

## **CP#20**

### **Hellenistic Kingship**

#### **Various sources**

##### **A. Aristotle in a letter to King Alexander**

Deal with the Greeks as a leader, with the barbarians as a master, taking care for the former as friends and kinsmen, while treating the latter as animals or plants.

##### **B. Hymn honoring Demetrios Poliorketes**

The greatest of the gods and those dearest to the city are present: Demeter and Demetrios are brought together here...She, the Holy mysteries of the Maiden have come to perform, and he, gracious as a god ought to be, and handsome, and joyful, is here also. All his friends in a circle and he in their midst, his friends just like stars and he the sun. ...”

##### **C. Divine Honors for Antiochus III and his Wife Laodike**

The great King Antiochus observes the attitude of his ancestors towards all Greeks, takes care for peace, supports many who tumbled, separately and in common, has set others at liberty instead of slavery, is convinced in general that kingship is established in order to bestow benefactions on mankind, has already previously relieved our city from slavery and has given liberty to her.

##### **D. King Eumenes II accepted the honors that the Ionian League decreed for him**

Eirenias and Archelaus met me at Delos and handed over a fine and generous decree, in which you began stating that I had chosen from the start the finest deeds and showed myself the common benefactor of the Greeks, that I had faced many great battles against the barbarians, displaying all zeal and care to make sure that the inhabitants of the Greek cities should always live in peace and enjoy the best state of affairs, receiving glory for the attendant danger and hardship, and choosing to stand firm in what concerned the League, in conformity with the policy of my father, and that I had demonstrated on many occasions my attitude in these matters, both in public and in private, being well disposed to each of the cities and helping each of them achieve many of the things that relate to distinction and glory, which through my actions demonstrated my love of glory and the gratitude of the League. And you passed a resolution, in order that you might always be seen to be repaying worthy honors to your benefactors, to crown me with a gold crown for valor, and to set up a golden statue in any place in Ionia I wished, and to proclaim these honors both in the competitions you celebrate and in those celebrated in each of the cities. I accept graciously the honors voted and having never failed so far as lies in my power to secure some glory and honor both to all in common and to each of the cities, I shall try now not to depart from this purpose. May events turn out as I wish, for in this way my actions themselves will demonstrate my policy more convincingly to you. And so that in future by celebrating a day in my name at the festival of the Panionia you might make the whole festival more distinguished, I shall assign to you sufficient sources of revenue which will enable you to celebrate my memory in a fitting way. As to the gold statue I shall make it myself, since I wish the favor not to cost anything to the League.

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##### E. Polybius 22.8.4-8.

For that the council should be in Eumenes' pay every year, and discuss public affairs swallowing a bait, so to speak, would evidently involve disgrace and hurt. Now it was Eumenes who was giving them money; next time it would be Prusias and after that Seleucus. "And," he said, "as the interests of democracies and kings are naturally opposed, and most debates and the most important deal with our differences with the kings, it is evident that perforce one or the other thing will happen: either the interests of the kings will take precedence over our own; or, if this is not so, we shall appear to everyone to be ungrateful in acting against our paymasters."

##### F. Athanaeus, *History*, 5.25

###### "The Great Spectacle and Procession of Ptolemy II Philadelphus, 285 BCE"

*When Ptolemy II Philadelphus became king of Egypt (285 B.C.), he celebrated his accession by a magnificent procession and festival at Alexandria. The following is only a part of the description of the very elaborate spectacle. The mere enumeration of all this pomp, power and treasure conveys a striking idea of the riches of the Ptolemaic kings, the splendor of their court, and the resources of their kingdom.*

First I will describe the tent prepared inside the citadel, apart from the place provided to receive the soldiers, artisans, and foreigners. For it was wonderfully beautiful, and worth talking of. Its size was such that it could accommodate one hundred and thirty couches [for banqueters] arranged in a circle. The roof was upborne on wooden pillars fifty cubits high of which four were arranged to look like palm trees. On the outside of the pillars ran a portico, adorned with a peristyle on three sides with a vaulted roof. Here it was the feasters could sit down. The interior of this was surrounded with scarlet curtains; in the middle of the space, however, were suspended strange hides of beasts, strange both for their variegated color, and their remarkable size. The part which surrounded this portico in the open air was shaded by myrtle trees and laurels, and other suitable shrubs.

As for the whole floor, it was strewn with every kind of flower; for Egypt, thanks to its mild climate, and the fondness of its people for gardening, produces abundantly, and all the year round, those flowers which are scarce in other lands, and then come only at special seasons. Roses, white lilies, and many another flower never lack in that country. Wherefore, although this entertainment took place in midwinter, there was a show of flowers that was quite incredible to the foreigners. For flowers of which one could not easily have found enough to make one chaplet in any other city, were here in vast abundance, to make chaplets for the guests . . . and were thickly strewn over the whole floor of the tent; so as really to give the appearance of a most divine meadow.

By the posts around the tent were placed animals carved in marble by the first artists, a full hundred in number; while in the spaces between the posts were hung pictures by the Sicyonian painters. And alternately with these were carefully selected images of every kind, and garments embroidered with gold and splendid cloaks, some having portraits of the kings of Egypt wrought upon them, and some stories from mythology. Above these were placed gold and silver shields alternately.

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And now to go on to the shows and processions exhibited; for they passed through the Stadium of the city. First of all there went the procession of Lucifer [the name given to the planet Venus] for the light began at the time when that star first appears. Then came processions in honor of the several gods. In the Dionysus procession, first of all went the Sileni to keep off the multitude, some clad in purple cloaks, and some in scarlet ones. These were followed by Satyrs, bearing gilded lamps made of ivy wood. After them came images of Victory, having golden wings, and they bore in their hands incense burners, six cubits in height, adorned with branches made of ivy wood and gold, and clad in tunics embroidered with figures of animals, and they themselves also had a deal of gold ornament about them. After them followed an altar six cubits high, a double altar, all covered with gilded ivy leaves, having a crown of vine leaves upon it all in gold. Next came boys in purple tunics, bearing frankincense and myrrh, and saffron on golden dishes. And then advanced forty Satyrs, crowned with golden ivy garlands; their bodies were painted some with purple, some with vermilion, and some with other colors. They wore each a golden crown, made to imitate vine leaves and ivy leaves. Presently also came Philiscus the Poet, who was a priest of Dionysus, and with him all the artisans employed in the service of that god; and following were the Delphian tripods as prizes to the trainers of the athletes, one for the trainer of the youths, nine cubits high, the other for the trainer of the men, twelve cubits.

The next was a four-wheeled wagon fourteen cubits high and eight cubits wide; it was drawn by one hundred and eighty men. On it was an image of Dionysus---ten cubits high. He was pouring libations from a golden goblet, and had a purple tunic reaching to his feet. . In front of him lay a Lacedaemonian goblet of gold, holding fifteen measures of wine, and a golden tripod, in which was a golden incense burner, and two golden bowls full of cassia and saffron; and a shade covered it round adorned with ivy and vine leaves, and all other kinds of greenery. To it were fastened chaplets and fillets, and ivy wands, drums, turbans, and actors' masks. After many other wagons came one twenty-five cubits long, and fifteen broad; and this was drawn by six hundred men. On this wagon was a sack, holding three thousand measures of wine, and consisting of leopards' skins sewn together. This sack allowed its liquor to escape, and it gradually flowed over the whole road.

*[An endless array of similar wonders followed; also a vast number of palace servants displaying the golden vessels of the king; twenty-four chariots drawn by four elephants each; the royal menagerie---twelve chariots drawn by antelopes, fifteen by buffaloes, eight by pairs of ostriches, eight by zebras; also many mules, camels, etc., and twenty-four lions.]*

After these came a procession of troops---both horsemen and footmen, all superbly armed and appointed. There were 57,600 infantry, and 23,200 cavalry. All these marched in the procession. . all in their appointed armor. . .

#### **Plutarch, *The Life of Demetrius***

Let us here record an example in the early life of Demetrius, showing his natural humane and kindly disposition. It was an adventure which passed betwixt him and Mithridates, the son of Ariobarzanes, who was about the same age with Demetrius, and lived with him, in attendance on Antigonus; and although nothing was said or could be said to his reproach, he fell under suspicion, in consequence of a dream which Antigonus had. Antigonus thought himself in a fair and spacious field, where he sowed golden seed, and saw presently a golden crop come up; of which, however, looking presently again, he saw nothing remain but the stubble, without the ears. And as he stood

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by in anger and vexation, he heard some voices saying Mithridates had cut the golden harvest and carried it off into Pontus. Antigonus, much discomposed with his dream, first bound his son, by an oath not to speak, and then related it to him, adding that he had resolved, in consequence, to lose no time in ridding himself of Mithridates, and making away with him. Demetrius was extremely distressed; and when the young man came, as usual, to pass his time with him, to keep his oath he forbore from saying a word, but, drawing him aside little by little from the company, as soon as they were by themselves, without opening his lips, with the point of his javelin he traced before him the words "Fly, Mithridates." Mithridates took the hint, and fled by night into Cappadocia, where Antigonus's dream about him was quickly brought to its due fulfillment; for he got possession of a large and fertile territory; and from him descended the line of the kings of Pontus, which, in the eighth generation, was reduced by the Romans. This may serve for a specimen of the early goodness and love of justice that was part of Demetrius's natural character.

But as in the elements of the world, Empedocles tells us, out of liking and dislike, there springs up contention and warfare, and all the more, the closer the contact, or the nearer the approach of the objects, even so the perpetual hostilities among the successors of Alexander were aggravated and inflamed, in particular cases, by juxtaposition of interests and of territories; as, for example, in the case of Antigonus and Ptolemy. News came to Antigonus that Ptolemy had crossed from Cyprus and invaded Syria, and was ravaging the country and reducing the cities. Remaining, therefore, himself in Phrygia, he sent Demetrius, now twenty-two years old, to make his first essay as sole commander in an important charge. He, whose youthful heat outran his experience, advancing against an adversary trained in Alexander's school, and practiced in many encounters, incurred a great defeat near the town of Gaza, in which eight thousand of his men were taken and five thousand killed. His own tent, also his money, and all his private effects and furniture, were captured. These, however, Ptolemy sent back, together with his friends, accompanying them with the humane and courteous message, that they were not fighting for anything else but honour and dominion. Demetrius accepted the gift praying only to the gods not to leave him long in Ptolemy's debt, but to let him have an early chance of doing the like to him. He took his disaster, also, with the temper, not of a boy defeated in his attempt, but of an old and long-tried general familiar with reverse of fortune; he busied himself in collecting his men, replenishing his magazines, watching the allegiance of the cities, and drilling his new recruits.

Antigonus received the news of the battle with the remark that Ptolemy had beaten boys and would now have to fight with men. But not to humble the spirit of his son, he acceded to his request, and left him to command on the next occasion. Not long after, Cilles, Ptolemy's lieutenant, with a powerful army, took the field, and looking upon Demetrius as already defeated by the previous battle, he had in his imagination driven him out of Syria before he saw him. But he quickly found himself deceived; for Demetrius came so unexpectedly upon him that he surprised both the general and his army, making him and seven thousand of the soldiers prisoners of war, and possessing himself of a large amount of treasure. But his joy in the victory was not so much for the prizes he should keep, as for those he could restore; and his thankfulness was less for the wealth and glory than for the means it gave him of requiting his enemy's former generosity. He did not, however, take it into his own hands, but wrote to his father. And on receiving leave to do as he liked, he sent

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back to Ptolemy Cilles and his friends, loaded with presents. This defeat drove Ptolemy out of Syria, and brought Antigonus from Calae to enjoy the victory and the sight of the son who had gained it.

Soon after, Demetrius was sent to bring the Nabathaeans into obedience. And here he got into a district without water, and incurred considerable danger, but by his resolute and composed demeanour he overawed the barbarians, and returned after receiving from them a large amount of booty and seven hundred camels. Not long after, Seleucus, whom Antigonus had formerly chased out of Babylon, but who had afterwards recovered his dominion by his own efforts and maintained himself in it, went with large forces on an expedition to reduce the tribes on the confines of India and the provinces near Mount Caucasus. And Demetrius, conjecturing that he had left Mesopotamia but sparsely guarded in his absence, suddenly passed the Euphrates with his army and made his way into Babylonia unexpectedly; when he succeeded in capturing one of the two citadels, out of which he expelled the garrison of Seleucus, and placed in it seven thousand men of his own. And after allowing his soldiers to enrich themselves with all the spoil they could carry with them out of the country, he retired to the sea, leaving Seleucus more securely master of his dominions than before, as he seemed by this conduct to abandon every claim to a country which he treated like an enemy's. However, by a rapid advance, he rescued Halicarnassus from Ptolemy, who was besieging it. The glory which this act obtained them inspired both the father and son with a wonderful desire for freeing Greece, which Cassander and Ptolemy had everywhere reduced to slavery. No nobler or more just war was undertaken by any of the kings; the wealth they had gained while humbling, with Greek assistance, the barbarians, being thus employed, for honor's sake and good repute, in helping the Greeks.

When the resolution was taken to begin their attempt with Athens, one of his friends told Antigonus, if they captured Athens, they must keep it safe in their own hands, as by this gangway they might step out from their ships into Greece when they pleased. But Antigonus would not hear of it; he did not want a better or a steadier gangway than people's good-will; and from Athens, the beacon of the world, the news of their conduct would soon be handed on to all the world's inhabitants. So Demetrius, with a sum of five thousand talents, and a fleet of two hundred and fifty ships, set sail for Athens, where Demetrius the Phalerian was governing the city for Cassander, with a garrison lodged in the port of Munychia. By good fortune and skilful management he appeared before Piraeus, on the twenty-sixth of Thargelion, before anything had been heard of him. Indeed, when his ships were seen, they were taken for Ptolemy's and preparations were commenced for receiving them; till at last, the generals discovering their mistake, hurried down, and all was alarm and confusion, and attempts to push forward preparations to oppose the landing of this hostile force. For Demetrius, having found the entrances of the port undefended, stood in directly, and was by this time safely inside, before the eyes of everybody, and made signals from his ship, requesting a peaceful hearing. And on leave being given, he caused a herald with a loud voice to make proclamation that he was come thither by the command of his father, with no other design than what he prayed the gods to prosper with success, to give the Athenians their liberty, to expel the garrison, and to restore the ancient laws and constitution of the country.