ANABASIS 5 (2014)
STUDIA CLASSICA ET ORIENTALIA

Víctor Alonso Troncoso (University of La Coruña, Spain)

THE ZOOLOGY OF KINGSHIP: FROM ALEXANDER THE GREAT TO THE EPIGONI (336 – C. 250 BC)

José Mª Díaz de Rábago
In memoriam

Keywords: Zoology, kingship, Alexander the Great, Diadochi, Epigoni

As a long term historical phenomenon, kingship has normally established a strong bond with the forces of nature, beginning with animals. We know the many variations of the master/mistress of animals theme, the *despotēs/potnia thērōn* of the Greeks – Tarzan might be, in my opinion, the modern American version of the ancient myth –, and the reader will remember the *Golden Bough* of Sir James Frazer, with its sacred king embodying the agricultural cycle and the fertility of the earth. The question I want to propose is how this connection worked during the period that constituted the Hellenistic dynasties, from Alexander the Great to the Successors and the next generation of the Epigoni. To what degree, for instance, would we be entitled to speak of an animalization of the kingly idea and image? Did the essentially charismatic nature of the new *basileia* favour this trend? May the bestiary of Greek mythology have shaped the new royal portraiture, to proclaim the king's extraordinary qualities, if not to suggest or even assert his divinity? Was zoology likely to have played a role in the process of constructing the king's identity and public persona? And, if self-fashioning among the Diadochi involved special relationships with certain animals, could we detect the manipulations of the images and even the polemical intention of the iconographies? Did the contenders wage battles of images (say, *iconomachiae*) making use of an ad hoc bestiary? Another question pertains to ethnicity and ethnic boundaries: might a creature from an exotic country, a camel or an elephant, become an acceptable symbol of political power in a Greco-Macedonian milieu? After all, as has been said, the animal as a social construc-

tion, that is, the animal of the mind, „can be sign, symbol, metaphor, image, thought, felt presence, memory, intuition, allegory".[1]

In this article I would like to focus my analysis on three case studies: the horse, the lion and the eagle, all of which undoubtedly attained a special symbolism in the ideology of royal power. Three animals, by the way, „bons à penser", rather than „bons à manger" (or „bons à sacrifier"), to use Lévi-Strauss' terminology (1962).[2]

Alexander the Great

In the zoology of Alexander's kingship the most celebrated creature was surely the horse, embodied in the famous Bucephalas (Plu. *Alex*. 6; D.S. 17.76.6), in honour of which the Macedonian conqueror founded a city in India, Bucephala.[3] Alexander always fought on horseback, he often hunted on horseback, and generally he moved on horseback too, in addition to using the horse-drawn chariot on certain occasions (Plu. *Alex*. 23.4). No wonder the fine arts have immortalized him as a rider.[4] However, the significance of Bucephalas in Alexander's life becomes more understandable when studied against the background of Macedonian history. As far as we know, the association of equines with the official iconography of the Argeads goes back to the coinage of Alexander I Philhellene, the first member of the dynasty to mint coins, sometime after the retreat of the Persians from Greece in 479.[5] The obverse of his major silver denominations (octodrachms, tetradrachms and drachms) show the typical cavalryman, sometimes accompanied by a dog, depicting the figure of a hunter, but probably also evoking the warrior function of both the Macedonian nobility and the royal house.[6] The Rider type, and to a certain extent its two iconographic variations, the horse led by a rider and the horse unattended, remained fairly constant throughout the regal coinage until Philip II, who gave a new dimension, a Panhellenic format, to the equestrian theme. Instead of the animal exuberance typical of the Macedonian landscape, which had given a local flavour to the previous dynastic coinage, Philip introduced a new iconographic program addressed

[1] Bleakley 2000, 16, 39.

[2] I have already dealt with the elephant in two earlier papers: Alonso 2013 and Alonso forthc. Bulls are studied in this paper only in their relationship with Seleucus. Serpents should also be considered as part of the zoology of kingship among Alexander and the Diadochi: see Ogden 2011, 29–56; 2013, on their role in the dynastic foundation myths and the mythologizing of procreation.

[3] Cf. Anderson 1930; Baynham 1995, 5 n. 27, with updated bibliography.

[4] Stewart 1993, *passim*.

[5] Raymond 1953, 57, 85; Hammond 1979, 84, 104.

[6] See Picard 1986; Tripodi 1998, 13–34; Seyer 2007, 72–74, 90–91; and Franks 2012, 53–57, for good discussions on the semiotic richness of this image.

to the entire Greek world, commensurate with his political ambitions on the international scene.[7]

War animal, hunting animal, and also racing animal, the horse played a preeminent role in the Argead ideology of kingship, to the extent that Bruno Tripodi has spoken of a hippocentric Macedonian culture.[8] I wonder whether the taming of Bucephalas by the young Alexander, as recounted by Plutarch (*Alex*. 6), does not signify anything more than an embellished episode in a series of *omina imperii*, dear to the Alexander Romance.[9] As it happens, learning to ride and to control a stallion was for the Macedonian nobility a stage prior to war,[10] and the numismatic evidence from some local tribes, the Ichnaians,[11] the Orreskians,[12] and the Tyntaniens,[13] c. 480, points to the importance of mastering the art of horsemanship: we see on the obverse of their tribal staters a fully armed young warrior, perhaps Ares, restraining or subduing an unruly horse.[14] If hunting a wild boar constituted the rite of passage that allowed a male of the Macedonian elite to recline at dinner (Athen. 1.18a), the mastery over Bucephalas by Philip's son and heir may have offered an additional proof of manhood in the extremely competitive milieu of the court, if not a heavenly sign of legitimacy.[15] In this regard, it should be recalled that in the Late Geometric vase painting from Argos, purportedly the original home of the Argeads, horses were targets for the skills of the tamer, the „horse-leader's", rounding out the master's command of his world.[16] Now, if the taming of Bucephalas was in a way reminiscent of an old *despotēs thērōn*, it is pertinent to remember that there appears to have been a consistent link between mastery of animals and hunting as signifiers for other forms of socio-political domination, apart from the fact that in some cases the lord of the beasts manifests royal power and the maintenance of order in the cosmos through nature.[17] As Ballesteros Pastor has observed on Mithridates'

[7] For the symbolic and political meaning of Philip II's iconographical changes regarding animals, I depend on my own research, „The Animal Types on the Argead Coinage, Wilderness and Macedonia", communication presented at ATINER Conference on Ancient Macedonian History, Athens 2012 (in press).

[8] Tripodi 1998, 33–34; cf. also Franks 2012, 53–57.

[9] See Anderson 1930, 17–21.

[10] Griffith 1979, 413; Hammond 1989, 25.

[11] Head 1879, 76 no. 1; Svoronos 1919, pl. 4 no. 13–15; Kraay 1976, 140, 362 no. 491.

[12] Head 1879, 146 no. 3–4; Svoronos 1919, pl. 5 no. 14–16.

[13] Svoronos 1919, 48 pl. 4 no. 20–21; Raymond 1953, 54, pl. 2 no. 10, 11, 13.

[14] Hammond 1983, 247; Picard 1986, 68; Youroukova 1999, 437. The motif was not limited to this or that Macedonian tribe, as the Epimenes gem from Naucratis proves, c. 500–490, showing a nude young restraining his horse in the same pose: see Zazoff 1983, 103, pl. 23.2.

[15] See Anderson 1961, 99; Franks 2012, 48. On the celestial approval, Greenwalt 2002, 285–287.

[16] Langdon 1989; 2010, 127; cf. Nilsson 1941, 288.

[17] Arnold, Counts 2010, 19.

extraordinary riding skills during childhood (Iust. 37.2.4–5), „la victoria sobre las fuerzas de la Naturaleza es desde luego un atributo propio de los héroes, teniendo además en cuenta que tanto en el mundo macedónico como el persa la caza y la lucha con animales salvajes representaba un elemento importante en la legitimación de la realeza".[18]

Once Alexander was proclaimed king, Bucephalas consequently came to occupy the highest position within the animal society of domestic species, and this change of status must also have affected the monarch's other horses, as we are informed that Alexander used different mounts during battle.[19] Such a change in the life of the animal was duly signalled by being adorned with the regalia to which the sources refer (Plu. *Mor*. 970d-e). And if the royal pages and servants were certainly allowed to ride the king's favourite horse as part of its care and training, only Alexander may have been entitled to mount the animal when harnessed with its regalia and ridden into combat or paraded alongside the army. This is how I interpret the passage in Plutarch, according to which „Bucephalas unsaddled would permit his groom to mount him; but when he was all decked out in his royal accoutrements and collars, he would let no one approach except Alexander himself. If any others tried to come near, he would charge at them loudly neighing and rear and trample any of them who were not quick enough to rush far away and escape".[20]

What apparently does not emerge in the history of Macedonian royal horsemanship is the concern for breed identity nor the religious aura attached to the king's horses that we see in the Achaemenid dynasty. Though careful selection and maintenance of well-bred stallions are to be deduced from coin types from Alexander I onwards,[21] there is nothing comparable to the Nesaean breed, the „sacred" equines – *hiroi*, says Herodotus (7.40.2) – that were the possession of the Persian monarch (Str. 11.13.7; 14.9; Plu. *Eum*. 8.3). Eight white horses of this breed pulled the chariot of Ahura-Mazda, while others drew the Great King's (Hdt. 7.40.4), not to speak of their mantic powers, the basis of hippomancy.[22] On the contrary, Bucephalas was a Thessalian stud, not even born at the palace stables, but sold to Philip by Philonicus the Pharsalian for thirteen talents.[23] Had

[18] 2013, 130, with further references. Cf. additionally Miller, Walters 2004, 46.

[19] Plu. *Alex*. 16.14; 32.12; Curt. 4.15.31; 8.14.34.

[20] Plu. *Mor*. 970d-e (tr. W. C. Helmbold); cf. Plin. *NH* 8.154; Sol. 45.8; Aul. Gel. 5.2.3. Arr. *An*. 5.19.5, exaggerates. As Anderson 1930, 20 long noted, it is to be conceded that every conqueror should have a distinguished horse, one that would allow him only to mount him.

[21] Lane Fox 2011c, 376; cf. Azzaroli 1985, 70.

[22] Plu. *Alex*. 6.1; Plin. *NH* 8.154: cf. Ridgeway 1905, 190–194; Tarn 1984, 78–83; Azzaroli 1985, 176–179; Briant 1996, 108, 230; Hyland 2003, 30–31.

[23] For the variations in the sources, see Hamilton 1969, 15; Hyland 2003, 149–150. Hammond 1979, 109 speculates that the large horse on Alexander I's coinage was probably from Per-

a European breed been privileged by the Macedonian ideology of kingship, Leonnatus, a member of the royal house of Lyncestis, would hardly have attached such importance to the Nesaeans in his self-fashioning (Arr. *Post Alex*. 12), nor would Alexander have appeared to Pyrrhus in a dream riding one of these stallions (Plu. *Pyrrh*. 11.2).

Alongside the horse, the lion image remained a coin type until the time of the Diadochi, with Lysimachus and Cassander, in spite of Philip's iconographic reforms. The reason is to be found in the fact that it had been the prey par excellence for the Macedonian monarchs, the most precious quarry for big game hunting on horseback. In fact, the Greek authors report that the great feline existed in areas of Macedonia in the classical period.[24] Alexander Philhellene had advanced the claims of his dynasty to heroic descent via Heracles,[25] the hunter of the Nemean beast, while his son Perdiccas II gave great prominence to the lion as a reverse type, with Archelaus being the introducer of the image of Heracles in lion skin before the end of the fifth century.[26] Particularly revealing in this iconographical sequence is one of the series of silver staters/didrachms issued by Amyntas III showing a horseman striking down with a spear on the obverse and, on the other side, a lion crunching another spear in its jaws.[27] The best confirmation of traditional big-game hunting among the Argeads is, of course, Tomb II at Vergina.[28] Letting aside whether it is Philip's or Arrhidaeus', the relevant fact for us is that its frieze depicts the deceased ruler on horseback about to strike the fatal blow to a lion.[29] It is also important to note that the two main opposing interpretations agree that the young rider located in the centre of the composition is Alexander, who typically takes part in the fight against the beast on horseback.[30]

Our literary sources on Alexander's campaigns in Asia mention at least three lion hunts,[31] without including the archaeological evidence provided by the Alexander Sarcophagus, the Palermo Mosaic, and perhaps the frieze block from

sian (Nisean) stock; cf. also Anderson 1961, 153 and Hyland 2003, 121. But note Ridgeway 1905, 301, 304, on the importance of the neighbouring Thessaly.

[24] Hdt. 7.125–126; X. *Cyn*. 11.1; Arist. *HA* 6.31, 579b; 8.28, 606b; Paus. 6.5.4–5; Dio Chr. 21.1.

[25] Hdt. 5.22.2; 8.137.1; 138.2–3; Th. 2.99.2; *FGH* 631 F 1.

[26] Raymond 1953, no. 176a–244a and *SNG* ANS 8 no. 47–62 (Perdiccas II), no. 72–75 (Archelaus).

[27] *SNG* ANS 8, no. 99; cf. Greenwalt 1993.

[28] Andronicos 1984, 97–197.

[29] Andronicos 1984, 102–105 figs. 58–59, 63, 71.

[30] Andronicos 1984, 108–109, figs. 65–66. Compare, v. g., Borza, Palagia, 2007, 103, with Lane Fox 2011b, 17.

[31] Briant 1991, 222–224; 1993, 270, 274–276; Lane Fox 1996, 141–142; Palagia 2000, 183–185; Carney 2002, 65–66; Cohen 2010, 76.

Messene and the Pella mosaic from the House of Dionysus.[32] The three venations are associated with two of the Companions, Craterus and Lysimachus, who either came to the king's rescue or distinguished themselves by killing a particularly ferocious beast. We cannot say if the sovereign treated such royal hunts as anything more than sport, though Plutarch has a Spartan ambassador describe one of these exploits as a valid test to qualify for supreme power: „Nobly, indeed, Alexander, hast thou struggled with the lion to see which should be king".[33] Interestingly, according to Ephippus (*FGH* 126 F 5 = Ath. 537e), the historical Alexander liked to bear the lion's skin and club in imitation of Heracles, the great hunter. The Greek and Latin authors also report that the Macedonian's outward appearance, alongside the upturned eyes and the beardlessness, included a leonine mane, with the *anastolē*.[34] Quite apart from the literary tradition, we can be sure that the pairing of the royal persona with the lion as the king of the animals took place during Alexander's lifetime, as it had a contemporary counterpart in the fine arts. Notably, the Dresden Alexander, reputed to belong to the king's official sculptor, Lyssipus, or to his school, shows a hairstyle suggesting a sort of identification with the great feline and therefore introducing an element of animalization in the kingly portraiture.[35] The same impression is created by the Alexander Mosaic, where the Macedonian is featured sporting a leonine mane windswept from his brow.[36] Moreover, it has been argued that the lion was the seal-device used by Alexander for his European correspondence.[37] In fact, the story told that, after his marriage with Olympias, Philip dreamed that he was putting a seal with the figure of a lion upon his wife's womb, a vision that Aristander of Telmessus interpreted as meaning that the queen was pregnant of „a son passionate and lion-like (*leontōdē*)".[38] No wonder the poet Lycophron (*Alex*. 1441), in the generation of the Epigoni, compares the Macedonian conqueror with a lion, a metaphor known by Plutarch (*Alex*. 13.2), and dear to the Alexander Romance too (Ps-Callisth. 1.13.3 Kroll). The literary image, of course, was not new, as it had appeared in Homer to characterize a heroes' strength,[39] beginning with Achilles (*Il*. 7.228), Alexander's paradigm (Plu. *Alex*.

[32] Stewart 1993, 276–277; Palagia 2000, 185–189, 202–206; Cohen 2010, 64–68, 76–80, 137–140; Franks 2012, 34–38.

[33] Plu. *Alex*. 40.4. Analogy between hunting and war in Greek and Eurasian history: Cartmill 1993, 30–31; Cohen 2010, 119–145.

[34] Plu. *Mor*. 335b; Ps-Callisth. 1.13.3 Kroll; Iul. Val. *Res Gest. Alex*. 1.7 Kübler.

[35] Hölscher 1971, 28; Killerich 1988; Stewart 1993, 112–113.

[36] Greenwalt 2002, 281.

[37] Baldus 1987.

[38] Plu. *Alex*. 2.4–5; cf. Hamilton 1969, 3–4, and Ogden 2011, 8–12, who proves that the tale was known outside Macedonia by at least the earlier part of Alexander's reign.

[39] Schnapp-Gourbeillon 1981, 39–40, 56, 86–90; Markoe 1989, 114–115; Cohen 2010, 74.

5.8; 24.10). Even earlier, royal ideology in the Near East going back to the third millennium associated kings with lion hunting and a lion-like nature.[40] Alexander, whose process of calculated Iranization is well known,[41] may have found in the lion a symbolic bridge to bring the Macedonian conception of monarchy closer to Mesopotamian and Iranian practice. It is no coincidence that the animal imagery chosen for the outer decoration of his hearse, ecumenical in its design, included golden lions (D.S. 18.27.1), guardian figures in the Near Eastern funerary art and also present on the top frieze of Hephaestion's funeral pyre (D. S. 17.115.4).[42] The connection Alexander, Babylon and lions, is also attested in other episodes, from the Macedonian's triumphal entry in the city (Curt. 5.1.21), until the end of his life, just before his death (Plu. *Alex*. 73.6).

The Diadochi and the Epigoni

The fact remains that during the wars among the Successors, in retrospect, the lion may have acquired a special significance for some of the pretenders to the diadem. Those Diadochi who had taken part in lion hunting along with Alexander used this memory in propaganda terms, to reinforce their claims to a share of his empire.[43] The trend was already set by 321, when Craterus commissioned a bronze group to be erected at Delphi in commemoration of the lion hunt in Syria and had himself represented as coming to Alexander's rescue.[44] As for Lysimachus, his royal imagery reflects the legend of lion-tamer attached to him: the lion-protome appears regularly on his coinage (apart from the full-length figure of the animal), representing probably his personal seal-device and even his dynastic symbol, while the name of Lysimachus' massive flag-ship, *Leontophoros*, suggests that, as a lion-slayer, he saw himself as lion-like.[45] Simply to compete, Perdiccas had to invent a story about his stealing a lion cub (Ael. *VH* 12.39), while the featuring of the beast on Alexander's hearse must have received the regent's approval.[46]

[40] Cassin 1987; Strawn 2005; Briant 1991, 219–222; 1996, 187, 229–230, 624–625.

[41] See Olbrycht 2004, passim.

[42] On these points, see Stewart 1993, 216–218; Elvira 2000; Strawn 2005, 224; Stähler 1993, 85–89; Palagia 2000, 172.

[43] Palagia 2000, 184.

[44] *FD* 3.4.2 no. 137; Plu. *Alex*. 40.5; Plin. *NH* 34.64. Paspalas 2000 has argued that the bull-devouring lion can be interpreted as a symbol of Persia, thus giving to Craterus' participation in Alexander's hunt a deeper significance, implying a share in the victory against Darius and a claim to empire.

[45] See Müller 1859, 12, pl. 1 no. 1–5, 16; pl. 2 no. 10–12; Berve 1926, 240; Newell 1937, 20; Baldus 1978; Mørkholm 1991, 81; Landucci 1992, 19–20, 46, 84–85; Lund 1992, 6–8. Also the Sassanid Bahram Gur proved his valour to become king by killing two lions with a mace: see Bosworth 1999, 91–92 [861–862]. I owe to G. Hatke (ISAW) this reference.

[46] Alonso 2013, 255.

That said, it should be noted that the lion did not prevail as the exclusive zoological icon of power for the Diadochi, nor even as the favourite for all of them. I find it significant that neither Ptolemy, nor Seleucus, the two most successful contenders of this period, if not the most representative of the *Zeitgeist*, associated their narratives and images to the king of the beasts. Neither did the lion play any special role for Antigonus Monophthalmus or his son Demetrius Poliorcetes, who were no secondary figures, as far as we can deduce from the extant sources.

To begin with, the emblematic animal of the Ptolemaic dynasty, from its founder onwards, was the eagle, symbol and herald of Zeus, and therefore important in augury as omen of victory – as Aristander the seer well knew (Plu. *Alex*. 33.2). The symbolism of no other animal is quite so simple and unambiguous as that of the eagle: the raptor, king of the birds of prey (*rex avium rapicum*, Polem. Phgn. 2.151), is associated with the sun and, largely by implication, with monarchs and sovereign states.[47] In the semiotics of royal power this can be observed, for instance, by comparing the (majestic) gravity assigned in augury to the eagle (Arr. *An*. 1.18.6–9) with the (domestic) lightness assigned to the swallow (Arr. *An*. 1.25.8). The great raptor, in effect, had figured prominently on Alexander's coinage, both on the limited issues known as the „eagle coinage", conventionally ascribed to the mint of Amphipolis,[48] and above all on his typical tetradrachms, forming a unitary image with the father of the gods. An eagle carrying a snake was used as a heraldic device on the tomb of Alcetas at Termessus,[49] although this motif had already been chosen by Alexander himself for the iconography of Hephaestion's pyre (D. S. 17.115.3).[50] Like the other Diadochi, Ptolemy continued to issue these Alexanders, with Zeus or Athena accompanied by the same badge. But once the Lagid proclaimed himself king, in 304, he gave the bird absolute prominence as a reverse type.[51] If Ptolemy's portrait now appeared on the obverse, instead of Alexander's, and if the eagle figured alone on the other side of the coin, standing on Zeus' thunderbolt yet without his image, it is logical to conclude that the animal's field of meaning, its symbolic capacity, had extended its domain, to the effect that it came to evoke the royal persona as well as the Ptolemaic dynasty.[52] In fact, this iconographic correlation between obverses and reverses remained constant in the regal coinage, fixing the identifi-

[47] Cf., v. g., Lerner 2009, 220–223; Bleakley 2000, 96.

[48] Price 1991, 103–104, pl. 143.

[49] Pekridou 1986, 88–100 pl. 10.

[50] Palagia 2000, 169–170.

[51] Mørkholm 1991, 66, no. 97–101.

[52] See Hazzard 2000, 91–92, for the identification of Ptolemy II/Arsinoe with Zeus/Hera in the court literature of Alexandria. Moreover, on the cumulative power of the eagle's image among the Ptolemies, see Meyboom 1995, 129–131.

cation of the king's portrait with the eagle, which not by chance was framed by the legend with the monarch's name, *basileou ptolemaiou*. This process of visual association may have been so evident with the passing of time, that one numismatist has interpreted the two-eagle reverse type on the bronze coins as the symbolic representation of the co-regency.[53] The two-eagle type first appeared c. 262, under Ptolemy II (285–246), in the generation of the Epigoni, and subsequently occurred during various periods until Cleopatra VII. It is not by coincidence that, according to Theocritus (*Id*. 17.72), a great eagle soared over the island of Cos at Philadelphus' birth, thus giving the best omen from Zeus himself. Last but not least, Soter's dynastic foundation myth introduces the motif of Zeus' eagle saving and rearing Arsinoe's exposed baby.[54]

For the rest, the painter Antiphilus commemorated Ptolemy as a heroic hunter (Pl. *NH* 35.138), a scene perhaps reproduced in a mosaic from Setif, Algeria,[55] his prey being a boar, not a lion – reminiscent of the old Macedonian rite of passage (Athen. 1.18a)?[56]

As for Seleucus I Nicator, in my opinion the very embodiment of the age of the Successors (v. g., App. *An*. 7.22.5),[57] he chose no less than four animals to be associated with his royal image and public persona: the horse, the panther, and above all the bull and the elephant.

We are told that in 315 Seleucus barely managed to escape from Antigonus' agents in Babylon thanks to the speed of his mount: did the providential steed inspire the recurrent motif of a horned horse's head on his coins, a royal emblem as it were of divine favour? According to Malalas (*Chron*. 202), the king later deified his saviour and erected a monument to it at Antioch, adding this inscription: „On this Seleucus escaped to safety from Antigonus; and returning from there, he killed Antigonus". Therefore, rather than Bucephalas, as some authors have supposed, I am inclined to think that the equine head on his coins depicts his own steed divinized.[58] Horns had long been a symbol of apotheosis for long in Asia, as well as an *Ahuric* (good) attribute according to Zoroastrianism; by the same token, horns appear on Seleucus' coinage adorning his war elephants, to

[53] Pincock 2007, whose hypothesis, however, has not gained general approval: cf. „5. Attempted publication", loc. cit.

[54] Suda, s. v. *Lagos* (= Ael. F 283). A good analysis of the tale by Ogden 2011, 80–88.

[55] See Donderer 1988.

[56] I owe this suggestion to my anonymous referee.

[57] Cf. Sherwin-White, Kuhrt 1993, 7.

[58] So Babelon 1890, xxiii; Newell 1937, 27; *ESM* 43–44; *SC* I 1, 7; Hoover 1996, 50; Erickson 2013, 124. Or, at least, a visual synthesis of both Bucephalas and the Saviour Horse, as Stewart 1993, 315 suggests. Contra Jenkins 1990, 133; Mørkholm 1991, 72–73; Greenwalt 2002, 284. Miller, Walters 2004, 50–51, argue that it is not Alexander's horse, but they also rule out Seleucus', thereby letting unsolved the problem of identifying the animal.

neutralize the fact that the Indian beast had initially been an evil (*Daevic*) animal for the Iranian religion.[59]

As it happens, the founder of the Seleucid dynasty had several stories about him recounting his heroism and his omens of empire.[60] One of them was related to the bull. Appian (*Syr*. 57), followed by the Suda (s. v. *Séleukos*), claims that images of Seleucus were adorned with bull's horns because, during religious rites initiated by Alexander the Great, he had held back the sacrificial bull when it escaped its bonds. According to the story, Seleucus was so large in stature and powerful of body that he was able to catch the bull by its horns and stop it with his bare hands. Appian's story of the escaped bull also had the purpose of legitimizing Seleucus as the rightful ruler of Alexander's empire, already chosen by fate during the Macedonian conqueror's lifetime. For his part, Ps.-Callisthenes (2.28) echoes this view when describing a statue of Seleucus identifiable by the horn he bore, token of his bravery and invincibility, which was supposedly included by Alexander in a sculptural group erected at the eastern gate of Alexandria.[61]

In effect, the literary, numismatic and sculptural sources all indicate that Seleucus had a strong symbolic association with bulls. Not only his statues were adorned with the animal's horns. An idealized portrait wearing a helmet covered with panther skin and adorned with bull's ears and horns appeared on the Seleucid's coins issued at Susa after 301 – the „trophy tetradrachms" –, probably depicting the king assimilated to Dionysus, as the god's emblematic animal was the panther.[62] In the 290s and 280s, the reverse type of a charging or, less frequently, standing bull, became a staple feature of the bronze coinage produced throughout the empire in the name of Seleucus.[63] In c. 295 the mint of Ecbatana produced a series depicting the king with Dionysiac attributes, wearing a helmet adorned with bull's ear and horns, with a panther's skin over his shoulders, and mounted on a horned horse.[64] Finally, Seleucus' horned portrait appeared on coins and

[59] Tafazzoli 1975.

[60] Hadley 1969; 1974, 53, 58–62; Mehl 1986, 5–12; Grainger 1990, 2–3, 8.

[61] Hoover 2011, 198–199.

[62] *SC* no. 195–199: see Babelon 1890, xv; *ESM* 156–57; Hoover 2002; Iossif 2004. But note Kroll's observations (2011, 119). Moreover, two important iconographic references may be mentioned here, both from Seleucus' motherland: the ivory Dionysus seated on a panther's skin, one of the reliefs decorating the couch found at Tomb II, Vergina (Andronicos 1984, 122, 133 figs. 75, 90), and the mosaic from the House of Dionysus at Pella, c. 325–300, showing the god riding a panther (Cohen 2010, 66–67 figs. 19–20). See also the presence of the feline, alongside a griffin and a deer, on the mosaic pavement from the circular building in the area of Darron's sanctuary, c. 300 (Pella, Archaeological Museum).

[63] *ESM* no. 105–109, 117–119, 501–502; Mørkholm 1991, 76, no. 158–160; *SC* no. 47, 125–127, 148–153, 191–193, 203, 224–225, 283a–303.

[64] *SC* no. 203; Hoover 2002.

seals produced under his son Antiochus I to commemorate his death and apotheosis in 281.[65]

In a recent study on taurine imagery as a multicultural expression of royal and divine power under Seleucus, Hoover has reminded us that for all of the main ethnic constituents of Nicator's empire, whether Greek, Babylonian or Iranian, the bull had important pre-existing symbolic and mythical associations.[66] Thus, when the Diadoch employed the bull or its horns as his identifying emblems throughout much of his domains, he could not have helped but invite their interpretation in different cultural contexts. It has long been generally agreed that the bull's horns adorning the helmet and, later, the head of Seleucus' numismatic portraits were intended to evoke the Greek god Dionysus,[67] for this deity could appear in the guise of a bull or wearing horns, as Martin P. Nilsson explained many years ago.[68] Furthermore, like Dionysus and Alexander, Seleucus was a conqueror of Asia as far as India,[69] where Seleucid propaganda presented the Diadoch leading a successful campaign against Chandragupta.[70] At the same time, the bull's horns and the taurine iconography in Seleucus' self-fashioning addressed the native populations of Asia, especially Babylonians and Iranians. In Mesopotamian lands local gods and god-kings, beginning with Naram-Sin, had long been depicted wearing horned crowns as tokens of their divine power. Most notable of all was the city god of Babylon, Bel-Marduk, whose horned headdress was repaired during Alexander's reign and whose name is considered to be a shortened form of Amaruduk, „Young Steer of Day".[71] Seleucus had had the opportunity to become familiar with these religious customs since his appointment as satrap of Babylon in 321, where his respectful treatment of the Chaldean priests and the restoration of the Esagil temple most probably explain the city's support for him against Antigonus,[72] as well as the sacerdotal final fiat to the foundation of Seleucia on the Tigris (App. *Syr*. 58; Paus. 1.16.2). No wonder that the charging bull bronze type appears for the very first time anywhere in the Seleucid empire at the Babylonian mint of Seleucia on the Tigris in the period c. 300–296/95, followed by the Mesopotamian mint of Carrhae after 295/94.[73] Being the first ruler ever to mint bronze coins for local use in Babylonia, Seleucus thus proclaimed his piety and

[65] Newell 1937, 60 fig. 1; *WSM* 50, 245, 248, no. 784–88, 1359, 1363–67 (pl. 6, 54); Mørkholm 1991, 116, no. 354a-b; *SC* I 1, 114, no. 322–23, 469–72 (pl. 18, 21).

[66] Hoover 2011, but see also Erickson 2009, 68–70; 2013, 120–124.

[67] Hadley 1974, 56–57; Goukowsky 1978, 129.

[68] 1941, 538–539; cf. Svenson 1995, 40.

[69] *ESM* 157; Goukowsky 1981, 15–16.

[70] Yet, contrast Mehl 1986, 183–186 with Grainger 1990, 108–109.

[71] Hoover 2011, 204.

[72] See Grayson 1975, no. 10 obv. 6, with D.S. 19.91.

[73] For both mints, see, respectively, *SC* no. 125–127 and *SC* no. 47.

his patronage over the great temple complexes and their priests, and consequently his legitimacy as a ruler of the Babylonians.[74]

The connection between taurine images and royalty was also evident in the iconography of the palaces at Susa, Persepolis and Ecbatana, since the bull, the Primal Bull, was of key importance in Zoroastrian mythology.[75] Bearing in mind the Seleucid need to retain the loyalty of the Upper Satrapies,[76] it seems logical that Seleucus' horned types were also intended to have just as much Iranian as Greek and Babylonian appeal. In fact, the two horned and helmeted portraits of the king from the mints of Susa and Ecbatana strongly suggest that both series were specifically issued to project a positive image of Seleucus' power into Persia, in the role of a rightful successor to the Great Kings of the Achaemenid house.[77] At the same time, the bull coinage served to remind Iranian subjects that the policy of Seleucus was not that of Antigonus and his other colleagues.[78] Although he was a foreign Macedonian ruler, Seleucus' appeal to Iranian religion showed that he could ignore his „demonic" (*Ahuric*) side and serve as a kind of naturalized Achaemenid, the more so considering that his wife Apama was a Sogdian princess and their common son and co-king, Antiochus, a hybrid of Greek and Iranian.[79]

The wearing of horns was not exclusive to Alexander's and Seleucus' portraits. They also adorned the head of Demetrius Poliorcetes, a monarch capable of developing his own self-image, consciously independent from that of Alexander and the other Successors.[80] His horned head assimilated him to Poseidon (Taurus) or to Dionysus; or it simply evoked the idea of divinity, since the supernatural connotations of this zoological attribute in Asia may also have inspired the Antigonid design.[81]

Finally, in the generation of the Epigoni only Pyrrhus of Epirus constructed a political personality based on a conscious and open *imitatio Alexandri*.[82] This was intended to emphasize not only the legitimization by war of royal power, but also the magic of the relationship with certain animals. The eagle, herald of Dodona's god, appeared associated to the Epeirote monarch, who liked being sur-

[74] *ESM* 61. On these initial relations, cf. Sherwin-White, Kurt 1993, 9–11; Grainger 1990, 32–33, 83; and, partially contra, Mehl 1986, 41–42.

[75] Kreyenbroek 2013.

[76] See Olbrycht 2013, 169–176.

[77] For these issues, see *SC* no. 203.

[78] Cf. Hoover 2011, 212–213.

[79] See Müller 2013, 206–209.

[80] See Newell 1937, 169; Smith 1988, 38–39, 52, 64; Poulios 1988, 112; Stewart 1993, 278; Erickson 2013, 117.

[81] So Kroll 2007, 117–118, with n. 24.

[82] See Goukowsky 1978, 116–118; Stewart 1993, 284–285.

named *Aetos* by his compatriots (Plu. *Pyrrh*. 10.1; *Mor*. 975b). An eagle-like person was considered to possess not only a robust physique, but also an equally robust animus.[83] Moreover, Plutarch (*Pyrh*. 11.5) reports that Pyrrhus was easily recognizable in combat by his helmet, with „its towering crest and its goat's horns", maybe reproduced in two marble busts at the Naples Museum.[84] As if that were not enough, the Molossian cultivated a martial style identified with the elephant corps, an Indian exoticism introduced by the great conqueror and role model.[85] However, it must be recalled that the elephantine elements are lacking in the Epeirote's known portraiture,[86] it being significant that the elephants and other weapons carved in relief on his funeral monument at Argos are not said to be accompanied by any representation of the royal person, neither as rider nor as commander (Paus. 2.21.4). If Pyrrhus was a famed general, his Egyptian colleague, Philadelphus, can be considered an administrator, „no warrior".[87] As Hazzard has put it,[88] when Callimachus (*Jov*. 69–77) praised Zeus as a god who had left the arts of warfare and hunting to lesser gods, the poet absolved the king from taking a role in military affairs. Typically, the second of the Ptolemies was the first Hellenistic ruler to inaugurate a zoological garden, in Alexandria, not a very heroic way of dealing with animals, although arguably a symbolic exhibition of power and knowledge of distant regions.[89]

Further thoughts and concluding remarks

In the first place, if I had to typify the nature of kingship during the age of Alexander and the Diadochi according to Max Weber's triadic categorization of authority (charismatic, traditional, and legal-rational), I would have no doubts: the charismatic form was typical of that age.[90] In the critical context of the age in question, the hierarchic associations of the great leaders with the forces of nature, and more exactly, with certain specific animals, strengthened the heroic and

[83] Polem. Phgn. 2.184; cf. Winkes 1992, 178.
[84] Winkes 1992, 184–188.
[85] Alonso 2013, 265.
[86] Smith 1988, 64–65; Brown 1995, 31–22.
[87] So Tarn 1913, 216 and Adams 2008, 92, *pace* McKechnie 2008, ix.
[88] Hazzard 2000, 91.
[89] See Helms 1988, 163–171, with Hubbell 1935.
[90] Weber 1947, 329 describes charisma as „a certain quality of an individual personality by virtue of which he is set apart from ordinary men and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional qualities". See in general Weber 1968, passim. Note Suda, s. v. *Basileia*: „It is neither descent nor legitimacy which gives kingship to men, but the ability to command an army and to handle affairs competently". Goukowsky 1978, 145 refers to charisma without mentioning the German sociologist, unlike Gehrke 1990, 48–49.

supernatural dimensions of royal power. This was also the case of Chandragupta, whose *omina imperii* included the attentions of a lion and the submission of a wild elephant (Just. 18.4). Consequently, the Successor's iconography on coins reflects quite well the cult of physical strength and personal energy as the basis of power.[91] However, the traditional component inherent to the dynastic principle began to lessen the importance of charisma during the generation of the Epigoni, that of Ptolemy Philadelphus, Antiochus Soter, Antigonus Gonatas, and Pyrrhus of Epirus. Let us say that the „routinization of charisma" – according to Weber[92] – made its appearance under these kings, all but the Seleucid being born or brought up in the purple. In fact, the divine attributes incorporated into the portraiture of the Epigoni, rather than signifying their equalization with Alexander or their proximity to the gods, tended to emphasize the principle of dynastic continuity and identification with the founding kings.[93] Somehow, this resulted in a greater serenity of the king's official image, as Fleischer has noted.[94] Yet, most of the Epigoni were still genuine war lords, whereby the zoological reverberations did not fade completely in the self-fashioning of their royal personae – think, for instance, of the elephants on Antiochus' trophy over the Galatians (Luc. *Zeux*. 11). Probably because he was the least charismatic ruler of his generation in Weberian terms, Philadelphus needed to use great pomp and artifice when displaying his dominion over wilderness (from foreign countries) in a parade at the highly civilized and urban Alexandria, the famous *pompē* described by Callixenus of Rhodes (*FGH* 627 F 2).

Secondly, the ideology of apotheosis and the ruler cult favoured the insertion of certain zoomorphic attributes in the representation of the monarch.[95] Ammon's horns, Poseidon's horns, the bull's horns of the old Asian divinities, the elephant scalp of the deified Alexander, Zeus' or Athena's aegis, the panther skin of Dionysus, the *leontē* of Heracles, Pan's horns (v. g., in Gonatas' numismatic portraiture),[96] the raptors' big eyes evoking a godlike nature (v. g., those of Alexander on the Pompeii Mosaic), all highlighted the superior nature of the sovereign.[97] After all, the Successors lived in „an age passionately seeking inspired leadership from supermen who seemed to be fulfilling a divinely appointed destiny".[98] More importantly, the new component of animalization in the sovereign's self-

[91] Fleischer 1996, 30–31, 38. Relate to the idea of masculinity of the Hellenistic king: Roy 1998.

[92] Weber 1968, 54–61.

[93] Svenson 1995, 189; Smith 1988, 45.

[94] Fleischer 1996, 31, 38.

[95] Svenson 1995, 183, 186–188.

[96] Kroll 2011, 118; Svenson 1995, 158, 183.

[97] Smith 1988, 40–45; Kroll 2011, 121.

[98] Hadley 1974, 64.

fashioning was consistent with the pathos of traditional hunters as empathic predators and celebrants of initiatory rites.[99] At least in some archaic cultures, this kind of hunter could still experience a feeling not only of communion with nature, but also of metamorphosis, becoming „a liminal and ambiguous figure, who can be seen either as a fighter against wildness or as a half-animal participant in it".[100] It should be recalled that on the Vergina fresco the chief hunter probably wears a lion's skin,[101] like his ancestor Heracles (and Alexander himself, according to Ephippus *FGH* 126 F 5), as if he had assimilated the strength of the prey he was about to kill.[102]

Thirdly, the world opened by the campaigns of Alexander and the Successors offered not only a new mankind, but also a new zoology,[103] one likely to affect the traditional conception of Macedonian kingship. Products and symbols of the conquered countries, the animal species now discovered were consciously or unconsciously incorporated into the image of the conquerors, enriching the semiotics and the ideology of power. In particular, the relationship of Alexander with the Indian elephants, with all its ambiguities, is highly illustrative of this process of acculturation.[104] In fact, most of Alexander's ancient biographers preserve episodes that show how much he enjoyed watching and keeping animals, his constant attention and thoughtfulness towards them.[105] Both the conqueror's intellectual curiosity – his careful *paideia* – and his eagerness for all that could bring him more greatness explain this attitude, perhaps even a certain empathy, towards certain beasts (note, v. g., Ael. *NA* 8.1). The most conspicuous of the Diadochi, being as they were in need of a foundational (charismatic) legitimacy to wear the diadem, seem also to have imitated Alexander in his openness to the animal world, to the point of associating some zoological features to their royal portraiture and self-fashioning.

Fourthly, the passion for wild animals and probably some kind of empathy with them did not constitute a novelty introduced by Alexander and his Successors; to a great extent, they were a legacy of the Macedonian identity, in particular of the Argead dynasty. The zoology of kingship on Macedonian regal coinage bears ample witness to this ethno-cultural peculiarity, from Alexander I Philhellene onwards.[106] Big game hunting, long absent from the „civilized" landscapes

[99] See Schnapp 1997, 41–44.

[100] Cartmill 1993, 31, with Bleakley 2000, 37–38. Note Ballesteros' commentary on Just. 37.2.8 (2013, 135).

[101] Tripodi 1998, 96 n. 212; Hatzopoulos 1994, 110.

[102] See Muñoz-Alonso 2012, 158–159. On Alexander by Ephippus, Weber 2009, 93–94.

[103] On this, Alonso, forthc.

[104] Alonso, forthc.

[105] See Bodson 1991, 136–138.

[106] I depend here on my own research, see supra note 7.

of the polis, represented one of the greatest joys in life for the Temenids, descendants of the most eminent of all hunters or, perhaps better, for the master of animals par excellence in Greek mythology, Heracles.[107] It was a scholar with a superb knowledge of the historical geography of the region, Hammond,[108] who emphasized the „un-Greek nature of the Macedonian terrain". If the Macedonian elite felt the heroic age as a living and relevant past, seen in terms of its sameness,[109] should we not explain in part such identification by the similarity of the ecological conditions enjoyed by Mycenaeans and classical Macedonians? Should we not place the *imitatio* and *aemulatio* of the Homeric heroes in the context of close contact with an untamed world of pre-domesticated wilderness, typical of the northern European geographies?[110] Contrary to the Count of Yebes and modern lovers of hunting,[111] elite Macedonians did not need to escape from urban civilization to reconcile themselves with nature (and wilderness), to find a cure to their alienation from nature.[112] Their quasi-Homeric ethos, still quite free from the *Unbehagen in der Kultur*, interacted fluently with an Ur-landscape of Ur-animals – perhaps, for them too, „the symbol and even the very essence of the deity".[113]

Fifthly, it is not surprising that Alexander's representation of his compatriots may reflect, in a moment of rage and (alcoholic) disinhibition, an acute animalizing imagination: „Do not the Greeks appear to you to walk about Macedonians like demi-gods among wild beasts (*thēriois*)?" (Plu. *Alex*. 51.4). This statement

[107] Burkert 1979, 78–98; cf. Cohen 1995, 493–494.

[108] Hammond 1972, 210.

[109] See Cohen 1995, 484.

[110] See the remarks of Hatzopoulos 2011, 46, on the distinctive climate, vegetation and fauna of Macedonia today when compared to other regions of Greece. On the primeval environment of the Almopia district, ideal for hunting, see Lane Fox 2011b, 14; and Franks 2012, 99, referring to the Greek wild mountains of the heroic age (Mount Pelion, Mount Parnassus) as the source of inspiration for the Vergina frieze's landscape. Cf. also Anderson 1985, 4.

[111] On them, see Ortega y Gasset's classic essay of 1942.

[112] So Cartmill 1993, 236.

[113] Nash 1982, 20; cf. Baudrillard 1994, 133–34 and Hamilakis 2003, 240. For the rest, Freud's remarks make full sense in this context: „Thus we recognize that a country has attained a high level of civilization when we find that everything in it that can be helpful in exploiting the earth for man's benefit and in protecting him against nature... is cultivated and effectively protected.... the course of rivers which threaten to overflow their banks is regulated, their waters guided through canals to places where they are needed...; the mineral wealth is brought up assiduously from the depths... The means of communications are frequent, rapid, and reliable; wild and dangerous animals have been exterminated, the breeding of tamed and domesticated ones prospers" (2000–2005, 15, with Bleakley 2000, 32–33). Macedonia had largely attained that level of civilization, Archelaus having accelerated the process (Th. 2.100.2), yet substantial parts of the country remained untamed. On the binomial wilderness – hunting in another European landscape, the ancient *Gallaecia*, see Alonso 2014, 188–94.

does not necessarily contradict the aforementioned. For, if it is right that „the quickest way to describe a human aberration is to compare it with animal behavior" (Bachelard), it is no less right that monstrosity has changed in meaning, in that the original monstrosity of the beast was „object of terror and fascination, but never negative, always ambivalent, object of exchange also and of metaphor, in sacrifice, in mythology, in the heraldic bestiary" (Baudrillard).[114]

Sixthly, Alexander's life was anything but sedentary: in fact, it probably looked more like that of a nomad. Neither palaces nor urban environments were where the Argead spent most of his reign, but rather war camps, amidst an army on the move, the king's tent being the centre of the empire.[115] In a way – not, of course, in an absolute way –, this mobility repristinated his cultural identity, and that of his men too, bringing their existence closer to the animal life, or if you prefer, to the predatory stage of our prehistoric ancestors. In a highly eloquent passage, Plutarch reports that, if Alexander was making a march that was not very urgent, he would hunt foxes or birds as he went along (*Alex*. 23.4). It is no coincidence that the two rulers who most resembled him, Seleucus and Pyrrhus, did not revolve around a political centre, a capital, but moved restlessly, in both cases developing a public image rich in zoological associations.

Seventhly, there were ethno-cultural limits or prejudices in the process of animal acculturation, obviously due to the Hellenistic ideology of kingship. The elephant, emblem of India and Indian royalty, came to be a symbol of power for some Greco-Macedonian dynasties, but not a sign of the royal persona itself.[116] In the visual tradition of the Hellenistic age camelids did not even appear as secondary actors, unlike the status accorded them among the Indians and the Iranians,[117] not to speak of the Arabs. Demonstrably, dromedaries were ridden by the Macedonians in some important missions (for instance, Curt. 7.2.18), but this animal imagery did not form part of the elite's self-presentation. It never became a visual theme. Gender prejudices might also have played a role in the monarch's identification with animals, as proven by the case of the panther or leopard: although it was Dionysus' emblematic beast and had a presence in the iconography of the kingly power, it could not be considered a main quarry due to its femininity.[118]

Finally, it remains to investigate how the binomial kingship and zoology worked for the rest of the Hellenistic age and subsequently among the Roman emperors. Ancient China could be also a very interesting civilization for a com-

[114] Bachelard 1986, 80; Baudrillard 1994, 135.

[115] See Spawforth 2007 and Weber 2009, 85, 98, on this aspect of the conqueror's life.

[116] Alonso 2013; forthc.

[117] V. g., Plu. *Alex*. 31.7; Gitler 2011, figs. 1,3.

[118] The analysis of Cohen 2010, 74–75 on this animal is interesting; see also Schnapp 1997, 261–263.

parative case study: Chinese history entails the retreat of the elephant before the advance of farming, although the great pachyderms were not infrequently used as war animals, at least until the seventeenth century AD.[119] For the rest, the binomial continues to work in our days, although with new symbolisms. For instance, the relations of European sovereigns with their pets and household animals can inspire different readings, like their use of the horse in public ceremonies, depending on whether the monarchy is constitutional (v. g., United Kingdom) or traditional (v. g., Morocco). Not to speak of the relationships between politicians and animals in Western republican culture: how many representations of the presidents of the United States of America can we remember in which they appear on horseback? I do not mean moments of private leisure, nor pictures of their careers before assuming the presidency. The power of animals and the animals of power in the political history of the modern era. This might be the subject for another paper – or even for a new book.[120]

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[119] The discussion of the evidence and the fascinating historical process in Elvin 2004. I owe this reference to Judith Lerner (ISAW).

[120] The present article was written during my stay as visiting research scholar at the Institute for the Study of the Ancient World (NY University), in 2013. An earlier version of it was presented and discussed at ISAW. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Spanish Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte for generously financing my research stay in NY (PRX12/00110) and also to ISAW and the Leon Levy Foundation for their hospitality. My thanks also go to Marek Olbrycht for his critical reading of this manuscript. I have benefited from the comments of anonymous referees.

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Abstract

Traditionally, kingship has established a strong bond with the forces of nature, animals amongst them. The issue this paper seeks to address is how this connection worked during the foundational period of the Hellenistic dynasties, from Alexander the Great (336 – 323) to the Successors (323 – 281) and the next generation of the Epigoni (281 – c. 250). To what degree, for instance, would we be entitled to speak of an animalization of the kingly idea and image? Did the essentially charismatic nature – in Weberian terms – of the new *basileia* favour this trend? Was zoology likely to have played a role in the process of constructing the king's identity and public persona, in his self-fashioning? Above all, horses, lions and eagles were chosen by the kings of that period to show their real and symbolic connections with the animal world – or animal society. This paper focuses on them.