Transactions of the American Philological Association 127 (1997) 97–109

The Origin of Alexander's Royal Insignia*

E. A. Fredricksmeyer
University of Colorado, Boulder

For Hardy

Throughout history, the dress and insignia of kings have had symbolic and propagandistic significance, and so it was with Alexander the Great. We know that his exclusive royal emblem in Asia was a band called the *diadema*, and that the Hellenistic kings, who derived the legitimacy of their kingship ultimately from Alexander, took it over from him.[1] But from where did Alexander take it? An answer could throw light on the nature of Alexander's kingship and his own view of it. The purpose of this paper is to examine this question.

Scholars have expressed three mutually exclusive views on the origin of Alexander's diadem. First, that it was traditional Macedonian insignia; second, that it was Persian; third, that it was taken from an association with the hero-god Dionysus. I hope to show that the third possibility is the most likely. Let us begin by considering the Macedonian connection.[2] The evidence for the Macedonian diadem consists of several late authors and some iconographic items. The authors are Lucan, Herodian, Ps.-Callisthenes, and Eustathius. Lucan (5.60) castigates Ptolemy XIII as *pudor crimenque deorum*, who crowned his head *Pellaeo diademate*, that is, with the diadem from Pella, the capital of Macedonia. But Lucan does not mean to suggest that the diadem originated in Macedonia, for elsewhere (9.153) he uses the expression *Pellaeas arces* to mean the Ptolemaic palace at Alexandria, which shows that he calls Ptolemy's diadem "Pellaean" in the sense that it came from the first Ptolemy, son of Lagus, who was Macedonian. Lucan condemns Ptolemy as unworthy of his heritage, but he tells us nothing about the provenance of the diadem.

*I wish to thank the two anonymous *TAPA* readers and Professor Skinner for criticisms and suggestions by which this paper has been considerably improved. Any remaining faults are entirely my own.

[1]See esp. Ritter 1965: 79–169.

[2]Macedonian: e.g., Droysen 6; Hoffmann 55–56; Taeger 32 and 460 (*Nachtrag*); Hammond 1989: 24 and 1991: 81; Franke 1952–53: 108 and 1956: 110; Mamroth 13.

Herodian (1.3.1–3), with reference to Alexander's *diadochi*, mentions in particular Ptolemy, "who fell in love with his own sister," and an Antigonus who imitated Dionysus by wearing an ivy wreath on his head "instead of the *kausia* and Macedonian diadem." We know of no Antigonus who imitated Dionysus, but if the reference is to Antigonus Monophthalmus, one of Alexander's immediate successors (*diadochi*), the statement could mean that the diadem was traditionally "Macedonian." But since the Ptolemy here mentioned is surely the second Ptolemy, Philadelphus, the *diadochi* are not necessarily Alexander's *immediate* successors, and the Antigonus in question could be Gonatas or Doson, or "Antigonus" could be a mistake for the son of Antigonus Monophthalmus, Demetrius, who did imitate Dionysus.[3] Whomever Herodian had in mind, the diadem could be called "Macedonian" in the sense that it originated with Alexander; thus Herodian's statement also provides no reliable information on the origin of the diadem. Next, Ps.-Callisthenes (2.7.6, p. 73 Kroll) has the Persian noble Oxyathres tell Darius before the battle at Issus that Alexander "puts the royal diadem aside in war but takes it up again after victory" (πολεμῶν μὲν ἀποτίθεται τὸ βασίλειον, νικήσας δὲ ἀναλαμβάνει τὸ διάδημα). The statement seems to mean that in battle Alexander puts aside the trappings of royalty, and it suggests that the diadem was a royal badge for both Persians and Macedonians. But we know that the statement is not correct for the Persians (see below), and we should probably infer therefore that it was also not correct for the earlier Macedonians, but rather reflects the Hellenistic era when the diadem was well known as royal insignia. This information too, then, tells us nothing about the origin of the diadem. Finally, we read in Eustathius (ad. Hom. *Od.* 12, p. 1399) that, according to Pausanias, a second-century C.E. lexicographer, the Macedonian kings wore the *kausia* "with a white diadem wrapped around it." Without further qualification the statement could be taken to apply to Macedonian kings before Alexander, but it seems more likely that, like the information in Lucan, Herodian and Ps.-Callisthenes, it is not accurate with respect to Macedonia before Alexander but again mirrors general familiarity with the diadem as royal insignia during the Hellenistic period. We see that none of these passages applies with any degree of certainty to the diadem of Macedonian kings before Alexander, although they do apply to Alexander himself and the kings who came after him.

[3]Plut. *Demetr.* 2.3: "He emulated Dionysus because he was most terrible in war but also most skillful at exploiting the ensuing peace for pleasure and enjoyment."

The iconographic evidence for Alexander's Macedonian diadem consists of assorted bands or ribbons on royal (?) heads found on coins of Alexander I, Archelaus, Aeropus, and Philip II; on Philip's head on a gold medallion; on a marble head of Philip; and on the head of a bearded man thought to be Philip decorating the bottom of a Hellenistic vase. There is also the gilded metal representation of what may be a diadem in the tomb thought to be Philip's.[4] The main problem with these representations, H. W. Ritter insists, is that if there was a Macedonian royal diadem, we should expect its form to be consistent. But it is not, ranging as it does from a broad band without loose ends to a thin ribbon with loose ends in the back. And we should expect that as royal insignia the diadem would be worn consistently by kings at least on their official coin portraits, but it is not.[5] The most likely conclusion is that the Macedonian "diadem" before Alexander was not an exclusively royal emblem but an honorific or decorative badge, possibly with some religious significance, and that the privilege of wearing it, perhaps like the purple cloak (*chlamys*) and cap (*kausia*), could be granted to others as well (Plut. *Eum.* 8.7).[6] This would accord with the statement of Justin (12.3.8) that the Macedonian kings before Alexander did not have a royal diadem (*insolitum antea regibus Macedonicis*). We may also note that if there was a traditional Macedonian royal diadem, and Alexander applied it to his kingship of Asia, then by this insignia he would not have distinguished between his Macedonian and Asian realms, and in view of the fundamentally different ideology and traditions of kingship in Macedonia and in the ancient Near East, this is *a priori* unlikely.[7] In Macedonia,

[4]*Alexander I*: Sakellariou 69 fig. 37; Kraay and Hirmer 350 and pl. 169.556 and 557; Hammond 1991: 81; Borza 1990: 130. *Archelaus*: Kraay and Hirmer pl. 169.559; Hammond 1982: 117 and fig. 3; Green 134 and n. 11. *Aeropus*: Price pl. 10.53 and p. 43; Green 134 and n. 11. *Philip*: Coins: Mamroth 13 and n. 2; Kraay and Hirmer pl. 170.562 and p. 351; Kaiser 304. *Gold medallion and marble head*: Richter 253.1706 (gold medallion), 1708 (marble head); Hatzopoulos and Loukopoulos 169 and pl. 91 (gold medallion); Bieber 20 and pl. 1.1 (medallion); Poulsen 47 and pl. 15.18 (marble head). *Vase*: Hatzopoulos and Loukopoulos 179 and pl. 93. *Gilded diadem*: *The Search for Alexander* 37 and pl. 29; Hammond 1991: 81.

We must acknowledge that we don't really know whom these figures were meant to represent. On their possible religious significance as an originally Thracian semi-divine Hero type, and a possible symbolic or mystical identification of the king with this Hero, see Greenwalt 1994: 125–31; 1997: 2–14.

[5]Ritter 1965: 36, 39, 41 and 1984: 106, 109.

[6]Cf. Borza 1981: 78: "Some forms of headbands seem to have been associated with the Macedonian monarchy before Philip's time."

[7]Hammond 1994: 181 and 226 recognizes the problem when he suggests a different form for the Asian badge, two ribands instead of the traditional one.

Alexander's power was circumscribed by the traditional rights of the nobility (*primus inter pares*) and even the people under arms, while in Asia Alexander aspired from the beginning to autocracy, not only because of the traditions of absolutism in the Near East, but also because by nature and temperament he inclined to it. There remains the possibility, however, that in Asia Alexander elevated a traditional Macedonian honorific, not exclusively royal, badge to the status of exclusive royal insignia for his kingship of Asia. I will return to this suggestion below.

Next, the Persian connection. Most scholars today believe that Alexander adopted his royal diadem from the Persians.[8] We know that at some time after the death of Darius in the late summer of 330 B.C.E., Alexander added some items from the Persian royal attire to his traditional Macedonian garb, primarily to court the good will of his Persian subjects (Eratosth. *FGrHist* 241 F30 = Plut. *Mor.* 329f–330a; Plut. *Alex.* 45.2, with the emendation of Μακεδονικῆς for Μηδικῆς as proposed by Coraes and Schmieder; Ephipp. *FGrHist* 126 F5 = Ath. 12.537e–538b). According to Diodorus (17.77.5), Curtius (6.6.4) and Justin (12.3.8), the royal diadem was one of these items.[9] This information has been widely accepted and accords with the popular notion that, after Darius' death at the hands of his own men, Alexander assumed the Persian kingship as Darius' legitimate successor (*Rechtsnachfolger*).[10] But the belief that Alexander presented himself as king of the Persian empire in succession to Darius is almost certainly incorrect. At the least, that succession would have required that Alexander assume the Persian royal titles (Great King, King of Kings, etc.), but there is no evidence for this.[11] Again, it would have required that he assume the key royal insignia of the Persians, the upright tiara, but it is virtually certain that he did not (Eratosth. *FGrHist* 241 F30 = Plut. *Mor.* 330a; *Alex.* 45.2).[12] We know that the diadem, which the Great King wore around his tiara, was not an exclusively royal emblem but, perhaps like its counterpart in Macedonia, an honorific badge worn also by members of the high nobility.[13] It is not very

[8]Smith 35: "It is the accepted view today that Alexander took over the diadem as a symbol of kingship from the Achaemenid kings."

[9] D.S. 17.77.5: εἶτα τό τε Περσικὸν διάδημα περιέθετο. Curt. 6.6.4: *itaque purpureum diadema distinctum albo, quale Dareus habuerat, capiti circumdedit.* Just. 12.3.8: *post haec Alexander habitum regum Persarum et diadema insolitum antea regibus Macedonicis...adsumit.*

[10]See Ritter 1965: 47–55.

[11]Cf. Plut. *Demetr.* 25.3: οὐδὲ αὑτὸν ἀνεῖπε βασιλέων βασιλέα.

[12] See Ritter 1965: 41–47. Cf. Bosworth 1995: 50 *ad* 4.7.4.

likely that Alexander took a badge in the garb of the Persian king that was not royal but merely decorative in order to make it the exclusive badge of his own kingship.[14]

This kingship was based, almost certainly, not on Alexander's succession to Darius' throne after the latter's death in the late summer of 330 B.C.E., but on his proclamation as "King of Asia" (not a Persian title) at Arbela after his victory over Darius on October 1, 331 B.C.E., that is, nearly a year before his alleged adoption of the Persian diadem.[15] This proclamation was apparently the climax of a carefully-arranged ceremony (Plut. *Alex.* 34). In light of the importance of symbols of royalty in the Near East it is quite unlikely that Alexander would have failed on this occasion to adopt some concrete symbol, or insignia, of his new kingship. We could of course speculate that Diodorus, Curtius and Justin simply got the occasion wrong by assuming that Alexander adopted the Persian diadem, along with other items, after Darius' death rather than upon his proclamation as King of Asia at Arbela. But it is unlikely that Alexander adopted this diadem at Arbela. When, after Darius' death, Alexander tried to make his assumption of Persian royal articles acceptable to the Macedonians as "war trophies" (Curt. 6.6.5), we know that they were not convinced but resented it. They would have resented it even more had Alexander adopted a Persian ribbon (not even royal) as insignia of his Asian kingship on an occasion, at Arbela, when they were celebrating their victory over the Persians, and their prevailing sentiment toward the Persians was hostility (Plut. *Alex.* 34). The information of Diodorus, Curtius and Justin probably comes from Clitarchus, who was neither an eyewitness nor very reliable.[16] But he would have been aware of the widely known fact that Alexander's royal badge in Asia was the diadem and also, because it became notorious, that after Darius' death Alexander adopted some articles of Persian

---

[13] X. *Cyr.* 8.3.13: [Cyrus] εἶχε δὲ καὶ διάδημα περὶ τῇ τιάρᾳ· καὶ οἱ συγγενεῖς δὲ αὐτοῦ τὸ αὐτὸ τοῦτο σημεῖον εἶχον, καὶ νῦν τὸ αὐτὸ τοῦτο ἔχουσι. Cf. Alföldi 1985: 108–10.

[14] Cf. Gschnitzer 168: it is to be doubted that Alexander's diadem, "das bei den Persern nicht dem König allein gebührte, gerade die Rechtsnachfolge der Achaimeniden ausdrücken sollte."

[15] Plut. *Alex.* 34.1: Τοῦτο τῆς μάχης ἐκείνης λαβούσης τὸ πέρας, ἡ μὲν ἀρχὴ παντάπασιν ἡ Περσῶν ἐδόκει καταλελύσθαι, βασιλεὺς δὲ τῆς Ἀσίας Ἀλέξανδρος ἀνηγορευμένος, ἔθυε τοῖς θεοῖς μεγαλοπρεπῶς. The proclamation is almost universally accepted as historical; e.g., Hamilton 90; Bosworth 1988: 85; Wirth 29; Will 94. On the designation "King of Asia" as a title, see Hammond 1986: 76–77.

[16] See Hammond 1983: 59, 79, 102, 136–37. On Clitarchus, see *FGrHist* 137 T6, T7, T8, T9, F13, F15, F24, F34. Cf. Alföldi 107–8.

dress. It was easy to make the (mistaken) inference that the diadem was one of them. Thus the popular notion that Alexander took his royal badge from the Persians rests on a very slender basis.

Third, the Dionysus connection. Pliny the Elder writes that "Father Liber invented the royal emblem of the diadem and the victory procession," *diadema regium insigne et triumphum invenit* (*Nat.* 7.191). And Diodorus relates (4.4.4) that "in order to ward off the headaches which every man gets from drinking too much wine [Dionysus] bound about his head, they report, a band (*mitra*)...and it was this head-band, they say, that later led to the introduction among kings of the diadem" (ἀπὸ δὲ ταύτης τῆς μίτρας ὕστερον παρὰ τοῖς βασιλεῦσι καταδειχθῆναι τὸ διάδημά φασι). The two writers concur in affirming that the diadem was originally associated with Dionysus and that it became the insignia of kings. These of course were the Hellenistic kings. Since it was well known that they derived their diadem from Alexander, and as there is no reason to think that Pliny and Diodorus go back to only one source (Diodorus attributes his information to a number of authors: λέγουσιν, φασί), we may infer that there existed in the Hellenistic age a tradition that Alexander's diadem was the Dionysus-badge. This conclusion is corroborated by a coin portrait of Alexander minted by Ptolemy I. It has been noted that in Greek iconography Dionysus characteristically wears either an ivy-wreath or a flat, distinctly diadem-like headband low on his forehead, and on Ptolemy's coins Alexander wears an elephant headdress (a trophy of India) and a flat diadem with raised edges worn around the forehead just beneath the hairline, "precisely as worn by Dionysus."[17] As Ptolemy knew Alexander intimately, it is likely that his portrayal of Alexander with the Dionysus-badge was not fanciful but accurate.[18]

What did Dionysus mean to Alexander? He was the main god in the Northern Aegean area and very popular also in Macedonia. This has long been known.[19] Beyond that fact, it has recently been shown that Dionysus apparently had a special importance for the Macedonian kings. The Argead foundation

[17]Smith 37. Cf. Krug 114–18. Good examples of the headband of Dionysus in Kraay and Hirmer pls. 3.8 and 83.241. Good examples of the Alexander portrait in Kraay and Hirmer pl. 217.297 and 298.

[18]Alexander wore his diadem either around his bare head (Arr. 7.9.9; D.S. 17.116.4; 18.60.6–61.1; Curt. 10.6.4) or around his *kausia* (Aristobulus, *FGrHist* 139F55 = Arr. 7.22.2; Ephippus, *FGrHist* 126F5 = Ath. 12.537e; Plu. *Ant.* 54).

[19]Baege 80: "Macedones quidem...Bacchum valde coluisse apparet...Bacchi religionem in militum (of Alexander) patria valde viguisse liquet."

myth as recorded by Herodotus (8.137.1–138.3) probably was understood to mean that the origin and legitimacy of the Argead kingship in Macedonia was due to a sign given to Perdiccas by Helios who was taken as a manifestation of Dionysus.[20] If this is correct, it is quite possible that the emblem on the *larnakes* containing the bones of the king and (probably) his consort in Tomb II at Vergina represents a sunburst and that the sunburst, although by no means unique in Macedonian or Greek iconography, was associated in Macedonia as a dynastic symbol with the Solar Dionysus to whom the foundation of the Argead kingship was attributed. It may be no coincidence, then, that in Thrace, where we have evidence for the worship of the Solar Dionysus (Macr. *Sat.* 1.18.11; cf. Hdt. 7.111), the sunburst was a common emblem.[21] The importance of Dionysus to the Argead kings was reflected also, I believe, in the fact that Euripides wrote the *Bacchae*, celebrating the power of Dionysus, under the patronage of King Archelaus in Macedonia (probably in 407 B.C.E.),[22] as well as by the importance in Macedonia of the institution of the symposium, where king and nobles cultivated a close personal bond, no doubt under the aegis of Dionysus as the presiding deity.[23]

There is additional evidence for the importance of Dionysus for the Macedonian kings. In a letter to Alexander, Olympias writes (Ath. 14.659f–660a): Πελίγναν τὸν μάγειρον λαβὲ παρὰ τῆς μητρός. οὗτος γὰρ οἶδε τὰ ἱερά σου τὰ πατρῷα πάντα ὅν τρόπον θύεται, καὶ τὰ Ἀργεαδικὰ καὶ τὰ Βακχικά, ὅσα τε Ὀλυμπιὰς προθύεται οὗτος οἶδεν. μὴ οὖν ἀμελήσῃς, ἀλλὰ λαβέ· καὶ ἀπόστειλον πρὸς ἐμὲ τὴν ταχίστην. ("Buy the sacrificer-cook Pelignas from your mother. For this man knows all your ancestral rites, how they are performed, both the Argeadic and the Bacchic ones, and all the sacrifices which Olympias performs (for you) he knows. Therefore, do not neglect this but buy him. And send me your reply as soon as possible.") This statement provides evidence that, at any rate in the time of Philip and Alexander, the Macedonian state cult consisted of two main components, the "Argeadic" and the "Bacchic" rites. While the "Argeadic" rites, centering on Zeus and Heracles, probably represented the cults of the conquering *Makedones* under the Argead kings, the "Bacchic" rites represented the indigenous religion of Dionysus, as well as, perhaps, other pre-existing cults

[20]Greenwalt 1994a: 3–8.
[21]Adams 1–5; Greenwalt 1997: 5. Cf. Theodosiev 374 and passim.
[22]Dodds xxxix.
[23]See Borza 1983: 45–55.

which had been received into the official state religion.[24] Thus in this official state cult, over which the king presided by right of dynastic succession and officiated as high priest of the Macedonian people when performing regular sacrifices, the rites of Dionysus were of major importance.

In addition to the significance Dionysus possessed for Alexander in his official capacity, first as heir-apparent and then king, his relationship with this hero-god also contained a more personal element. We know that Alexander's mother Olympias was from youth on an avid devotee of the god (Plut. *Alex.* 2.7–9; Duris *FGrHist* 76 F2 = Ath. 13.560f; Ath. 14.659f), and we know that she had a major influence on Alexander's development at a time when Philip was away from the capital much of the time on campaign. It is not unreasonable to assume that she instilled, or encouraged, in Alexander a special veneration for her favorite god.[25] She may even have suggested to him that Dionysus was actually Alexander's father. Plutarch (*Alex.* 2.6) relates that Philip once saw a serpent in bed with Olympias and may have considered it possible that she had been visited by a divine being. J. R. Hamilton (5) comments: "It is not impossible that a woman like Olympias may have believed that the god (Dionysus) in the shape of a snake (cf. Eur. *Bacch.* 1017–18) was the father of Alexander and perhaps even said so.... It is most improbable that the snake would have been connected with Ammon before Alexander's visit to Siwah. The snake surely would have been taken to be Dionysus." According to Eratosthenes (*FGrHist* 241 F28 = Plut. *Alex.* 3.3), Olympias told Alexander (before his departure for Asia) "the secret of his birth, and charged him to entertain thoughts worthy of his begetting." But even if we discount these stories, the remaining evidence shows clearly that Dionysus was an ubiquitous deity in Macedonia, of special importance to the Argead kings, and in particular also to Alexander.[26]

[24]For my reading of the text, with the emendation Ἀργεαδικὰ for the MS. Ἀργαδιστικὰ, as proposed by G. Kaibel, see Fredricksmeyer 179–82. Cf. Hammond 1985: 158; Gagé 8; Goukowsky 9 with n. 44; Schachermeyr 410 with n. 500. As for the authenticity of the letter, the principle is today generally accepted that while some letters in Alexander's received correspondence are no doubt fictitious, others are authentic, which means that each letter must be considered on its own merits. In the case of this letter, it is hard to see why it should have been invented, and in fact its authenticity is generally accepted. In addition to the references above in this note, see esp. Berve I: 44–49 and II: 286.

[25]Cf. Carney 41: "Olympias was particularly pious about Dionysus, just as her son would be." See also Berve II: 283–84.

[26]Vollgraff believes (423–36) that the story of Alexander's filiation of Dionysus became current at an early date, and that Philodamus of Scarphea in his paean to Dionysus, composed

Now it used to be thought that the tradition of Dionysus' Eastern conquests as far as India was derived from Alexander's campaign, but it has recently been shown that it was already well established in the Greek world by the beginning of the fourth century.[27] This is important. It means that the tradition of the god's Eastern conquests must have been well established by the mid-century in Macedonia, where the Homeric martial ethos was still strong and the god immensely popular. It is reasonable to assume, therefore, that Dionysus served Alexander and his men as their heroic model for the conquest of the East (the only heroic *paradeigma* then available to them), not just in India, where they believed they had found actual traces of the god's campaigns, but from the very beginning. [28] And this bears on the question of Alexander's diadem.

By Alexander's victory over Darius in October of 331 B.C.E., "the empire of the Persians was thought to be completely destroyed" (Plut. *Alex.* 34.1). At Alexander's proclamation as "King of Asia" at Arbela, which followed the battle, we should expect that he would now also adopt a visible emblem of his new kingship. If it is correct that Alexander indeed considered Dionysus his heroic-divine predecessor in his own conquest of the East and that the badge of Dionysus already then was thought to symbolize the god's conquest of the East,[29] it becomes likely, in light of the importance of Dionysus both for the Macedonian kings and their people, and in light of Ptolemy's coin portrait of Alexander with the Dionysus badge, that at Arbela Alexander assumed this emblem as the insignia of his own conquest, and his kingship, of Asia.

Now it is noteworthy that Plutarch (*Alex.* 34.1) does not say that Alexander proclaimed himself, but rather that he "was proclaimed"

---

probably in 335 B.C.E., picked up on this story by referring to Alexander as παῖς Βάκχου (stroph. 11, vs. 133f.). Vollgraff further believes (427) that "le jeune roi a prétendu à la filiation divine, à titre de fils de Bacchus, dès les débuts de son règne." Cf. Taeger 176. However, this is quite uncertain, and perhaps unlikely. Furthermore, the stories that Alexander considered Dionysus his ancestor (Plut. *Mor.* 332b) and that in 323 B.C.E. he received divine honors at Athens as *Neos Dionysos* (D.L. 6.63) are probably not historical. See Nock 21–30. But they certainly reflect Alexander's close association with the god. Later kings did claim descent from the god (Tondriau 441–66).

[27]Goukowsky 11–14; Alföldi 1949–50: 559–60; 1985: 120–25.

[28]Cf. Piganiol 285–92. The story (*logos*) in Arr. 4.8.1–2 and Curt. 8.2.6 that on one occasion, a holy day of Dionysus, Alexander neglected his sacrifice, sacrificing instead to the Dioscuri, if true, does not mean that he neglected the god also on other occasions. On Alexander on the track of Dionysus in India, see, e.g., Edmunds 376–78.

[29]Alföldi 1985: 125.

(ἀνηγορευμένος) King of Asia. This can only have been done by Alexander's army, although no doubt at his initiative. Still, as long as it was the army, not Alexander himself, that made the proclamation, we may wonder whether Alexander would have wished to be indebted for his kingship to the authority or largesse of his Macedonian troops. He had claimed this kingship from the outset solely on his own authority by virtue of his conquest and the grace of the gods, and therefore was not beholden for it to anyone else (D.S. 17.17.2; Just. 11.5.5–11. Cf. Arr. 2.14.7–9, letter to Darius after Issus).[30] At Arbela, therefore, it is very likely that Alexander gave expression to this fact by himself donning the Dionysus-victory band as the emblem of his new kingship instead of having it placed on him by anyone else. This constituent act, then, would have been acknowledged by his army in their official "proclamation" of his kingship and the whole transaction then ratified by the gods (Plu. *Alex.* 34.1: ἔθυε τοῖς θεοῖς μεγαλοπρεπῶς). The Dionysian background of Alexander's new insignia was surely acceptable to Alexander's army. They never questioned the diadem while he lived, and after his death they regarded it with reverence as the representative symbol of his kingship (D.S. 18.60.6–61.2; Curt. 10.6.4–12; Polyaen. 4.8.2). They would hardly have been so receptive had the badge come from the attire of the Persian Great King.[31]

We may now conclude. It is not very likely that there existed in Macedonia before Alexander an exclusively royal diadem which Alexander adopted, either directly or in a modified form, as emblem of his new kingship in Asia. Such a Macedonian royal diadem, if it existed, would have conveyed the impression that Alexander's Asian kingship was an extension of his Macedonian realm, and in view of Alexander's emphatic attribution of this new kingship to his own victories and the grace of the gods alone, together with his aspirations to autocracy, such a perception can hardly have been his intent. As for the Persian diadem, it was not an exclusively royal badge in the Persian regalia any more than an analogous badge was in Macedonia, and it is unlikely that at Arbela Alexander would have elevated a minor and almost incidental item in the Persian king's attire to serve as the exclusive badge of his kingship.

The remaining possibility is that Alexander adopted as his royal insignia in Asia a band that was associated with the hero-god and conqueror of the East, Dionysus, and that may have had some prior meaning as a sacred badge in

[30]See Schmitthenner 31–46; Mehl 183–86.

[31]If it was not Persian, the implied criticism by the Macedonians of Alexander's adoption of things Persian after Darius' death does not of course apply to the diadem.

Macedonia. The possibility that Alexander adopted the Dionysus badge is supported only by indirect evidence, but on balance it is the most plausible, because it accords with all the known facts and with what we know of Alexander's values and personality. Alexander most likely adopted the badge in October, 331 B.C.E., after what was believed to be the end of the Achaemenid empire as a result of his decisive victory at Gaugamela, on the occasion of his great victory celebration at Arbela and his proclamation as "King of Asia." The likelihood that some form of diadem was already familiar not only to the Persians but also to the Macedonians, if only as an honorific badge, must have rendered both peoples more receptive to Alexander's new insignia. By this badge Alexander not only showed his emulation of the hero-god in his conquest of the East, but also suggested that his new kingship was neither entirely Macedonian nor Persian, but a creation uniquely his own, which rested on the authority of his conquests and the sanction of his Graeco-Macedonian gods. Among those gods, Dionysus was of special significance.[32]

[32]In addition to Dionysus, as suggested in this paper, Alexander apparently placed the invasion of the Persian empire under the aegis of Zeus, Athena, and Heracles as well. But Greek legend had not yet taken Heracles to the East, until traces of his expedition were "found" by the Macedonians in Afghanistan and India. See Brunt 437.

Works Cited

Adams, J. P. 1983. "The *Larnakes* from Tomb II at Vergina." *ArchN* 12: 1–7.

Alföldi, A. 1949–50. "Die Geschichte des Throntabernakels." *NClio* 1–2: 537–66.

———. 1985. *Caesar in 44 v. Chr., I: Studien zu Caesars Monarchie und ihren Wurzeln*, ed. H. Wolff. Bonn.

Baege, W. 1913. *De Macedonum Sacris*. Dissertationes Philologicae Halenses 22. Halle.

Berve, H. 1926. *Das Alexanderreich auf prosopographischer Grundlage*. Vols. 1 and 2. Munich.

Bieber, M. 1964. *Alexander the Great in Greek and Roman Art*. Chicago.

Borza, E. N. 1981. "The Macedonian Royal Tombs at Vergina. Some Cautionary Notes." *ArchN* 10: 75–87.

———. 1983. "The Symposium at Alexander's Court." *ArchMak* III: 45–55.

———. 1990. *In the Shadow of Olympus: The Emergence of Macedon*. Princeton.

Bosworth, A. B. 1980. "Alexander and the Iranians." *JHS* 100: 1–21.

———. 1988. *Conquest and Empire: The Reign of Alexander the Great*. Cambridge.

———. 1995. *A Historical Commentary on Arrian's History of Alexander*. Vol. 2. Oxford.

Brunt, P. A. 1983. *Arrian*. Vol. 2 (Loeb ed.). Cambridge, Mass.

Carney, E. D. 1987. "Olympias." *AncSoc* 18: 35–62.

Droysen, J. G. 1952. *Geschichte des Hellenismus*. Vol. 2, ed. E. Bayer. Rev. ed. Tübingen.

Edmunds, L. 1971. "The Religiosity of Alexander." *GRBS* 12: 363–91.

Franke, P. R. 1952–53. "Geschichte, Politik und Münzprägung im frühen Makedonien." *JNG* 3–4: 99–111.

———. 1956. "Literaturüberblicke der griechischen Numismatik. Makedonien." *JNG* 7: 105–12.

Fredricksmeyer, E. A. 1966. "The Ancestral Rites of Alexander the Great." *CP* 61: 179–82.

Gagé, J. 1975. "Alexandre le Grand en Macédoine dans le Ière moitié du IIIe siècle av. J.-C." *Historia* 24: 1–16.

Gschnitzer, F. 1968. Rev. of H. W. Ritter, *Diadem und Königsherrschaft*. *AAHG* 21: 167–70.

Goukowsky, P. 1981. *Essai sur les origines du mythe d'Alexandre. II: Alexandre et Dionysos*. Nancy.

Green, P. 1982. "The Royal Tombs at Vergina: A Historical Analysis." In W. L. Adams and E. N. Borza, eds., *Philip II, Alexander the Great and the Macedonian Heritage*. Washington, D.C. 129–51.

Greenwalt, W. 1994a. "A Solar Dionysus and Argead Legitimacy." *AW* 25: 3–8.

———. 1994b. "The Production of Coinage from Archelaus to Perdiccas III and the Evolution of Argead Macedonia." In I. Worthington, ed., *Ventures into Greek History*. Oxford. 105–34.

———. 1997. "Thracian Influence on the Ideology of Argead Kingship." *Second International Symposium of Thracian Studies*: 1–23. Forthcoming. I wish to thank the author for kindly sending me an advance copy.

Hamilton, J. R. 1969. *Plutarch: Alexander. A Commentary*. Oxford.

Hammond, N. G. L. 1982. "The Evidence for the Identity of the Royal Tombs at Vergina." In W. L. Adams and E. N. Borza, eds., *Philip II, Alexander the Great and the Macedonian Heritage*. Washington D.C. 111–27.

———. 1983. *Three Historians of Alexander the Great*. Cambridge.

———. 1985. "Some Macedonian Offices *c.* 336–309 B.C." *JHS* 105: 156–60.

———. 1986. "The Kingdom of Asia and the Persian Throne." *Antichthon* 20: 73–85.

———. 1989. *The Macedonian State: Origins, Institutions, and History*. Oxford.

———. 1991. "The Royal Tombs at Vergina: Evolution and Identities." *ABSA* 86: 69–82.

———. 1994. *Alexander the Great: King. Commander and Statesman.* 3rd ed. London.
Hoffmann, O. 1906. *Die Makedonen. Ihre Sprache und ihr Volkstum.* Göttingen.
Hatzopoulos, M. B., and L. D. Loukopoulos. 1980. *Philip of Macedon.* Athens.
Kraay, C. M., and M. Hirmer. 1966. *Greek Coins.* New York.
Kaiser, W. B. 1966. Rev. of H. W. Ritter, *Diadem und Königsherrschaft. Gnomon* 38: 304–305.
Krug, A. 1968. *Binden in der griechischen Kunst.* Hösel.
Mamroth, A. 1949–52. "Die Tetradrachmen Königs Philippos II. von Makedonien." *BNZ* 1: 13–16.
Mehl, A. 1980–81. "ΔΟΡΙΚΤΗΤΟΣ ΧΑΡΑ: Kritische Bemerkungen zum 'Speererwerb' in Politik und Völkerrecht der hellenistischen Epoche." *AncSoc* 11–12: 183–86.
National Gallery of Art (U.S.). 1980. *The Search for Alexander. An Exhibition.* Boston and New York.
Nock, A. D. 1928. "Notes on Ruler Cult." *JHS* 48: 19–43.
Piganiol, A. 1940. "Les Dionysies d'Alexandre." *REA* 42: 285–92.
Poulsen, V. 1954. *Les portraits grecs.* Copenhagen.
Price, M. 1974. *Coins of the Macedonians.* London.
Richter, G. M. 1965. *The Portraits of the Greeks.* Vol. 3. London.
Ritter, H. W. 1965. *Diadem und Königsherrschaft.* Munich and Berlin.
———. 1984. "Zum sogenannten Diadem des Philippsgrabes." *AA* Heft 1: 105–11.
Sakellariou, M. B., ed. 1983. *Macedonia.* Athens.
Schachermeyr, F. 1973. *Alexander der Grosse. Das Problem seiner Persönlichkeit und seines Wirkens.* Vienna.
Schmitthenner, W. 1968. "Über eine Formveränderung der Monarchie seit Alexander d. Gr." *Saeculum* 19: 31–46.
Smith, R. R. R. 1988. *Hellenistic Royal Portraits.* Oxford.
Theodossiev, N. 1995. "The Sacred Mountain of the Ancient Thracians." *Academia Litterarum Bulgarica. Institutum Thracologicum. Studia in Honorem Alexandri Fol. Thracia* 11: 371–84.
Taeger, F. 1957. *Charisma. Studien zur Geschichte des antiken Herrscherkultes.* Vol. 1. Stuttgart.
Tondriau, J. 1952. "Dionysos, dieu royal." Mélanges H. Grégoire IV. *AlPhO* 12: 441–66.
Vollgraff, W. 1927. "Le Péan Delphique à Dionysos." *BCH* 51: 423–68.
Will, W. 1986. *Alexander der Grosse.* Stuttgart.
Wirth, G. 1973. *Alexander der Grosse.* Reinbeck bei Hamburg.