

# **Prosopography of the Somatophylakes of Alexander the Great**

**Monica O. Aneni**

**Department of Classics  
University of Ibadan  
Ibadan, Nigeria.**

Email: [monaneni@yahoo.com](mailto:monaneni@yahoo.com), [anenimonica@gmail.com](mailto:anenimonica@gmail.com)

Phone: 08056501788. 07039574581

# Prosopography of the Somatophylakes of Alexander the Great

Monica O. Aneni

Department of Classics

University of Ibadan

Email: [monaneni@yahoo.com](mailto:monaneni@yahoo.com)

**Abstract:** Ancient authors such as Arrian, Polybius, Plutarch and several others have dedicated a huge amount of literature to the exploits and politics of Alexander the Great. Modern scholars, drawing from the narrations of ancient authors, have analysed several aspects of the times and life of this great leader and those of his Diadochi. However, little attention has been paid to the men who served as his bodyguards. This paper is therefore designed to examine the biographies of the somatophylakes of Alexander the Great, with a view to understanding their roles throughout the period of Alexander's warring years until his death in 323 BC, as well as their positions and influences post Alexander. The paper adopts a historical methodology as it examines the times and lives of the bodyguards. Plutarch's ideology on biography is adopted as framework. Further studies may examine the sphere of control of the Diadochi and their roles in promoting Hellenistic culture in Africa and the Near East after the demise of Alexander

[Keywords: Leadership, bodyguards, biography, the Macedonian Empire]

## INTRODUCTION

Drawing from the works of ancient authors, several modern scholars have debated on some aspects of the life and times of Alexander the Great, the Hellenistic world, and the roles of some of the somatophylakes and diadochi of Alexander. Heckel (1978) questions the veracity, authenticity and identity of some of the Somatophylakes. This is as against Arrian's use of ambiguous and inconsistent use of military terminology including facts about some of the Somatophylakes of Alexander. Berve (1926), in his *Das Alexanderreich auf prosopographischer Grundlage*, discusses the nature, essence and extent of Alexander's empire, even as he presents a picture of the men from Macedonian nobility that surrounded Alexander, and

making a distinction between the bodyguards and other men around Alexander. He presents three categories, as postulated by Hammond, of the various guards of King Philip II and Alexander the Great. The first category is the *die liebwachter* (a few high-ranking officials or the somatophylakes). The second category is the *die leibgarde*: young Macedonian nobles who were about twenty years of age and bodyguards as well. The third category is the *die hypaspistenleibswache* - these were the hypaspists of the king. Occasionally, Arrian called them somatophylakes to distinguish them from other hypaspists. Hammond (1991) deviating from Berve's second categorization of the bodyguards of Philip II and Alexander the Great and with evidence from ancient authors, describes how and who guarded king Philip II, and Alexander after he killed Cleitus. Guthrie (2020) discusses the politics of *philia* relationships that kept and sustained men in the courts of the king. Guthrie also expatiates further on how Alexander himself became king through this *philia* relations and as king, fostered this politics as he surrounded himself with men, he had such relationships with. Atkinson (2010) explains honour in the ranks of Alexander's army. He discusses this honour as the entitlement to respect one desired irrespective of his status or rank in the army. Just as men of higher rank demanded respect from those of lower rank, those of lower ranks also demanded respect and honour from their superiors in the same army. This was because of how the army was constructed under Alexander, such that after the demise of Alexander, the army had assumed a democratic entity such that a soldier of a lower rank could advise his superiors on the course to assume regarding the leadership of the Empire. Taiwo (2020), while discussing the prosopography of Nero, examines the views of ancient theorists about the inner nature of man and the development of character, both of which are foremost factors in the examination of the prosopography of eminent personalities, even in antiquity.

Several other modern authors have discussed variously the Empire of Alexander, his exploits, categorization of the men or *philo*i surrounding Alexander, with little attention paid to the biography of the somatophylakes of Alexander. This paper attempts to examine the prosopography of each of the named somatophylakes of Alexander, with a view to understanding their roles throughout the period of Alexander's warring years until his death in 323 BC, as well as their positions and influences post Alexander. The study on which this paper is based adopts a historical methodology as it examines the times and lives of the bodyguards. Plutarch's theory on biography is adopted as framework. Further studies may examine the sphere of control of the diadochi and their roles in promoting Hellenistic culture in Africa and the Near East.

### PLUTARCH'S THEORY ON BIOGRAPHY

Plutarch's theory for writing biography is imbedded in the fact that Plutarch wrote for his readers to understand the character of the personalities and acquire intrinsic worth from them. In his *Life of Alexander*, Plutarch states that he was not writing history, but a biography whence his readers could adopt the virtues of the lives of Alexander. He reiterates this argument in his *Life of Demetrius the Besieger*. Here, Plutarch compares the lives of Demetrius and that of Marcus Antonius, the Emperor. He stated that both men were notorious in womanizing, drinking, and fighting; they were open-handed as well as extravagant and their fortunes were the same. The theory of Plutarch pushes the idea that his audience, which is made up of educated Greeks and Romans should learn from the biographies of eminent personalities, Greek and Roman constitution, administration, and moral issues, especially behind political leadership and its influence on the populace (Stadter 2014). Plutarch's idea on biography comes to bear on this study, as the achievements, challenges, failures of the individuals examined in this study can influence the audience, philosophically and otherwise.

### THE SOMATOPHYLAKES

Alexander the great was surrounded by several men, drawn from the Macedonian nobility. These men were warriors and commanders of his troops. Some became leaders of dynasties after his demise. While he was alive, some served as his somatophylakes or bodyguards.

The somatophylakes or the bodyguards of Alexander were made up of seven men. These men were of high-ranking Macedonian nobility. They were generals in the army and were highly respected. They were always seven in number, but between 326 BC and 324 BC Alexander appointed Peucestas as the eighth somatophylax. Their position remained thus throughout the period they served. If anyone of the generals was to be replaced due to death, the new bodyguard attained the position of his predecessor as noted in the table below. Haephaeston replaced Ptolemy; Menes of Pella replaced Balacrus; Leonnatus replaced Arybbas; Perdiccas, and Ptolemy of Lagus replaced Menes and Demetrius respectively. Peucestas was the only exception. He was appointed as the eighth somatophylax. However, by 323 BC, Hephaeston was not one of the bodyguards.

Table 1. The Somatophylakes of Alexander the Great

Period (BC)	Names
336-334	Aristonous of Pella, Lysimachus, Peithon, Arybbas, Balacrus, Demetrius, Ptolemy
333	Aristonous, Lysimachus, Peithon, Arybbas, Balacrus, Demetrius, Hephaestion
332	Aristonous, Lysimachus, Peithon, Arybbas, Menes of Pella, Demetrius, Hephaestion
331	Aristonous, Lysimachus, Peithon, Leonnatus, Menes, Demetrius, Hephaestion
330-327	Aristonous, Lysimachus, Peithon, Leonnatus, Perdicas, Ptolemy of Lagus, Hephaestion
326-324	Aristonous, Lysimachus, Peithon, Leonnatus, Perdicas, Ptolemy Lagus, Hephaestion, Peucestas
323	Aristonous, Lysimachus, Peithon, Leonnatus, Perdicas, Ptolemy Lagus, Peucestas

#### *Aristonous of Pella*

The bodyguard in the first position was Aristonous of Pella. He was an eminent warrior. Arrian tells us in his *Anabasis* 6. 28.4. and in his *Indica* 18.5 that he was Pellaean and Eordaeon in origin, meaning that his birthplace was Eordaeon, but he was brought up in the courts of Pella. He was said to have performed excellently well as a warrior. At the death of Alexander the Great, Aristonous of Pella suggested that the supreme power be vested in Perdicas. He later became the general of Olympias in the war between Olympias and Cassander. Cassander sentenced Aristonous of Pella to death in 316 BC when he defeated and imprisoned Olympias (Smith, 1867).

*Lysimachus*

The second and noteworthy bodyguard was Lysimachus. Born in 360 BC, he was a Thessalian and an officer under Alexander the Great (Sear 1978). At the death of Alexander, he became the king of Thrace, Asia Minor and Macedon. His father was Agathocles (Lund, 2002), and his paternal grandfather was Alcimachus. His father was a noble, a high ranking official and a close friend of Philip II of Macedon. Lysimachus and his brothers enjoyed prominent positions in the circle of Alexander and were educated at the court of Macedonia in Pella (Heckel, 2006).

Lysimachus married thrice. His first marriage in 321 BC was to Nicaea, the daughter of Antipater. They had three children, namely: Agathocles (son), Eurydice and Arsinoe (daughters) as noted by Heckel (2006, 175). Nicaea died in about 302 BC. Lysimachus married Amastris in 302 BC but was divorced in about 300/299 BC. His third marriage was to Arsinoe II in about 300/299 BC. Lysimachus and Arsinoe also had three sons: Ptolemy I Epigonos, Lysimachus and Phillip (Billows, 1995). Pausanias tells us that an Odrysian concubine bore Lysimachus a son named Alexander.

Lysimachus became one of Alexander's men after killing a lion with his bare hands. Alexander had earlier thrown him into the lion's den as punishment for smuggling poison to a prisoner whom he, Alexander had condemned to a slow death. Pausanias narrates the story of how Lysimachus killed a lion with his bare hands. Alexander shut him in prison with the lion. Thereafter, Alexander had great respect for him and accorded him honour as deeply deserving of a Macedonian noble. Heckel (2006) notes that Lysimachus was selected as Somatophylax during the reign of Philip II. By 328 BC when Alexander campaigned in Persia, he was one of his close bodyguards. Again, as Alexander campaigned in 324 in India, he was awarded a crown in Suza for his works. Some coins that were minted and issued during his appointment as a bodyguard had his image on one side and the image of a lion on the reverse side. After Alexander died in 323 BC, he was made *strategos* of Thrace. Consequently, Hornblower and Spawforth (2000) note that he had problems with Seuthes, the king of Thrace. In 315 BC, he joined a coalition of Cassander, Seleucus, and Ptolemy against Antigonus Monophthalmus. However, he was distracted by the Tracian and Scythian tribes that revolted against him. Hornblower & Spawforth (2000 p. 128) note that, he succeeded in quelling a revolt against him by the cities on the coast of the Black Sea. Lysimachus established the city of Lysimachia in 309 BC in an area that connected the Chersones with the mainland. Heckel tells us that between 305 and 306 BC, he assumed the royal title of king, just like Antigonus.

Lysimachus entered a second alliance with the trio of Cassander, Ptolemy and Seleucus in 302 BC. He also entered Asia Minor with a reinforcement of troops from Cassander recording a huge success. He retired to his quarters in Heraclea and married the Persian princess, queen Amastris. In 301 BC Lysimachus, alongside Seleucus, defeated Antigonus in the battle of Ipsus. The trio then shared the domains of Antigonus. Williams (1926: 450) states that Lysimachus got Lydia, Ionia, Phrygia and the Northern coast of Asia Minor. When Lysimachus felt that he could not trust Seleucus because he felt Seleucus was almost too powerful, he entered an alliance with Ptolemy by marrying his daughter Arsinoe II. In 297 BC when Demetrius the son of Antigonus was absent from Greece, Lysimachus took his towns in Asia Minor. In 294 BC, Lysimachus signed a peace treaty with Demetrius and the later was declared king of Macedonia.

Lysimachus was defeated and taken prisoner by Dromichaetes king of the Getae when he wanted to rule the Danube. Dromichaetes set him free in exchange for the Danubian lands he had earlier captured. Demetrius on the other hand wanted to attack Thrace but was distracted by an uprising in Boeotia and an attack by Pyrrhus the king of Epirus (Chisholm 1911). Lysimachus, together with Pyrrhus invaded and chased Demetrius away from Macedonia in 287 BC. Lysimachus allowed Pyrrhus to rule over Macedonia for seven months. However, he attacked Macedonia, and both co-ruled briefly until 285 when Lysimachus sent Pyrrhus packing and became sole ruler (Williams, 1926).

Lysimachus later had issues bordering on domestic troubles. Lysimachus executed his two sons who killed their mother queen Amastris. In 284 BC, Arsinoe and her paternal half-brother plotted against Agathocles, the first son of Lysimachus. They accused Agathocles of conspiracy with Seleucus against Lysimachus. She did this because she wanted her sons to succeed Lysimachus. Consequently, Agathocles was executed (Chisholm, (1911). The result of this atrocious act by Lysimachus caused indignations, disruptions, and revolts by many of the cities of Asia Minor. His trusted and close allies abandoned him. The widow of Agathocles fled with her children to Seleucus. Seleucus then invaded Lysimachus' territory in Asia Minor, and they came against each other at the decisive battle of Corupedium. Here, Lysimachus was killed. His body was discovered on the field after a few days, even as his faithful dog kept birds of prey away from his body. His son, Alexander buried him at Lysimachia.

*Peithon*

Diodorus Siculus' *Bibliotheca Historica* furnishes us with information on Peithon. Peithon, the son of Craterus, was a noble from Eordaia in western Macedonia. One of the somatophylax of Alexander the Great in 355 BC, he later became one of the *diadochi* of Alexander after his demise. He became the satrap of a very large region called Media. Media was the region that controlled the roads to the east and the west. Because it was too large a state to govern by one leader, Atropates was made the leader of the northern part of Media. It became known as Media Atropatene. At a point in time, Perdicass sent Peithon and a legation of Macedonians to quell the revolts precipitated by the soldiers who were domiciled in the eastern parts of Alexander's empire. Peithon was successful and the agitators surrendered. However, his men massacred their opponents. Thereafter, Peithon returned to Media, but Perdicass began to have misgivings about him. Perdicass requested Peithon to join forces with him against Ptolemaic Egypt. However, in 320 BC, Seleucus, Antigenes and Peithon slayed Perdicass. Thereafter, Peithon who desired to expand the frontiers of his region, invaded, and killed Phillipos, the Satrap of Parthia and crowned his brother, Eudemus as satrap. The other leaders of inner Asia became scared of Peithon and then joined forces with Peucestas, one of the somatophylax and the satrap of Persia, to defeat Peithon and sacked him from Parthia. Having returned to Media, Peithon went to Babylon to seek the support of Seleucus. In Babylon, Eumenes also came to seek the support of Seleucus and Peithon against Antigonus Monophthalmus claiming that he was at war because of king Alexander IV and king Phillip III, but Seleucus and Peithon refused to join him. Peithon then joined forces with Antigonus. Eumenes and Peucestas. Peithon proved a brave and victorious warrior at the battle of Gabiene and Paraitakene. He grew to become one of the most powerful *diadochi* after the second war of the *diadochi*. As he began to build his power and authority, Antigonus felt threatened and so executed Peithon.

*Arybbas*

The next bodyguard was Arybbas. Not much is known of him. He was from Epirus and a member of the Molossian Royal family. Heckel informs us that he died in 332 BC after an illness. In 331 BC, Leonnatus became the next somatophylax in his stead.

*Balacrus*

Balacrus or Balakros was the son of Nicanor. After the battle of Issus in 333 BC, he was selected as the satrap of Cilicia. Balacrus and Phrygia, the satrap of Hellespontine conquered Asia Minor. He married Phila, the daughter of Antipater. Carradice & Price (1988) note that he died in about 328 or 323 BC in the battle against the Pisidians. Balacrus has been noted as a satrap who used an Achaemenid form of coinage. His name and that of Baal, the local deity, were inscribed on his coins. His idea of coinage influenced that of Alexander's imperial coinage (Mildenberg, 2000) which is said to have begun in Tarsus in about 333-327 BC under the leadership of Balacrus as noted by Howgego (2002).



Coin of Balacrus, as Satrap of Cilicia, Tarsos, 333-323 BC.

*Demetrius*

Not much is known of him, except that he was one of the somatophylax of Alexander, and that he was executed because he was accused of a conspiracy against Philotas. Philotas was the eldest son of Parmenion who was the most talented and experienced general of Alexander the Great (Heckel, 2005).

*Ptolemy*

One of the bodyguards of Alexander. Not much is known or discussed of him. He died in 334 BC at the siege of Halicarnassus (Heckel, *ibid*).

*Hephaestion*

Hephaestion was the bodyguard who replaced Ptolemy. He was believed to be of the same age as Alexander the Great, meaning that he must have been born in 353 BC, the same year as Alexander. He was a noble of Macedonian descent. His father was Amyntor. He became a page in the king's court as was expected of adolescent boys of the aristocratic Macedonian class, and there was probably where he met

Alexander. A general in Alexander's army and his bodyguard, Curtius tells us that he was the "... most beloved of all the king's friend. ..." for they grew up together and shared secrets all their lives. People compared their relationship to that of Achilles and Patroclus. An anecdote about Hephaestion's youth is found in the Alexander Romance. Chugg (2006) notes that Hephaestion was mentioned as the friend of Alexander who went sailing with Alexander and how they reached Pisa easily. Plutarch also tells us that when Alexander was fifteen years old, he studied with his friends at Mieza with Aristotle as their teacher. Although his name was not mentioned as one of those studying at Mieza, Aristotle mentions him in a catalogue of his correspondences that no longer exist. This suggests that Hephaestion must have been given a good education under the tutelage of Aristotle. Some years later, king Philip exiled some of Alexander's older friends namely: Ptolemy, Nearchus, Harpalus, Erigius and Laomedon due to the Pixodarus affair. Hephaestion was probably not included because he was Alexander's contemporary and may not have had a strong influence over Alexander at the time. Erigius was about 24 years older than Alexander. Hephaestion relationship with him endured for a long period of time. Aristotle describes their friendship as "one soul abiding in two" (Diogenes 1952). The morning after the Battle of Issus, Queen Sisygarrbis, who was the senior member of the captured Persian royalty, pleading for the lives of the family knelt before Hephaestion thinking he was Alexander, for he was taller, and they wore the same attire. She was embarrassed at her mistake; however, Alexander forgave her and told her that Hephaestion was Alexander too. In his reply to Alexander's mother, he noted that Alexander meant a great deal to him. Alexander announced at the death of Hephaestion that he valued Hephaestion's life as much as his. Cartledge (2004, p. 9) describes Hephaestion as Alexander's alter ego.

Hephaestion also performed diplomatic functions. Curtius tells that having received the capitulation of Sidon in 333 BC, Alexander authorised him to place the most deserving man on the throne of Sidon. Having consulted with the locals, he appointed as king, Abdalonymus, a man of royalty, who, because of his honesty became a gardener. He performed excellently well, justifying Hephaestion's choice. In 332 BC, Alexander placed him in charge of his fleet, sent him to Gaza, while ordering him to evade the coast. This was not an easy task. For the crew was a motley group of semi-reluctant allies of various nationalities. The leader (Hephaestion) of the crew would need to display the virtues of patience and strength. The cargo which was siege engines would need to be unloaded and reassembled after being transported through difficult terrains to their destinations. Hephaestion proved his mettle here.

Hephaestion was the most trustworthy and sharer of secrets with Alexander. Alexander trusted him deeply because he was loyal and got the job done. He was Alexander's torchbearer or his best man at his wedding. He was known to support all the policies of Alexander, including marrying the Asian bride. Chugg suggests that Hephaestion waded into the dispute between Demosthenes and Alexander, with a view to installing a reconciliation process between the two leaders. Due to their closeness, it was rumoured that Alexander and Hephaestion may have been lovers, although ancient texts never suggested or alluded to such, and modern scholars such as Skinner (2010) and Martin (2012) disagree with the rumours. Apart from Alexander, Hephaestion was also close to Perdiccas because they both worked successfully as a team. Hephaestion died in 324 BC after he fell ill from a fever, and Alexander was greatly grieved at his death.

#### *Menes of Pella*

He was the son of Dionysius. Dionysius was one of the officers of Alexander the Great. In 333 BC after the battle of Issus, Alexander appointed Menes of Pella as one of his somatophylakes to replace Balacrus who had been promoted to the satrapy of Cilicia. Having occupied Susa, Alexander sent Menes to the Mediterranean in 331 BC as leader of Syria, Phoenicia and Cilicia. He also gave him 3000 talents to give a part to Antipater for taking part in the war with the Lacedaemonians. Waldemar (2008) informs us that he issued coinage that bore the initial "M".

#### *Leonnatus*

Leonnatus (356 BC - 322 BC) was of the royal house of Lyncestis. He was a Macedonian officer under Alexander the Great and he was also one of his diadochi. Leonnatus who was of the same age with Alexander, was indeed close to him and was also one of his bodyguards. Diodorus (1963) informs us that Leonnatus took the responsibility of informing the family of Darius that Alexander would not make them suffer a dreadful fate, having been defeated by Alexander at the battle of Issus. As a matter of fact, Alexander promised to raise Darius' six-year-old as his own and promised to treat the family as royalty. Cleopatra, the sister of Alexander and the widow of King Alexander I of Epirus offered her hand to him. When Alexander the Great died in 323 BC, Perdiccas the regent appointed Leonnatus as the satrap of Hellespont Phrygia. Also, when the Athenians revolted against Macedonia and Antipater the new king, Leonnatus went with an army of 20,000 infantry and a

cavalry of 1,500 strong to assist Antipater at the siege against Lamia. Smith (2007) assumes that he probably decided to assist Antipater with the sole aim of claiming the throne. However, he was killed in that battle and his marriage to Cleopatra did not happen.

#### *Perdiccas*

Perdiccas (355-321/320 BC), the son of Orentes, a Macedonian noble, was a general in Alexander's army (Austin 1981). Orentes was a descendant of the independent Princes of Orestis, a province of Macedonia. His date of birth is unknown, but it is believed he shared the same birth year with Alexander the Great. Arrian mentions that he had a brother by the name Alceitas, and also a sister, Atalante. Diodorus states that she married Attalus. Perdiccas married Atropates, the daughter of the satrap of Media in 324. In that same year, Hephaestion died and Alexander appointed Perdiccas to succeed Hephaestion as commander of the Companion Cavalry. Anson (2014) mentions that Alexander on his deathbed, gave his ring to Perdiccas. Perdiccas was the commander of the battalion of the Macedonia phalanx. In 335, during the conquest of Thebes, he displayed exceptional bravery, although he was brutally wounded. When Alexander campaigned against India, Perdiccas held an important command. Again as Alexander campaigned against the Achaemenid Persia, Perdiccas was a member of Alexander's army. He later became supreme leader and commander of Alexander's army and king on behalf of Alexander's half-brother, Phillip Arridaeus. Having assumed the position of regent, Antipater, Craterus and Antigonus Monophthalmus, generals in Alexander's army resisted him. Perdiccas rose against this coalition and attempted to invade Egypt. However, he was killed by his soldiers who had revolted against him due to the failure of the invasion.

At the death of Alexander the Great in 323 BC in Babylon, he presided over a meeting of Alexander's generals. At this meeting, discussions about Alexander's successor was done in great detail. Perdiccas argued that they, the generals should wait for the birth of Alexander's unborn son by Roxanne. And that until he was old enough to be regent, he, Perdiccas would hold the empire as regent on his behalf. Some of the generals agreed to his proposal. However, Meleager, one of the generals and the commander of the infantry, argued that the empire be given to Arridaeus, the half-brother of Alexander, because he was first in succession. Meleager's proposal was supported by the infantry. Hence, the partition of Babylon was inevitable. However, an agreement was reached and a middle ground was found. Perdiccas would serve as king and supreme commander of the imperial army. They

recognized as joint regents, Arridaeus and the unborn child of Roxanne who was named Alexander IV of Macedon. Craterus was declared as the Guardian of the Royal Family.

In spite of his position, Perdiccas became intolerant of his rivals. He murdered Meleagar and Stateira, Alexander's second wife. Consequently, he was challenged by the other generals. He appointed Leonnatus as satrap of Hellesponte Phrygia. But Leonnatus rather sailed to meet with Cleopatra, the sister of Alexander and the widow of king Alexander I of Epirus because she had offered her hand to him. When Perdiccas heard of the defiance of Leonnatus, he marched the imperial army to Asia in 322 in order to reassert himself as king. Then he ordered Leonnatus to appear before him, but the former died in the Lamian War. Other characters continued to display intrigues in the pursuit of taking over all or a part of Alexander's empire. Cynane who was the half-sister of Alexander arranged that Eurdice II marry Arridaeus who was already joint king with Perdiccas. Perdiccas was fearful and jealous of Cynane intentions, therefore, he ordered his brother Alcestas to exterminate her. But he didn't succeed because the army was discontented and did not support the proposal for they had great respect for Eurydice. Perdiccas approved the marriage, but he was still in control of the royal family and the empire.

To consolidate his control over Alexander's empire, Perdiccas decided to invade and take over Cappadocia which was under the rule of the Persians. Here Perdiccas needed the support of Antigonus I Monophthalmus, the strap of Pamphilia and Lycia. However, Antigonus was not prepared to lend his support to Perdiccas. Perdiccas was successful in his invasion of Cappadocia in 322. He ordered Antigonus to appear in his court, but the later escaped to Antipater in Macedonia. Next on Perdiccas' agenda was to marry Nicaea, the daughter of Antipater. This move would strengthen his power and control over the empire. However, he did not marry her because Alexander's mother, Olympia, offered him the hand of Alexander's sister Cleopatra in 322 BC. This meant that he would eventually emerge the true successor of Alexander the Great, especially considering the fact that Alexander's half-brother Arridaeus was intellectually disabled and Alexander's son was part Persian and may not be accepted by the Greeks because of his mother's nationality.

Perdiccas' behavior earned him animosity and distrust from other generals. For humiliating Antipater and his daughter, Antipater was angry and discontented with Perdiccas. Antigonus was unhappy with the display of power and authority by Perdiccas, and Craterus was unhappy that Perdiccas refused to recognize and acknowledge him, in spite of his position in the army. Therefore, the three of them decided to revolt against Perdiccas. Ptolemy also became a target for invasion by

Perdiccas due to his behavior. It was reported that in 321 BC, Perdiccas had sent Arridaeus to accompany the body of Alexander to Aegae in Macedonia for burial in the royal house as was the tradition. As the entourage passed through Syria, Saunders (2007) tells us that Ptolemy bribed the escorts and took the body to Memphis, in Egypt and then later to Alexandria. This action provoked Perdiccas into invading Egypt.

Having arrived at the easterly tributary of the Nile close to Pelusium, Perdiccas discovered the opposite side of the Nile garrisoned. Therefore, he went further away to locate where he could cross to the towns of Tanis and Avaris into Egypt. However, the Camel's Rampart, an Egyptian force resisted him. Again, Perdiccas ordered his War Elephants and Silver Shield infantry to attack the Egyptian force. But Ptolemy arrived with an army larger than Perdiccas' and beat Perdiccas' forces to retreat. Perdiccas searched for another route to cross into Egypt. He found one near Memphis, but many of his men drowned. It was a catastrophic campaign. As a result, mutiny broke out among his men for the failure to invade Egypt. Perdiccas was then assassinated in about 321 or 320 BC by Peithon, Antigenes and Seleucus, who were his officers.

#### *Ptolemy of Lagus or Ptolemy I Soter*

Ptolemy I Soter, a Macedonian, was born in c.367 BC (Jones, 2006). He was the son of Lagus a Macedonian and nobleman from Eordaea. His mother was Arsinoe of Macedon. Some sources claim that he was the illegitimate son of Philip of Macedon and so Alexander's half-brother. It may be a myth meant to glorify the Ptolemaic Dynasty (Carney 2010). He was the originator of the Ptolemaic Dynasty. He was first Alexander's bodyguard and then diadochi and eventually, the founder of the Ptolemaic Dynasty that ruled Egypt as Pharaohs until the death of Cleopatra VII in 31/30 BC. He was one of Alexander's trusted bodyguard, companion and military officer. He collected the remains of Alexander the Great when it was en-route Macedonia, took it to Memphis and then later to Alexandria. When Perdiccas attempted to invade Egypt, he joined a coalition against Perdiccas. At the death of Perdiccas in 320 BC, Ptolemy was able to consolidate his control over Egypt and its environs.

Ptolemy married his mistress Thais, who was also his wife. They had three children namely; Lagus, Leontiscus and Eirene. Eirene was married to Eunostos of Soloi in Cyprus. In obedience to Alexander, Ptolemy also married the Persian noblewoman, Artakama. In 322 BC, Ptolemy married Eurydice, the daughter of

Antipater. Their children were; Ptolemy Keraunos, Meleager, Ptolemais and Lysandra. Ptolemy Keraunos was king of Macedon between 281-279 BC. Meleager only ruled for two months in 279 BC. Ptolemais was married to Demetrius I of Macedon (Plutarch, 1770). Lysandra was first married to Alexander V of Macedon and later to Agathocles, the son of Lysimachus. Ptolemy also married Berenice, the cousin of Eurydice. They had three children named; Arsinoe II, Philotera and Ptolemy II. Arsinoe was first married to Lysimachus, and later to her half-brother Ptolemy Keraunos, and finally, to her full brother Ptolemy II Philadelphus (Clayman, 2014).

As a bodyguard of Alexander the Great, he played prominent roles during the campaigns of Alexander in Afghanistan and India. He fought at the Battle of Issus in 333 BC. The battle was between the Hellenic League under the command of Alexander and the Achaemenid Empire under the leadership of Darius III (Chisholm, 1911). He also went with Alexander as he later visited the Oracle in the Siwa Oasis. There he was announced as the son of Zeus (Grimal, 1992). Ptolemy himself personally campaigned against Bessus who rebelled against Alexander. Having captured Bessus, he handed him over to Alexander for judgment and execution (Arrian, 1884).

Ptolemy succeeded Alexander as he became Pharaoh of Egypt. At the division of Alexander's empire, he was appointed as satrap of Egypt. He later took control of Cyrenaica. Ptolemy collected the corpse of Alexander on its way to Macedonia. Ptolemy did this because he wanted to assert control as Alexander's successor. For it was believed in the custom of the Macedonians, that kings asserted the right to the throne as they buried their predecessor. Therefore, he buried Alexander's remains in Memphis, later transferred the remains to Alexandria where he built a tomb for it. After this event, Green (1990, pp 13-14) informs us that Ptolemy joined the coalition against Perdiccas. He also executed Cleomenes his deputy for spying for Perdiccas.

Perdiccas attempted to invade Egypt in 321 BC, but he failed and he was assassinated by his officers who were discontented and upset about the failure of the invasion and the loss of about 2,000 of his men. Green (1990) further notes that although Ptolemy was invited to take up the place of Perdiccas, he turned down the offer and decided to focus on, and assert his control over Egypt and her environs, rather than risking all in order to be in control of Alexander's Empire. Ptolemy acquired Egypt, the outlying areas such as Cyrenaica, Cyprus, Syria and Judea. As Antigonus desired to control Alexander's empire, Ptolemy joined the coalition against him. He fought the army of Antigonus who had taken Cyprus and he reconquered the land in 313 BC. Chisholm (1911) affirms that Ptolemy also

destroyed a revolt in Cyrene in 313 BC. In 312 BC, at the battle of Gaza, Ptolemy and Seleucus occupied Syria, crushing Demetrius I, the son of Antigonus Monophthalmus. Again Ptolemy occupied Syria, but Antigonus conquered Syria. Later, a truce was called and a peace treaty was signed by both parties in 311 BC. In the meantime, king Alexander IV who was only 13 years old at the time was killed at the orders of Cassander. Chisholm (1911) mentions that as a result of this, Egypt came solely under the command of Ptolemy. In 309 BC, Ptolemy broke the peace treaty signed with Demetrius and Antigonus by attacking and taking Lycia and Caria. He also took Corinth, Sicyon and Megara in 308 BC. These provoked Antigonus and so at the battle of Salamis, he defeated and captured Menelaus, the brother of Ptolemy and occupied Cyprus (Chisholm, 1911). Chisholm further mentions that Antigonus' invasion of Egypt failed because Ptolemy effectively resisted him. Ptolemy assumed the title of king and made his son Ptolemy II Philadelphus co-regent in 285 BC, even as Antigonus and his son Demetrius both assumed the title of king. Other diadochi such as Cassander, Lysimachus and Seleucus I Nicator also proclaimed themselves kings over their spheres of control. In 305/304 BC, Ptolemy helped the Rhodians against the siege by Demetrius, and the Rhodians showed their gratitude by granting Ptolemy divine honours.

In 302 BC, he joined a coalition against Antigonus. At the battle of Issus in 301 BC, Antigonus was killed by Lysimachus and Seleucus. Consequently, Ptolemy took over Caria. However, Syria was given to Seleucus by other members of the coalition. This resulted in recurring warfare for about a hundred years between the Ptolemaic and Seleucid dynasties. After the war, Ptolemy lost his holdings in Asia Minor and Greece. In 295/294, he reoccupied Cyprus. Cyrenaica came under his control in 300 BC, and he made Magas his stepson, the satrap of the city (Chisholm 1911).

Ptolemy was an outstanding leader. He established the Ptolemaic Dynasty, secured Egypt and extended his sphere of control over Egypt's environs. His achievements in Egypt were indeed notable, and he left a stable and well governed kingdom for his son Ptolemy II Philadelphus who succeeded him. He died in January 282 BC at the ripe age of 84 or 85.

Jacoby (1926) writes that as a historian, Ptolemy wrote the history of Alexander's campaigns of which he was an eyewitness, the work is no longer extant. While writing his *Anabasis*, Arrian used Ptolemy's account as his primary source, as it is observed in paraphrase or precis in the work (Bosworth, 1988). Arrian (1884) notes in his *Anabasis* that Ptolemy was the author "whom I chiefly follow," due to the fact that Ptolemy had witnessed the campaigns of Alexander and that being a king, it would have been dishonorable for Ptolemy to be mendacious about the events he

witnessed (Arrian, 1884). Chisholm (1911), also considers Ptolemy's history as straightforward and honest narration of the events that occurred in the period under question. However, Errington (1969) argues that Ptolemy displayed bias in his narrative towards Perdiccas; systematically placing Perdiccas in a bad light and blackening his personality. A good example of this can be found in Arrian's account of the fall of Thebes in his *Anabasis* 1.8. 1-1.8.8 where Arrian made references solely to Ptolemy. This account differs from the account of the same issue in Diodorus Siculus' *Library of History*. 17.11-12. Roisman (1984), proposes that Ptolemy's blackening of the personality of Perdiccas as argued by other scholars is exaggerated.

Finally, among his several achievements, Ptolemy supported the Alexandrian Library and also sponsored Euclid, a great Mathematician, of whom it was rumoured that when Ptolemy found it difficult to understand his work, the *Elements*, he told Ptolemy that there was no royal road to geometry (Robinson 2005).

#### *Peucestas*

Arrian (1933) in his *Indica* tells us that Peucestas was the son of Alexander who hailed from Meiza in Macedonia. He served as a somatophylax of Alexander the Great, where he performed excellently well. He was appointed as the carrier of the sacred shield Alexander took from the temple of Athena in Troy. Consequently, he worked closely with Alexander even in his attack against the capital city of the Malavas in 325 BC. Arrian (1958), Plutarch (1919) and Diodorus Siculus (1989), all note that Peucestas was responsible for saving the life of Alexander the Great at that battle. Consequently, the king bestowed on Peucestas every award of distinction that was in his power to give. He also made him one of his somatophylax. He appointed him as satrap of Persis as they arrived at Persepolis. Peucestas also received a crown of gold. His actions pleased Alexander and the people of Persepolis for adopting their culture in respect to their dressing and customs and they regarded him as a Persophile (Curtis and Stewart 2007).

In 323 BC, Peucestas joined Alexander in Babylon with a troop of 20,000 Persians. Marcus Justinus (1853) informs us that after Alexander's death, he renewed his control over Persis, even in 321 BC in the second partition of the Empire at Triparadisus. In 317, he participated actively in the war between Antigonos and Eumenes. He was on Eumenes' side and was the chief commander of the forces provided by the satrapies by the east of the River Tigris. Peucestas was proud and quite an irritant. However, Eumenes expertly handled Peucestas' character, as well

as keeping him as an ally. Furthermore, his armies were treated as royalty, while Eumenes was the director of all operations in the war.

In 316 BC, Peucestas' insubordination, misconduct, haughty and ambitious behavior led to the defeat and surrender of Eumenes at the battle of Gabiene. Antigonos took his satrapy and also made a prison.

### CONCLUSION

Alexander's somatophylakes were altogether twelve in number. They were men of great resourcefulness, even as they were drawn from the Macedonian nobility. They were all unique, intelligent and courageous. They generally performed excellently well alongside Alexander. However, some seemed to lack control or co-ordination of their wits post Alexander. They were interested in grabbing or becoming sole successor of the Empire. They were, as in the case of Perdicass, willing to exterminate dissenting voices. They were haughty, disobedient and unruly as in the case of Peucestas; they lacked control over domestic issues as in the case of Lysimachus. These behaviours cost them severely, little wonder their careers were cut short due to death at their primes. But, Ptolemy Soter I distinguished himself as an effective somatophylax and a diadochi. He was contented with being the leader of Egypt and her environs even when an opportunity to take over Perdiccas' position after his death presented itself. He focused on Egypt and built a city where Hellenistic civilization thrived. He died at age 84 or 85 and left a stable and well-governed kingdom for his successor.

### REFERENCES

- Anson, Edward M. (2014). *Alexander's Heirs: The Age of the Successors*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Arrian (1884). *The Anabasis of Alexander*. Book 3, Chapter XXX. Translated by Edward James Chinnock. London. Sourced from [https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The\\_Anabasis\\_of\\_Alexander/Book\\_III/Chapter\\_XXX](https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The_Anabasis_of_Alexander/Book_III/Chapter_XXX).
- Arrian (1884). *The Anabasis of Alexander*. Book 6, Chapter II. Translated by Edward James Chinnock. London Sourced from

[https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The\\_Anabasis\\_of\\_Alexander/Book\\_VI/Chapter\\_II](https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The_Anabasis_of_Alexander/Book_VI/Chapter_II).

- Arrian, Anabasis 6.28.4 sourced from  
<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A2008.01.0531%3Achapter%3D18%3Asection%3D5>.
- Arrian, Indica 18.5. sourced from  
<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A2008.01.0531%3Achapter%3D18%3Asection%3D5>.
- Arrian (1933). *Anabasis*. Book VIII Indica. Translated by Ilif. Robson. Sourced from  
<https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/ancient/arrian-bookviii-especially.asp>.
- Arrian (1958). *Life of Alexander the Great*. Translated by Aubrey de Selincourt, Harmondsworth. Penguin Book.
- Arrian, *Successors*, 1.21
- Atkinson, J (2010). Honour in the Ranks of Alexander the Great's Army. *Acta Classica*, 53, 1-20. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24592498>
- Austin, M.M. (1981). *The Hellenistic World from Alexander to the Roman Conquest: A Selection of Ancient Sources in Translation*. Cambridge University Press.
- Berve, H. (1926). *Das Alexanderreich auf prosopographischer Grundlage*. Munich.
- Billows, R.A. (1995). *Kings and colonists: aspects of Macedonian imperialism*, BRILL.
- Bosworth, A. B. (1988). From Arrian to Alexander: Studies in Historical Interpretation. Oxford: Oxford University Press. pp. 13-14.
- Carney, E (2010). *Philip II and Alexander The Great: Father and Son, Lives and Afterlives*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Carradice, I and Price, M (1988). *Coinage in the Greek World*. Seaby. p. 110.
- Cartledge, P. (2004) *Alexander the Great: The Hunt for a New Past*. London: Macmillan.
- Chisholm, H Ed. (1911). *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. 17 (11th ed.). Cambridge University Press.
- Chisholm, H Ed. (1911). "Ptolemies" *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. Vol. 22 (11th ed.). Cambridge University Press. pp. 616-618.
- Chugg, AM (2006) *Alexander's Lovers*. Lightning Source UK Ltd.
- Clayman, DL (2014). *Berenice II and the Golden Age of Ptolemaic Egypt*. Oxford University Press.
- Curtis, VS and Stewart, S (2007). *The Age of the Parthians*. Bloomsbury Academic.
- Diodorus Siculus. (1933). *Bibliotheca Historica*, XIX 14,1-8, XIX 46,5-6. Translated by C. H. Oldfather. Loeb Classical Library 279. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

- Diodorus Siculus. (1963). *The Library of History of Diodorus Siculus*. Vol. VIII Book XVII: 37-38. Loeb Classical Library edition. Retrieved 14/01/2022 from [https://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Diodorus\\_Siculus/17B.html](https://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Diodorus_Siculus/17B.html)
- Diodorus Siculus. (1989). *Bibliotheca*. Translated by C. H. Oldfather. Vol. 4-8. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press; London: William Heinemann, Ltd.
- Diodorus Siculus. *Library of History*. Sourced from [https://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Diodorus\\_Siculus/17A.html#8.3](https://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Diodorus_Siculus/17A.html#8.3).
- Diodorus Siculus, *The Library of History*, 18.37.2.
- Diogenes Laertius. (1952). *Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers: Aristotle*. Translated by Hicks, Robert Drew. Loeb Classical Library.
- Errington, R. M. (1969). "Bias in Ptolemy's History of Alexander". *The Classical Quarterly*. 19 (2): 233-242.
- Green, P (1990). *Alexander to Actium*. University of California Press. pp 13-14.
- Grimal, N (1992). *A History of Ancient Egypt*. Oxford: Blackwell Books.
- Guthrie, J (2020). *Philia Networks in the Macedonian Court and the Long Accession of Alexander the Great*. *Karanos* 3, pp. 59-83.
- Hammond NGL (1991). *The Various Guards of Philip II and Alexander III*. *Historia: Zeitschrift Für Alte Geschichte*, 40(4), 396-418. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4436210>.
- Heckel, W (1978). *The "Somatophylakes" of Alexander the Great: Some Thoughts*. *Historia: Zeitschrift Für Alte Geschichte*, 27(1), 224-228. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4435594>.
- Heckel, W (2006). *Who's who in the age of Alexander the Great: prosopography of Alexander's empire*, Wiley-Blackwell.
- Heckel, W (2005). *The Marshals of Alexander's Empire*. Routledge.
- Hornblower, S and Spawforth, T (2000). *Who's Who in the Classical World*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. p. 238.
- Howgego, C (2002). *Ancient History from Coins*. Routledge.
- Jacoby, F (1926). *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker, Teil 2, Zeitgeschichte. - B. Spezialgeschichten, Autobiographien und Memoiren, Zeittafeln [Nr. 106-261]*. Berlin.
- Justinus, MJ (1853). *Epitome of the Philippic History of Pompeius Trogus*. Book XIII: 4. Translated by Rev. John Selby Watson. London: Henry G. Bohn, New York, Convent Garden.
- Justin, "Justinus: Epitome of Pompeius Trogus' Philippic Histories", XV, 3, 1-10. <http://www.attalus.org/translate/justin1.html#15.1>.

- Lund, HS (2002) *Lysimachus: A Study in Early Hellenistic Kingship*, Routledge.
- Martin, TR (2012). *Alexander the Great: the story of an ancient life*. Cambridge University Press. pp. 99-100.
- Mildenberg, Leo (2000). On the so-called Satrapal Coinage. *Publications de l'institut Francais d'Etudes Anatoliennes*. Annee 2000, 12: pp 9-29.
- Pausanias, Description of Greece. 1.10.4. sourced from <https://pausanias.chs.harvard.edu/read/urn:cts:greekLit:tlg0525.tlg001.the-center-for-hellenic-studies-translations-eng:1.10.1-1.14.4>.
- Pausanias. Description of Greece. 1.9:5. <https://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=urn:cts:greekLit:tlg0525.tlg001.perseus-grc1:1.9.5>
- Plutarch (1919). *Parallel Lives: Alexander*. Translated by Bernadotte Perrin. Cambridge, MA. Harvard University Press. London. William Heinemann Ltd. 7.
- Plutarch. *Life of Alexander*. Translated by John Dryden. Retrieved from <http://classics.mit.edu/Plutarch/alexandr.html>.
- Plutarch. *Life of Demetrius the Beseiger*. Translated by John Dryden. Retrieved from <http://classics.mit.edu/Plutarch/demetrus.html>
- Plutarch. (1770). *Parallel Lives. Demetrius*. 32. 46 translated John and William Longhorne. Retrieved from <http://www.attalus.org/old/demetrius2.html#32>.
- Prudence J (2006). *Cleopatra: A Sourcebook*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press.
- Quintus CR. *The History of Alexander*. Book 3.12.16. sourced from [https://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/L/Roman/Texts/Curtius/3\\*.html](https://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/L/Roman/Texts/Curtius/3*.html).
- Robinson, V (2005). *The Story of Medicine*. Whitefish, Montana: Kessinger Publishing. p. 80.
- Roisman, J (1984). "Ptolemy and His Rivals in His History of Alexander". *The Classical Quarterly*. 34 (2): 373-385.
- Saunders, Nicholas (2007). *Alexander's Tomb: The Two-Thousand Year Obsession to Find the Lost Conqueror*. Basic Books, p. 41.
- Sear, DR (1978). *Greek Coins and Their Values, Volume 2*. Seaby. p. 634.
- Smith, W (1849) *A Dictionary of Greek and Roman biography and mythology*. Vol. 1: Abaeus-Dysponteus Ed. by William Smith. Illustrated by numerous engravings on wood. Online at the University of Michigan Library. Sourced from <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/moa/acl3129.0001.001/327>.
- Smith, W (2007). *A Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography and Mythology*. London.
- Stadter, P (2014). *Plutarch and his Roman Readers*.: Oxford University Press. Retrieved 16 Feb. 2022, from

<https://oxford.universitypressscholarship.com/view/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198718338.001.0001/acprof-9780198718338>.

Taiwo, F (2020). Nero's Prosopography: A view of the Ancient Theorists. Nigeria and the Classics. Volume 12: 31-48.

Williams, Henry Smith (1926). Historians History of the World (Volume 4). Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc., New York.

UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN LIBRARY