
The Agathocles Affair

or, The Fall of the House of Lysimachus

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ABSTRACT Lysimachus (*ca.* 355-281 BCE) is the only Successor of Alexander the Great who did not establish a lasting dynasty. The Agathocles Affair is generally considered the critical moment that led to the fall of the house of Lysimachus. Rather than the king or his heir, the king's youngest wife Arsinoe has traditionally received all blame for the succession crisis. This paper reevaluates the Agathocles Affair within the context of Lysimachus' polygynous marital relations as a case study of the troubled position of the designated heir as well as the sons of the king's other wives.

KEYWORDS Lysimachus, Agathocles, Thrace, Macedonian kingdom, dynastic succession, marital relations.

Introduction

Lysimachus met his death at the Battle of Corupedium (February 281 BCE) at the age of 74. Just a few years before he had laid claim to sole kingship of Macedonia; he ruled over Thrace and part of Asia Minor; his son and heir Agathocles had chased Demetrius into the hands of Seleucus; Lysimachus was, in a word, at the height of his power. Then it all came crumbling down. His wife Amastris was killed by her sons from a former marriage; Agathocles was executed on account of treason; and Ptolemy Ceraunus convinced Seleucus to declare war. Where did it all go wrong?

Unlike the other Successors, he had failed to prevent a succession crisis. Whereas Ptolemy publicly proclaimed his son with Berenice his heir and in some way abdicated or shared power with him, and Seleucus designated his heir in part by marrying his youngest wife Stratonice to his son Antiochus, Lysimachus ultimately could not avoid the dynastic struggles between sons of his various wives to bring down his royal house. The fall of the house of Lysimachus thus offers an appropriate case study for the troubles with polygyny, the appointment of an heir, and the position of the sons of other wives.

This paper will examine the roles played by the main actors in this tragic drama: Lysimachus, king of Thrace, Asia Minor and Macedon; his wife Arsinoe, daughter of Ptolemy of Egypt; Agathocles, the king's heir apparent, son of Nicaea; Ceraunus, son of Ptolemy of Egypt; and Seleucus, king of West Asia. As Agathocles was executed after a trial before a military assembly, he must have been involved in some conspiracy against his father. But who were his accomplices? Arsinoe gets the blame in the sources, as the scheming wife; but what part did Ceraunus and Seleucus play in this ruinous affair? The Agathocles Affair, in short, is a study not only in dynastic succession, but also in ancient and modern historiography, and a reassessment of historical motivation.

Traditionally, the blame for the downfall of the house of Lysimachus is placed squarely on Lysimachus' youngest wife Arsinoe. Ancient historians insist that Arsinoe brought calamity upon Lysimachus, forced him to repudiate his dear wife Amastris, reigned ruthlessly in her assigned territories, felt an unrequited love for her stepson Agathocles, and required her husband to execute his son on account of treason. Modern historians for their part have described Arsinoe in violent hyperbole as a sex kitten with claws, little more than a girl with not a little of a tigress, a bird of prey chased by a tempest, and a rattlesnake disturbed with an iron will¹. (I will refrain from commenting on the apparent misogyny that these modern misapprehensions express).

A more positive presentation credits Arsinoe with Lysimachus' sudden philhellenism, *i.e.*, the expansion of his sphere of influence into the Aegean and Greek mainland as evinced at Athens and Thebes, in Aetolia and Delos². In the first full-scale modern biography, Gabriella Longega presents the Hellenistic period as an age when royal women like Arsinoe began assuming political importance, concluding peace treaties and alliances, or waging war³.

Hazzard summarized his reactionary presentation of the queen under the header "Arsinoe's Inglorious Career", –appealing to the authority of Otto, Will, Heinen, and Burstein– in which he portrays the queen as an ineffective schemer, victimized by her half-brother Ceraunus, and forced to seek refuge with her full-brother Philadelphus⁴. Apart from his arbitrary use of scholarly literature, more importantly, Hazzard deliberately distorts the evidence to suit his purpose. Nevertheless, even he cannot escape the conclusion that Arsinoe occupied a prominent position at court in the 280s BCE and was directly responsible both for the death of Agathocles as well as indirectly that of Lysimachus.

Burstein, who had published his 'revisionist view' of Arsinoe two decades earlier, rightly stresses that apart from her marriage to Lysimachus, "little is known of Arsinoe before the 280's", when, however, "her prominence at court is clear"⁵. Employing descriptive words such as "desperate", "disaster" and "tragedy", Burstein certainly paints a bleak picture of Arsinoe's position in Thrace and Macedon. Pomeroy concurs that Arsinoe's plot against Agathocles was ill conceived⁶.

Conversely, Landucci Gattinoni and Lund contend that rather than Arsinoe, it was Agathocles who had conspired against his father, which Ogden rightly remarks would still point to pressure from Arsinoe⁷. Dmitriev, for his part, reasons that the fall of the house of Lysimachus was primarily caused by Ceraunus' arrival at court, after his father had expressed his favor for the future Ptolemy II⁸. In her biography on Arsinoe, Carney merely resigns that, "we will never know what finally led Lysimachus to [kill his son] and how large a role Arsinoë had in it"⁹.

¹ ROHDE 1876, 64; GERCKE 1887, 270-271; BOUCHÉ-LECLERCQ 1903-1907, I, 160; BEVAN 1927, 54, 57; LONGEGA 1958, 55; HUZAR 1966, 337; GREEN 1990, 122, 132.

² Cf. BOUCHÉ-LECLERCQ 1903-1907, I, 144-147; TARN 1913, 123-124; BEVAN 1927, 54-55; MACURDY 1932, 112-114; CARY 1951, 84-85; BENGTON 1975, 113-114; OGDEN 1999, 59-62.

³ LONGEGA 1968, esp. 15.

⁴ HAZZARD 2000, 82-85; cf. OTTO 1931, 413-414 (arguing against Tarn's interpretation of the First Syrian War as "Arsinoe's war"); HEINEN 1972, 99 n. 14 (arguing against Longega's interpretation of the Chremonidean War as driven by Arsinoe); WILL 1979-1982, I, 198-199.

⁵ BURSTEIN 1982, 198-199.

⁶ POMEROY 1984, 18.

⁷ LANDUCCI GATTINONI 1992, 211-214; LUND 1992, 196-198; OGDEN 1999, 61.

⁸ DMITRIEV 2007; also, see: COLLINS 1997, 464-473.

⁹ CARNEY 2013, 45.

In light of the widely divergent modern interpretations of Arsinoe and of her role in the downfall of Agathocles and Lysimachus, an in-depth analysis of the events at hand would seem appropriate. An assessment of the roles of the various actors in the tragic court drama will moreover contribute to a new paradigm for better appreciating Hellenistic queenship in general and Arsinoe in particular.

A word of caution about the surviving ancient sources might be expedient for gauging the state of our knowledge due to the nature of the historiography. Evidence for the downfall of Lysimachus and the “Agathocles Affair” derives mainly from: Memnon of Heraclea (*fl.* second century CE), as excerpted by Photius (*ca.* 810-893 CE)¹⁰; Pausanias’ *Periegesis* (*ca.* 150 CE); and Justin’s *Epitome* (*ca.* third century CE) of Trogus’ *Philippic History* (*ca.* late first century BCE). In addition, there is a passing reference in Eusebius’ *Chronicle* (*ca.* 325 CE), derived from Porphyry (*ca.* 235-*ca.* 305 CE); as well as a throw-away snide remark in the *Icaromennipus* by Lucian (*ca.* 125-*ca.* 175 CE). Apart from the fact that these authors are centuries removed from the events at hand, Justin’s work is notoriously sensationalist; Pausanias is often hopelessly confused; and the summary of Memnon’s account is prone to particularism.

Perhaps more importantly, the accounts of Memnon, Pausanias and Justin all depend to a large degree (directly or indirectly) on the works of Duris of Samos (*ca.* 350-280 BCE), Hieronymus of Cardia (*ca.* 355-240 BCE) and/or Nymphis of Heraclea (*fl. ca.* 250 BCE), who, though all (near) contemporaries, each had their own axe to grind and are known to be untrustworthy¹¹. Pausanias, precisely in his portrait of Lysimachus, criticizes Hieronymus for being biased against all kings except Antigonus Monophthalmus –and especially against Lysimachus (on account of ruining Cardia when he founded Lysimachea)¹². Nymphis, for his part, had been exiled from Heraclea in Bithynia probably during the regime of Heracleides of Cyme, Arsinoe’s governor; which might well explain the venomous depiction of Arsinoe and the glowing admiration for Amastris expressed in Memnon’s excerpts¹³. Longega dedicates a substantial section of her examination of the Agathocles Affair to source criticism (*Quellenforschung*), which, though laudable, ultimately fails to contribute an objective method for separating the wheat from the chaff –*i.e.*, the valuable facts from the worthless fiction¹⁴. In fact, one might be tempted to conclude that all authors were unreliable and that the “truth” has been irretrievably lost¹⁵. That, nevertheless, would appear to be a case of throwing out the baby with the bath water.

A dose of subjectivism is thus inescapable for establishing what is deemed plausible –and what is not. It is impossible to prove beyond doubt what *really* happened at Lysimachus’ court. As historians, however, I believe our task is to adhere as closely to the surviving sources as possible, rather than dismiss them as unreliable and construct an alternative narrative based on figments of our own imagination –however fertile or erudite that imagination might appear. The following analysis will begin with a

¹⁰ Photius’ epitome, e.g., summarizes Memnon’s books 9-12 in just about 2,500 words; it is therefore misguided to treat Photius’ account as a quotation of Memnon and even more so as direct citation of Nymphis’ words; cf. *RE s.v.* ‘Memnon’, no. 4, XV(1): 653-654; *RE s.v.* ‘Photios’, no. 13, XX(1): 667-737; TARN 1913, 124-125, n. 25 (“We must follow Memnon-Nymphis where possible); JANKE 1963, esp. 1-3; HEINEN 1972, esp. 12 n. 29, 15-16; HEINEMANN 2010, 9-13.

¹¹ *RE s.v.* ‘Duris’, no. 3, V(2): 1853-1856; OKIN 1974; KEBRIC 1977; LANDUCCI GATTINONI 1997.

¹² Paus. 1.9.8; *RE s.v.* ‘Hieronymos’, no. 10, VIII.2, 1540-1560; REUSS 1876; HORNBLLOWER 1981; ROISMAN 2010.

¹³ Memn. *FGrH* 434 F 5.4, 7.2; *RE s.v.* ‘Nymphis’, XVII.2, 1608-1623; JANKE 1963, esp. 10-11; HEINEN 1972, 10-11, n. 27; HEINEMANN 2010, 14-15.

¹⁴ LONGEGA 1968, 44-54; cf. HEINEN 1972, 6-7 n. 18; LUND 1992, 187-189.

¹⁵ *Pace* TARN 1913, 123-124; LUND 1992, 189-190; CARNEY 2013, 44-45.

reevaluation of both the ancient and the modern historiography, and then offer a close re-examination of the chronology of the course of events. I will assess Arsinoe's position among the other wives of Lysimachus, and subsequently appraise the possible roles of the various actors involved in the drama at Lysimachus' court in the 280s BCE: not only Arsinoe, but also Agathocles, Ptolemy Ceraunus, Ptolemy (later of Telmessus), Lysandra, as well as Lysimachus himself. Perhaps it will prove beneficial, though, first to give brief sketches of the individuals and events preceding the downfall of Agathocles and Lysimachus.

PRESENTATION OF THE ACTORS

Allow me to begin with a presentation of the actors involved in the dramatic events leading up to the downfall of Agathocles and Lysimachus. There can be little doubt that Lysimachus (*ca.* 355-282 BCE) was one of the close confidants and companions (*hetairoi*) of Alexander the Great¹⁶. Nonetheless, he hardly appears in the Alexander history. While he was born in Pella, Macedon, his father Agathocles was from Crannon, Thessaly. He is placed among the Companions who tried to restrain Alexander during the Cleitus Affair (mid-328 BCE) and he is said to have angered Alexander by relieving Callisthenes' suffering (late 328 BCE)¹⁷. By the time of the crossing of the Hydaspes (May 326 BCE) at the latest, Lysimachus was part of the prestigious corps of the royal bodyguards (*somatophylakes*)¹⁸. After Alexander's death at Babylon (June 323 BCE), Thrace was allocated to Lysimachus, including territory yet to be subjected to Macedonian rule¹⁹. Like the other Successors, Lysimachus donned the royal fillet (*diadēma*) and with it laid claim to kingship within his realm (*ca.* 305 BCE)²⁰. He expanded his territory at the expense of the Antigonids and Seleucids –and eventually dislodged Pyrrhus from Macedon to establish his own reign there.

Lysimachus is said to have *outlived* fifteen of his children and –like Demetrius and Ptolemy, as well as Alexander and Philip before– was openly polygamous²¹. Lysimachus is left unmentioned among the grooms who received a Persian or Median bride during the mass wedding at Susa (March 324 BCE). I have argued elsewhere that

¹⁶ For Lysimachus (esp. his early career), see: Paus. 1.9.5-1.10.5; Nep. *Reg.* 3; HÜNERWADEL 1900, 11-13; POSSENTI 1901, 41-44; NIESE 1893-1903, I, 63, 192, 197-246, 274-275, *pass.*; BELOCH 1912-1927, IV.2, 129; SAITTA 1955; HECKEL 1982; LANDUCCI GATTINONI 1992, 73-89; LUND 1992, esp. 1-18; FRANCO 1993; DELEV 1995; VAN OPPEN 2024.

¹⁷ Curt. Ruf. 8.1.11-19, 45-48, 5.22; cf. Plu. *Alex.* 50-52, 55; Plu. *Demetr.* 27.3; Paus. 1.9.5; Arr. *An.* 4.8.1-9.4, 12.2; Just. *Epit.* 15.3; BERVE 1926, I, 26-27, II, 329-335, no. 668; CARNEY 1981, 1996; ASHTON 1983; HECKEL 1986; BOSWORTH 1988, 103-104, 107-108, 115, 118-119; LUND 1992, 6; VAN OPPEN 2014a.

¹⁸ Arr. *An.* 5.13.1, 6.28.4; App. *Syr.* 54; TARN 1948, II, 138-141; HECKEL 1986, esp. 291; LUND 1992, 4.

¹⁹ D.S. 18.3; Curt. Ruf. 10.10; Paus. 1.6.4, 9.5; App. *Syr.* 9.53; Arr. *Succ.* 5; Just. *Epit.* 13.4; BOSWORTH 1988, 175-178.

²⁰ D.S. 20.53.3; Plu. *Demetr.* 18.2; App. *Syr.* 9.54; Just. *Epit.* 15.2; GRUEN 1985, esp. 258 and 267 n. 37; LEHMANN 1988, esp. 6-10.

²¹ Plu. *Comp. Demetr. Ant.* 4.1: Δημήτριος μὲν, οὐ κεκωλυμένον, ἀλλ' ἀπὸ Φιλίππου καὶ Ἀλεξάνδρου γεγονὸς ἐν ἔθει τοῖς Μακεδόνων βασιλεῦσιν, ἐγάμει γάμους πλείονας, ὥσπερ Λυσίμαχος καὶ Πτολεμαῖος, ἔσχε δὲ διὰ τιμῆς ὅσας ἔγημεν; “Demetrius did not do what was prohibited, but what had become customary for the kings of Macedon from Philip and Alexander, for he made many marriages, just as Lysimachus and Ptolemy, and held all the women he married in honor”; Just. *Epit.* 17.2.1: *Lysimachus amissis ante variis casibus quindecim liberis non instrenue Moriens*; “Lysimachus having previously lost in various ways fifteen children died not without spirit”; HEINEN 1972, 35-36; DMITRIEV 2007, n. 2.

it is impossible that a close confidant of Alexander like Lysimachus would not have received a Persian noblewoman in marriage; nor would he have had reason to repudiate her after Alexander's death²² (more about this Susan bride below). As a corollary, I would suggest the possibility that daughters of this (admittedly hypothetical) Susan bride were given to the Odrysian king Seuthes (*ca.* 313/2 BCE) and the Getic king Dromichaetes (*ca.* 293/2 BCE)²³. Conversely, I would rather suggest considering the Odrysian wife, mentioned by Pausanias as mother of Lysimachus' son Alexander, as a confusion with Oxyathres' daughter Amastris, who Polyaeus names as mother of the same Alexander²⁴.

Around the time of the Settlement of Triparadisus, the venerable regent Antipater established marital alliances with several of the chief Successors of Alexander the Great (*ca.* 320/19 BCE)²⁵. While Antipater's eldest (known) daughter Phila was married to Antigonos' son Demetrius and his youngest daughter Eurydice was given to Ptolemy, Nicaea was wed to Lysimachus²⁶. Although no source names her as mother of any of Lysimachus' children, she is generally assumed to have given birth at least to her husband's eldest son Agathocles, and two daughters, Eurydice and Arsinoe²⁷. As per

²² VAN OPPEN 2014a; 2024; cf. LUND 1992, 215 n. 36. For the Susa nuptials, see: DROYSSEN 1877-1878, I.2, 241-247; NIESE 1893-1903, I, 165-166; BELOCH 1912-1927, IV.1, 34-35; TARN 1948, I, 109-111; II, 333-334; SEIBERT 1967, 5; BOSWORTH 1988, 156-158; BROSIUS 1996, 77-78; CARNEY 1996, 577-579; OGDEN 1999, 44-46; HOFF 2002; O'NEIL 2002; GRAINGER 2007, 89-90; HECKEL 2008, 137-141.

²³ For Seuthes and his wife Berenice, see: *IGBR* III.2, 148 no. 1731 = *SEG* 42: 661; also, see: *IG* II² 9233 = *SEG* 26: 329, 32: 305 (Σεύθης | Λυσιμαχεύς); cf. Thuc. 2.101.5-6; BURSTEIN 1984, 66 n. 34; 1986, 24 n. 33; LUND 1992, 29-30, 215 nn. 36-37; ELVERS 1994. For Dromichaetes, see: *RE* s.v. 'Dromichaetes', no. 1, V.2, 1715; DROYSSEN 1877-1878, II, 275-279; NIESE 1893-1903, I, 367-369; BELOCH 1912-1927, IV.1, 223-226; IV.2, 248; TARN 1913, 40; LANDUCCI GATTINONI 1992, 14-17, 182-185; LUND 1992, 45-48; DELEV 2000; DMITRIEV 2007, 138-141; VAN OPPEN 2024, 59, 61.

²⁴ For the Odrysian woman, see: Paus. 1.10.4-5 (υἱὸς μὲν Λυσιμάχου, γεγονὼς δὲ ἐξ Ὀδρυσιάδος γυναικός); Polyaeus. *Strat.* 6.12 (Mss. Μηκρίδης; emend. Palmerius, Αμῆστριδος); *RE* s.v. 'Lysimachos', no. 1, XIV.1, 30; DROYSSEN 1877-1878, II.2, 326 n. 3 (misattributing Agathocles to the Odrysian); NIESE 1893-1903, I, 367; BELOCH 1912-1927, IV.2, 130; SAIITA 1955, 72; SEIBERT 1967, 94-96; LANDUCCI GATTINONI 1992, 122; LUND 1992, 29; OGDEN 1999, 57-59; DMITRIEV 2007, 136 n. 2; VAN OPPEN 2024, 62-63. For Alexander, additionally see: *RE* s.v. 'Alexandros', no. 17, I.1, 1436-1437; NIESE 1893-1903, I, 403 (erroneously assigning Alexander to Nicaea).

²⁵ D.S. 18.39; Arr. *Succ.* 30-38; Paus. 1.6.8; Just. *Epit.* 8; *RE* s.v. 'Triparadeisos', 2nd ser. VII.1, 177-178; DROYSSEN 1877-1878, II.1, 90, 147; NIESE 1893-1903, I, 223-224; BELOCH 1912-1917, IV.2, 235-249, 314-316, 616-619; MANNI 1949; 1951, 70-81; TARN 1952, 1-7; SMITH 1961, 283-290; SEIBERT 1967, 11-19, 27; ERRINGTON 1970; 1977; BENGTONSON 1977, 369-373; HAUBEN 1977; WILL 1979-1982, I, 19-46; ANSON 1986; 2003; BILLOWS 1990, 68-71; LUND 1992, 19-50; STYLIANOU 1994; HABICHT 1995, 54; OGDEN 1999, 53-54, 69; BOIY 2007, 111-137; LANDUCCI GATTINONI 2011; VAN OPPEN 2015a.

²⁶ For Nicaea, see: Str. 12.4.7 (565); Steph. Byz. s.v. 'Nikaia'; *RE* s.v. 'Nikaia', no. 2, XVII.1, 220-221; DROYSSEN 1877-1878, II.1, 85, 98-99, 103, II.2, 196, 237, 318; NIESE 1893-1903, I, 236, 389, 397; TARN 1913, 16; BERVE 1926, II, 274, no. 552; BELOCH 1912-1927, IV.2, 127, 129-130, 178-179; SEIBERT 1967, 16-17, 80, 93-94; Cohen 1973; WILL 1979-82, I, 34, 86; LUND 1992, 54, 186; OGDEN 1999, 57-59; HECKEL 2006, 175; DMITRIEV 2007, 136; BENNETT s.v. 'Arsinoe I', n. 3 (iii); VAN OPPEN 2024, 59-62.

²⁷ For Agathocles, see: *RE* s.v. 'Agathokles', no. 18, I.1, 757; DROYSSEN 1836, 555, 610; NIESE 1893-1903, I, 380-381; BELOCH 1912-1927, IV.1, 221-223, IV.2, 131, 179; TARN 1913, 16, 37; SEIBERT 1967, 80; WILL 1979-1982, I, 87; LUND 1992, 45-46, 185-199, *pass.*; OGDEN 1999, 58; DMITRIEV 2007, *pass.*; CARNEY 2013, 44-47. For Eurydice, see: *RE* s.v. 'Eurydike', no. 18, III.1, 1327; DROYSSEN 1877-1878, II.2, 251, 263-264, 275, 299, 320; NIESE 1893-1903, I, 376; BELOCH 1912-1927, IV.1, 217, IV.2, 130; TARN 1913, 16, 37; SEIBERT 1967, 16-19; WILL 1979-1982, I, 34; LUND 1992, 10, 94, 194; OGDEN 1999, 55, 58; VAN OPPEN 2024, 60-61. For Arsinoe, see: *RE* s.v. 'Arsinoe', no. 25, II.1, 1281-1282; DROYSSEN 1877-1878, II.2, 258, 318, 325, III.1, 265-266; NIESE 1893-1903, I, 389, II, 99; TARN 1913, 16, 263, 291; *id.* 1952, 16-18; BELOCH 1912-1927, IV.1, 582, IV.2, 111, 130, 182; BEVAN 1927, 55, 59, 66-67; MACURDY 1932, 109-111; SEIBERT 1967, 78, 83, 93, 98; WILL 1979-82, I, 88, 128; OGDEN 1999, 58-59, 74-75; BENNETT 2003; s.v. 'Arsinoe I'; VAN OPPEN 2014b.

usual dynastic naming practice, Agathocles was named for his paternal grandfather; but it cannot be determined for whom the two daughter were named. Both Eurydice and Arsinoe were names running in the Macedonian royal family. For instance, wives of Amyntas I, Philip II and Philip Arrhidaeus were (re-)named Eurydice, and of course, one of Ptolemy's wives; while the latter's mother and daughter were called Arsinoe²⁸. Before the Battle of Ipsus, Lysimachus additionally married Amastris (302 BCE), the widow of Dionysius of Heraclea Pontica, and the mother of the latter's daughter Amastris and sons Clearchus and Oxyathres²⁹. The elder Amastris was the daughter of Oxyathres, the brother of the Achaemenid king Darius III Codomannus. Alexander had first given her to Craterus at Susa³⁰. When the latter married the aforementioned Phila (322 BCE), she opted to arrange her marriage to Dionysius, with Craterus' consent³¹. Rather than the Odrysian woman, I would rather assign Lysimachus' son Alexander to Amastris –as the more reliable Polyaeus informs³². Alexander was probably her last child, as she would have been near the age of menopause by then (*ca.* 300/299 BCE)³³. The last woman Lysimachus took to wife was Arsinoe, the daughter of Ptolemy I and his fourth wife Berenice I³⁴. Of Lysimachus' wives, only Amastris comes close to leaving her mark in the historical records like Arsinoe has. Lysimachus married Arsinoe *ca.* 300/299 BCE, and she gave birth to three sons in quick succession: Ptolemy (299/8 BCE), Lysimachus (297/6) and Philip (294/3), all born two or three years apart³⁵. There is no reason to give credence to the story that Amastris left Lysimachus because she was jealous of his affection for Arsinoe, or that Arsinoe had forced Lysimachus to

²⁸ VAN OPPEN 2014a.

²⁹ For Amastris, see: D.S. 20.109.6-7; Memn. *FGrH* 434 F 4-5; *RE* s.v. 'Amastris', no. 7, I.2, 1750; DROYSEN 1877-1878, esp. I.2, 242, II.2, 14, 207; NIESE 1893-1903, 166, 276, 342-345; BELOCH 1912-1927, IV.1, 214, IV.2, 129-130; TARN 1913, 117; BERVE 1926, II, 24, no.50; MACURDY 1932, 60, 107, 113, 117; SEIBERT 1967, 13, 24-26, 93-99, 125; BURSTEIN 1976, 75-86; LUND 1992, 75, 82, 88, 185-186; BROSIUS 1996, 78, n. 70; OGDEN 1999, 58; HECKEL 2006, 21; GRAINGER 2007, 145, 159; DMITRIEV 2007, 142-143; VAN OPPEN 2014a; 2020; 2024, 59, 63-69.

³⁰ Arr. *An.* 7.4.5; VAN OPPEN 2014b.

³¹ Memn. *FGrH* 434 F 4.4 (*ap. Phot. Bibl.* 224.5 = 884-885 *PGM*). For Dionysius of Heraclea, see: D.S. 15.81.4; 16.36.3, 88.5; 20.77.1; Memn. *FGrH* 434 F 4; *RE* s.v. 'Dionysios', no. 66, V(1): 912-913; DROYSEN 1877-1878, I.1, 247, II.2, 45-46; II.2, 8, 14, 141, 207, III.1, 68; NIESE 1893-1903, I, 345; TARN 1913, 227, 231; BELOCH 1912-1927, IV.1, 124, 163; BERVE 1926, II, 144-145, no. 276; SEIBERT 1967, 24-26; BURSTEIN 1976, 72-80; BOSWORTH 1988, 157; LUND 1992, 75, 98, 105, 119-120, 124, 188, *pass.*; FRANCO 1993, 140-149; HECKEL 2006, 113-114.

³² Polyaeus. *Strat.* 6.12; *supra* nn. 24-25; MACURDY 1932, 113. DMITRIEV (2007) is seemingly unaware of the issue.

³³ BELOCH 1912-1927, IV.2, 130; AMUNDSEN-DIERS 1970; 1973; WOOD 1994, 401-439; THOMAS *et al.* 2001.

³⁴ For Arsinoe, the daughter of Ptolemy I, esp. see: Memn. *FGrH* 434 F 4.9-10; Plu. *Demetr.* 31.3; Paus. 1.10.3-4; Just. *Epit.* 15.4.24; *RE* s.v. 'Arsinoë', no. 26, II.1, 1282-1283; MACURDY 1932, 111-130; LONGEGA 1968, 16-67; BENGTSOEN 1975, 111-138; BURSTEIN 1982; POMEROY 1984, 14-16; LUND 1992, 186-198; OGDEN 1999, 57-62, 73-80; DMITRIEV 2007; VAN OPPEN 2010; 2011; 2012; CARNEY 2013; BENNETT s.v. 'Arsinoe II'.

³⁵ Just. 24.3.5 records the age of Arsinoe's younger sons as 16 and 13 at the time of their death (*ca.* 281/0 BCE); if the eldest was at least 18 at the time, he must have been born no later than (18+280=) 298 BCE; ROHDE 1876, 75 n. 1; DROYSEN 1877, III.2, 236; SEIBERT 1967, 123; HEINEN 1972, 9-10; LUND 1992, 197-198; OGDEN 1999, 59; VAN OPPEN 2012, 62 n. 4; BENNETT s.v. 'Arsinoe II', n. 3.

repudiate Amastris³⁶. Nor need we assume that Nicaea had passed away by this time³⁷. She too would probably be approaching her forties, and thus approach the age of menopause, so that she would no longer be able to successfully give birth³⁸. As he is explicitly said to have been polygamous, modern interpretations of Lysimachus' supposed serial monogamy are emphatically fallacious³⁹. It is, I believe, precisely in light of his polygamy that we should understand the downfall of Lysimachus' eldest son and heir apparent, Agathocles.

Agathocles was doubtless his mother's eldest and his father's most favored son, and (as Justin confirms) Lysimachus' appointed heir and successor⁴⁰. However, he was not necessarily Nicaea's eldest child. That is to say, it is unclear whether Eurydice was born before or after Agathocles. If she was indeed named after a female member of Antipater's family, one would suppose that she was born before or shortly after her grandfather's death (August 319 BCE). If we date Nicaea's marriage to Lysimachus around the time of the Settlement of Triparadisus (320/19 BCE), Eurydice might well have been Nicaea's first child. If we presuppose fairly regular intervals between births and assume that Nicaea was indeed the mother of three children, we would arrive at the following approximate birthdates: Eurydice, *ca.* 319 BCE; Agathocles, *ca.* 318/7 BCE; Arsinoe (I), *ca.* 316/5 BCE. (Nicaea would naturally have continued to be able giving birth until reaching menopause, *ca.* 300/299 BCE).

Agathocles first appears in the historical records serving under his father in the Getic War against Dromichaetes –together with Amastris' son Clearchus of Heraclea⁴¹. While frequently cited in the ancient sources, much remains obscure surrounding this ill-fated expedition and its circumstances. For one, the date of the campaign is a matter of confusion. While the present purpose precludes an in-depth analysis of the various ancient sources and modern scholarly opinions, it would seem safe to date the expedition after Cassander's sons lost their power in Macedon (294 BCE), while Demetrius and his son Antigonos were besieging Thebes (*ca.* 293-292 BCE)⁴². Where Darius and Alexander had failed before him, Lysimachus hoped to cross the Ister (modern Danube) and add the northern-Thracian interior (modern Romania) to his domain. While initially successful, Lysimachus' army was evidently lured into the steppe of the Wallachian Plain. At risk of suffering famine and parching thirst, his troops were overcome by their adversaries, despite their overwhelmingly greater numbers⁴³. Lysimachus and the remains of his army were captured –including his son Agathocles and stepson Clearchus. Meanwhile Demetrius abandoned his siege of

³⁶ Phot. *Bibl. cod.* 224 §5 (885 *PGM*) = Memn. *FGrH* 434 F 4.9: πρὸς τὴν θυγατέρα Πτολεμαίου τοῦ Φιλαδέλφου, Ἀρσινόη δὲ ἦν τὸ ὄνομα, τὸν ἔρωτα μεταθεῖς, διαζυγῆσαι τὴν Ἀμαστριν αὐτοῦ παρέσχεν αἰτίαν, καὶ καταλιποῦσαν τοῦτον καταλαβεῖν τὴν Ἡράκλειαν; “When [Lysimachus] turned his love towards the daughter of Ptolemy Philadelphus [*sic!*], who was named Arsinoe, this caused Amastris to divorce him, and leaving him behind she returned to Heraclea”; derived from Nymphis. Cf. D.S. 20.109.6; BELOCH 1912-1927, IV.1, 214; MACURDY 1932, 113; LUND 1992, 88.

³⁷ SEIBERT 1967, 93; BURSTEIN 1982, 199, n. 7; CARNEY 1994, 124; BENNETT 2003, 66; VAN OPPEN 2024, 62.

³⁸ *Supra* n. 33.

³⁹ Plu. *Pyrrh.* 4.4; SEIBERT 1967, 93; MÜLLER 2009, 33.

⁴⁰ Memn. *FGrH* 434 F 5.6: τὸν ἄριστον τῶν παίδων καὶ πρεσβύτερον Ἀγαθοκλέα; Just. *Epit.* 17.1: *Agathoclem, filium suum, quem in successionem regni ordinauerat, per quem multa bella prospere gesserat.*

⁴¹ For the Getic war, see: D.S. 21.10-12; Str. 7.3.8, 14 (302, 305); Plu. *Demetr.* 39.3; *De sera* 11; *De tuenda* 9; *Regum* 32; Memn. *FGrH* 434 F 5; Paus. 1.9.6; Polyæn. *Strat.* 7.25; Just. *Epit.* 16.1.19; Oros. *Adv. Pag.* 3.23.52; Suidas *s.v.* ἀναδρομή, Δρομικαίτης (=Plb. F 1.11 [16]); mod. lit. cit. *supra* n. 23.

⁴² Cf. Trog. *Prol.* 16; Plu. *Demetr.* 39.3; Just. *Epit.* 16.1.19, 3.3.

⁴³ Polyæn. (*Strat.* 7.25) reports a staggering 100,000 troops.

Thebes and occupied southern Thrace in hopes of expelling Lysimachus from his kingdom⁴⁴. Whereas Lysimachus could not afford to fight on two fronts, Dromichaetes opted for negotiating favorable terms rather than having to fight off Demetrius or other Successor kings as well⁴⁵. They agreed to an alliance, in which Lysimachus was obliged to recognize the Getic king in his realm and give him a daughter in marriage (perhaps a child of his Susan bride). Thus Lysimachus secured the release of his son and stepson. Agathocles, as Diodorus relates, was eventually returned bearing rich gifts to secure the compact⁴⁶.

Apparently the Getic War exposed Lysimachus' fragile hold over his kingdom, for immediately afterwards he promoted Agathocles as his heir and successor. Agathocles was now in his mid-twenties. We are told that after the campaign, Agathocles wed Lysandra (*ca.* 292 BCE), daughter of Ptolemy I and Eurydice, and recent widow of Cassander's son Alexander (d. 294 BCE)⁴⁷. Lysandra was probably one of her parents' youngest children, yet must have been nubile when she was first wed to Alexander (*ca.* 297/6 BCE)⁴⁸. I would therefore place her birthdate tentatively between 312/1 and 309/8 BCE. She would then have been at least in her late teens (16-20 years of age) when she was married to Agathocles. (Their age difference being five to ten years.)

Next we hear of Agathocles, he is in charge of the army in Asia Minor during the last campaign against Demetrius Poliorcetes (287-286 BCE)⁴⁹. A grand alliance between Ptolemy, Seleucus, Lysimachus and Pyrrhus had dislodged Demetrius from Macedon (288/7 BCE). Lysimachus attacked Demetrius from Thrace, while Pyrrhus invaded Macedon from Epirus, and they divided the territory between them. Ptolemy's fleet meanwhile sailed against Greece (where Antigonos Gonatas remained in control of the garrison troops at Munychia), while Seleucus waited in the East. Demetrius transferred the theater of war into Asia Minor, hoping to wrest Lydia and Caria from Lysimachus. Bronze coinage was quickly struck possibly in several mints across northwestern Asia Minor, featuring Agathocles' name on the legend, to fund the campaign⁵⁰. Agathocles chased Demetrius from Lydia into Phrygia, where the latter lost a large number of troops while crossing the river Lycus (a tributary of the River Meander), and thence into Cilicia, where Demetrius' soldiers plundered Tarsus, while Agathocles blockaded the Taurus Mountains⁵¹. Demetrius, defeated by fate more than anything, eventually surrendered to Seleucus, pleading for his life. Seleucus moved him to the Syrian Chersonese, where he kept Demetrius under close guard until his death some three years later (283 BCE)⁵². When Agathocles (now in his early thirties)

⁴⁴ Plu. *Demetr.* 39.

⁴⁵ D.S. 21.12.3-6; Memn. *FGrH* 434 F 5.1; Paus. 1.9.6; Just. *Epit.* 16.1.19.

⁴⁶ D.S. 21.11.

⁴⁷ For Lysandra, see: *RE* s.v. 'Lysandra', XIII.2, 2502; DROYSEN 1877-1878, II.2, 236, 256, 263, 269, 295, 318-325, 332; NIESE 1893-1903, I, 354, 388; BELOCH 1912-1927, IV.1, 217, 221-223, IV.2, 128, 131, 179; SEIBERT 1967, 75; WILL 1979-1982, I, 88; LUND 1992, 84-85; OGDEN 1999, 69, 59; DMITRIEV 2007, 136-141; BENNETT s.v. 'Lysandra'.

⁴⁸ Porphyry *FGrH* 260 F 3.5 (*ap.* Euseb. *Chron.* 1.231); Syncell. *Chron.* 505 (Dind.); BELOCH 1912-1927, IV.1, 215; DMITRIEV 2007, 141.

⁴⁹ BENGTON 1964-1967, I, 227-229; LUND 1992, 185.

⁵⁰ This coinage (*Hist. Num.*² 258, 531; *BMC Mysia* 91, nos. 1-2) has long been attributed to Agathopolis in Thrace (modern Ahtopol in Bulgaria); Robert (1959) restituted the coinage to Miletropolis, which he presumed was briefly renamed Agathoclea; I would rather suggest that the legend ΑΓΑΘΟ (and shorter abbreviations) refer to Agathocles personally, instead of a particular city; cf. Borrell 1842, 2; LUND 1992, 197; COHEN 1995, 163-165; RIGSBY 2005; PSOMA 2009; TEKIN 2011.

⁵¹ Plu. *Demetr.* 46-47.

⁵² Plu. *Demetr.* 48-52; WHEATLEY 1997 (dating Demetrius' death to February/March 282 BCE).

returned to his father's court, he had demonstrated his military skills and proven his ability to succeed his father. Lysimachus was near the zenith of his power after expanding his kingdom into Macedon. Yet it was precisely at that time that trouble started to emerge.

ARSINOE AT LYSIMACHUS' COURT

Lysimachus was about 55 years of age when he had married his last wife, Ptolemy's daughter Arsinoe (*ca.* 300/299 BCE); she was anywhere between 12 and 18⁵³. We may safely disregard Memnon's assertion (no doubt derived from Nymphis) that she forced Amastris to leave Lysimachus. She could hardly have dominated Lysimachus' court at her young age; Amastris was over two decades Arsinoe's senior; nor was Lysimachus so senile or so blindly in love with her to be immediately in thrall of his new wife⁵⁴. Arsinoe has nonetheless left her mark in the historical records. Cities were (re-) founded in her name, such as Ephesus, the site of the temple of Artemis (one of the Seven Wonders)⁵⁵. She was mentioned by name and title in a Delian decree honoring Demaratus of Sparta, the Eurypontid exile at Lysimachus' court⁵⁶. Additionally, her eldest son Ptolemy erected a statue of his mother on his father's behalf at Thebes⁵⁷. Lund interestingly proposes to connect this with Lysimachus' diplomatic activities in Central Greece, also evinced by his dedication of a statue in honor of Hadea, the wife of his brother Autodictus, in the Amphiareum at Oropus (Boeotia), in recognition of her *arête* ("virtue") and her *eunoia* ("goodwill")⁵⁸.

There is, however, little evidence substantiating her dominance until the early 280's BCE. Ephesus was renamed Arsinoea at the latest by 289/8 BCE, but perhaps shortly after Lysimachus regained the city from Demetrius in 294 BCE⁵⁹. In Aetolia Conope, nearby Hyria-Lysimachea, was renamed Arsinoea (modern Angelokastro) some time

⁵³ For the date of the marriage of Lysimachus and Arsinoe, see: DROYSEN 1877-1878, II, 526; NIESE 1893-1903, I, 354; SAIITTA 1955, 81; LONGEGA 1968, 18-19; cf. VAN OPPEN 2012, 61-63; 2015, 168.

⁵⁴ Cf. *RE s.v.* 'Arsinoe', no. 26, II.1, 1282; *s.v.* 'Lysimachos', no. 1, XIV.1, 28-29; ROHDE 1876, 64-65; BOUCHÉ-LECLERCQ 1903-1907, I, 145; BELOCH 1912-1927, IV.1, 241-242; SEIBERT 1967, 123; LONGEGA 1968, 17-19, 26-42, 54-55; HEINEN 1972, 6-7; BURSTEIN 1982, 199; POMEROY 1984, 14; CARNEY 1994; LUND 1992, 193-196; HAZZARD 2000, 81-85; DMITRIEV 2007, 144-145; VAN OPPEN 2012, 64.

⁵⁵ For Arsinoea-Ephesus, see: Str 14.1.21 (640); Paus. 1.9.7, 7.3.4-5; Polyæn. *Strat.* 8.57; Steph. Byz. *s.v.* Ἐφεσος; *RE s.v.* 'Ephesos', suppl. XII, 248-364, 1588-1704; BELOCH 1912-1927, IV.1, 219; LONGEGA 1968, 30-33; COHEN 1995, 177-180; VAN OPPEN 2024, 74-75. BURSTEIN's revisionism (1982, 198-199) has led him astray when attributing the renaming for Lysimachus' daughter rather than his wife; citing Eustath. (*Comm. Dion. Perieg.* 828 = *GGM* II, 363, l. 19) against the more reliable testimony of Strabo, Polyænus and Stephanus of Byzantium.

⁵⁶ *Syll.*³ 381 = *IG* XI(4): 542: τῷ βασιλεῖ Λυσιμάχῳ καὶ Ἀρ[σι]νό[η] | τῇ βασιλίσσει | τὴν τοῦ δή[μου] τοῦ Δηλί[ων] | εὔνοιαν π[ᾶ]σαν, τύχη | ἀγαθῇ [δεδο]χθ[α]ί τῇ | βουλῇ καὶ τῷ δήμῳ, ἐπαινέσαι Δημάρατον | Γοργίωνος Λακεδαιμόνιον κτλ.; DITTENBERGER 1915, 615 *comm. ad loc.*; LONGEGA 1968, 26-29; LUND 1992, 93, 168, 182, 186, 194; VAN OPPEN 2024, 69.

⁵⁷ *SEG* 25: 516: [Πτ]ολεμαῖ[ος] Λυσιμάχου | [ὕ]περ βασιλέως [Λ]υσιμάχο[υ] | [Ἀρ]σινόην τὴν αὐτοῦ (*vacat*) | [γυν]αῖκα καλοκ[ἀ]γαθίας ἔνεκ[α]. Cf. *Syll.*³ 337 = *IG* VII, 2419; Robert 1933; Moretti 1967, *ISE* I, 170, no. 67; HEINEN 1972, 10; LUND 1992, 168, 197-198; VAN OPPEN 2024, 69.

⁵⁸ *Syll.*³ 373 = *IG* VII, 279 = *SEG* 25: 496 = *Epigr. Orop.* 383: Βασιλεὺς Λυσιμάχος | Ἀδεῖαν τὴν Αὐτοδίκου | τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ γυναῖκα | ἀρετῆς ἔνεκεν καὶ | εὐνοίας τῆς εἰς αὐτὸν | Ἀμφιαράω. LUND 1992, 3, 180.

⁵⁹ D.S. 20.107.4, 111.3, 21.20; Plu. *Demetr.* 30-31, 35, 46-47; Front. *Strat.* 2.3.3; Polyæn. *Strat.* 4.7.4, 12, 5.19; BELOCH 1912-1927, IV.1, 219 n. 2, 233-237; LUND 1992, 72-78, 83-85, 89, 92, 102-103; VAN OPPEN 2024, 74.

in the early 280's BCE. Like the refoundation of Ancore-Antigonea in honor of Nicaea, or that of Smyrna for Eurydice, to be sure, naming cities after royal women is not by itself a manifestation of a woman's power or influence. Amastris, for her part, had been personally involved with the synoecism named after her on the Paphlagonian coast between Heraclea and Sinope. The coinage she issued in her own name as Lysimachus' queen are certainly to be understood as demonstration of her royal power—even if she acted as her husband's representative in the region⁶⁰. After Amastris' death (285/4 BCE), the territories of Heraclea, Tius, and Amastris came under Arsinoe's control—a clear sign of her ascendancy at court⁶¹. Memnon's account (derived as it is from Nymphis) criticizes her for establishing Heracleides of Cyme as her governor, who is said to have ruthlessly punished the citizenry⁶². The stronghold of Pergamum on the Caicus, at some point before Lysimachus' death, apparently also came into Arsinoe's possession. She allegedly mistreated Philetaerus, Lysimachus' treasurer in the fortress, who therefore revolted when his overlord was beset with domestic troubles⁶³.

Arsinoe may, finally, have been the subject of various anecdotes, which although of questionable historicity, do reveal the perception of her overweening position among Lysimachus' wives⁶⁴. A story going back to Phylarchus relates how Lysimachus and Demetrius exchanged insults at each other's expense. When the former had derided the latter's relationship with the Athenian courtesan (*hetaira*) and flute-player (*aulêtris*) Lamia, Demetrius retorted that his own whore (*pornê*), at least, was more modest (*sôphronestera*) than Lysimachus' Penelope⁶⁵. Supposing that scandal followed her wherever she went, scholars tend to identify Arsinoe as Lysimachus' faithful "Penelope"⁶⁶. Lysimachus' lieutenant Telesphorus mocked Lysimachus at a symposium for "starting trouble" by "bringing in this vomiting woman"⁶⁷. The pun involved substituting "this vomiting woman" (*tênd' emousan*) for "this Muse" (*tênde Mousan*) from an unknown tragic play. Perhaps the jeer no more than ridiculed Arsinoe for suffering from *emesis gravid* ("morning sickness"), indicating that she was in the first trimester of one of her pregnancies. These tales of verbal abuse are not necessarily grounded in historical reality. The gist of such boasting is meant to shame rivals by dishonoring their wives. Yet, even if it is prudent treating these anecdotes with cautions,

⁶⁰ Str. 12.3.10 (544); Ps.-Scymn. *Perieg.* 961-967 (*GGM* I, 237); Plin. *Ep.* 10.98-99; Steph. Byz. *s.v.* Ἀμαστρίς; DROYSÉN 1877-1878, II.2, 236, 321, III.1, 190, 267, 271; TSCHERIKOWER 1927, 44-45; BURSTEIN 1976, 75-83, 141-142 n. 17; MAREK 1989; FRANCO 1993, 150-152; COHEN 1995, 383-384; VAN OPPEN 2020, 26-31; 2024, 67.

⁶¹ Memn. *FGrH* 434 F 5.4; BURSTEIN 1976, 86-87, 93-94.

⁶² Memn. *FGrH* 434 F 5.5.

⁶³ Str. 13.4.1 (623); Paus. 1.8.1, 1.10.4; *infra* p. 20.

⁶⁴ VAN OPPEN 2024, 70-72; for ancient anecdotes as historical evidence, see: SALLER 1980.

⁶⁵ Plu. *Demetr.* 25.6: ἦν δὲ καὶ πάντων ἀπεχθέστατος ὁ Λυσιμάχος αὐτῶ, καὶ λοιδορῶν εἰς τὸν ἔρωτα τῆς Λαμίας ἔλεγε νῦν πρῶτον ἐωρακέναι πόρνην προερχομένην ἐκ τραγικῆς σκηνῆς: ὁ δὲ Δημήτριος ἔφη τὴν ἑαυτοῦ πόρνην σωφρονεστέραν εἶναι τῆς ἐκείνου Πηνελόπης; Athen. 14.614e-615a: Δημήτριος ὁ Πολιορκητής, ὡς φησι Φύλαρχος ἐν τῇ σ' τῶν Ἱστοριῶν, ὅς γε καὶ τὴν Λυσιμάχου αὐτὴν κωμικῆς σκηνῆς οὐδὲν διαφέρειν ἔλεγεν ἐξίεναι γὰρ ἀπ' αὐτῆς πάντας δυσυλλάβους: τὸν τε Βίθον γλευάζων καὶ τὸν Πάριν, μεγίστους ὄντας παρὰ τῷ Λυσιμάχῳ, καὶ τινες ἑτέρους τῶν φίλων παρὰ δ' αὐτοῦ Πευκέστας καὶ Μενελάους, ἔτι δὲ Ὀξυθέμιδας, ταῦτα δ' ἀκούων ὁ Λυσιμάχος 'ἐγὼ τοίνυν, ἔφη, πόρνην ἐκ τραγικῆς σκηνῆς οὐχ ἐώρακα ἐξιούσαν', τὴν αὐλητρίδα Λάμιαν λέγων, ἀπαγγελέντος δὲ καὶ τούτου πάλιν ὑπολαβὼν ὁ Δημήτριος ἔφη 'ἀλλ' ἢ παρ' ἐμοὶ πόρνη σωφρονέστερον τῆς παρ' ἐκείνῳ Πηνελόπης ζῆ'.

⁶⁶ TARN 1913, 123; MACURDY 1932, 113; OGDEN 1999, 236; BENNETT *s.v.* 'Lamia', n. 11.

⁶⁷ Athen. 14.616c: κακῶν κατάρχεις τήνδ' ἐμοῦσαν εισάγων; cf. Plu. *Quaest. conviv.* 2.1.13 (= *Mor.* 643e); CAMERON 1995, 98. For Telesphorus, see: D.S. 19.74, 75, 87; *RE s.v.* 'Telesphoros', no. 2, 2nd ser. V(1): 390; BELOCH 1912-1927, IV.1, 122 n. 2; BENGTONSON 1964-1967, I, 148-152; HAUBEN 1975, 93-98; SALLER 1980; POTTER 1987; LUND 1992, 10-12.

they were based on a perception of Arsinoe's ascendancy. At any rate, Lysimachus is not known to have wed any other women, or to have maintained mistresses in the last two decades of his life. Let us presently turn to the ancient accounts of Arsinoe's alleged role in the fall of the house of Lysimachus.

THE DAWNFALL OF LYSIMACHUS

Justin begins his account of Lysimachus' downfall with a report of an earthquake around the Hellespont and the Thracian Chersonese that destroyed Lysimachea 22 years after its foundation⁶⁸. This prodigy, Justin explains portended that likewise Lysimachus, his family and his kingdom would sink into ruins. Pausanias, conversely, introduces his account of Lysimachus' downfall with the general comment that men are wont to bring great misfortune upon themselves for love⁶⁹. He resolutely impugns Arsinoe and implies that Lysimachus' misfortunes began at the time of their wedding (*ca.* 300/299 BCE). Pausanias explains that at the time not only Lysimachus himself was already blessed with children, but that Agathocles also had children. As Agathocles wed Lysandra after the Getic War (*ca.* 292 BCE), Pausanias' chronology is evidently off by almost a decade⁷⁰. From the reference to Agathocles children (plural), we might nonetheless gauge that the events commenced in the early or mid-280s BCE. Pausanias moreover opines that Lysimachus' advanced age (he was in his mid-fifties) as well as his marriage to the sister of his daughter-in-law only made matters worse⁷¹. Porphyry (*ap.* Eusebius) and Memnon (*ap.* Photius) concur that it was through Arsinoe's influence that Lysimachus was persuaded to execute Agathocles⁷².

Pausanias proffers the view that Arsinoe feared for the lives of her children, if they should fall into the hands of Agathocles after Lysimachus' death⁷³. Moreover, he adds that various (unnamed) writers (plural) related that Arsinoe had fallen in love with Agathocles, but was spurned⁷⁴. Demetrius' sneer that his own whore was more modest than Lysimachus' "Penelope" might well refer to her infidelity with Agathocles (whether apocryphal or not)⁷⁵. Although both motives –securing the lives of her children and hating Agathocles for the unrequited love– may not necessarily be mutually exclusive, Pausanias makes no effort deciding the matter. Justin, contrariwise,

⁶⁸ Just. *Epit.* 17.1.1-3: *Hellesponti et Chersonesi regionibus terrae motus fuit, maxime tamen Lysimachia urbs ante duos et XX annos a Lysimacho rege condita, eversa est. Quod portentum dira Lysimacho stirpique eius ac regni ruinam cum clade vexatarum regionum portendebat.*

⁶⁹ Paus. 1.10.3: εἰώθασι δὲ ἀνθρώποις φύεσθαι δι' ἔρωτα πολλὰ συμφοραί.

⁷⁰ *Supra* pp. 39-40.

⁷¹ Paus. 1.10.3: Λυσίμαχος γὰρ ἡλικία τε ἤδη προήκων καὶ ἐς τοὺς παῖδας αὐτὸς τε νομιζόμενος εὐδαίμων καὶ Ἀγαθοκλεῖ παίδων ὄντων ἐκ Λυσάνδρας Ἀρσινόην ἔγημεν ἀδελφὴν Λυσάνδρας. Notice the impersonal νομιζόμενος ("is considered"), indicating that Pausanias is conveying the opinion of his source(s).

⁷² Memn. *FGrH* 434 F 5 (*ap.* Phot. *Bibl. cod.* 224 §9 = 889 *PGM*); Porphyry. *FGrH* 260 F 3.8 (*ap.* Euseb. *Chron.* II, 233).

⁷³ Paus. 1.10.3: Ἀρσινόην φοβουμένην ἐπὶ τοῖς παισὶ, μὴ Λυσιμάχου τελευτήσαντος ἐπ' Ἀγαθοκλεῖ γένωνται, τούτων ἕνεκα Ἀγαθοκλεῖ ἐπιβουλεύσαι λέγεται. Notice the plural λέγεται ("they say"), implying that Pausanias consulted more than one author.

⁷⁴ Paus. 1.10.3: ἤδη δὲ ἔγραψαν καὶ ὡς Ἀγαθοκλέους ἀφίκοιτο ἐς ἔρωτα ἢ Ἀρσινόη, ἀποτυγχάνουσα δὲ ἐπὶ τῷ βουλευσῶν λέγουσιν Ἀγαθοκλεῖ θάνατον. Notice again the plurals ἔγραψαν ("they have written") and λέγουσιν ("they say"), clearly evincing that Pausanias had several works before him.

⁷⁵ LUND's interpretation (1992, 85, 227 n. 17) that Demetrius meant to slur Arsinoe's chastity by referring to her many suitors misses the point: it does not discredit Arsinoe to imply she has many admirers, the slur is meant to question her fidelity.

maintains that it was merely through the ministry of Arsinoe that Lysimachus poisoned his son, implying that she was his subordinate agent in the affair, rather than the chief instigator⁷⁶. Justin for his part makes no attempt to explain Lysimachus' immoral hatred for his own son⁷⁷. Surely not because of his refusal of Arsinoe's romantic overtures. Said hatred, moreover, contradict Justin's own statement that Agathocles was his father's favorite son and appointed heir to the throne. Strabo asserts neutrally that it was due to domestic troubles that Lysimachus was compelled to kill his son⁷⁸.

According to Photius' summary of Memnon's account, Lysimachus actually failed to poison his son in secret, because Agathocles discovered in time that his food or drink had been tampered with and spat it out⁷⁹. The passage continues that Agathocles was then imprisoned on account of plotting against his father, adding that it was a false charge. This accusation is all that Lucian mentions in his list of earthly scandals among the Hellenistic royal houses –which also includes the incestuous marriage of Ptolemy II with his full-sister Arsinoe II, and that of Antiochus I with his step-mother Stratonice⁸⁰. The execution of Agathocles, so Memnon-Photius claims, was carried out by Ptolemy Ceraunus, Arsinoe's half-brother⁸¹. We will have occasion to return to this important, though puzzling, statement below.

According to Pausanias, Lysimachus only later discovered Arsinoe's machinations⁸². By then he had been abandoned by all his friends (*philoí*), so Pausanias adds. Justin elucidates that the murder of Agathocles was only the beginning of calamities, because afterwards Lysimachus was required to execute several of his confidants, who had expressed their resentment about the prince's death⁸³. This atmosphere of fear at court is also connected with the sequel to the Telesphorus anecdote mentioned above⁸⁴. For, Lysimachus is said to have imprisoned his lieutenant in an animal cage for offending Arsinoe; apparently displaying him, *i.a.*, as a warning to Theodorus of Cyrene, the “atheist” philosopher, who angered the king by freely speaking his mind when he visited him on behalf of Ptolemy I⁸⁵. Arsinoe's “vomiting” may then refer to her attempt to administer the poison that Agathocles spat out⁸⁶.

Those who survived the court purge, deserted to Seleucus. Pausanias apprises that Lysandra fled to Babylon, because Lysimachus had let Arsinoe's killing of Agathocles gone unpunished. Lysandra took her children along with her, Pausanias adds, as well

⁷⁶ Just. *Epit.* 17.1 (*ministra Arsinoe noverca*); *pace* Trog. *Prol.* 17.

⁷⁷ Just. *Epit.* 17.1.4: *Agathoclem, filium suum, ... non solum ultra patrium, verum etiam ultra humanum morem perosus ... interfecit*; Oros. *Adv. Pag.* 3.23.56: *filiumque suum Agathoclem ultra humanum morem perosus occidit*.

⁷⁸ Str. 13.4.1 (623): ὁ τε γὰρ Λυσίμαχος κακοῖς οἰκείοις περιπεσὼν ἠναγκάσθη τὸν υἱὸν ἀνελεῖν Ἀγαθοκλέα.

⁷⁹ Phot. *Bibl.* 224.9 (889 *PGM*) = Memn. *FGrH* 434 F 5.6.

⁸⁰ Luc. *Icarom.* 15 (135).

⁸¹ Phot. *Bibl.* 224.9: ὁ δὲ Πτολεμαῖος, ὡς αὐτόχειρ τοῦ μιάσματος ἐγεγόνει, ἀδελφὸς ἦν Ἀρσινόης, καὶ ἐπόνυμον διὰ τὴν σκαιότητα καὶ ἀπόνοιαν τὸν Κεραυνὸν ἔφερον.

⁸² Paus. 1.10.3: λέγουσι δὲ καὶ ὡς Λυσίμαχος αἰσθοῖτο ὕστερον τὰ τολμηθέντα ὑπὸ τῆς γυναικός, εἶναι δὲ οὐδὲν ἔτι οἱ πλέον ἠρημωμένῳ φίλων ἐς τὸ ἔσχατον. Notice the plural (“they also say that...”), implying (once more) that Pausanias used more than one source.

⁸³ Just. *Epit.* 17.1.5.

⁸⁴ BOUCHÉ-LECLERCQ 1903-1907, I, 145 n. 2.

⁸⁵ For Theodorus, see: Sen. *Ira* 3.17.2-4; Plu. *An viti* (= *Mor.* 499d); *Exil.* (=606b); D.L.. 2.8 (102), 6.7 (97); *RE s.v.* ‘Theodoros’, no. 32, 2nd ser. V(2): 1825-1831; WINIARCZYK 1981; FRANCO 1993, 201-202; O’SULLIVAN 1997, 142-146.

⁸⁶ Memn. *FGrH* 434 F 5.6 (φαρμάκῳ ... ἐξεμεθέντος).

as her brothers, “who were seeking refuge with Ptolemy”⁸⁷. Although this is not evident from the immediate context, we should assume the Ptolemy under question is Ceraunus, Arsinoe’s half-brother, rather her father Ptolemy I, or her son with Lysimachus. Among the refugees at Seleucus’ court was also Alexander, who Pausanias (erroneously) calls the son of Lysimachus by an Odrysian woman –whereas her mother rather was Oxyathres’ daughter Amastris, as Polyaeus states. Both Strabo and Pausanias mention the desertion of Lysimachus’ treasurer at Pergamum, Philetaerus, the predecessor of the Attalids⁸⁸. Both authors maintain that Philetaerus had already been embroiled with Arsinoe (allegedly on false accusations) –and now deserted to Seleucus, offering him an attractive treasury of 9,000 talents. Friends and family, commanders and subordinates, troops and cities were abandoning Lysimachus’ side all too fast.

The faction around Lysandra and Ceraunus in fact now began imploring Seleucus to declare war on Lysimachus⁸⁹. Justin adds that Seleucus was merely waiting for an excuse to attack Lysimachus, because he “desired to emulate his glory”⁹⁰. That is to say, the entreaties offered Seleucus an appropriate pretext for extending his dominion at Lysimachus’ expense. Seleucus also longed to return to his fatherland, Memnon believed⁹¹. The stage was thus set for the Battle of Corupedium, in which Lysimachus was wounded and defeated, and after which he lost his life (February 281 BCE).

Even a quick glance reveals the confusion and contradictions in the evidence. Although Arsinoe is most often blamed for the downfall of the house of Lysimachus, some blame is attached to all actors involved in the drama. It should come as no surprise that scholars disagree over the interpretation of the course of the events and the underlying motives.

THE AFFAIR REASSESSED

Until about half a century ago, most modern historians agreed with the ancient authors that Arsinoe was the main instigator of Agathocles’ downfall. Her role has been put into questions more recently, with different attempts to reconstruct the course of events. Macurdy imagined that as a girl Arsinoe may well have fallen in love with Agathocles, the young son of her old husband. Macurdy thus understood that a romantic drama ensued because of the age difference between Arsinoe and Lysimachus, while Agathocles would be much closer to her in age⁹². Certainly her conjecture seems specious (to me) that Lysimachus might have fallen victim to her poison had Agathocles not rejected Arsinoe’s advances. Tarn, for his part, considered the tale of Arsinoe’s love for her stepson nothing more than worthless court gossip, warning that what really transpired may never have been known⁹³. Lund finds the tragic similarities with

⁸⁷ Paus. 1.10.4: τούς τε παῖδας ἅμα ἀγομένη καὶ τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς τοὺς αὐτῆς, οἳ περιελθὼν τοῦτο ἐς Πτολεμαῖον καταφεύγουσι.

⁸⁸ Str. 13.4.1 (623); Paus. 1.10.4; *supra* n. 63.

⁸⁹ Memn. *FGrH* 434 F 5.7; Paus. 1.10.4.

⁹⁰ Just. *Epit.* 17.1.8 (*ex aemulatione gloriae*).

⁹¹ Memn. *FGrH* 434 F 8.1: Σέλευκος δὲ τοῖς κατωρθωμένοις κατὰ Λυσιμάχου ἐπαρθεῖς, εἰς τὴν Μακεδονίαν διαβαίνειν ὄρμητο, πόθον ἔχων τῆς πατρίδος, κτλ.

⁹² MACURDY 1932, 113; *pace* WILCKEN in *RE* s.v. ‘Arsinoe’, no. 26, II.2, 1282; cf. NIESE 1893-1903, I, 403 n. 2 (“sicherlich eine romanhafte Erfindung”). MACURDY believed that Arsinoe was about 15 when she arrived at Lysimachus’ court, and that Agathocles was about 20 years old; he was perhaps born *ca.* 318/7 (not 320/19) and she between *ca.* 318/7 and 312/1 (rather than *ca.* 315) BCE.

⁹³ TARN 1913, 123-124; cf. HEINEN 1972, 7 n. 19.

Phaedra and Hippolytus too much coincidence to give the story credence⁹⁴. Deciding that such an affair would have been much too private to have been publicly known, she thus concludes that the tale is likely “tainted by gossip and rumor”.

Both Tarn and Macurdy, more to the point, suggested that political acumen may have guided Arsinoe in her overtures, hoping to guarantee her position as queen and secure that of her children after Lysimachus’ death⁹⁵. Longega embroidered on this interpretation, presenting Arsinoe as a power-hungry queen, whose ambitions were truncated by unforeseen circumstances⁹⁶. In fact, securing the lives of her sons certainly drove her when marrying Ceraunus, even if Justin believed that the initiative was Ceraunus’, so as to eliminate possible rivals; she convinced him to adopt her sons and not to take other wives, as a warrant for the eventual succession of her eldest, Ptolemy⁹⁷. The reference to her policy (*proairesis*) in the Chremonidean Decree (268 BCE) and the appointment of Philadelphus’ co-regent (268/7-259 BCE), should in my mind be interpreted along the same lines, as her desire to secure her son’s succession, whether in Macedonia or Egypt⁹⁸. Dmitriev rhetorically asks why Arsinoe succeeded to convince Lysimachus only fifteen years after their marriage to promote their son over the head of Agathocles⁹⁹. He thus fails to recognize the significance of this timeframe, for after fifteen years of marriage Arsinoe’s son Ptolemy (born *ca.* 299/8 BCE) was just about to reach majority, precisely an age at which his claim to the succession would have become acute¹⁰⁰.

Agathocles, to be sure, could hardly have been the innocent victim falsely accused of plotting against his father. Scholars wishing to diminish Arsinoe’s role have long assumed that Agathocles had indeed conspired against Lysimachus and that this plot was the real reason why he was killed¹⁰¹. Possenti, for one, speculated that Ceraunus had been Agathocles’ accomplice in this plot against Lysimachus¹⁰². Landucci Gattinoni conjectures that Lysimachus had discovered a plot against his life lead by Agathocles in league with Seleucus as well as Philetaerus, which the king perceived as a jeopardy to his sovereignty for which he felt required to execute his son¹⁰³. Landucci Gattinoni, however, offers no reasons why Agathocles might have plotted against his father’s life; nor does she explain how Philetaerus’ alliance with Agathocles may have been related to his conflict with Arsinoe. Lund wishes to explain the Agathocles Affair as a Crown Prince’s frustration at the King’s reluctance to relinquish power; a frustration which once expressed publicly was felt a sufficient threat to force

⁹⁴ LUND 1992, 189-190; cf. Eur. *Hippol.* 525-565; Paus. 1.10.3; MACURDY 1932, 113; POMEROY 1984, 16.

⁹⁵ So, too: BELOCH 1912-1927, IV.1, 241; HEINEN 1972, 6; LUND 1992, 186.

⁹⁶ LONGEGA 1968, esp. 54-55.

⁹⁷ Just. *Epit.* 17.2.6; HEINEN 1972, 12-13; CARNEY 2013, 55-64.

⁹⁸ For the Decree of Chremonides, see: *Syll.*³ 434-435 = *IG* II² 687; DROYSEN 1877-1878, III.1, 225-248; NIESE 1893-1903, II, 130-132; BOUCHÉ-LECLERCQ 1903-1907, I, 185-193; 1913-14, 69-70; BELOCH 1912-1927, IV.1, 588-591, IV.2, 75, 157-158, 502-506; TARN 1913, 313; HEINEN 1972, 95-213; HABICHT 1979, 95-112; *id.* 1994, 144; WILL 1979-1982, I, 219-233; BURSTEIN 1982, 205-210; HAUBEN 1983, 114-119; *id.* 1992, 162; HAZZARD 2000, 94-95; MARQUAILLE 2008, 47-48; O’NEIL 2008, 65-89; VAN OPPEN 2010, 148-149; 2015b, esp. 15-18, 120-123. For “Ptolemy the Son”, esp. see: *RE* s.v. ‘Ptolemaios’, no. 20, XXIII.2, 1666-1667; HOLLEAUX 1921; HUB 1998; TUNNY 2000; GYGAX 2002; BURASELIS 2005; VAN OPPEN 2010, 147-148; BENNETT s.v. ‘Ptolemy the Son’.

⁹⁹ DMITRIEV 2007, 146.

¹⁰⁰ HEINEN 1972, 10.

¹⁰¹ FRANCO 1993, 203-207.

¹⁰² POSSENTI 1901, 116-117; so, too: KLOTZSCH 1911, 203 n. 2.

¹⁰³ LANDUCCI GATTINONI 1992, 211-214.

Lysimachus' hand and execute his son¹⁰⁴. From the ancient authors one might simply deduce, of course, that Agathocles believed his succession was endangered by Arsinoe and her eldest son Ptolemy¹⁰⁵.

Recently Collins has suggested that rather than Arsinoe, instead her half-brother Ptolemy Ceraunus had conspired against Agathocles, taking a clue from Memnon's statement that Ceraunus had killed Agathocles. Collins dates Ceraunus' arrival at Lysimachus' court to (late) 286 BCE, reckoning that Ptolemy I had already decided before that time to settle the crown on the future Ptolemy II and divorce Eurydice¹⁰⁶. She emphasizes that the ancient sources unanimously condemn Ceraunus for murdering Seleucus and usurping Lysimachus' kingdom¹⁰⁷. By means of explanation, however, she offers the legend of royal bastardy associated with Ptolemy, son of Lagus, who according to several late authorities was actually believed to be the son of Philip II¹⁰⁸. The improvident implication of this hypothesis is that Ceraunus must have been plotting for several years to establish his reign in Macedonia by spreading a rumor about his father's alleged royal descent¹⁰⁹; that the friends of Agathocles supported the latter's murderer's claim, followed him and his sister Lysandra to Babylon, where they managed to dupe Seleucus¹¹⁰; that Seleucus promised to establish Ceraunus back in Egypt after Ptolemy I would have died¹¹¹; and that none of the ancient authors felt an urge to comment on Ceraunus' extraordinary deceit (or that it had gone unnoticed all this while)¹¹².

Memnon's statement that Ceraunus carried out the execution of Agathocles, however, is very puzzling to say the least. As Heinen asked some four decades ago, *cui bono?* What would he stand to gain? He could not have expected to lay claim to the kingship in Macedonia. Even when he joined Lysandra in fleeing to Babylon, Seleucus promised Ceraunus to support his claim in Egypt (*viz.*, not Macedonia), should his father Ptolemy I come to pass. And why would Agathocles' friends seek refuge with Seleucus and Ceraunus, if the latter had murdered Agathocles? Heinen convincingly argues, therefore, that the Ptolemy in question must have been Arsinoe's eldest son, rather than her half-brother¹¹³. This Ptolemy might reasonably have cherished the hope that Lysimachus would duly designate him heir and successor to the throne after Agathocles was removed. Photius, Memnon or an intermediary copyist, in other words, must have confused the two Ptolemies. We thus gain an important insight not only in the actors involved in the drama, but also their motives. For in this respect the sources are hopelessly confounding, too. Arsinoe, in short, had conspired against Agathocles, because she feared for her sons' lives, and wished to secure the succession of Ptolemy. It was he who ultimately killed his rival, not Ceraunus, who would have gained nothing.

¹⁰⁴ LUND 1992, 196-198.

¹⁰⁵ *Contra* DMITRIEV 2007, 146.

¹⁰⁶ COLLINS 1997, esp. 464-473.

¹⁰⁷ Str. 13.4.1 (623); App. *Syr.* 62; Paus. 10.19.7; Just. *Epit.* 17.2.5; Phot. *Bibl.* 226.13.

¹⁰⁸ For the tale, see: VAN OPPEN 2013.

¹⁰⁹ COLLINS 1997, 472 ("a rumour of [Ceraunus'] kinship with Alexander the Great could have been circulating for five or so years before he was crowned in 281 BCE").

¹¹⁰ Cf. Memn. *FGrH* 434 F 5.6; Paus. 1.10.4.

¹¹¹ Cf. Memn. *FGrH* 434 F 8.2; Just. *Epit.* 17.1.

¹¹² COLLINS seems unaware of Heinen's analysis (1972).

¹¹³ HEINEN 1972, 7-12 (suggesting an interpolation of a gloss in Memnon's text). Most authors have followed Heinen: WILL 1979-1982, I, 103-105; WALBANK 1988, 297; LANDUCCI GATTINONI 1992, 210 n. 149; LUND 1992, 188; CARNEY 1994, 126; OGDEN 1999, 61; *contra* MORI 2008, 95, n. 14.

Adding to the already contentious conditions at Lysimachus' court, I would also think, with Tarn and Geyer, that sibling rivalry played its part¹¹⁴. If her half-sister Arsinoe did make romantic advance towards Agathocles, Lysandra would have lost her position as her husband's only wife as well as his queen, after his accession. Arsinoe moreover challenged the eventual succession of her sister's children with Agathocles. Ceraunus' sudden arrival definitely further aggravated the situation. He may initially have hoped to stake his claim in Egypt through his sister's connections with Lysimachus, as Heinen suggests¹¹⁵. Ceraunus doubtless supported Lysandra and may also have supported her husband. Heinen, nonetheless, rightly warns against giving too much priority to this sibling rivalry. For example, Agathocles had just a short time before successfully campaigned against Demetrius, who was married to Ptolemais, the full-sister of Lysandra and Ceraunus. Politics trumped marital alliances. Lysandra was nevertheless an assertive woman, who we see playing an important role in the events after Agathocles' death, turning with her children and brothers to Seleucus; and after Lysimachus fell at Corupedium his son Alexander had to intercede with her to have his father's body buried in the temple of Lysimachea¹¹⁶. She will have played at least some role in the events that lead to her husband's death; for like her half-sister, she will have wished to secure her children's lives as much as he own¹¹⁷.

Finally, Dmitriev suggests taking Justin's statement about the earthquake around the Hellespont as a chronological clue from which we should date the beginning of the Agathocles Affair to *ca.* 287/6 BCE, since Lysimachus' Thracian capital was founded at the time that Polyperchon was making his bid with Alexander's son Heracles (309 BCE)¹¹⁸. Dmitriev therefore supposes that the downfall of Agathocles was connected with the arrival of Ptolemy Ceraunus at Lysimachus' court, which he thus dates to the same period (despite repeated arguments, *e.g.*, by Heinen or Hazzard, that it should be placed later, *ca.* 285/4 BCE)¹¹⁹. As a corollary to Ptolemy's choice for Berenice's son over the head of Ceraunus, Dmitriev argues that Agathocles similarly fell into his father's disfavor, as his marriage to Lysandra had lost its political importance. Conversely, Lysimachus was now married to the full-sister of the Lagid heir, and married his own daughter to him. Consequently, Arsinoe's position increased at Lysimachus' court, as a result of which Amastris returned to Heraclea, and Arsinoe's son Ptolemy was chosen as his father's heir.

This reconstruction of events, however, suffers from several chronological errors. Ceraunus cannot have arrived at Lysimachus' court before his half-brother's appointment as joint-ruler in Egypt (*ca.* 285/4 BCE), by which time Amastris had already been killed by her sons and Lysimachus had avenged her death by executing Clearchus and Oxyathres in Heraclea. (Dmitriev in my mind also allows insufficient time for the synoecism of Amastris on the Paphlagonian coast, which from the numismatic evidence would appear to have occurred at least a few years before Amastris' death).

¹¹⁴ TARN 1913, 124; GEYER in *RE s.v.* 'Lysimachos', no. 1, XIV.1, 21.

¹¹⁵ HEINEN 1972, 14-15.

¹¹⁶ Paus. 1.10.5; App. *Syr.* 64.

¹¹⁷ Cf. Paus. 1.10.3-4.

¹¹⁸ DMITRIEV 2007, 145-146; cf. *Mar. Par.* = *FGrH* 239 F B.19; D.S. 20.29.1; Str. 7 F 51 (52 Mein.); App. *Syr.* 1.1; D.L. 2.17 (139); Euseb. *Chron.* II, 116; Oros. *Adv. Pag.* 3.23.33.38; LUND 1992, 184.

¹¹⁹ For the date of Ptolemy I's choice for Ptolemy II, see: Paus. 1.6.8; Just. *Epit.* 16.2; Euseb. *Chron.* I, 161; BELOCH 1912-1927, IV.1, 220; HAZZARD 1987; VAN OPPEN 2015a, 163; BENNETT *s.v.* 'Ptolemy I', n. 8.

Despite these misgivings, Dmitriev is nonetheless correct that historians ought not exculpate Lysimachus. He is not only accused of permitting Arsinoe's crime, or of allowing her to convince him to murder his own son, he is also said to have grown an unnatural hatred towards Agathocles, and to have used Arsinoe merely as his agent. Moreover, Lund rightly reminds us of Lysimachus' brutal inclinations, having previously caused the deaths of his son-in-law Antipater, and his stepsons Clearchus and Oxyathres; to which we may add the imprisonments of his daughter Eurydice, and his lieutenant Telesphorus¹²⁰. Lysimachus could hardly have been such a senile old fool (in his late fifties or early sixties) to be so easily persuaded by his overambitious young wife to kill his eldest and beloved son, nor could he have been so injudicious to execute his son (without due trial) merely for rebuking Arsinoe's advances. More must have been at stake. International politics, diplomatic relations and marital alliances will have played an undeniable role.

If Lysimachus had Agathocles imprisoned on account of plotting against his life, as the evidence indicates, one would also expect him to court-martial his son. Macedonian custom did dictate that treason was punishable with death¹²¹. Agathocles should thus have been tried before a military assembly, which would also have executed the sentence¹²². Understanding the evidence in such a way that Lysimachus flouted this custom and had his son executed without due trial, we can suddenly better understand the outburst of outrage among his courtiers and commanders. Whether Agathocles had indeed plotted against his father's life or whether the accusations were false became moot questions, when Lysimachus dispensed with his confidants' privilege of trying treason cases. To this observation I should add that if Agathocles was executed without due trial, the survivors of his faction may well have spread claims in his defense to the extent that the charges were false, even if they were not.

THE DATE OF AGATHOCLES' DEATH

One last issue can now be addressed, namely the date of Agathocles' death¹²³. A definite *terminus post quem* is given by Agathocles' campaign against Demetrius, which is to be dated after the latter was ousted from Macedon (288/7 BCE), after he hoped once more to capture Lydia and Caria (287/6 BCE), and after he was chased into the hands of Seleucus (286/5 BCE). However, we can lower that date further still to *ca.* 284 BCE, since Ceraunus most likely arrived at Lysimachus' court only after Ptolemy I appointed Ptolemy II as joint-ruler (January-February 284 BCE).

A *terminus ante quem*, nonetheless, is more difficult to ascertain. Naturally it falls before the Battle of Corupedium (February 281 BCE), and the military preparations that preceded it (282 BCE). We should probably date Ceraunus' arrival in Babylon

¹²⁰ LUND 1992, 10-12, 192.

¹²¹ *RE s.v.* 'Prodosia', XXIII.1, 90-95.

¹²² E.g., the Philotas Affair and the execution of Olympias illustrate that court-martial was still in practice at the time; for which, e.g., see: D.S. 17.79, 19.50-51; Curt. Ruf. 6.7-11; Plu. *Alex.* 29; Arr. *An.* 3.26; Just. *Epit.* 12.5; DROYSEN 1877-1878, I.2, 422; NIESE 1893-1903, I, 111; BELOCH 1912-1927, IV.1, 21, IV.2, 306; BOSWORTH 1988, 101-103; O'NEILL 1999; CARNEY 2006, 82-84.

¹²³ Various dates have been proposed by scholars: 286/5 BCE (NEWELL 1936, 3-8), 284 BCE (WILCKEN 1893 in *RE s.v.* 'Agathokles', no. 18, I, 757; BELOCH 1912-1927, IV.1, 243), 284/3 BCE (WILL 1979-82, I, 98), 283 BCE (BOUCHÉ-LECLERCQ 1913-14, I, 46; CORRADI 1929, 60-62, 96-97; SAITTA 1955, 94-95; BENGTON 1964-1967, I, 229), 283/2 BCE (LONGEGA 1968, 45; HEINEN 1972, 17-20, esp. 19, n.56; AMELING 1991, 111; LUND 1992, 186), 282 BCE (GEYER 1928, in *RE s.v.* 'Lysimachos', no. 1, XIV.1, 22; HOFFMAN 1938, in *RE s.v.* 'Philetairos', XIX(2): 2158).

sufficiently before the campaign against Lysimachus for Seleucus to become perceived as Ceraunus' benefactor¹²⁴. Additionally, as Heinen reasons, we should place Agathocles' death prior to that of Ptolemy I (April 282 BCE), as Seleucus could otherwise never have promised Ceraunus to support his claim to throne *after* his father's death¹²⁵. A date *ca.* 283 BCE is confirmed by Philetaerus' rule at Pergamum, which according to Strabo lasted for twenty years, while Eumenes I succeeded his uncle in 263 BCE¹²⁶. (Admittedly, the number may well have been rounded). Placing Agathocles' death earlier appears implausible, not only because Ceraunus had only just arrived in Macedon, but also because Seleucus hardly needed convincing to prepare for war against his erstwhile companion. We thus arrive at a date of *ca.* 283 BCE.

CONCLUSION

The Fall of the House of Lysimachus is a prime example of the troubles with royal polygamy –or, rather, polygyny, that is, kings marrying various wives. For, the Agathocles Affair brought a succession crisis to a head even before Lysimachus died. Other Successors devised their own solutions to smooth out the succession and avoid a dynastic struggle after their deaths. The ancient evidence presents Arsinoe as the main instigator of the Agathocles Affair; and while modern scholars such as Tarn (1913), Macurdy (1932), and Longega (1968) have followed this presentation, Pomeroy (1984) and Carney (2013) have expressed their doubts. In the wake of Burstein's revisionist view (1982), scholars such as Lund (1992), Hazzard (2000), and Dmitriev (2007) have downplayed Arsinoe's influence.

Possenti (1901) and Klotzsch (1911) already argued that it was actually Agathocles who conspired against his father with Ceraunus. Landucci Gattinoni (1992) conversely suggests that Agathocles conspired together with Seleucus and Philetaerus; while Lund (1992) emphasizes Agathocles' frustration over his position at his father's court. Collins (1997) and Dmitriev (2007) rather lay the blame on Ceraunus as a reaction to his oust from the Ptolemaic court, as he was passed over for the Lagid succession in favor of Ptolemy II.

My problem with modern skepticism over the available ancient sources is not so much that scholars find the evidence untrustworthy. It is that if the evidence is dismissed, scholars should not offer figments of their own imagination instead. I find this a case of throwing the baby out with the water. It is poor historical methodology to construe the course of events on pure speculation alone.

So, again, according to the official version Agathocles was executed on account of treason by a trial judged before the king's confidants or perhaps less likely a military assembly. What this means, first of all, is that the sources indicate that a due trial took place and that Agathocles was *not* assassinated without due trial. However, apart from the statement that he plotted against his father, further details of the accusation against Agathocles do not survive. Still, versions of the story exist in which Arsinoe was implicated, too. Following Lund, we might dismiss this as court gossip, perhaps stemming from the women's quarters.

To offer my assessment, I would begin by emphasizing that Arsinoe may very well have feared for the lives of her sons, as Pausanias does claim –a claim supported, in my

¹²⁴ Memn. *FGrH* 434 F 8.3.

¹²⁵ HEINEN 1972, 17-20.

¹²⁶ Str. 13.4.1 (623).

view, by her latter repeated efforts to support the position of her sons (particularly Ptolemy of Telmessus). This course of events would imply that she offered herself to Agathocles, similar to the situation at the Seleucid court where Antiochus was married to his stepmother Stratonice. Pausanias believed that Agathocles spurned Arsinoe's proposal, which leaves much unexplained—specifically how that led to the accusations against him.

There are important differences with the Seleucid situation: Arsinoe had three sons with Lysimachus, Stratonice only bore Seleucus a single daughter; Antiochus for his part was unmarried, while Agathocles was already married to Lysandra, with whom he had at least two children. What Agathocles stood to gain from Arsinoe's offer—a win-win situation for both—was that her children would not rival him. From the accusation that Agathocles plotted against his father, it may be gathered that the king felt threatened, whether or not Agathocles and Arsinoe discussed their proposal with Lysimachus or meant to have him killed.

Lysimachus was demonstrably brutal. There are various anecdotes, such as the imprisonment of Telesphorus in an animal cage and the imprisonment of his own daughter Eurydice. Lysimachus moreover ordered the deaths of Antipater II, and his stepsons Clearchus and Oxyathres. And after the Agathocles Affair he attempted to purge his court of opponents, which only helped to isolate him. In my view, then, Ceraunus, Lysandra or Seleucus bear no immediate responsibility for the fall of the house of Lysimachus. His own personality may have been an important contributing factor, but the position of Arsinoe's sons, particularly Ptolemy, was the deciding factor of the Agathocles Affair. The affair thus illustrates vividly and violently the trouble of heirs and spares, when the sons of a king's various wives are left out of the succession¹²⁷.

ABBREVIATIONS

<i>IGBR</i>	MIHAILOV 1956-1966
<i>ISE</i>	MORETTI 1967-2001
<i>Notit. episc.</i>	DARROUZÈS 1981
<i>RE</i>	PAULY-WISSOWA 1893-1978
<i>SNG v. Aulock</i>	AULOCK <i>et al.</i> 1957-1968

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¹²⁷ A version of the present article was presented on the panel “Heirs and Spares: Dynasty and Succession in Antiquity”, convened by Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones, Eve MacDonald, Alex McAuley, and Shaun Tougher, held at the *XIIIth Celtic Classics Conference*, University of Coimbra (June 26-29, 2019). I owe the panel's organizers and attendees as well as various anonymous reviewers a debt of gratitude for their constructive comments. This article will likely be the last of a series on early-Hellenistic marital practices and dynastic relations going back to 2010.

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