CHAPTER 3

From Babylon to Cappadocia

Eumenes’ opportunity to rectify his difficulties came in the dissension which arose after Alexander’s death. Alexander had not provided for a successor, and is even supposed to have said when asked to whom he left his empire, “To the strongest” (Arr. Anab. 7. 26. 3; Diod. 17. 117. 4). Disputed successions and civil war were not unusual circumstances in Macedonian history and often followed a monarch’s death, given that Macedonian tradition made every member of the extended royal family a potential king (Carney 2000: 7–8). However, this particular succession crisis possessed a number of features not seen in the earlier struggles. In the first place, it would be the first not to take place in Macedonia, and in fact, those who would be most involved in the succession had not seen their homeland in over a decade. Moreover, the monarchy itself had changed profoundly since Alexander’s accession to the throne in 336. This was no longer the Kingdom of Macedonia, it was now the “Kingdom of Asia” (Fredricksmeyer 2000: 136–66; Anson 2013A: 151–79). Alexander had even planned for the capital of his vast empire to be Babylon (Str. 15. 3. 9–10). Alexander’s homeland in the Conqueror’s scheme was to be only a part, albeit a very important part, of this new empire.

Moreover, the succession process in Macedonian tradition could be described as informal at best. There was no regular procedure for either the selection or even the acknowledgment of a new monarch, Alexander’s chief companions, his officers, and in this succession, as it turned out his troops, were faced with determining not only the future ruler or even rulers, but, in this particular crisis, even the very nature of the monarchy. The new king previously had always come from the surviving members of the royal family, the Argead or Temenid clan (Anson 2013A: 13–14, 21–2; 2014A: 14). The Macedonian kings were by tradition descended from the Argive Temenus, thus the family was often referred to as Temenid (Hdt. 8.137–139, Thuc. 2.99.3). The ruling family was also called Argead, a term that apparently derives from a tribal name, “Argeas, the son of Macedon” (Stephanus of Byzantium, s.v. Argeou), but which also came to be associated with their claimed Argive origin. Beyond this basic requirement, there were certain elements that did appear previously with

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1 In general on disputed Macedonian successions, see Hammond and Griffith 1979: 115, 168–171, 180–4, 206, 208; Borza 1990: 133–5, 161–2, 177–9, 190–5, 200–1.
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some frequency. Most often sons followed fathers on the throne,² as was the case in the succession of Alexander the Great. In the position of presumptive heir, the son would have through his father’s influence formed bonds with powerful Macedonian allies and been associated with his father’s rule. Alexander at the age of sixteen had been made regent of Macedonia during his father’s absence on campaign (Plut. Alex. 9. 1), and had commanded the elite Macedonian Companion Cavalry at Chaeronea, where the Macedonian forces crushed the coalition that had been raised against them by the southern Greek city-states (Diod. 16. 86. 1–4; Plut. Alex. 9. 2–3). In the succession crisis that followed Alexander’s own death in Babylon, there was no clearly apparent heir. It would now appear to be up to Alexander’s chief hetairoi, referred to in our sources as the principes,³ or megistoi (Arr. Succ. 1a. 2), to determine the new king and the future of the empire.

The traditional hetairos relationship of service linked to camaraderie changed during the reigns of Philip II and especially during that of his son Alexander III, the Great. Alexander took on many of the trappings of the old Persian ruling dynasty and began to style himself as the “King of Asia,” as noted. The role of the Macedonian aristocrats had significantly diminished with the successes of first the father and then the son. It was this basic change in the traditional relationship along with the acquisition of so much that was Persian that in the last years of Alexander’s reign soured the relationship between king and his pezhetairoi so carefully nurtured by his father, not to mention that between himself and many of the Macedonian aristocrats.

Previously, as noted, at the death of the sitting monarch, if there was a prominent male member of the family available, and especially present, that individual most often succeeded to the throne. Again, in the case of Alexander

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² Herodotus (8. 139) lists the first seven kings of Macedonia, “From that Perdiccas Alexander was descended, being the son of Amyntas who was the son of Alcetas; Alcetas’ father was Aeropus, and his was Philip; Philip’s father was Argaeus, and his again was Perdiccas.” In the more historical period, Alexander I was the son of Amyntas I (Hdt. 5. 19. 1–2; 7. 173. 3; 8. 136. 1, 139. 1, 140a. 1; 9. 144. 1; Just. 7. 4. 1); Perdiccas II, son of Alexander I (Thuc. 1. 57. 2); Archelaus, son of Pausanias, son of Aeropus (with, perhaps, the intervening rule of Amyntas II [Arist. Pol. 131b3–15]; Diod. 14. 84. 6); Alexander II (Diod. 15. 60. 3; Just. 7. 4. 8; Aeschin. 2. 26); Perdiccas III (Diod. 16. 2. 4; Schol. on Aeschin. 2. 29), and Philip II (Diod. 16. 2. 1), sons of Amyntas I.

³ While Curtius uses the term also in a general sense as chief or principal (6. 6. 7, 9. 21, 10. 22; 9. 6. 4. 7. 3; 10. 7. 17), for commanders of army units (4. 13. 28; 7. 2. 33; 9. 7. 6), and with respect to non-Macedonians (3. 13. 13; 4. 11. 1. 14. 22; 7. 6. 11. 6; 9. 8. 16; 10. 1. 3), with respect to the crisis surrounding Alexander’s death he uses it consistently to refer to the principal hetairoi of the former king (Curt. 4. 10. 4; 5. 1. 42; 6. 6. 11. 39; 8. 1. 9. 18. 5. 9. 6. 2; 9. 3. 1; 10. 6. 1, 7. 8. 13. 10. 1).