

Why did the Successors meet at Triparadeisus?*

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ABSTRACT This note puts forward an alternative suggestion for why the Successors met at Triparadeisus in 320 that calls into doubt the prevailing opinion that they were constantly at loggerheads with each other.

KEYWORDS Successors, Triparadeisus, Early Hellenistic Diplomacy

The settlement at Triparadeisus in 320 (low chronology) has been much discussed¹. Alexander the Great's first-generation Successors met there after Perdiccas had been assassinated during his disastrous invasion of Egypt², thereby wrecking what the Successors had decided for the future of the old Macedonian Empire at Babylon in 323³. It was obvious that another settlement in 320 was necessary. Perdiccas had been regent of the two kings, and although the regency had been offered to Ptolemy after Perdiccas' death, he had refused it, naming instead Pithon and Arrhidaeus as co-regents⁴. His measure must have been intended as a stopgap until a new and more formal settlement could be decided, including who would be regent. We cannot imagine powerful men such as Antipater or Monophthalmus would have been content to allow Pithon, an army commander who was one of Perdiccas' assassins⁵, and Arrhidaeus, who had hijacked Alexander's hearse at Damascus in 321⁶, to wield the power of the regency over them. In fact, Antipater made sure that he became guardian of the two kings by taking charge of the proceedings and clashing with the outspoken and calculating Eurydice, wife of Philip III, who was angry that she was not named guardian⁷.

In this paper I am not concerned about the terms of the 320 settlement, but why the meeting was held at Triparadeisus, which hitherto has not been properly considered. On the one hand, it was a convenient location, with Antipater en route from Cilicia, Antigonus in Cyprus, and Ptolemy (and the two kings and regents) in Egypt. On the

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¹ D.S. 18.39; Arr. *BNJ* 156 F 9, 34-38; Polyae. 4.6.4, with, for example, ERRINGTON 1970; ROISMAN 2012, 136-144; LANDUCCI GATTINONI 2014.

² D.S. 18.33-37; Arr. *BNJ* 156 F 9, 28; Paus. 1.6.3; Justin 13.8.1-2, 10, with ROISMAN 2012, 93-107; ROISMAN 2014; WORTHINGTON 2016, 95-99.

³ Babylon settlement: ROSEN 1967; ROSEN 1968; BOSWORTH 1993; BOSWORTH 2002; MEUSS 2008; ANSON 2014, 14-28; WORTHINGTON 2016, 73-83.

⁴ D.S. 18.36.6-7 (Ptolemy), Arr. *BNJ* 156 F 9, 30 (Pithon and Arrhidaeus), with WORTHINGTON 2016, 98-99.

⁵ D.S. 18.36.5, Paus. 1.6.3; cf. Just. 13.8.10. *Contra* Arr. *BNJ* 156 F 9, 28; Str. 17.1.8, Nepos, *Eumenes* 5.1, but on these suspect accounts cf. WORTHINGTON 2016, 97 n. 47.

⁶ D.S. 18.28.2-3; Arr. *BNJ* 156 F 9, 25; Paus. 1.6.3.

⁷ D.S. 18.39.4-7; Arr. *BNJ* 156 F 9.31-33; Polyae. 4.6.4, with ROISMAN 2012, 136-142, 157-158.

other hand, the location, I suggest, was a deliberate choice because of the social and recreational environment it provided. As such, the selection of Triparadeisus provides an insight into the relationships between these men at this time, which goes against the commonly held view of them as constantly at loggerheads with each other and eager to seize any opportunity to extend their territories.

The actual location of Triparadeisus is unknown, but it was probably in southern Syria – Diodorus speaks of it in ἄνω Συρία⁸. Of course, none of the Successors may have relished the prospect of erstwhile comrades and now opponents meeting on their own turf, hence neutral ground was appropriate. Animosities between them had grown during Alexander's reign, perhaps even encouraged by the king to prevent any sort of union against him, and friction was certainly evident at Babylon⁹. Everyone there was suspicious of Perdiccas' ambition¹⁰, just as Antigonos (who was not present) later 'was not swayed by Perdiccas' edicts, and was already ambitious and scornful of all his comrades'¹¹. Eumenes, an ally of Perdiccas, was likewise viewed with distrust – Monophthalmus had not sent him expected military support in Cappadocia, and when Antipater and Craterus marched against Perdiccas in 320, Eumenes defeated and killed Craterus in battle¹². In fact, after Perdiccas' death in Egypt, Ptolemy in tandem with the two kings condemned Eumenes and other Perdiccan supporters to death *in absentia*¹³, so for a time almost all the Successors were united in opposition to these men.

The ensuing Wars of the Successors, taking up almost forty years, hardly come as a surprise to us, and probably were not to the leaders in question, given their ambitions and attitude towards each other¹⁴. Thus when the first war ended on Perdiccas' death and the protagonists assembled at Triparadeisus and thrashed out another settlement, the question we normally ask is not whether this settlement would last, but for how long? And it was not long; Antipater's death in 319 and his disregard of Cassander sparked the second war (319-316)¹⁵.

But were the Successors really at each other's throats in 320, and by extension are we right to have a pessimistic view of the longevity of the next settlement? The questions get us back to why they gathered at Triparadeisus. Its name provides the clue; as several of our ancient writers state, a paradeisus was an area of natural beauty, like a park, or, more often, a hunting ground of animals¹⁶. The two are not mutually exclusive. That it was an attractive and lush area gave rise to its usage in the Septuagint

⁸ D.S. 18.39.1.

⁹ HECKEL 2002.

¹⁰ Arr. *BNJ* 156 F 1, 5, with WIRTH 1967; BOSWORTH 1993. Those at Babylon may have delayed leaving for their territories until Roxane gave birth to ensure Perdiccas did not try to undo their agreement: WORTHINGTON 2016, 89.

¹¹ Plu. *Eumenes* 3.3.

¹² D.S. 18.30.5-60; Arr. *BNJ* 156 F 9, 26-27; Plu. *Eumenes* 7; Nepos, *Eumenes* 4.1-4, with ROISMAN 2012, 127-134.

¹³ D.S. 18.37.1, 59.4; Arr. *BNJ* 156 F 9, 30; Just. 13.8.10, 14.1.1; cf. Plu. *Eumenes* 8.1-3.

¹⁴ Wars: WILL 1984; BENGTON 1987; HAMMOND – WALBANK 1988, 117-244; HECKEL 2002; BOSWORTH 2002; BENNETT – ROBERTS 2008-2009; ROISMAN 2012; WATERFIELD 2011; ANSON 2014. See, also, the essays in HAUBEN – MEEUS 2014.

¹⁵ D.S. 18.55-57, with GREEN 1990, 18-20; WATERFIELD 2011, 75-83.

¹⁶ Josephus, *Antiq.* 7.14.4 ('King's paradise'); cf. 8.7.3, 10.3.2; Xen. *Anab.* 1.2.7 ('a large park full of wild animals', which Cyrus hunted for exercise); cf. 1.2.9; Xen. *Cyr.* 8.1.38 (Cyrus used to hunt 'the animals kept in the park'); cf. 1.13.14; D.S. 14.80.2 ('the pleasure park of Tissaphernes'); D.S. 16.41.5 ('the royal park where the Persian kings customarily went for relaxation'); Plu. *Artaxerxes* 25.1 ('a royal stopping-off place with lush parks'). See also GREEN 1990, 12-17.

as the Garden of Eden, and in the New Testament the equivalent of paradise, like no place on earth¹⁷. It was, in a nutshell, the equivalent of a modern resort.

The Successors decided to meet at Triparadeisus, I suggest, because it was both a convenient location and, especially, it offered the chance to combine politics with leisure. In this respect, it was analogous to a Macedonian symposium: a social gathering with an important political design of forging ties between the elite and, with the king attending, even an informal counseling forum¹⁸. In the aftermath of Perdiccas' death, with everyone still suspicious of each other, the meeting at Triparadeisus afforded these men the opportunity to relax, socialize, and even to try to rebuild bridges. A more modern analogy would be the politics discussed and deals made over a golfing match at a plush resort. The aftermath of Alexander's death at Babylon was chaotic to say the least, with the troops forcing their way into the palace, putting forward their own demands, and even forcing Perdiccas and some of the others to hide in fear of their lives¹⁹. On top of that there was the common distrust of Perdiccas and the current moods of the senior staff towards each other. We might image that after dividing up the empire each man was probably thankful to take his leave. But in 320, with Perdiccas the principal protagonist of the years since the settlement at Babylon, dead, the future might well look more optimistic.

There were other pleasant locations throughout the Macedonian Empire, so we cannot know for sure exactly why Triparadeisus was chosen, thanks to the nature of our sources. But what we can say, I believe, is that the meeting there offers us an intriguing insight into the mood of the Successors that we might not normally consider. There is no question that each man was ambitious, and that each was wary of the other, but with the dual monarchy in place and the disliked Perdiccas no longer a concern, there may have been an attempt to bury some hatchets in the hunting and socialising that would have taken place. Otherwise, why gather there except to combine business with pleasure? The location would also have provided a pleasant and much-needed break for the troops, many who had recently fought in Egypt, not to mention allowing them the opportunity to become familiar with the new regent of the two kings, to whom they still pledged loyalty.

In 320, then, the Successors may well have made a conscious attempt to reduce their personal enmity and suspicion by meeting at a place like Triparadeisus. Unfortunately, it turned out to be only a short hiatus in their wars, for not long after the settlement Ptolemy showed his ambition by seizing Syria²⁰. Then in 319 Antipater's death set off the chain reaction of ensuing wars and frequent changes of alliances that have made us view these men as nonstop enemies and schemers.

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¹⁷ Luke 23.43.

¹⁸ BORZA 1983; POWNALL 2010.

¹⁹ D.S. 18.2.2-4; Arr. *BNJ* 156 F 1, 2; Curt. 10.7.11-9.11; Justin 13.3.5-10, with ROISMAN 2012, 71-81; ERRINGTON 1970, 50-51; MEEUS 2008, 44.

²⁰ D.S. 18.43.

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