher), 144, 186, 197, 209, 211
- Stratonike (wife of Antiochos I), 141
- Stratonike (wife of Mithradates I), 148
- Stratonikos, musician, 371
- succession, 108-114
- Suda*, 31-2
- suggenēs*, 94, 99-102, 138, 151, 367
- Sulla, 337, 339
- Sun, 2, 106, 195, 232, 242, 247, 254, 286-8, 300-301, 306, 309, 314, 318, 353-4
- sunedrion*, 121, 138, 155-8, 167-75, 216, 237, 265, 333, 336-7
- Susa, 20, 24, 55, 63, 69, 70, 165, 391
- symposium, 146-7, 152, 159, 195, 204-6, 210, 225-7, 327-30
- Syrinx, 204-5
- Tambrax, 55
- Tarn, W.W., 24
- Tarsos, 8, 55, 69, 144, 146, 288, 302, 329
- Taurion (Antigonid courtier), 172

- Telestos (poet), 186
 Telmessos, 144
 Thebes (Egypt), 297
 Thebes (Greece), 292, 350
 Theodotos the Aitolian, 120, 175-6
 Theokritos, 39, 102, 190, 204-7, 226-7, 237-241, 322, 326, 357, *Idyll* xv ('Adonia'), 206-7, 227, 326, *Idyll* xvi ('To Hieron'), 39, 220-4, 232, 243-4, 247, *Idyll* xvii ('To Ptolemaios'), 39, 143, 239-41, 243, 247, *Idyll* xxiv, 237, *Idyll* xxvi, 237
 Theophrastos (philosopher), 197, 199, 211
 Theopompos, 95, 96
therapeia, 14, 119
 Thermopylai, Battle of, 299
 Thermos (Aitolia), 245
 Theseus, 344, 351
 Thessalonike, daughter of Philippos II, 280
 Thessalonike (city), 59
 Thetis, 164, 358
 throne, 338-41
 Tigranes the Great, 35, 339, 366
 Tigranokerta, Battle of, 366
 Tilly, Charles, 26-8
 Timon (poet), 191-2, 213
 Timotheon (poet), 196
 Tiridates, 178
 Titans, 238, 244, 247, 321, 356-7
 Tlepolemos (Ptolemaic courtier), 169-70
tropheus, 152, 185-6, 118
 Troy, 377
tryphē, 36, 143, 206, 208, 316, 346, 352
 Tryphon, 31, 64, 254, 271
 Turner, Victor, 257, 262
 Tušratta, king of Mitanni, 378
 Tyre, 166, 175, 286, 350, 373, 375-6
 Ugarit, 328, 377-8
 Uruk, 278
 Vassili III, ruler of Muscovy, 254
 Vergina, see Aigai
 Vespasianus, 282-3
 Virgil, 199, 204
 Vitellius, 283
 Weber, Max, 25-6
 wedding ceremony, 341-2
 Xenarios (architect), 198
xenia, 11, 93, 119, 134-6, 175, 193, 221, 223-4
 Xenophon, 30, 183, 228-9, 331, *Cyropaedia*, 229, 367, 381
 Xerxes, 33, 43, 51, 71, 296, 313
 Yaddai, see Iaddous
 Yannai, see Jonathan
 Yahweh, 20, 269, 290, 294-5, 328
 Zabdibelos, 127
 Zariaspa, see Baktra
 Zeno (philosopher), 24, 187, 197, 229
 Zenodotos (philosopher), 209
 Zenon Papyri, 144, 147
 Zeus 34, 41, 81-4, 90, 105, 221, 229, 232, 239, 241-3, 245, 247, 297, 298, 318, 338, 341, 346, 353, 356, Zeus of Dodona, 34, Zeus Kataibatos 298, Zeus Kosmokrator, 232, 353, Zeus Ouranios, 353, Zeus Soter, 81-2
 Zeuxis (painter), 196
 Zeuxis, Seleukid governor, 36, 70, 188

Samenvatting

In de Hellenistische imperia van Alexander de Grote en diens opvolgers in Egypte, Griekenland en het Midden-Oosten ontwikkelde zich in de laatste drie eeuwen vóór onze jaartelling een geheel eigen hofcultuur. De invloed daarvan op latere monarchieën is groot. Overgenomen in het Romeinse Rijk in het westen en de Parthische en Nieuw-Perzische Rijken in het oosten, beïnvloedde de elitecultuur en machtsrepresentatie die aan de Hellenistische hoven ontwikkeld werd uiteindelijk zelfs de Islamitische monarchieën van de kaliefs en de Osmanen, en de absolutistische monarchie in het Vroegmoderne Europa. In deze eerste volledige studie naar Hellenistische hofcultuur wordt onder meer getracht een verklaring te geven voor deze vergaande doorwerking door te wijzen op de vermenging van monarchale tradities uit het oude Nabije Oosten met de meer westerse tradities van Grieken en Macedoniërs. *The Hellenistic Royal Court* is breed van opzet, en behandelt alle aspecten van hofcultuur in hun onderlinge samenhang, van sociaal-politiek tot ideologisch-representatief. De nadruk ligt op de drie grote Macedonische dynastieën: de Antigoniden (Macedonië en Griekenland), Ptolemaeën (Egypte en de oostelijke Middellandse Zee) en Seleukiden (Turkije, het Midden-Oosten en Iran) onderling vergeleken. Belangrijke vragen zijn steeds in hoeverre er sprake is van continuïteit van eerdere monarchale tradities (met name de Macedonische en Perzische), en van vermenging van Griekse en oud-oosterse cultuur.

In hoofdstuk 1, getiteld ‘Hof, koningschap en ideologie’, worden de methodologische en theoretische kaders uiteengezet, alsmede de belangrijkste resultaten van het onderzoek gepresenteerd. Ook wordt een karakteristiek gegeven van Hellenistisch imperialisme en koningschap, waarbij de nadruk ligt op de central rol van oorlog in ideologie én praktijk.

Hoofdstuk 2, ‘Paleizen’, behandelt paleisarchitectuur en -decoratie, met nadruk op de ideologische implicaties daarvan. Centraal staat de vraag: hoe werd omgegaan met de paradoxale aanwezigheid van een paleis van een autocratische vorst in een autonome, zichzelf bestuderende stad?

Hoofdstuk 3, ‘De hofgemeenschap’, behandelt de sociale en politieke aspecten van het hofleven: de hovelingen (de zogeheten ‘vrienden van de vorst’), factie- en successiestrijd, en de rol van de kroonprins en de vorstin. Er wordt betoogt dat de sociale dynamiek aan het hof bepaald werd door patronagerelaties in de vorm van geritualiseerde (gast)vriendschap en het uitwisselen van (eer)geschenken. Via zijn ‘vrienden’, die banden onderhielden met hun geboortesteden en families, en ook hun eigen patronagenetwerken hadden, kon de heerser invloed uitoefenen in stad en provincie; omgekeerd konden steden en elitefamilies via de vrienden invloed uitoefenen aan het hof.

In hoofdstuk 4, ‘Cultureel en wetenschappelijk mecenaat’, wordt een verklaring gegeven voor het feit dat kunstenaars, schrijvers en wetenschappers die in dienst van vorsten traden geen lakeien van

de macht waren, maar juist typisch grensverleggend werk deden; men denke aan de theorie dat de aarde om de zon draait, de berekening van de omtrek van de aarde, de uitvinding van de stoommachine en de ontwikkeling van nieuwe literaire genres. In dit hoofdstuk wordt tevens ingegaan op het belang van het hof voor het ontstaan van ‘Hellenistische’ cultuur, die hier gezien wordt als een samenbindende imperialistische cultuur, vergelijkbaar met Osmaanse taal en cultuur in het Turkse Rijk.

In hoofdstuk 5, ‘Ritueel en ceremonieel’, wordt uitgebreid ingegaan op allerlei vormen van publieke representatie: kronings- en begrafenisrituelen, huwelijksluitingen, ceremoniële intochten in steden, religieuze plechtigheden en processies. Alle Hellenistische monarchieën benadrukten in hun rituelen en ceremonieën de goddelijkheid van de heerser en diens rol als bringer van vrede, orde en voorspoed. Een opvallend kenmerk van de Hellenistische monarchieën is, dat de vorsten zich in hun zelfpresentatie aanpasten aan lokale verwachtingspatronen. Zo lieten de Ptolemaeën zich tot farao kronen in het Egyptische Memphis en tot *basileus* (‘koning’) in het Griekse Alexandrië, en deden Seleucidische vorsten direct en indirect mee aan het oeroude, inheemse Akitu Festival in Babylon. Tegelijkertijd was er echter óók een overkoepelende, internationale vorm van koningschap en elite-cultuur die deze cultureel en etnisch heterogene rijken samenbond, en die juist erg Grieks-Macedonisch van karakter was. Het hof speelde een centrale rol in het creëren en uitdragen van deze ‘Hellenistische’ imperium-cultuur.

In het laatste, concluderende hoofdstuk, ‘Synthese: Een Gouden Tijdperk’, wordt betoogt dat de Hellenistische monarchieën, anders dan tot nu toe werd aangenomen, in navolging van Egyptische, Mesopotamische en Perzische voorbeelden een sterk universalistische ideologie ontwikkelden, maar juist door de incorporatie van meer bescheiden en ‘individualistische’ Griekse opvattingen over koningschap een vorm van machtsrepresentatie ontwikkelden die bij uitstek geschikt was om als basis te dienen voor de imperiale en monarchale ideologie van het Romeinse keizerrijk.

In de Appendix tenslotte, wordt ingegaan op de kleding van de koning en de drie voornaamste Hellenistische regalia: (1) de diadeem, de koninklijke hoofdband waaruit onze koningskroon is ontstaan, (2) de scepter, die de vorm had van een speer ter benadrukking van het krijgersethos van de vorst en het feit dat hij heerste over ‘met de speer veroverd land’, en (3) koninklijk purper, de extreem kostbare, waarschijnlijk bloedrode verfstof die gewonnen werd uit zeeslakken en in het Midden-Oosten een symbool van koningschap, in Griekenland een symbool van goddelijkheid was.

Curriculum Vitae

Rolf Strootman werd geboren op 3 september 1968 te Rotterdam. Van 1986 tot 1990 studeerde hij museologie aan de Amsterdamse Hogeschool voor de Kunsten (Reinwardt Academie) en van 1990 tot 1993 geschiedenis aan de Universiteit Leiden. Na zijn doctoraalexamen (*cum laude*) werkte hij enige jaren als beleidsmedewerker bij het Voorzieningsfonds voor Kunstenaars te Den Haag, en als freelance tekstschrijver en redacteur. Vervolgens was hij aio bij de vakgroep Geschiedenis van de Universiteit Leiden. Hij is thans werkzaam als docent Oude Geschiedenis bij de Universiteit Utrecht. Zijn huidige onderzoeksgebied is de geschiedenis van het Midden-Oosten en Iran in de Hellenistische Periode. Hij is de auteur van *Gekroonde goden: Hellenistisch koningschap van Alexander tot Kleopatra*. Rolf Strootman woont met Elise en hun kinderen David en Leonoor in Amersfoort.

Rolf Strootman was born in Rotterdam on September 3, 1968. From 1986 to 1990 he studied museology at the Amsterdam School of the Arts, and from 1990 to 1993 history at Leiden University. After his MA (*cum laude*) he worked for some years for a cultural institute, and as a free-lance copywriter and journalist. From 1996 to 2000 he was a research trainee at the University of Leiden. He is currently lecturing Ancient History at Utrecht University. His main field of study is the history of the Middle East and Iran in the Hellenistic Period. He is the author of *Gods Enthroned: Hellenistic Kingship From Alexander to Kleopatra* (in Dutch). Rolf Strootman lives with his wife Elise and their children David en Leonoor in Amersfoort.