

2: THE HELLENISTIC KINGDOMS

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INTRODUCTION

The emergence of the major states in the Hellenistic World was the result of a complicated series of events, a mixture of various traditions, and the existence of some very forceful personalities. All of these combined to make Hellenistic kingship, as well as the kingdoms themselves, unique. The most influential personality, even in death, was that of Alexander the Great, and he left his mark on all the kingdoms. But the strength of the personalities among the Successors (Diadochoi) was equally distinct. A generation and a half of almost-constant civil war among the Macedonian Successors to Alexander provided the context in which these kingdoms were formed. Finally, in each kingdom, the traditions of the native peoples and their natural resources made a mark on that development as well. Many of the aspects of Hellenistic kingship were passed on to the Romans, along with the religious and cultural heritage of the Hellenistic World, to be adapted and find its culmination in Roman imperial culture.

THE AFTERMATH OF ALEXANDER'S DEATH

When Alexander the Great died in Babylon in June 323 B.C.,¹ he left behind more questions than he had resolved. Worse, he had failed to provide for any succession. Over the previous year, half of the twenty provincial governors (satraps) had either already been executed for treason and malfeasance or were awaiting that fate, which hamstrung the normal machinery of government. The leading figures of the last decade were all gone, dead from the strains and conditions of the campaigns themselves or executed in the intrigues of court politics. Parmenion,

Philotas, Nikanor, Kleitos, Koinos, and Hephaistion were all dead. Only Antipatros remained as regent in Macedonia and general for Europe, but even in this case, the general Krateros was returning to Macedonia at the head of 10,000 veterans with orders to relieve him. The office of Chiliarch (essentially the “Prime Minister”) had been officially vacant since Hephaistion’s death the year before, though Perdikkas was carrying out the functions of the office.

For all intents and purposes, there was no government. No permanent structure for the empire had been created. Alexander’s approach had been to tinker with the existing Persian institutions: Civil functions in each satrapy had been split off from the military ones, with the latter always in the hands of a Greek or Macedonian commander. All financial affairs had been placed in a central office, but its head, Harpalos, had fled after massive embezzlement and was now a fugitive. No one had replaced him, except Alexander himself.

The most pressing problem, however, was a successor. One of Alexander’s wives, Roxane, was pregnant, which presented the possibility of a direct male heir. The only other dynastic choice was Alexander’s half brother, Arrhidaios, who was reputedly mentally or emotionally incompetent.² Beyond these choices, there were a host of potential usurpers. It was, in fact, this last group that initiated the Wars of the Diadochoi, and saw to the end of the Argead Dynasty. And it was from among this same group that the dynasties of the three major Hellenistic Kingdoms emerged.

The council of officers that gathered at Babylon within a few days of Alexander’s death consisted of the second rank of commanders. The most experienced generals weren’t there at all: Antipatros and Krateros. It did not possess any clear authority to make arrangements. Perdikkas claimed that Alexander had given him his signet ring, but there had been no witnesses. Among those present were all but one of the men who would be the major figures of the next generation and who made themselves kings in the coming years: Kassandros, Seleukos, Lysimachos, and Ptolemy. The remaining future king, Antigonos the One-Eyed (Monophthalmos), was on duty as a general in Asia Minor.

Ptolemy suggested that the council itself should govern the empire, exercising royal authority without a king, and await the outcome of Roxane’s pregnancy before making any other decision regarding the succession. It was a popular position, but Perdikkas wanted executive control for himself. Given the fact that the rule of an empire by committee is a formula for disaster, it is hardly surprising that they compromised and chose both proposals. Perdikkas was confirmed as

Chiliarch, and they decided to wait on the formal succession. Almost without knowing it, they had begun to change the nature of kingship and taken the first steps to institutionalize it. But, as will happen continually over the next forty years, events ran ahead of them.

While the officers talked, the men of the Macedonian Phalanx acted. They proclaimed Arrhidaios to be king, as the only surviving son of Philip II. They stormed the palace where the council was meeting and forced them to accept another compromise. Arrhidaios, now called Philip III, was recognized as king, but provision was made for a joint kingship should Roxane bear a son, naming Perdikkas and Leonnatos as the child's potential guardians. Indeed, Roxane did bear a son a few months later, named for his father: Alexander IV. Perdikkas was confirmed as Chiliarch and shortly after had Meleager, the leader of the Phalanx and Philip III's guardian, killed. The council then, under the authority of Philip III Arrhidaios, appointed new satraps and army commanders. Unity appeared to be restored.

But it was only appearance. Perdikkas had already begun consolidating his power, seeing to it that all the potential rivals at court were given satrapies and commands away from the center. Antipatros and Krateros were jointly named generals for Europe, which took care of the two senior commanders. Antipatros later offered to solidify the position among the leading figures with marriage alliances.³ Antigonos the One-Eyed was reconfirmed as satrap of Greater Phrygia and thus was kept out of the picture. Leonnatos was given Hellespontine Phrygia, and Alexander's Greek secretary, Eumenes of Kardia, Cappadocia. Two more court favorites and potential rivals then were gone. Ptolemy chose Egypt as his satrapy, one presumes after a good deal of thought, and so removed himself. Seleukos, the former commander of the Hypaspists, was promoted to command the Companion Cavalry; Kassandros (the son of Antipatros) took Seleukos' place at the head of the Hypaspists (where Perdikkas could watch them both as his own subordinates).⁴

THE WARS OF THE DIADOCHOI

What emerged over the next few months was a struggle for the control of Alexander's empire by trying to control the two kings. As neither king was able to rule in his own right (because of incompetence on the one hand, and infancy on the other), they became the symbols of power for other factions. Alexander's mother, Olympias, offered a

marriage alliance to Perdikkas in 322, namely the hand of Alexander's sister Kleopatra.⁵ The price for that marriage was dropping the alliance with Antipatros, Olympias' archrival. The possibility of being a royal uncle and regent, which could mean a path to kingship itself, was too much for Perdikkas to let go. Further, Ptolemy entered the picture at this point by hijacking Alexander's funeral cortege on its way back to Macedonia, diverting it to Egypt. Two factions emerged at this point: Perdikkas and his party, which had control of the kings, and a group of commanders, who either feared Perdikkas' ambitions or had ambitions of their own, or both.

Antipatros and Krateros led one army of the coalition from Macedonia into Asia Minor to attack Perdikkas from the north. Perdikkas detailed Eumenes of Kardia to slow them up in Asia Minor while he took care of Ptolemy in the south. Eumenes managed to kill Krateros in personal combat, but Antipatros and the rest of army brushed past him. In the meantime, Perdikkas repeatedly failed to force the Nile line against Ptolemy in Egypt. The result was that his own officers killed Perdikkas, and the army deserted to Ptolemy.

In 321, at Triparadeisos in Syria, Alexander's Grand Army met for what would be the last time. Antipatros was named by it as regent for the kings, whom he took back to Macedonia. Antigonos was to command a field army to crush Eumenes. The other satrapal appointments were reconfirmed. But within two years, Antipatros was dead of natural causes, and the struggle for control of the kings (and the empire) was renewed. Philip III Arrhidaios and his wife were killed in 317 by Olympias, who was executed the next year as Antipatros' son, Kassandros, solidified his power in Macedonia.⁶ At the same time (316) in Asia, Antigonos the One-Eyed engineered the betrayal of Eumenes of Kardia and proclaimed himself to be the "Lord of Asia," though not yet daring to call himself "king."

The generals and satraps continued to rule in the name of Alexander IV, who was now under the control of Kassandros. Though Antigonos' ambitions were clear, he still used Alexander IV and the legitimacy of the Argead House as pretext for a new war. Just as the other satraps had joined against Perdikkas, a new coalition of Kassandros in Macedonia, Ptolemy in Egypt, Lysimachos in Thrace, and Seleukos in Babylon now allied against Antigonos. The major players, however, were becoming fewer in number.

Another war raged inconclusively down to 311. At that point, a general peace was negotiated. This left Antigonos in control of Asia and the others in their original territories. Only Seleukos was excluded

from the treaty altogether. It is very likely that as part of the settlement Kassandros was to eliminate Alexander IV before he came of age to rule. Indeed, by 309, Alexander IV was dead, killed in secret but buried in public by Kassandros at Aigai (probably in Tomb III in the Great Tumulus at Vergina).⁷ But for now, all the major figures maintained the fiction that they ruled in Alexander IV's name.

PERSONAL KINGSHIP AND THE EMERGENCE OF THE KINGDOMS

Individual skirmishing between the rival generals occurred over the next five years. In the course of these struggles, the son of Antigonos the One-Eyed, Demetrios (who was later given the nickname of “Poliorketes” or “Sacker of Cities”), managed to liberate Athens from Kassandros and his puppet, Demetrios of Phaleron. For this, both he and his father were recognized as “Savior Gods,” and two new tribes were established in their honor at Athens. Then, Demetrios, in command of the Antigonid fleet, defeated Ptolemy in a naval engagement off Cyprus in 306 (see also Chapter 13 in this volume). This was the occasion for Antigonos to have himself and Demetrios both formally proclaimed as “kings” by his army. It was also the signal to the rest of the dynasts to end the fiction of ruling in the name of the Argead House. Ptolemy, Seleukos, Lysimachos, and eventually Kassandros all followed suit. The Antigonids had done so through the mechanism of their army, visibly connecting to the previous Macedonian custom.

There is considerable disagreement as to whether the custom could be characterized as truly electing the kings or simply proclaiming the acceptance of the succession. In this case, it was done at the instigation of Antigonos and was clearly not part of a dynastic succession. Rather, it was meant to establish a new dynasty. At the very least it amounted to a public acknowledgment of his kingship, regardless of what it drew from old practice. It is very likely, as a result, that the others used the same mechanism and for the same reasons. There had been a clear break with the Argead dynasty, and this was a step toward establishing legitimacy in the eyes of their Macedonian followers. It was another step toward the institutionalizing of the monarchy.

It also signaled a new round of wars. Antigonos and Demetrios tried to invade Egypt to displace Ptolemy in late 306 and failed miserably. At this point, Demetrios then besieged the city of Rhodes over the course of the next year and failed again. Demetrios got his nickname as

the “Sacker of Cities” as an ironic result of this failure (see Chapter 13 in this volume for discussion). In 304, the Antigonids decided to try their luck against Kassandros in Greece, with considerably more success. Demetrios broke the siege of Athens by Kassandros and restored the Hellenic League (to bring the Greek *poleis* in on the Antigonid side). By late 302, Demetrios was poised for the invasion of Macedonia itself.

At this point, Kassandros took the initiative to restore the old coalition. If Antigonos gained control of Asia and Macedonia, he would pose too great a power for the others to survive. They made common cause, and the decisive battle was fought at Ipsos in the spring of 301. Lysimachos and Seleukos, commanding the allied army, defeated and killed Antigonos, while Demetrios retreated to the port cities in the Aegean still held by the Antigonids and to the command of the great Antigonid fleet.

This did not end the maneuvering. The victors soon fell out among themselves, as Demetrios must have hoped. Kassandros died of consumption over the winter of 298/7 and his son, Philip IV, followed him within the year, dead from the same cause. The remaining two sons fell out over the exercise of royal authority, which opened the way for Demetrios. In 294, he invaded Macedonia, killed one of Kassandros’ sons, and drove the other out. Following precedent, Demetrios had his army proclaim him “king” of Macedonia. The dynasty of Kassandros was extinguished in short order. While this was going on, the other kings were solidifying their positions. Ptolemy was well established in Egypt, and likewise Lysimachos in Thrace. Indeed, the two entered into a marriage alliance, with Lysimachos marrying a daughter of Ptolemy.⁸ Seleukos had begun as the least secure of the dynasts, but by this time, he had control of most of the old area of the Persian Empire and begun a bitter rivalry with Ptolemy.

Demetrios had hoped to use Macedonia as the springboard to rebuild Alexander’s empire. After all, Alexander had done so. As it turned out, just as Alexander’s adoption of the rituals and attitudes of eastern kingship had alienated many of his Macedonians, so too did Demetrios’ imitation of those same practices have a like effect on the Macedonian homeland. Further, Demetrios’ open ambitions made him a target for both Lysimachos and Pyrrhos of Epiros. And the latter had a legitimate claim on Macedonia, related by blood to Alexander and the Argead House. By 287, the Macedonians were fed up and withdrew their support from Demetrios, forcing him to flee the kingdom. Lysimachos and Pyrrhos divided Macedonia up between them. It was the low point in Macedonia’s fortunes.

Demetrios left his young son, Antigonos Gonatas, to control what was left of the Antigonid forces in Greece proper, while he himself took command of the fleet and left to try his hand in Asia Minor. But in the maneuvering against Lysimachos, Demetrios' luck finally ran out. He fell back to the south and was captured by Seleukos in 286. Demetrios spent the remaining three years of his life in captivity. For all intents and purposes, the struggle was down to three dynasts: Lysimachos of Thrace, Ptolemy of Egypt, and Seleukos of Asia. No one gave much thought to Antigonos Gonatas. But none of them had forgotten about Alexander the Great or the ambitions that had created his empire in the first place.

Lysimachos now made his bid for ultimate power, the key to which would be the control of Macedonia. He had pushed Pyrrhos out of Macedonia and Thessaly by 285. Equally, he expanded his control in Thrace all the way to the Danube. But at this point, Lysimachos' position was weakened by a dynastic struggle within his family, which led him to order the death of his own son, Agathokles, in late 283 or early 282. Agathokles had been popular, but more importantly, his widow appealed to Seleukos for aid in 282.⁹

With clear signs of weakness and disintegration evident in Lysimachos' kingdom, Seleukos saw this as his opportunity to bid for control of Alexander the Great's empire. The two armies met at Korupedion in Asia Minor in the late spring or early summer of 281. Seleukos defeated Lysimachos, who was killed in the course of the struggle. By the end of summer, Seleukos crossed to Europe claiming control of Macedonia and Thrace as well as Asia. Everything but Ptolemy's Egypt was now his, and Seleukos seemed on the verge of reuniting the empire. But at this very point, Seleukos' chief aide, Ptolemy Keraunos (the dispossessed son of Ptolemy I of Egypt), assassinated him.

The possibility of reuniting Alexander's empire faded to a dream, and the army eventually proclaimed Ptolemy Keraunos as king of Macedonia, in what was now a well-established if too often practiced procedure. It was short lived. Ptolemy himself was killed in a Celtic invasion of Macedonia in 279. Within two years (277), the Macedonians proclaimed Antigonos Gonatas as king, in the absence of any other possible candidate.¹⁰ Antigonos managed to make it stick, and campaigning over the next seven years established the Antigonids as the new dynasty of Macedonia, one that would last for the rest of Macedonia's independence.

What has been a long tale covering the chaos that followed Alexander's death is nevertheless a necessary one to understand what

now emerged. At the end of it, there were three royal houses left of all the potential leaders that had begun the struggle: the Ptolemies in Egypt, the Antigonids in Macedonia, and Seleukos' son, Antiochos I, who had been ruling in his father's absence as joint monarch and now carried on the Seleukid tradition in Asia. But the dream of Alexander's empire and the ambitions of these royal houses remained.

The idea of empire was an underlying principle and desire in each of the major kingdoms. The starting point for each kingdom had been the same. The trappings of monarchy and Macedonian kingship in each would be the same, though each would also react in different ways to the conditions of the lands and peoples they ruled. Each kingdom would have its own advantages and disadvantages in the struggles that followed over the next four generations, but the dreams of Alexander and his empire always lurked behind them. One can now talk meaningfully of the formations of these kingdoms, which controlled the Hellenistic world.

ANTIGONID MACEDONIA

Macedonia claimed the direct inheritance of the traditions of Philip and Alexander's kingdom. The major divisions and shape of the kingdom remained the same as they had been under Philip II, and for that matter, under Kassandros. Antigonos II Gonatas was not only the son of Demetrios Poliorketes; his mother had been Kassandros' sister Phila, which added to his legitimacy among the Macedonians. To a large extent, he adopted the policies of Kassandros, which had been in turn based on those of Philip II. The major goal was to protect the kingdom itself.

To the north and west, this meant a strong defense against the Illyrians and now the Celts as well. To the south, it meant at least the passive control of Greece and to the east the maintenance of the frontier in Thrace. These had been the traditional external problems of Macedonia throughout the fifth and fourth centuries. Added to these was a wary defense against the ambitions of the other Hellenistic monarchies, who sought to get at Macedonia primarily through Greece or Thrace. These areas were not so much threats in their own right as pawns for others. This was a legacy of the Wars of Succession.

Internally, Antigonos Gonatas had a number of advantages. He had a reasonably homogeneous population in comparison to the other Hellenistic monarchies, internal lines of communication, and an existing

infrastructure of roads, fortresses, and resources on which to build. But the Macedonian population had been reduced dramatically. Antigonos could not stop the flow of settlers leaving for the new city foundations in the other Hellenistic kingdoms. The very nature of these Macedonians made them valuable commodities in the Hellenistic East. Alexander had left some 7,600 men behind with Antipatros at the beginning of the campaigns in 334, while he himself took with him in the initial expedition, or received as reinforcements later on, some 60,000 more Macedonians. Based on the usual ratio of the military muster representing about 10 percent of the overall population, the number of Macedonians altogether must have been around 700,000. Under the Antigonids, the full Macedonian levy dropped to around 25,000 men (15,000 in the phalanx itself, plus others including mercenaries). That meant that at least two thirds of the population must have emigrated. Those that were left were arguably the best troops in the Hellenistic World, man for man, but they were fewer in number. It did relieve one traditional problem for the Macedonian monarchy: There was little or no sign of the internal dissent that had plagued the kingdom in the fifth and early fourth centuries.

Equally, that it was Macedonia itself must have affected the nature of the monarchy. The Macedonians had already demonstrated to Antigonos' father that there were things which they would not condone and had thrown Demetrios Poliorketes out. That example must have been ever before Antigonos Gonatas. He, too, had been proclaimed "king" by the Macedonian army in 277. As with the Argead kings, the Antigonids of Macedonia were expected to lead the army personally, and all of them did so, as opposed to the Ptolemaic record in this area. There is a longstanding debate over the nature of the Macedonian kingship, one group of scholars holding that it was always a constitutional monarchy and another that it was always an autocracy. Oddly, neither side seems to allow for development. But insofar as there is written evidence for the constitutional position, it largely comes from Antigonid Macedonia.¹¹ A popular monarch might occasionally get away with murder, literally, but clearly there were Macedonian sensibilities to which, to a large extent, Antigonos Gonatas and his successors paid attention. Nor was there ever any sign in Antigonid Macedonia of the "ruler cult" that emerged in the other Hellenistic kingdoms, despite the examples not only of Philip and Alexander, but Antigonos the One-Eyed and Demetrios Poliorketes.¹²

In Antigonos' case, he was both a popular monarch and one who enjoyed a long reign of nearly forty years. Despite all the odds, Antigonos Gonatas died a natural death in 239, which went even further toward

firmly establishing his dynasty. That popularity was based on the success of Antigonos' policies and the defense of the realm. In terms of the traditional problems, Antigonos continued the construction of border fortresses (*stratopeda*) against the Illyrians and the Celts along the western mountainous approaches to upper Macedonia. To fill in for troop shortages, Antigonos tended to stock these posts with Cretan and Arkadian mercenaries. The result was that Macedonia, especially to the west, became an onion-skin of defensive layers and almost unassailable, even to the Romans in the second century. The north, with the access down the great river valleys of the Axios (Vardar) and the Strymon (Struma), was more of a problem and would remain so even for the Romans in the first century.¹³

To the south, and the control of Greece, Antigonos also took great care. For most of his early reign, there were Macedonian garrisons and pro-Macedonian tyrants throughout Greece, even in Athens. The rise of the Aitolian League and the Achaian League greatly cut into this, but Antigonos' goal was not so much domination as it was to use Greece as a buffer to keep out his Ptolemaic and Seleukid rivals. To do that, he maintained three great fortresses at key points, called by the Greeks the "Three Fetters." The first of these was the city and great Antigonid naval base at Demetrias, located at the head of the Gulf of Magnesia, founded by and named for his father. Demetrias insured that Antigonos Gonatas and his successors could transport troops quickly to Greece as needed, rather than maintaining large forces there or fighting their way each time along the land route through Thermopylai. The second "Fetter" was the fortress city of Chalkis on the island of Euboia, which lay near the Euripos channel. Here, the island was only 45 yards from mainland Greece. Further, it was this that permitted the Macedonians to bypass the traditional choke point at Thermopylai, which was usually controlled by the Aitolians. This guaranteed the passage into Central Greece. Finally, there was the great fortress at Acrocorinth, the sugarloaf mountain just on the outskirts of the city of Corinth at the Isthmus. This secured entry into the Peloponnesos. Thus, Antigonos Gonatas could move armies virtually anywhere in Greece with relative security and ease.

Acrocorinth periodically was lost to the Macedonians, especially after Aratos of Sikyon rose to power in the Achaian League. But by one means or another, the Antigonids always managed to regain control of it. And with Acrocorinth came the shipyards at Corinth, which the Antigonids used to maintain and rebuild their fleet. On two occasions, at Kos around 254 and at Andros around 246, Antigonos Gonatas led

the Macedonian fleet to victory over the Ptolemies. Those victories would have been impossible without the control of Corinth's shipyards. Philip V would use them to the same advantage at the end of the third century.

To pay for all of this, Antigonos Gonatas turned to commercial development. The mineral resources, timber, and trade produced roughly the same income as they had under Philip II. This was not inconsiderable, but the problem was that the Ptolemaic and Seleukid resources were so vast. Nevertheless, Pella became a commercial center as well as the capital. The famous Macedonian mosaics at Pella came from the rich residential district by the Loudias River, not the government buildings, and were the byproduct of that trade. At the head of the Thermaic Gulf, the city of Thessalonike (named by Kassandros for his wife) grew even faster. It sat both on the old royal road that ran from east to west and on the Axios River route north into the upper Balkans. Two other cities grew and prospered as well. Amphipolis, which lay on the lower reaches of the Strymon, enjoyed the same advantages as Thessalonike, but added timber and gold from Mount Pangasion to the mix. And Kassandreia (on the old site of Potidaia on the Pallene promontory) was refounded by Kassandros and named for him. It dealt with the rich agricultural products of the Chalkidic peninsula and the Anthemios. In particular, it was noted for its Mendeian wine, which was aggressively marketed from Kassandros' time on (even using cups especially designed by the sculptor Lysippos).

If its resources were considerably less than the Seleukids and Ptolemies, Antigonid Macedonia nevertheless had enough for its needs. The fortresses to secure the kingdom were built and maintained. There was enough for Antigonid fleets, which enjoyed success at very key points throughout its history. Though there were occasional barbarian incursions into upper Macedonia, they were few and always countered vigorously by the monarchy. Macedonia under the Antigonids was secure, reasonably prosperous, and genuinely independent. It maintained its potential in the game for Alexander's empire. More importantly, as the reign of Philip V demonstrates, the Antigonids still had the ambitions and the personal ability to reconstruct Alexander's empire.

PTOLEMAIC EGYPT

Ptolemy I Soter¹⁴ had chosen Egypt at the very outset and deliberately. It had a number of clear advantages. First, it was readily defensible, as

Ptolemy proved against Perdikkas in 322 and then later Antigonos the One-Eyed in 306. Indeed, the Nile line has only been forced a dozen times in history. So Egypt provided a strategic location for Ptolemy and his successors against external forces. Secondly, it was equally secure internally. Egypt was the classic land of despotism. It consists, in traditional Egyptian terms, of the Two Lands: the Nile Delta on the one hand, and the Nile Valley on the other. From Memphis at the southern end of the Delta to Elephantine and the First Cataract, it was a 750-mile-long valley, never wider than 15 miles at any point. It was also clearly delineated, as it was possible to stand literally with one foot on arable soil and one on complete desert. With a garrison at Memphis and another at Elephantine, the populace of the Nile Valley was trapped, for there was nowhere else to go but desert, the same deserts that protected Egypt from outside invasion. Finally, all land was “king’s land,” and Egypt could be and indeed was run as a state monopoly producing surpluses in grain and luxury goods.

Ptolemy, and for that matter the Seleukids, had one problem that Antigonid Macedonia did not: large native populations. In this case, it was one that was itself homogeneous and had thousands of years of culture and tradition binding it together. From the beginning, Ptolemy rejected Alexander’s approach to fusion. There was no native elite anyway that could correspond to the Persians in Asia. Thus, Ptolemy chose to maintain two distinct identities: He was a Macedonian king to his Greeks and Pharaoh to his Egyptians, at least after 306. There had been two Greek cities, both in the Delta, when Ptolemy came to Egypt as satrap: the old Panhellenic trading colony at Naukratis and Alexandria, which became his capital. He also founded a city about halfway up the Nile Valley, just north of Abydos, which was named for him: Ptolemais. These cities each had a large Greek population brought in by Ptolemy and the usual trappings of Greek civic government and institutions. There was also a considerable settlement of Greeks around the Fayoum, the lake district west of the lower Nile Valley, and Memphis. Here, they were established as cleruchs (military colonists) and settled on good land to provide the basis for the Ptolemaic phalanx.

The rest of Egypt was kept divided into the forty-two districts (called *hsaput* in Egyptian and *nomos* in Greek), which had been traditional for over 3,000 years. Here, some seven to ten million native Egyptians lived the same life they had always led. They worshipped the traditional gods, and the Ptolemies endeavored to keep up the old religion and the old ways.¹⁵ The images of the Ptolemies were executed in traditional Egyptian style on the monuments and buildings. Indeed,

one could not tell them apart from the images of the previous native dynasties. The inscriptions were written in traditional hieroglyphics, in demotic (a cursive script based on hieroglyphics) and Greek. The title used by the Ptolemies was the ancient formula: “King of the Two Lands.” Each Ptolemy bore the traditional five names of Pharaoh in the cartouche, only one of which was his actual call name and the rest were connected to the old gods and religious formulas. In short, to the average native, they were still ruled by their own kings. Even this was to Ptolemy’s advantage, as by tradition, all land was Pharaoh’s, all wealth was Pharaoh’s, and all life was Pharaoh’s. An Egyptian priest, Manetho, wrote a history of the dynasties of Egypt in Greek for Ptolemy, placing him as the founder of the Thirtieth Dynasty and thus incorporating them into the Egyptian fabric. But it will not be until the last of that Dynasty that anyone one of them, in this case Kleopatra VII, bothered to learn Egyptian.

Each *nomos* was administered by a Greek governor or *strategos*. In each district, there was a small population of cleruchs as well, set up like local squires, to provide security and help with the administration of the district. Altogether, this amounted to a thin veneer of Greco-Macedonians set over a very large population of natives. Normally, nothing disturbed the lives of the natives aside from the traditional taxes they had always paid. They were not used in administration or the armed services. Occasionally, in national emergencies, the Ptolemies did arm and train these natives to fill out the phalanx, as Ptolemy IV would do at the end of the third century. This was usually followed by a period of native unrest and rebellion, but not a permanent condition.

The economic resources of Egypt were vast. The state monopoly on grain made Egypt the main grain exporter in the Mediterranean, even through the Roman period when Egypt became the personal possession of Augustus and his successors. The spread of Greek culture throughout the Hellenistic East, the desire for those populations to maintain their Greek heritage in humane letters, and the growth of bureaucracies to govern these areas also increased the need for paper. Egyptian papyrus provided the main source for this and another major export crop. Finally, trade down the Nile for luxury items, such as ivory, ebony, gold and jewels from Africa, and incense coming up the Red Sea from Yemen, filled out the economic picture.

It all provided a fabulous income. Even more important, the security of the kingdom and its geographic advantages meant that there was very little overhead necessary to maintain the government. The

Seleukids had a far larger economy and income, but they also had to protect a larger area both externally from barbarians and internally from bandits and rebels, as well as the upkeep of a massive infrastructure. This meant that the Ptolemaic revenues provided a disposable income far greater than any of the other kingdoms. The estimates of the royal treasury in the time of Ptolemy II Philadelphos range up to 800,000 talents. If the security of Egypt was its first great advantage, its wealth gave the Ptolemies its edge in the rivalries among the Hellenistic kingdoms. It made possible a brilliant court life.

Alexandria was the jewel in the crown of that court (Figure 13). It lay on the westernmost mouth of the Nile, across Lake Mareotis. The old Egyptian city of Rhakotis had been refounded by Alexander the Great and named for him. It eventually grew to a city of 300,000 people under the Ptolemies. Lake Mareotis protected the site from the hottest of the Egyptian weather, giving it a Mediterranean climate. The city was divided into five districts. The Alpha and Beta districts made up the royal compound, which comprised a third of the city. The old Egyptian city of Rhakotis became the Gamma district, the native quarter. The Ptolemies encouraged a large Jewish migration to Alexandria, and Jews were used both in the administration and as crack mercenaries.¹⁶ This Jewish population occupied its own area in the city, the Delta district. Finally, the Greek population settled into the swank suburban region of Eleusis (the Epsilon district).

The Ptolemies lavished their wealth on Alexandria. A great trade harbor was established behind the protective island of Pharos, on which sat the giant lighthouse that was one of the wonders of the ancient world. That harbor was the conduit for Egyptian trade and another source of royal revenue. The royal compound held palaces, its own harbor, docks, warehouses, barracks, and temples. Among the temples was the Sema, which housed the Sarcophagus of Alexander. It was the hijacking of Alexander's funeral cortege that had prompted the first War of the Successors. Ptolemy made the temple for Alexander's body, which also served as a talisman for his kingdom. Also, he established in the compound the Museum, a library and school of the Muses to rival Athens as a cultural center. Ptolemy and his heirs used culture as a diplomatic weapon, and it was his deliberate intent to make Alexandria the cultural center of the Hellenistic world. The Library grew to over a million works, including the original manuscripts of Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, and Aristophanes. To a large extent, the survival of the ancient Greek literary heritage is the result of the Museum and the Ptolemies' efforts.

The central bureaucracy that ran the kingdom did so from Alexandria. There was a prime minister, or “*Dioiketes*,” who supervised the various departments. It was staffed largely by Greek and Jewish scribes. There were few Egyptians involved at any level, except in the Egyptian priesthoods. The city administration had, at least initially, all the trappings of Greek government: a self-governing *boule* or council (which seems to disappear after Ptolemy I Soter); elected magistrates (who became appointed ones after Ptolemy I); a gymnasiarchal system for educating the Greek youth; and an ephebic corps to train them for the army.

At Alexandria, the Ptolemies strove to maintain their *persona* as Macedonian kings. Ptolemy, whichever Ptolemy, wore the traditional garb: the *kerasia* (or felt cap), the *chlamys* (or Macedonian military cloak), and the *stephanos* (or fillet crown). There were royal pages (*basilikoi paides*), royal huntsmen (*kynagidoi*), Companions (*Hetairoi*), and Foot Companions (*Pezetairoi*). There was no substance to the form, however. The institutions were empty symbols, for there was no assembly, and after Ptolemy I (over the next ten generations) only one Ptolemy ever again commanded his own troops in the field.

Nevertheless, those forces were considerable. The Ptolemies had relatively small but efficient armies of up to 30,000 men. About 15,000 were drawn from the Greco-Macedonian population of Egypt, and the remainder of the army was made up of mercenaries paid for by the Egyptian trade. The primary Ptolemaic arm was the navy, again made possible by its fabulous wealth. The Ptolemaic fleet at its height amounted to 1,200 vessels of all types. The Ptolemies went in for larger fleet vessels: septiremes (over twice the size of the traditional trireme) and decaremes, most of which were also cataphracts (or decked over to carry catapults and various armament). They even experimented with ships that had manpower ratios of twenty, thirty, and forty men on the oarlocks (see also Chapter 13 in this volume).

The underlying assumption, again, was that, at some point, one of the kingdoms would have the wherewithal to reunite Alexander’s empire. That meant two areas of activity for the Ptolemies: against Antigonid Macedonia and against Seleukid Asia. Both of these required a fleet. Ptolemy I had established possessions in the Aegean islands and on the Asia Minor coastline, following the collapse of the Antigonid kingdom after the Battle of Ipsos in 301. These were organized into naval districts, each under its own nauarch, and assigned marines and a squadron to hold it. It is with this fleet that Ptolemy II kept probing

Greece for weaknesses against Antigonos Gonatas, an effort thwarted by Antigonos' victories in the battles of Kos and Andros.

The other area of Ptolemaic involvement was their rivalry with the Seleukids over the control of the land bridge area between Asia and Africa, what is now Lebanon, Israel, and Gaza. Ptolemy I had occupied the entire region up to the great bend of the Euphrates River immediately following the battle of Ipsos. But Seleukos claimed it as his territory. Quick communication with this area was necessary for Ptolemy and was facilitated by the Ptolemaic fleet, with their garrisons at ports like Sidon. Over the next century and a half, the Seleukids and Ptolemies would fight eight "Syrian" wars to try to settle the matter of control. For both of them, the ultimate goal of this was the first step in reuniting Alexander's empire. Success swayed back and forth between them, Egypt sometimes moving as far as Syria at several points and the Seleukids getting as far as the suburbs of Alexandria at one point late in the game.

So Ptolemaic Egypt remained in the hunt for empire. Its chief drawback was that it did not have a sufficient Greek population base to recruit an army that could challenge either Antigonid Macedonia or Seleukid Asia. In this regard, it was the weakest of the three kingdoms. But it held a secure territory and was immensely wealthy, advantages that saw it through to be the longest lasting of the all Hellenistic kingdoms.

SELEUKID ASIA

The last of the great Hellenistic monarchies was the House of Seleukos I Nikator, the longest lived and most successful of the Diadochoi. The Seleukids inherited the lion's share of Alexander's empire: Asia Minor, Syria, and Iran. This meant that the Seleukids had immense economic resources, both from dominating the traditional silk and spice routes to eastern Asia as well as from their own natural resources. They also had a much larger population, some fifty to sixty million people, and supported a much larger military establishment than the other kingdoms. Further, it was into the Seleukid territories that the vast majority of immigrants from the Greek homeland poured, settling into some eighty cities in Asia Minor and Mesopotamia. Equally, this meant that the Seleukids had a more massively diverse population than the other kingdoms.

The Seleukid approach to their large native population was the reverse of the Ptolemies. Of all the Macedonian officers who had

married Iranian noblewomen at Alexander's great wedding feast at Susa in 324, only Seleukos had kept his bride, Apama, and she bore him his heir: Antiochos I. When Seleukos was assassinated in 281, Antiochos was already serving as joint king and now simply did so solely in his own name. Though the royal family did not continue to intermarry with native elites, a large part of their power base rested on intermarriage. When Alexander sent his 10,000 older veterans home to Macedonia with Krateros, he ordered them to leave their native wives and children behind so as not to cause undue turmoil among the families that awaited them in Macedonia. But Alexander promised to take care of these native families and raise the children as Macedonians. Seleukos kept that pledge and added newer Greek and Macedonian settlers to both of these groups. And others among the 10,000 Macedonian common soldiers who also had married at Susa stayed on in Asia as well. A population that can be identified as "Macedonian," but made up of the descendants of these groups, appears in the sources on the Seleukids down through the time of Antiochos III. From them, the Seleukids could field a phalanx armed and trained in the Macedonian fashion of up to 35,000 men, though of varying quality.

For the rest, the Seleukids likewise followed Alexander's lead more than either of the other two kingdoms. Natives served in the administration and the armed forces, just as they had under Alexander. Altogether, the Seleukids could employ a field army of around 80,000 men by the time of Antiochos III. The core of the army was the 35,000 man phalanx, the rest were native units serving in traditional fashion as linen-clad light infantry, archers, slingers, javelin men, or whatever. This meant that, overall, man for man, the army was not as effective as the Antigonid forces, but usually better than the Ptolemaic armies. And regardless, there were many more of them. On the other hand, Seleukids rarely ventured far into naval activity, with the notable exception of Antiochos III. Their need for a navy was almost nonexistent.

The problem for the Seleukids, both in terms of the economic and military resources, was that the kingdom was so large and required so much. It stretched from the Mediterranean to the Indus Valley in the beginning and had three capitals. The first was the old royal Persian residence at Susa, at the main pass through the Zagros Mountains to the Iranian Plateau, and from which they sought to govern Iran proper. The second was Seleukeia-on-the-Tigris, at the old site of the military camp at Opis, just above Babylon. This was the capital for the Mesopotamian heartland of the Seleukid monarch. The third was Antioch, in Syria,

named for Antiochos I. It was the western center of administration for the kingdom and the territories claimed by Seleukos after the battle of Ipsos. It was also the territory in contention with the Ptolemies during the Syrian Wars.

The kingdom was too vast to be governed effectively with the resources the Seleukids had. This was recognized early on by Seleukos Nikator. In 305, Seleukos had negotiated a settlement with Chandragupta, an Indian adventurer who founded the Mauryan Empire. Seleukos gave up all claims to the three satrapies Alexander had envisaged for the Indus Valley, in exchange for a stable of war elephants and their breeding stock. Those elephants had helped win the day at Ipsos, but the settlement was a practical admission that Seleukos could not hold India any more than Alexander could. For that matter, the Seleukids came to the conclusion they could not maintain much of a presence in Iran proper either. They simply set up native satraps who paid tribute and made ceremonial obeisance to the Seleucid monarchy.

It was the drive to increase their manpower resources that prompted a massive resettlement and immigration program by the Seleukids, bringing people from Greece and Macedonian into Asia. There were dozens of city foundations throughout Asia Minor and Mesopotamia; some were named for the kings and queens of the dynasty, such as Seleukeia, Antioch, Apameia, and Laodikeia. Others reflect the areas from which the settlers came, such as Pella, Aigai, and Bottiaia (named for cities and districts in Macedonia). A few, such as Dura-Europus, were totally new foundations and wholly Macedonian initially. But most were based on existing communities, which were renamed, and the settlers were encouraged to intermarry with the local elites, following again the initial policy of Alexander.

Regardless of which particular method or origin, these settlers brought with them the basics of Greek culture, art, and education. Town councils were established in these cities along with gymnasiarchal education. Theaters were built along with temples, gymnasia, stadia, hippodromes, and Greek-style market places. The adaptation of Attic Greek known as Koine (or Common) Greek joined Aramaic as the language of trade and was the language of government as well. Macedonian traditions were kept intact. Citizenship was defined as holding land from the king in exchange for military service, and it was the definition used for the groups from which the phalanx was drawn. There are even vague references to an assembly (*hoi Makedones* – “the Macedonians”), but it was one that could have had not much more than a ceremonial function. The Seleukids themselves, as with the Ptolemies, continued

to employ the Macedonian symbols of kingship and ceremonial dress. The court was filled with officials bearing the traditional Macedonian titles and functions. Unfortunately, for the Seleukids, this came with a penchant for court intrigue, dynastic plotting, and murder, which frequently destabilized the kingdom.

Despite all this, the essence of kingship here more than anywhere else was personal. For many of their subjects, the only thing they had in common was that they were governed by the Seleukids and were bound together only by the existence of the monarchy. This fostered the practice of ruler cult among the Seleukids. As mentioned earlier, this can be traced back to Alexander. It shows up among the Ptolemies as well, but there the native Egyptian strain is stronger. Pharaoh derived his legitimate rule from being the living incarnation of Ammon Ra. For the Ptolemies, therefore, to be legitimate in Egyptian eyes, they had to and did maintain this.

The Seleukids had to take a slightly different tack, and initially ruler cult grew out of the civic foundations of the Seleukid colonizing program. The cities recognized the king as their founder, much as Archaic Greek colonies had established hero cults for their founders (*oikistai*). By extension, the wider practice recognized the ruler for the same reasons as being a benefactor to his people. But it went a step further. For the Seleukids, it acknowledged the ruler as the very symbol of the state and established public services of thanksgiving celebrating the benefits of his rule. The form, as with Alexander, was to worship the ruler “as if he were a god,” usually dropping incense on a burner before the royal image. Equally, crowns and other dedications served the same purpose. The practice of ruler cult will carry over to Rome and Augustus in the East for much the same reason as the Seleukids employed it. The act was, in fact, more patriotic than religious. But as Seleukid power waned in the second century, it was pushed to extremes by rulers such as Antiochos IV Epiphanes.

Actually, events began to chip away at Seleucid power from the point of Seleukos I's death. Philetairos, a eunuch and keeper of Lysimachos' treasury at Pergamon, transferred his loyalty (and the treasury) to Seleukos in 282. But with Seleukos' death, Philetairos became virtually independent, though nominally under Seleukid suzerainty. Pergamon was located about fifteen miles up the Kaikos River valley, and the region came to dominate the northwest area of Asia Minor, the old Troad. Having a treasury of as much as 80,000 talents was a good start, but Pergamon was equally a rich agricultural area specializing in fruit, wine, and sheep. Philetairos ruled it for seventeen years,

building a fabulous royal residence in the upper citadel and a thriving city below it.

Philetairos was succeeded by his nephew, Eumenes I. With the aid of the Ptolemies, Eumenes formally broke from Seleukid control. When Eumenes died in 241, he was succeeded by his cousin, Attalos I, who will actually found the ruling dynasty: the Attalids. Pergamene policy was to imitate the kingship in the larger states in everything from cults to cultural politics. But the Attalid kingdom had been carved from Seleukid territory, and the Seleukids never forgot that nor accepted it. Further, the Seleukids had never fully established their authority over the interior of Asia Minor. Native monarchies, largely Hellenized, likewise adopted or adapted the Greek model of the Hellenistic monarchies. States such as Bithynia, Nikomedia, Cappadocia, and Pontos emerged along with Pergamon.

Equally, at the eastern end of the Seleukid dominions, there were similar problems. From Seleukos' time onward, control of the Iranian Plateau was nominal. But by the middle of the third century (traditionally by 247), a Scythian tribe called the Parni took over the satrapy of Parthia and began to extend their control over the Plateau. Though a problem in itself, this also cut off the area of Bactria. From Alexander's time on, there had been a heavy Greek settlement in the region. Alexander had founded as many as two dozen cities as part of his way of ending a bitter guerrilla war there. By the 230s, the Greek satrap of the region, Diodotos, had established an independent kingdom, buffered from the Seleukids by the Parthian kingdom.

Bactria was a rich agricultural region. It was watered by the Oxus and Jaxartes rivers, as well as a canal system (*qanat*), which carried water from the mountains. The Greek Bactrian kings built on this (and Alexander's foundations) a brilliant kingdom. Archaeological remains from this region are rich and extensive, the crown of which is Ai Khanum. These are the remains of a Hellenistic city on the Oxus that was probably the capital of the kingdom. Like Pergamon, and the Hellenized kingdoms of Asia Minor, Bactria became a small-scale model of the great Hellenistic monarchies.

At the end of the third century, Antiochos III the Great sought to reestablish Seleukid control of the region by driving out the Parthians (Parni), at which point the Bactrian king Euthydemos acknowledged Seleukid suzerainty (around 206). But control was still only nominal. After Antiochos III left, the Arsacid dynasty that ruled the Parni managed to take back their control first of Parthia, then of the whole Iranian Plateau in the second century. Euthydemos remained as king of Bactria

throughout all of this. Barbarian invasions would displace the Bactrian kingdom further south in the second century and further west in the first century but the monarchy lasted at least to the end of the first century.

Despite the size of the Seleukid realm, then, their power was not so nearly as overwhelming as it might seem. For all intents and purposes, both the eastern and western ends of that realm established their virtual independence. The dynasty had to maintain and defend their far-flung dominions, which limited how much attention they could concentrate at any one time on Ptolemaic Egypt or Antigonid Macedonia. Still, the Seleukid heartland of Mesopotamia and Syria was a power to be reckoned with. It was prosperous, populous, and had the largest army in the Hellenistic East.

CONCLUSION: A BALANCE OF POWER

What emerged after the Wars of Succession was a rough balance of power among the three great Hellenistic monarchies. The Antigonids held the Macedonian homeland and maintained the traditions of Philip and Alexander, as well as their claim to empire. It was a goal, which at one point under Antigonos the One-Eyed, they had almost achieved. But the Antigonid economic resources couldn't compare with those of their rivals. Further, the Macedonian army, though excellent, was matched on the one hand by the disposable wealth of Egypt and the resources it could buy and on the other by the greater numbers of the Seleukid forces.

The Ptolemies held the most strategically secure territory in the Hellenistic World. They had immense treasures and the means to renew them continually. This gave them an advantage, especially in the technological realm of naval warfare. But their overall manpower resources were small militarily, and they could neither match the Antigonids in quality nor the Seleukids in numbers.

The Seleukids had the greatest population and income. But their territories were so exposed and their internal lines of communication so extended that those resources were stretched too thin. Normally, they could not hope to challenge the Ptolemies at sea. As for the Antigonid Macedonia, it was too far away and at the end of a tenuous line of communication, as the events after the murder of Seleukos Nikator demonstrated, to be an effective target.

But the dream of Alexander's empire was still alive. All of these dynasties saw themselves as the direct heirs of Alexander. None of them had forgotten what Alexander had achieved, nor presumed that the balance of power would last forever. Indeed, by the end of the third century, it was arguably resolving itself. But the smaller Greek Hellenistic states, for whom the balance of power meant freedom and autonomy, sought to prolong things by asking for Roman aid. Ultimately that changed everything.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

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NOTES

- 1 Unless otherwise noted, all dates in this chapter may be assumed to be B.C.
- 2 The exact nature of Arrhidaios' problem has never been satisfactorily explained. Plutarch variously refers to him as of "unsound mind" (*Alex.* 10.2), a "half wit" (*Alex.* 77.5) and "acting like a child" (*De. Fort. Alex.*, 337 DE). Diodorus refers to an incurable mental illness (18.2.2).
- 3 Through Antipatros, virtually all of the dynasts were bound in marriage. His daughter Phila married Krateros, and after his death, Demetrios Poliorketes, the son of Antigonos the One-Eyed. Her son by Demetrios was Antigonos Gonatas, who established the permanent Antigonid hold on Macedonia. Another daughter, Eurydike, married Ptolemy, only to be put aside and have her son by him (Ptolemy Keraunos) disinherited. Ptolemy Keraunos would assassinate Seleukos I Nikator. A third daughter, Nikaia, was married to Perdikkas and later to Lysimachos of Thrace.

- 4 Neither Seleukos nor Kassandros remained long at the court, certainly not after 322, as neither was caught up in the coming struggle between Antipatros and Perdikkas.
- 5 Kleopatra was the widow of Alexander of Epiros. She had offered her hand, probably at the suggestion of Olympias, to Leonnatos in 322, but he died that same year. Olympias was clearly the instigator of the offer to Perdikkas. After Perdikkas' death, Kleopatra lived quietly at Sardes in Asia Minor until 309. In that year, she quarreled with Antigonos the One-Eyed and tried to flee to Ptolemy. Antigonos captured and killed her.
- 6 Following the siege of Pydna, Kassandros put Olympias on trial for the murder of his brother and over 100 Macedonian nobles. She was found guilty and executed by the victims' relatives. Recent excavations at Pydna may have revealed the bodies of her victims. Later that year (316), Kassandros married a daughter of Philip II, Alexander's half sister Thessalonike.
- 7 The ancient sources are unanimous in stating that the murder was done in secret (probably in 311) and kept secret for an indefinite time (Diod. 19.105.2–3; Paus. 9.7.2; and Justin 15.2.2). That lasted at least until 310/9 based on the listing of Alexander IV's death on the *Marmor Parium* (Jacoby, *FGH* II B n. 239 F B 18, p. 1008). The burial at Vergina must have occurred shortly after the death became public knowledge. The identification of the remains in Tomb III as Alexander IV is speculation, as there is no inscription or literary source, but there really is no other candidate and the forensic evidence makes it likely.
- 8 He had previously been married to Kassandros' sister, Nikaia. Now Lysimachos married Ptolemy's daughter Arsinoe, whose mother, Berenike, had displaced Antipatros' daughter Eurydike and her children at Ptolemy's court. It was Arsinoe's goal to do the same for Nikaia's children.
- 9 Agathokles was Lysimachos' son by Nikaia. This was the culmination of the plotting by Arsinoe.
- 10 Pyrrhos of Epiros would normally have been a viable choice, but he was fighting the Romans in Italy in 279 and would not return until 275. As a result Pyrrhos was temporarily out of the picture. When he did return, he and Antigonos fought for three years up and down the length of Greece until Pyrrhos was killed in 272 at Argos.
- 11 An inscription with the formula "King Antigonos [III Doson] and the Macedonians decree. . . ." has been found at Delos [*Syll.*³ 518=IG XI.3, 1097], and four other inscriptions refer to the ruler as "king of the Macedonians" rather than "king of Macedonia." The exact meaning of this phrase has been debated in the secondary literature, but this is outside the scope of this chapter.
- 12 Philip had established a "hero" cult for his father, Amyntas III, and was "flirting" with divinity in the Festival of the Olympians at which he was murdered. Alexander, of course, had issued a decree at the Olympic Games in 324 requiring that he be worshipped as if he were a god. As I noted earlier, the Athenians had accorded "divine" honors to the Antigonids as "Savior Gods" after the liberation of Athens.
- 13 Quintus Cicero, the great orator's brother and Roman governor of the province of Macedonia, remarked in a letter to Marcus that the northern borders of the province were the very swords and spear points of his legionaries.

- 14 Most Hellenistic monarchs had nicknames, sometimes given to them whether they liked it or not, such as Demetrios Poliorketes, sometimes with totally obscure meanings as with Antigonos II Gonatas. The Ptolemies chose them consciously, and in this case, “Soter” referred to a traditional appellation for Zeus, “Savior.”
- 15 The Rosetta Stone, which provided the key to translate hieroglyphics, was a thanksgiving dedication honoring Ptolemy V Epiphanes for restoring a traditional Egyptian temple.
- 16 The key garrison at Elephantine at the First Cataract was Jewish.