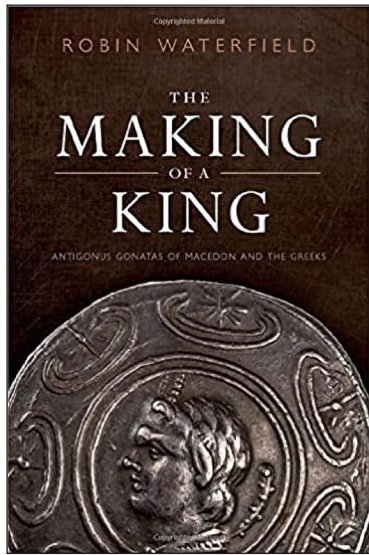


The Making of a King. Antigonus Gonatas of Macedon and the Greeks

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Waterfield describes this volume as the completion of an unintended trilogy after his previous books *Dividing the Spoils* (2011) and *Taken at the Flood* (2014). In these volumes he charted both later and earlier periods of the Hellenistic age. The author's most recent volume *The Making of a King* charts the rise of Antigonus Gonatas, the grandson of the perhaps better known, Antigonus Monophthalmus or 'the one-eyed'. Citing a paucity of sources for the entirety of the 3rd century BC, Waterfield feels that Antigonus Gonatas and his

career have not received the credit he deserves for stabilising the kingdom of Macedon after a period of chaos and violence, as many of the companions and associates of Alexander the Great vied for control of the fragments of his broken empire in the wake of his death in 323 BC.

Dividing the book into two distinct parts, Waterfield spends the early chapters of the work providing the background and context for the kingdom of Macedon after Alexander's death, in the period before Gonatas takes the throne. This is an engaging half of the book and the opening chapter in particular is a tour de force of names from antiquity which will have some resonance with the reader: Cassander (companion of Alexander), Olympias (Alexander's mother), and Antipater (Regent of Macedon in Alexander's absence). Dates and names pass at speed, especially concerning the different competing factions for the throne. Some prior knowledge of the major competing powers would be helpful to the general reader here. The chapter also deals with the final battle of the 'Diaoichi', whom Waterfield covered in his earlier volume in 2011, with the battle of Corupedium between Lysymachus and Seleucus in 281 BC taking centre stage and bringing the reader closer to the time of Antigonus' rule. As Chapter one ends, Macedon is in disarray and has been divided into two separate kingdoms. Waterfield sets the scene for what is to follow by noting that 'Phillip II's Macedon had fallen apart, it would take a strong hand to unite it'.

Chapters two and three provide context for the relationship between Macedon and the two most prominent Greek states, Athens and Sparta, in both political terms but also those with the

most name recognition for most readers. What follows is a chronological assessment of the weakening, and partial subjugation, of both Sparta and Athens by subsequent Macedonian monarchs including Philip II, Alexander, Demetrius and Antigonus Gonatas.

Chapter four details the rise of confederacies within Greece in the 3rd century; these, unlike the largely ineffective opposition of Sparta and Athens, outlined in previous chapters, prove to be a far sterner test for the Macedon inherited by Antigonus. Waterfield recounts (briefly) the rise of both the Anatolian and the Achaean confederacies with some admiration, stating 'the Anatolians and the Achaeans were not the earliest Greek confederacies, but they were the most successful'. Waterfield continues 'one of the reasons for their success was their willingness to experiment, to find the best way to satisfy the member states and create a stable system'. This chapter sets the scene for the concerns which Antigonus would encounter once he had claimed the Macedonian throne.

Chapter five completes the last chapter of Part I of Waterfield's study by describing the plans of Ptolemy I, ruler of Egypt, to invade Greece. Perhaps Waterfield's best and most engaging chapter, recounting the creation of the Ptolemaic dynasty and the wealth and power which it wielded, allows praise to be given to Antigonus for resisting the military and diplomatic ambitions of a power such as Ptolemaic Egypt. Like much of Part I, this chapter begins far from the subject of Antigonus Gonatas and 'travels towards' him. Detailing Ptolemy's planned invasion of Greece in 308 BC, he pits Cassander as Ptolemy's enemy, as opposed to Gonatas. The process of travelling toward Antigonus is a deliberate facet of the author's work, and one which provides a more holistic picture of the period under consideration. As Waterfield noted at the outset, the third century is often little understood due to the paucity of its sources and the difficulty of constructing a chronological narrative. By travelling towards Antigonus at every stage, this is an issue which the author skilfully attempts to address.

The second half of the work also focuses on Gonatas' other qualities, not just a warrior but a state builder; Antigonus concluded a peace with Antiochus (son of Seleucus, one of Alexander's *diadorchi*) who maintained designs on the Kingdom of Macedon. Waterfield, with justification, believes that this was a remarkable achievement and shows the calibre of Antigonus as a statesman as well as a warrior. This is much in keeping with the second half of this volume, Antigonus taking his place as the rightful King of Macedon. These chapters detail his marriage to Phila, daughter of Seleucus I, yet this is not the only thread throughout this half. Antigonus possessed a life which was rich and varied; vaunted for its triumphs and successes as much as it was mired by failure, defeat and heartbreak. Despite military victories against his long-time rival, Ptolemy II, at Cos in 261 BC or the victory over the Greek confederacy in the Chremonidean War, Antigonus' years as King were also laced with tragedy. With the death of his eldest son, Halcyoneus, around 265 BC and the re-emergence of the Aetolian and Achaean confederacies, the influence of Macedon in central and southern Greece waned. Despite this, Waterfield's Gonatas was a man of vision, energy and ability: reuniting a fractured Macedon and fostering peace with Antiochus must stand as his greatest foreign policy success. However, this was not the only one. Within this fine volume, Waterfield has allowed Antigonus to emerge from behind those more well-known figures of the Hellenistic age. Deservedly he takes his place among the most accomplished kings, warriors and statesmen of the 3rd century. This would make a fine addition to any course on the rise and fall of Macedon and its re-emergence.

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