

Royal *epitropeia*

Remarks on Kingship and Guardianship in Macedonia and the Hellenistic Kingdoms

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ABSTRACT

The institution of the guardianship (epitropeia) of the infant or otherwise disabled king in Macedonia and the Hellenistic kingdoms has never been separately examined. Its description with the modern term «regency» only partly corresponds to its essence. Royal guardianship in those times presents, however, many interesting aspects pertaining to the persons exercising this function, their relation to the royal house or other social provenance, the way(s) of their selection, their own ambitions in this role and their eventual success in ascending the throne themselves. A careful study of some relevant cases may allow useful vistas into the whole problem, and, actually, the institution of Macedonian and Hellenistic kingship.

I. INTRODUCTION – TERMINOLOGICAL CLARIFICATION

Succession is perhaps the most delicate process in the preservation of a dynasty and a monarchic state. For it is very difficult to replace one of those persons (most often men) who have every interest, as long as they live, in presenting themselves as irreplaceable, unless they have again themselves prepared a convincing continuation of their rule by a member of their family or someone else. Dynastic power tolerates real vacuums as little as nature does. Therefore an able heir, so important for a private person, is imperative for the normal development of a monarchy. However, ideal conditions are often denied by realities: a king may die without having had the possibility of leaving behind a successor of his blood or of his choice, or one who has the ability necessary for the continuation of the state. Especially if a minor or a disabled successor is the only available solution, someone else has to assume the role of the real governor in a generally acceptable capacity, usually as guardian of the legitimate and, at least temporarily, nominal king. This situation has repeatedly occurred also in classical antiquity and led to the constitutional expedient of what we call today «regency/ régence/ Regentschaf» etc.

However, one should note from the beginning that the significance of the modern term «regent» – «the one who acts as king (<regens)» – cannot be equated with that of the corresponding ancient Greek term and its meaning as we know it especially from the best attested example of Macedonian and Hellenistic monarchy.¹ There the standard term for the regent is *epitropos*, which lays the emphasis on the temporary role of the real holder of royal power as guardian of the nominal king. In employing this term, ancient Greek monarchy in the wider sense clearly borrowed an institution from private relations and projected it into the context of a monarchy. Not the real fact of acting as a king, but the position of taking care of whoever formally sits on the throne and is regarded as the ruler of the state, was the programmatic essence of that sort of «regent». Therefore, also in respect to royalty the modern term «guardian» is much nearer to both form and essence of the ancient Greek *epitropos*.

Of course, a crucial factor in this perception of «regency» was the fundamental idea of the dynastic «oikos», the monarchic house, from which the line of rulers came. The continuation of the ruling house imposed solutions of

¹ Cf. HAMMOND & WALBANK 1988, 99: «The technical term for guardian was ἐπίτροπος. There was no term in Greek for our word ‘regent’». There have been few special examinations of the royal *epitropos* in Macedonia and the Hellenistic world. Apart from the very old and concise but still useful remarks of BRECCIA 1903, 57-60, 74, see esp. HATZOPOULOS 1986 and 1996, I, 276-279, 303-312; LE BOHEC 1993, 113-121 (with the tables, *ibid.* 150-151); ANSON 2009; MEEUS 2009, esp. 296-302.

safety similar to those practised in the purely private sphere, which was highlighted by the use of the same term for this royal institution.

Another preliminary point of importance is the degree of continuity between Macedonian and Hellenistic kingship as far as the succession of rulers and its forms are concerned. Despite the development of Macedonian royalty towards absolute forms of power since Alexander (after the model of the Persian king), at the Hellenistic courts there seems to be no significant deviation from the old Macedonian practice by which such problems of rule were solved, apart from examples of collegial guardianship, to which we shall come back later. The form of collegial guardianship, however, is also easily retraceable inside Greek familial practice (perhaps the best-known case is that of the infant Demosthenes' three guardians, arranged as such by his father while still alive).² The title itself, *epitropos*, is used continuously in our sources from the case of Aeropos, guardian of Archelaos' infant son in Macedonia of 400 BCE (see below), to the two warring guardians of Antiochos V Eupator at the Seleucid court in 166/5 BCE, Lysias and Philippos,³ and beyond.⁴

II. RELATION OF KINGSHIP AND GUARDIANSHIP IN MACEDONIAN PRACTICE AND THEORY

A.

After what has already been said, it is understandable that the *epitropos* of the infant king was chiefly recruited from within the royal house itself; that is, among the nearest relatives of the nominal king. The earliest such known case in the Macedonian house was probably that of the already mentioned

² Dem., *Against Aphobos*, 27.4-7; *Against Onetor*, 30.6. Plut. *Dem.* 4. Cf. CARLIER 1990, 40-49.

³ Josephus, *AJ* 12.9.2 (360-361), 7 (386); *Macc.* I, 6.13-15, 55-57; II, 9.28-29, 11.1; Just. 34.3.5. Cf. NIESE 1903, 219, 242; BIKERMAN 1938, 42 (n. 8); SAVALLI-LESTRADE 1998, nos. 56, 63. Very interesting in this later case is the basis of the two rival epitropal claims: Lysias seems to have acted as curator of the young successor already during the absence of the king (Antiochos IV) on his last expedition, while Philippos was entrusted with the guardianship of the successor by the dying king during the expedition itself. As proof of his new position, Philippos is reported to have received at the deathbed of the king his royal insignia (diadem, dress and seal) to bring them to his son and successor whose care he officially undertook. It is noteworthy that the guardian who was in actual possession of the young successor, and officially proclaimed him as new king (with the title of Eupator), that is Lysias, was the final winner.

⁴ One of the famous later cases (also because of Pompeius' end) is that of Potheinos and Achilles at Alexandria, who acted as guardians of the still too young Ptolemy XIII in the period 51-48 BCE. Especially Potheinos' real position of power is clearly expressed in Plut. *Pomp.* 77: ὁ...πάντα διέπων τὰ πράγματα Ποθεινός... Cf. HUSS 2001, 707, and GEHRKE 2005, 113 (cited also below on Ptolemaic arrangements of rule after Epiphanes' period).

Aeropos: after Archelaos' death during a royal hunt (400/399 BCE) he acted first as *epitropos* of the latter's infant son Orestes, though he later had Orestes executed and assumed the royal power himself, having ruled in all for six years.⁵ As Hammond-Griffith have reasonably concluded,⁶ Aeropos seems to have belonged to the ruling house of the Argeads, and was possibly a half-brother of the deceased Archelaos by another mother. Here the position of the guardian was simply the starting-point for gaining the royal title, without any known reactions from any side.

Another such early case⁷ where the infant age of the lawful successors caused the solution of guardianship to be invoked, after complicated family vicissitudes and arrangements, occurred after the death of Amyntas III in 370 BCE. The eldest son of the dead king, Alexander II, already of adult age, succeeded his father but was assassinated after two years by a shrewd probable relative (of unknown degree), Ptolemy of Aloros (Alorites), who had managed to gain the love of Eurydike, the queen mother, and her collaboration in his plans.⁸ Officially, he married Eurydike and undertook in 368 BCE the role of *epitropos* to the two remaining infant sons of Amyntas III, Perdikkas (the later Perdikkas III) and Philip (the later Philip II). Whether Ptolemy Alorites also aspired to the royal title we cannot know with certainty, although it looks very likely.⁹ Anyway, the elder of the two brothers under his guardianship, Perdikk-

⁵ Diod. 18.37.6: Κατὰ δὲ τὴν Μακεδονίαν Ἀρχέλαος ὁ βασιλεὺς ἐν τινι κυνηγίῳ πληγῆς ἀκουσίως ὑπὸ Κρατεροῦ τοῦ ἐρωμένου τὸν βίον μετήλλαξε... τὴν δ' ἀρχὴν διεδέξατο Ὀρέστης παῖς ὢν, ὃν ἀνελῶν Ἀέροπος ἐπίτροπος ὢν κατέσχε τὴν βασιλείαν ἔτη ἕξ. Cf. Sync. Chr. p. 500 D.

⁶ HAMMOND & GRIFFITH 1979, 168-170. Cf. further HATZOPOULOS 1986, 283.

⁷ Whether Archelaos (413-399 BCE) initially also acted, even very shortly, as an *epitropos* of his half-brother and lawful heir of Perdikkas II (Alketas or Meropos according to schol. Ael. Arist., *Pros Platona hyper ton tessaron*, 46.120, 2) before murdering him, does not explicitly emerge from our sources. The chronologically nearest tradition in Plat. *Gorg.* 471 C seems rather to imply that Archelaos has decided from the beginning not to play such a role. On this hypothetical guardianship of Archelaos see HATZOPOULOS 1986, 284-285 (with the earlier lit.).

⁸ On Ptolemy Alorites see Aesch. 2.29: περὶ Πτολεμαίου, ὃς ἦν ἐπίτροπος καθεστηκὸς τῶν πραγμάτων, ὡς ἀχάριστον καὶ δεινὸν ἔργον διεπράξατο. More details in the ancient schol. ad loc.: Πτολεμαίου] οὗτος ἦν ὁ ἐπικαλούμενος Ἀλωρίτης, ὃς ἀνελῶν Ἀλέξανδρον τὸν Ἀμύντου, συλλαβομένης αὐτῷ πρὸς τοῦτο Εὐρυδίκης τῆς μητρὸς Ἀλεξάνδρου, καὶ γήμας τὴν Εὐρυδίκην καὶ ἐπιτροπεύσας Περγδίκκου καὶ Φιλίππου παίδων ὄντων ἐβασίλευσεν ἔτη ε', καὶ ἀποθνήσκει ἀναίρεθεῖς, Περγδίκκου αὐτοῦ τὴν ἐπιβουλήν συστήσαντος (Vat.Laur. Bgim.). ὃς ἦν ἐπίτροπος] τῶν περὶ Φιλίππων ἔτι μικρῶν ὄντων (Vat.Laur.Fgm.). On Diodorus' testimony see next note. Cf. HAMMOND & GRIFFITH 1979, 182-184; HATZOPOULOS 1986, 281-282.

⁹ This is rendered at least very probable by the form in which his rule is presented in Diod. 15.71.1: Πτολεμαῖος ὁ Ἀλωρίτης ἐδολοφόνησεν Ἀλέξανδρον, καὶ ἐβασίλευσε τῆς Μακεδονίας ἔτη τρία; 77.5: κατὰ τὴν Μακεδονίαν Πτολεμαῖος μὲν ὁ Ἀλωρίτης ἐδολοφονήθη ὑπὸ [τάδε]λφου] Περγδίκα, βασιλεύσας ἔτη τρία...; cf. also Eusebius, *Chron.* I, coll. 227, 229 Schoene. However, his real position is clearly reflected in Aeschines' contemporary reference to him (see above), and the

kas, was finally (after *c.* three years) able to dispose of him in time and ascend the throne himself. In Alorites' case the post of guardian of the infant king or kings was successfully combined with a marital connection to the current royal family. However, this latter fact itself, and the existence of no fewer than two minor kings and aspirants to real royal position under his own official guardianship, may have retarded any further ambitions on the part of Alorites and, in the end, allowed the proper reestablishment of lawful succession. Also in this case, we have no indication of an intervention by an external party in this family game of power. Apparently, the efficiency of any real incumbent of royal power in an epitropal role, whether initial or not, silenced any reactions in a state like the early Macedonian kingdom, which was regularly suffering foreign invasions and instability.

It is instructive that this basic remark also holds true in two further Macedonian cases where the implementation of guardianship remained bloodless but equally efficient and a preparation for the royal title itself: the relevant and illustrious examples are here Philip II, Alexander the Great's father, and, during the Hellenistic period, Antigonos III Doson. In the first case, Philip succeeded his brother Perdikkas III (after his unexpected death in war) in 359 BCE, initially as *epitropos* of the latter's infant son Amyntas (that is, as *tutor pupilli*), according to the clear testimony of Justinus (7.5.9-10) which we have no reason to reject.¹⁰ As this source further (*ib.*) relates, external perils and Philip's ability persuaded the Macedonians, somewhat later, to make him king. Philip subsequently ruled until his assassination (for other reasons) in 336 BCE without ever having had to dispose of his nephew Amyntas, even after the latter had grown up, or ever having seen his new position contested because of that relative's existence. Only Alexander later, after he himself succeeded his father Philip, felt it necessary to get rid of that cousin and other members of the royal house who might eventually present rival ambitions.¹¹

absence of any coinage in his name. Cf. already GEYER 1930, 133-134, and recently ANSON 2009, 281-283.

¹⁰ Thus also HATZOPOULOS 1986, 280, 286-287. Justin's testimony and Philip's regency have been unconvincingly contested by HAMMOND & GRIFFITH 1979, 208-209, 702-704. Anson's 2009 view that a person from the clan of the Argeads could be simultaneously accepted as *both* guardian and king, while someone of different descent (like Ptolemy Alorites, cf. above) would only be a «true regent» in Macedonia cannot carry conviction. It constitutes, I think, an interestingly but desperately formalistic attempt to solve the problem of the Macedonian *epitropeia* = «regency» (in modern terminology). Especially the further case of Antigonos Doson (see below), whose position developed from guardianship to the acquisition of kingship for himself, seems to me to prove this truth beyond doubt. It is also characteristic that MEEUS 2009 accepts Anson's basic interpretation but has then to differentiate himself in various points.

¹¹ Arrian, *FGrHist* 156 F 9.22. Cf. Curtius 6.9.17; 10.24.

An important detail in Philip's development from the position of *epitropos* to that of formal and official king was the intervention of the Macedonian people: *compulsus a populo regnum suscepit* is the formulation of Justin. It would be futile here to reopen the complicated problem of the relations between people and king in ancient Macedonia.¹² However, some sort of expression of will on the part of the Macedonian people (or the Macedonian aristocracy as their traditional and powerful representatives, cf. Doson's case below!) may be safely assumed. What is important in our context is the firm wish of the Macedonians, however represented, finally to invest their royal guardian with full royal power, setting customary etiquette aside. Moreover, this expression of popular feeling apparently also secured Philip's further rule from the appearance of any really dangerous pretender. That factor and his complete success as a king guaranteed his rule to the end.

In the case of Antigonos Doson we have a variant of the same situation. After the death of Demetrios II a royal uncle undertakes again the role of *epitropos* to the infant successor (the later Philip V). After he has proved worthy of kingship by valiantly defending the national interest, he is also subsequently recognized as king himself. At three points the type of the whole development differs from Philip II's case just examined. According to Plutarch (*Aem.* 8.2-3) Doson's successive investiture, first as *epitropos* of the infant successor and then as king in his own right, is implemented by the Macedonian nobles (οἱ πρῶτοι Μακεδόνων), who fear a power vacuum in the state (δείσαντες... τὴν ἀναρχίαν) in critical times. Here the "populus" in Philip II's case is most probably, and valuably, specified. The second point is that a marital connection with the current dynastic line strengthens the position of the *epitropos* who then becomes king: the widow of Demetrios II, Phthia,¹³ marries Doson, again as a part of the whole settlement of the succession by the nobility. A third point, often neglected but crucial, is that this «interim king» suffers a natural death in due course *c.* eight years later, and the adult (eighteen years old) Philip V ascends the throne without difficulties. We simply cannot know what would have happened if Doson had lived longer. It is, however, very unlikely that he would have simply laid down the sceptre himself for the sake of a nephew of adult age, given his own spectacular royal record of success.

Thus, in all these cases analysed, royal efficiency appears as a fully sufficient qualification to ascend the throne for a member of the wider royal family,

¹² The basic positions have been clearly argued esp. by ERRINGTON 1978 and HATZOPOULOS 1996, I, 261ff.

¹³ On the problem of her personality (and her relation to Chryseis, also reported as wife of Doson) cf. LE BOHEC 1993, 143-149.

from the stepping-stone of an initial epitropal function, though this progression could be assisted by some further advantages (marriage into the dynasty, consent of the people/nobility). One may conclude in general that an able guardian of the infant successor and the state was often finally and officially accepted as king himself.

B.

We may now detect, after a careful scrutiny of our sources, that this «constitutional/institutional reality» in Macedonia seems to have corresponded to elements of the understanding of kingship and its intrinsic connection with guardianship in Macedonian perception. An important relevant testimony is put by our sources into the mouth of no less experienced a person than Alexander the Great himself. As Arrian (7.9.9) reports, Alexander described his royal office in the following way while addressing his mutinous troops at Opis (324 BCE):

After these toils [that is, the whole Asiatic expedition] what remains to me but this purple and this diadem? I possess nothing privately nor could anyone point to treasures of mine but the possessions belonging to you or safeguarded for your sake (ὄσα ἔνεκα ὑμῶν φυλάττεται). For there is no purpose to keep all this for myself as I share the same food with you and I take the same sleep. Nonetheless, I think that the food of the luxurious among you differs from mine, and I am aware that my vigilant protection saves your sleep.

Despite the obvious rhetorical tendentiousness of these phrases there is here a precious piece of content that illuminates Macedonian royal ideology. In particular, the idea that state property is not owned by, but entrusted to, the king as its administrator actually attributes to his position the significance of a guardianship on behalf of the people.¹⁴ This idea is then completed by that of protecting the general welfare and safety of his subjects.

The same idea was later dramatically emphasized (and exaggerated) in the famous description of royalty as “glorious servitude” (Ael. *VH* 2.20) by Antigonos II Gonatas. Gonatas appears to have tried thus to admonish his son whose behavior to their subjects tended to be abusive. The real, that is, the successful king should demonstrate the understanding of his role as servant of the state, like that of a slave-steward of his master’s property (not his own!).

¹⁴ The same idea is echoed also in Curtius 10.6.23: «Quin igitur ad diripiendos thesauros discurritis? *Harum enim opum regiarum utique populus est heres*» (from Meleagros’ speech during the discussions after Alexander’s death at Babylon, see below).

It is equally noteworthy that similar strands of thought are then found in the entries on *basileia* in the much later lexicon of Suda (approximately 10th cent. AD) where various older material has been collected.¹⁵ Two of these entries touch on the questions raised here. In the first (the third in Suda) we find the following views:

Kingship is a piece of public property (κτῆμα τῶν κοινῶν), and not the public goods the property of royalty. Therefore one should hate compulsory and abusive demands of payment [understand: by a king] as a sort of tyrannical excesses, while one should honour reasonable and humane contributions asked for as a sort of tutelage (ὄσπερ κηδεμονίαν).

If this entry unmistakably recognizes traits of a guardianship in a worthy kingship, the second entry (also in Suda) very interestingly disengages kingship from natural descent and dynastic pedigrees altogether:

Neither nature nor right (δίκαιον) invests men with kingship, but able military leadership and prudent government of the state. Such was the case with Philip [that is, Philip Arrhidaios] and Alexander's Successors. For the son by nature [that is Arrhidaios as son of Philip II] was not helped at all by his parentage because of his mental weakness, while those wholly unrelated [understand: to the Argeads] became nevertheless kings of almost the whole world.

The context makes clear, as noted long ago, that these passages are mainly concerned with the facts of early Hellenistic kingship. However, the basic idea that kingship is linked with military and governing skill more than with nature and, especially, «right» does not need to postdate Alexander. Furthermore, if one sees the two entries in connection with each other, they may describe, and also be inspired by, that line of examples where dynastic right ceded to the royal capability of a man who was initially «just» an *epitropos* of a king and kingdom but finally proved to deserve the purple himself. In other words, if the ability to take proper care of nominal ruler and state clearly existed, the basic conditions for advancement to royal status were fulfilled. It was considerably easier for an *epitropos* to develop into a king, as the ideal of the king naturally included the fundamental quality of a guardian of the state. In the light of these remarks one can better perceive how in Macedonian history men who were initially *epitropoi*, if they possessed some direct or indirect connection with the current royal dynasty, could not only aspire to royalty but also be accepted relatively easily as kings. The talent of the incumbents and the difficulties of the state appear early as decisive factors in that process.

¹⁵ On the background and historical role of Hellenistic treatises on *basileia* in detail cf. HAAKE 2003 (on the entry in Suda: 92 with n. 132).

Of course, the centuries after Alexander also brought changes with regard to royal guardianship, especially the growth of ambition on the part of persons of the royal entourage and the phenomenon of collective guardianship of the king. Two more or less characteristic examples of these further developments will now be focused upon as concisely as possible.

III.1. ALEXANDER'S SUCCESSION

Alexander's succession has often, and rightly, been treated as an exceptional situation. However, even there the value and strength of some recurring traits of Macedonian and of the gradually emerging Hellenistic kingship, especially in regard to royal guardianship, should not be overlooked. The main facts as given in our (partly dissenting) sources may first be recalled: Alexander's lawful successors available were (a) his queen's, Roxane's, baby (not yet born while the main arrangements of rule were being put in place after the king's death!) and (b) his apparently mentally disabled half-brother Arrhidaios. The dying Alexander had left his signet ring, an emblem of royal administration, to Perdikkas, who had succeeded Hephaistion as chiliarch, already a very distinguished Achaemenid royal post beside that of king. It was thus clear that Perdikkas would be the main claimant for the guardianship of Alexander's son as he proved to be. However, the possible ambitions of such a royal steward were equally clear. Therefore Perdikkas' opponents, who relied mainly on the support of the Macedonian infantry (as opposed to the cavalry of the *hetairoi*, supporting his claim), insisted on a nominal double kingship including Arrhidaios (as Philippos Arrhidaios) and Alexander's son. The former was then finally placed under a separate, practical guardianship by Krateros, another noble Macedonian. It seems characteristic, though, that neither Perdikkas nor Krateros is expressly mentioned in our main sources on the post-Alexander period as *epitropos* of Alexander IV or Philip III Arrhidaios, neither is anyone else.¹⁶ Perdikkas is called *epimeletes tes basileias* in Diodoros, while his official function remained that of chiliarch, which, as Arrian,¹⁷ writing in the

¹⁶ Perdikkas is, however, mentioned as ἐπίτροπος καὶ ἐπιμελητὴς τῶν βασιλικῶν πραγμάτων in the Heidelberger Epitome (*FGrHist* 155 F 1.2) and as τῆς ὑπὸ Ἀλεξάνδρῳ γενομένης γῆς ἐπιτροπεύων (and Antipatros as his successor in this capacity) in App. *Mithr.* 8. However, in the first case the juxtaposition of the terms *epitropos* and *epimeletes* suggests that they had to complement the sense of each other (cf. MEEUS 2009, 300) – thus one cannot know which of them might have been an original and official title, while in both these sources the standard imperial Roman use of ἐπίτροπος/ἐπιτροπεύω to denote the office of a *procurator* (*Augusti*) may have also influenced the choice of vocabulary (cf. MASON 1974, s.vv. ἐπιτροπεύω, -ή, -ος).

¹⁷ *FGrHist* 156 F 1, 3: ... ἐφ' ᾧ...εἶναι... Κρατερόν δὲ προστάτην τῆς Ἀρριδαίου βασιλείας,

Roman imperial period, has to explain, meant «the guardianship of the whole kingdom» (ἐπιτροπή τῆς ξυμπάσης βασιλείας), to be perceived then as a de facto role.¹⁸ Only the even later writer Justinus (13.2.14) mentions expressly but collectively Perdikkas and Krateros, but also Leonnatos and Antipatros, as *tutores* of the expected son of Alexander. Krateros himself was not called *epitropos* of Arrhidaios in the Greek sources, most probably because it made no sense (or would be tactless) to install a guardian over an adult king. Therefore he appears in Arrian (*loc. cit.*) as *prostates* (“protector, chief administrator”) of Arrhidaios’ kingship. It is understandable that this fine use of titles to describe the result of a highly difficult negotiation and division of powers is partly clouded in the sources of much later date. Nonetheless, the fact emerges clearly that an experiment in collegial guardianship was made, corresponding to the form of a post-Alexander double kingship, imposed partly by the intervention of the army.¹⁹

The situation changed considerably after Krateros’ death in 321, which in practice left the way even more open to Perdikkas’ ambitions. The latter appears to have been descended from a noble Macedonian family with royal links, as Curtius reports (10.7.8). The guardian decided then to strengthen these links significantly by attempting to win the hand of Alexander’s sister Kleopatra. If Perdikkas had managed to effect such a marriage, he would have entered the royal dynasty as a retroactive son-in-law and gained a weighty advantage over his rivals.²⁰ His efforts in this direction were soon detected, however, and contributed to his enemies’ uniting against him and ending his grander plans.

The vacuum left by Alexander was at the same time too big to be filled by one person and too small to house the parallel ambitions of several candidates for guardianship, already aspiring to royal positions for themselves. Under such conditions any solution in the form of collective guardianship, rendered even more difficult by the double kingship that had been arranged, was doomed to fail, as was Perdikkas’ attempt to free himself from such limitations. The formally discreet guardian remained here an abortive king.

Περδίκκων δὲ χιλιάρχῳ χιλιάρχιας ἣς ἦρχεν Ἡφαιστίων (τὸ δὲ ἦν ἐπιτροπή τῆς ξυμπάσης βασιλείας).

¹⁸ On Perdikkas’ chiliarchy in detail: MEEUS 2009, 302-310 (with previous lit.). His view, however, that Arrian’s testimony (see above) on the sense of Perdikkas’ *chiliarchia* is due to a misconception of the epitomizing Photius does not convince. Already the previous connection of the post with Hephaisition, its previous incumbent, must have added a special weight to its significance.

¹⁹ Cf. ERRINGTON 1978; HAMMOND & WALBANK 1988, 98-107; RATHMANN 2005, esp. 26-32. In these studies the main previous bibliography is cited.

²⁰ RATHMANN 2005, 62-64 tends to underscore this intended marriage in his effort to sketch a policy of Perdikkas which would have been more loyal to the dynasty of Alexander.

III.2. THE GUARDIANS OF PTOLEMY V EPIPHANES

The setting of a later situation where the death of a king offered the occasion for new experiments in collegial guardianship of an infant successor is the kingdom of the Ptolemies at the close of the third century BCE, after the dynasty had been long structured. The episode in question occurred after Ptolemy IV Philopator's death (204 BCE). Thanks to the extensive excerpts from the relevant chapters of Polybios that are preserved,²¹ we are able to learn much more about this than about almost any other procedure of royal succession and guardianship in Hellenistic history, although crucial details are again missing. However, what actually seems to have happened is that, initially, two of the most influential ministers and *philoï* of Philopator, Sosibios the Elder and Agathokles, were able after the king's death to eliminate his widow Arsinoe III, a possible obstacle in their plans. Some time later, they announced the death of the royal couple, presented the infant new king, and invested him solemnly with the diadem, in a typical "proclamation of royal enthronement" (*anadeixis*),²² during a carefully organized assembly of the palace guards and the commanders of royal infantry and cavalry at the court. Simultaneously, the same ministers read there a testament of Philopator (fabricated, according to Polybios) which installed them both as *epitropoi* of Ptolemy V. The fellow conspirators were thus advanced to the role of royal guardians in front of a supposedly representative conference of the kingdom's military elite. The more experienced of the two in administrative respects, "a shrewd and enduring gadget (of state)", as Polybios poisonously calls him,²³ was Sosibios. He seems to have died soon afterwards, though from what cause is unknown, so that Agathokles was left to rule the state alone on behalf of the royal child. He then took care to send away from Alexandria most of the other important personalities of court and state, among them the experienced and widely respected military commander Tlepolemos, entrusted now with the governorship of the district of Pelousion. Tlepolemos, remarks Polybios (15.25.27), hoped first that some sort of collegial tutorship of the king would be installed, taking on the form of some kind of council of state (ὑπάρξειν τι συνέδριον ὃ τὴν τε τοῦ παιδὸς ἐπιτροπείαν ἔξει καὶ τὴν τῶν ὄλων προστασίαν), obviously with his own participation. However, Agathokles worked more and more towards a complete control of the state by him and his family, and thus gradually

²¹ Pol. 15.25-34; 16.21-22.

²² Still fundamental on this ceremony at Hellenistic courts BIKERMAN 1937.

²³ Pol. 15.25.1: Σωσίβιος ὁ ψευδεπίτροπος Πτολεμαίου ἐδόκει γεγονέναι σκευὸς ἀγχίνου καὶ πολυχρόνιον, ἔτι δὲ κακοποιὸν ἐν βασιλείᾳ.

concentrated against himself the resentments of various people in the capital and beyond it. Increasingly, it was realized that the kingdom was being ruled not by a collegial guardianship but by a sort of family mafia (with important female members including Agathokles' sister Agathokleia, an ex-courtesan of Philopator, and her equally ill-reputed mother Oinante). Tlepolemos was clearly the unifying figure among the opposition to Agathokles' regime, so that the latter, when he felt he was losing the plot, had to try a palace assembly again, inviting to it the Macedonians at the court: he obviously hoped to attain at that meeting a condemnation of the actions of Tlepolemos (who was preparing to invade the capital) and a confirmation of his own actions as sole guardian of king and state. The new show resulted in a collapse of his case, as those assembled already understood the ideological and practical weakness of Agathokles' present position. His arguments and testimonies supposedly proving Tlepolemos' ambitious schemes, that is, his imminent claim to the diadem and royal cult for himself (Pol. 15.26.5-7), were so evidently propagandistic that they increased the antipathy towards Agathokles' family and finally contributed to the outbreak of a real revolt in Alexandria, during which the guardian, his family and many of his followers met a cruel death.

An important role in this revolt was played by Sosibios the Younger (son of the previous co-guardian of the king), who managed, at the height of the uprising, to elicit from the terrified child-king his consent "to deliver to the people those who had wronged him or his mother (that is, Arsinoe III)".²⁴ Having thus received *carte blanche* to instigate a reign of terror against Agathokles and his party, Sosibios is reported to have also taken the little king into his house and his personal custody. It is no surprise, then, to find that, in the settlement following Agathokles' overthrow, Sosibios turns up as a key collaborator of the effective victor Tlepolemos, in a new type of collective guardianship over Epiphanes. Tlepolemos now had, from the beginning, the indubitable main role, as the affairs of state (as well as the crucial sectors of army and finances) were in his hands; but Sosibios was entrusted with the king's seal, with his personal care, and most probably also with certain aspects of the diplomatic relations of the kingdom (Pol. 16.22.2).²⁵ Tlepolemos apparently tried to realize a sort of collaborative government programme, for the absence of which he had presumably once become alienated from Agathokles. He is depicted by Polybios (16.21), however, as a militarily talented man who understood

²⁴ Pol. 15.32.7-8: ...ἐπόθετο (*scil.* Sosibios the Younger) τοῦ βασιλέως εἰ παραδώσει τοῖς πολλοῖς τοὺς εἰς αὐτὸν ἢ τὴν μητέρα τι πεπλημμεληκότας. τοῦ δὲ κατανεύσαντος.

²⁵ His functions certainly exceeded those of a «chamberlain», the Macedonian court official known as ὁ ἐπὶ τῆς θεραπειᾶς (as once suggested by CORRADI 1929, 298 and still pondered by WALBANK 1967, 526-527). On his eventual mention on Ptolemaic coins see HUSS 2001, 502¹.

little of politics and diplomacy, whereas Sosibios represented an old political family with long experience of intrigues. Its next offshoot, Sosibios II's son Ptolemaios, finally emerged as the principal critic of Tlepolemos at court. The main criticism against the latter was that he was handling state affairs not as a guardian but as an heir; in other words, he believed that he owned what he had undertaken to care for and administer. The reaction of the disputed guardian, interestingly, was seen only after his opponents held a sort of council at court to discuss his policy. He himself then convened the (proper) synedrion (Pol. 16.22.10: τὸ συνέδριον), apparently the official state council of principal officials under his presidency, at which he accused Sosibios with reference to his machinations and took away from him the seal and body of the king. Of course, there is no reason to think that Tlepolemos was not already confident of the stance of the members of the synedrion towards him. However, once again, a re-legitimization of the acting guardian in front of a selective miniature of public opinion was thought necessary, and this time it worked to his benefit.

We do not know how Tlepolemos's *epitropeia* ended; but he obviously survived it, as he had a subsequent career in his home city of Xanthos in Lycia.²⁶ However, as the king was still too young, a third phase of *epitropeia* began, at the head of which we meet again one of the protagonists of the rebellion against Agathokles, Aristomenes the Akarnanian. A sensible and timely side-changer, he had acted on the earlier occasion as a person of contact between the rebels and his previous patron Agathokles; in this capacity he finally communicated to the latter their demand that the king be delivered to them,²⁷ which took place and sealed the fallen regent's end. On the later occasion, Aristomenes clearly had supreme power in the name of the king;²⁸ but he seems also – like Tlepolemos – to have tried to govern with at least some pretence of collegiality, often convening the royal council under his presidency: this emerges at least from his skillful handling of Skopas' trial and condemnation.²⁹ The new (and strange) element was now that the almost adult king himself participated in the sessions of the council until he was officially declared to have come of age during his *anakleteria* of 197/6 BCE.³⁰

²⁶ Sources and bibliography on this later phase of his career cited in BURASELIS 2010, 426-429.

²⁷ Pol. 15.31.6, 10-12.

²⁸ Pol. 15.31.7: ...γενόμενος κύριος τῶν ὅλων πραγμάτων, κάλλιστα καὶ σεμνότατα δοκεῖ προστῆναι τοῦ τε βασιλέως καὶ τῆς βασιλείας. The fact that he is not expressly described as *epitropos* of the king may be due to the fact that the king was officially regarded as a «half-adult» and he needed no formal guardian but a formal “prostates”, a “chief caretaker” of the kingdom (cf. Arrhidaios' case above).

²⁹ Pol. 18.53.1-54.6.

³⁰ Cf. HUSS 2001, 504ff.

In all, the kaleidoscope of Epiphanes' guardians had shown again how difficult, and often impossible, it was to combine administrative talent, the support of the whole court and the principal officials as representatives of a wider «public opinion», and loyalty to the royal house in undertaking such duties. The temptation to play or even become king was (or was regularly thought to be!) too great, although in this series of guardianships we see no attempt to marry into the ruling dynasty in order to replace the king-to-be. On the other hand, the expedient of collegial guardianship was tried in more than form but it mainly worked as a collaboration between the guardian and a council of state (even if the recruitment of the latter may have been partly in his hands).³¹

IV. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Guardianship is in the end a very personal relationship, depending on good faith, and its eventual absence, towards one dead person and possibly not one but many more living persons. The greater the goods to be guarded, the bigger the temptations and the perils accompanying it. Therefore it is no surprise that the royal guardian could often think of or even achieve his advancement to the kingship. This was aided by useful methods of strengthening a guardian's relationship to the dynasty whose continuation he was supposed to guarantee, but also by existing notions of how kingship and guardianship were intimately related (as analysed above). The experiments in collegial guardianship that we have been able to study here, seem to have ultimately worked not so much as suitable methods for the transmission of power, but as mutual control by the guardians *and* potential rulers-to-be. However, the institution of royal guardianship, in the last analysis, often proved to be a solution not only for lawful heirs and ambitious guardians, depending on their final ability and loyalty respectively. The expedient of guardianship also contributed to the albeit temporary cohesion of, or at least the safe continuation of power, in entire states, in a way quite resembling the need of sequence in private families. Only the glory, the temptations and the dangers were of a very different scale and impact.³²

³¹ On the later cases of royal guardians in the Ptolemaic house and their historical contexts see the penetrating study by GEHRKE 2005.

³² I wish to thank Graham Shipley for a friendly revision of my original English text, while I remain, of course, responsible for any remaining errors of language and content. Selene Psoma has kindly offered bibliographical advice.

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