

Lysimachus and the Cities: The Early Years*

W.W. Tarn¹ once remarked apropos of the two decades following the death of Alexander the Great in 323 BC that "the more the period is studied, the stronger the conviction grows of the presence of a great lost writer behind it." His allusion was to the lost history of Hieronymus of Cardia, and subsequent scholarship has by and large confirmed Tarn's essentially intuitive assessment of the reliability of the Hieronymean tradition, particularly as it is reflected in Diodorus, books 18-20. Unfortunately, scholars have too often forgotten, however, that of necessity that tradition also reflects Hieronymus' biases, his partiality for the Antigonid house, already notorious in antiquity (Pausanias 1.9.8), and his tendency to use the freedom of the Greeks as the standard against which to measure the actions and policies of Alexander's successors rather than their success in coping with the particular problems they faced in the governing of their various satrapies and, later, kingdoms.² Most adversely affected has been the reputation of Lysimachus, first satrap and then King of Thrace and ultimately of much of Anatolia from 323 to 281, and bitter enemy of the early Antigonids and the "destroyer" of Cardia, Hieronymus' birthplace (Pausanias 1.9.8). Not surprisingly judgements of Lysimachus' policies toward the Greek cities based on sources derived from Hieronymus have been harsh. Thus, according to Th. Lenschau³ he was the King "qui Graecorum libertate fuit inimicissimus," the one most hostile to the freedom of the Greeks, while D.M. Pippidi⁴ in his standard history of the Greek cities of the west coast of the Black Sea, *I Greci nel Basso Danubio*, characterized his policy toward the cities of the Dobruja simply as "tyranny."

There is, to be sure, considerable evidence that seems to support this interpretation of Lysimachus' policy toward the Greek cities of his realm. Most important is the presence of garrisons in various Greek cities and the subjection of their governments to the oversight of royal agents (*epistates*), a situation implied for the Greek cities of the Dobruja in 313⁵ and attested for Heraclea Pontica in northern Anatolia and probably also Cassandra in the 280s.⁶ Further, Lysimachus issued no declaration supporting the principle of the freedom of the Greeks in response to that of Antigonus the One Eyed in 315 nor did he implement in his territories the relevant provisions of the Peace of 311 dealing with that subject.⁷ Not surprisingly, cities subject to him, again chiefly those in the Dobruja, proved responsive to such proclamations by his rivals, rising in rebellion in 313 (Diodorus 19.73) following that of Antigonus the One Eyed and probably again

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1. W.W. Tarn, *Hellenistic Civilization*, rev. ed. by G.T. Griffith (New York, 1961) 284. All dates are B.C.

2. Cf. Jane Hornblower, *Hieronymus of Cardia* (Oxford, 1981) 171-179.

3. Thomas Lenschau, *De rebus Priensium*, Leipzig Studien zur Klassischen Philologie, 12 (Leipzig, 1890) 175.

4. D.M. Pippidi, *I Greci nel basso Danubio*, G. Bordenache trans. (Milan, 1971) 93.

5. This is implied by Diodorus' remark (19.73.1-2) that the cities τῆς αὐτονομίας ἀντίχοντο; cf. W. Orth, *Königlicher Machtanspruch und städtische Freiheit* (Munich, 1977) 3-5.

6. Heraclea Pontica: Memnon, *EGrH*, 3B, 434 F 5.6-6.2. Cassandra: Polyaeus 6.7.2; for Lachares as an agent of Lysimachus see Polyaeus 3.7.2-3.

(Diodorus 20.25.1) subsequent to that of Ptolemy I in 310 (Diodorus 20.19.4). Add to these facts the figurative "destruction" of cities such as Cardia in 309 and Ephesus in 294 through their enforced inclusion in Lysimachus' newly founded capitals of Lysimachia in Europe⁸ and Arsinoea in Asia⁹ and the actual physical destruction of Astacus in northwest Anatolia in the 280's,¹⁰ and the characterization of Lysimachus' policy toward the Greek cities as unusually harsh in comparison with that of his contemporaries seems plausible.

The evidence that Lysimachus subjected the cities of his realm to a tyrannical regime, therefore, seems compelling, but is it? The anecdotal and often fragmentary sources for Hellenistic history encourage scholars to ignore chronology and, instead, to use evidence drawn from the whole of a king's reign — in Lysimachus' case a reign that spanned four turbulent decades — to construct a generalized synchronic analysis of his policies. But if the evidence concerning Lysimachus' treatment of the Greek cities subject to him is considered chronologically, it becomes clear that his policies toward them changed markedly after the battle of Ipsus in 301 and his acquisition of vast new territories in Anatolia.¹¹ Thus, the evidence pointing to a consistent policy of tightly controlling his subject cities, principally those of the Dobruja, is concentrated in the period prior to 301, while the situation in the 290's and 280's is much more complex. Examples of harsh treatment of individual cities after 301 are attested, but they are balanced by a considerable list of concessions and privileges granted to other cities.¹² Moreover, during the Ipsus campaign and again in the 280's but not before, Lysimachus, like his rivals, did invoke the principle of the freedom of the Greeks.¹³ Most revealing, however, is the change in his policies regarding garrisoning the cities of his kingdom and limiting their internal self-government. Again, both practices are attested in the decades after 301, but they seem clearly to be exceptions provoked by special circumstances to a general policy of permitting considerable freedom of action to local city governments. The situation is clearest with regard to the north Anatolian city of Heraclea Pontica. There, it is true, Lysimachus did ultimately install a garrison and *epistates* following his overthrow in 284 of the dynasty of tyrants that had ruled the city since the 360's, but this was probably one of the security measures he took in the wake of the upheavals that followed the execution of his popular son Agathocles and the purging of his supporters from the court and the Anatolian territories he had apparently administered for his father.¹⁴ In 284, however, he left it ungarrisoned and governed by its own local officials;¹⁵ and he seems to have followed the same policy a decade earlier in dealing with the Ionian cities he seized from Demetrius Poliorcetes in 294.¹⁶ This more flexible policy toward the Greek cities during and after 301 raises, therefore, the question whether there were particular circumstances that would account for Lysimachus' far less generous treatment of the west Pontic cities during the early years of his reign.

7. Diodorus 19.105; *RC* 1, lines 53 to 55.

8. V. Tscherikower, *Die hellenistischen städtegründungen von Alexander dem Grossen bis auf die Römerzeit*, *Philologus Supp.* 19 (Leipzig, 1927) 1-2.

9. Arsinoea: Tscherikower (Supra note 7) 25. That Arsinoea/Ephesus was Lysimachus' Asiatic capital is not explicitly stated in the sources but is likely in view of the recent discovery of the remains of a monumental statue of the king there (Erol Atalay and Sabahattin Türkoğlu, "Ein frühhellenistischer Porträtkopf des Lysimachos aus Ephesus," *JOAIW*, 50 [1972-1975] Beiblatt 123-150) and Arsinoe's residence in the city during the Corupedium campaign (Polyaenus 8.57).

10. Strabo 12.4.2, C 563.

11. For the results of a similar analysis of Lysimachus' fiscal policies see S. Burstein, "Lysimachus the *Gazophylax*: A Modern Scholarly Myth?," *Ancient Coins of the Graeco-Roman World: The Nickle Numismatic Papers*, W. Heckel and R. Sullivan editors (Waterloo, Ontario, 1984) 57-68.

12. For such lists see S. Burstein, "Lysimachus and the Greek Cities of Asia: The Case of Miletus," *The Ancient World*, 3 (1980) 74-76.

13. Ipsus campaign: Diodorus 20.107.2. 280's: *IG* II² 656, lines 31-38. For the context see S. Burstein, "Bithys, Son of Cleon from Lysimachia," *CSCA*, 12 (1984) 41.

14. Suggested by Pietro Ghione, "Note sul regno di Lisimaco," *Att. R. Acc. Sc. Torino*, 39 (1903-04) 628.

Two such circumstances can, in fact, be identified with regard to these cities. The first concerns the manner in which they became subject to Lysimachus. On paper, the satrapy of Thrace in 323 when it was assigned to him at Babylon was enormous, including the Chersonesus, that is, the present day Gallipoli Peninsula, and all of the north Balkans from the Nestos River¹⁷ east to the Black Sea and north to the Danube River. The reality was far different. Early in the 320's the death of Lysimachus' predecessor Zopyrion and the loss of his army while campaigning north of the Danube had been followed by a general uprising of Macedon's Thracian subjects led by Seuthes III, the ruler of the most important of them, the Odrysians. The magnitude of the resulting disaster is clear from Arrian's (*FGrH* 2B, 156 F 1.7) description of Lysimachus' satrapy as including "the Chersonesus and the peoples bordering Thrace as far as the sea at Salmydessus," a barren stretch of coast extending north for about seventy miles from the Bosphorus (Strabo 7.6.1). In other words, virtually all of Philip II's gains in Thrace had been lost. Equally important, none of the west Pontic cities fell within the boundaries of Lysimachus' satrapy as defined in 323. The presence of his garrisons in these same cities in 313, therefore, must mean that they were forcefully subdued by him sometime after 323. In such circumstances, a policy of respect for the freedom of the Greeks would have been impractical, all the more so, since recent studies have made it clear that declarations in support of Greek freedom were not so much statements of strongly held principles as propaganda devices used by various kings, including Lysimachus later in his reign, to induce cities subject to one king to defect to another and, therefore, hardly useful in the case of genuinely independent cities being forcefully deprived of their freedom.¹⁸

The second is the well attested tradition of close ties between the west Pontic Greek cities and the principal non-Greek states of the Thracian interior. The west coast of the Pontus was a frontier zone in which the few and isolated Greek cities maintained a precarious existence "full of anxiety and fear" and "hedged about on all sides by warlike tribes, the enemy almost pressing against my side" as the despondent Roman poet Ovid (*Tristia* 3.11 lines 10-14) described his life in exile at Tomis, modern Constantia, in the early first century AD. Natives in the immediate vicinity of the cities might be and were conquered and reduced to a type of servitude similar to that of Sparta's helots.¹⁹ Beyond the borders of the city's territories, however, were other groups, independent or vassals of the powerful chieftans of the interior states whose raids, actual or potential, produced that state of "anxiety and fear" alluded to by Ovid.²⁰ Survival, therefore, required protection and the coastal cities obtained it by recognizing the suzerainty of and, sometimes, paying tribute to the Thracian or Getic overlords of the raiders. The system is most clearly documented in a series of second and first century BC inscriptions such as the Histrian decree honoring a certain Agathocles for his repeated and only partially successful missions seeking military aid from a probably Getic king named Rhemaxus, overlord of Histria, against raids by the city's native neighbors.²¹ That it existed already

15. Memnon, *FGrH*, 3B, 434 F 5.3; cf. Stanley Mayer Burstein, *Outpost of Hellenism: The Emergence of Heraclea on the Black Sea*, University of California Publications: Classical Studies, 12 (Berkeley, 1976) 85-86.

16. I have discussed this question in "Lysimachus and the Greek Cities: A Problem in Interpretation," *Ancient Macedonia*, 4 (in press).

17. That the Nestos River was the western boundary of Lysimachus' kingdom is suggested by Pausanias 1.10.2.

18. For realistic assessments of declarations supporting the "freedom of the Greeks" see R.H. Simpson, "Antigonos the One-Eyed and the Greeks," *Historia*, 4 (1959) 385-409 and Robin Seager, "The Freedom of the Greeks of Asia: From Alexander to Antiochus," *CQ*, 31 (1981) 107.

19. D.M. Pippidi, "Le problème de la main d'oeuvre agricole dans les colonies grecques de la mer Noire," *Scythica Minora: Recherches sur les colonies grecques du littoral Roumain de la mer Noire* (Bucharest, 1975) 65-80.

20. Cf. the similar situation of Byzantium (Polybius 4.45), which, however, was complicated by the lack of a paramount chief in the city's hinterland.

in the fourth century, however, is suggested by an early third century inscription from Mesembria, likewise within Lysimachus' territory, which refers to that city's ties with a chief name Sadalas and his four predecessors.²²

Protection against attack by their non-Greek neighbors was the chief benefit the west Pontic cities gained from such ties, but not the only one. Thus, before the outbreak of their revolt in 313 the Dobruja cities secured the alliance of Thracian and Scythian populations. Again in the early 320's the destruction of Zopyrion, Lysimachus' predecessor as Macedonian governor of Thrace, and his army at the hands of the Scythians²³ followed his unsuccessful siege of Olbia at the mouth of the Bug River in the Northwest Black Sea (Macrobius, *Saturnalia* 1.11.33). That the Scythians were acting as allies of Olbia is not explicitly attested, but likely in view of Olbia's previous relations with that people.²⁴ Finally, a little over a decade earlier in 341 Odessus successfully invoked the aid of the Getes against Philip II.²⁵ Clearly central, therefore, to any assessment of Lysimachus' policies toward the west Pontic Greek cities is the question of the extent of his authority over the various Thracian populations of his satrapy and, especially, over the most powerful of them, the Odrysians and their king Seuthes III, the mastermind of the successful Thracian revolt of the early 320's.

It is particularly unfortunate, therefore, that the sources are unclear with regard to this particular issue. Thus, after briefly describing a hard fought battle in 323 between Lysimachus and Seuthes III in which Lysimachus, heavily outnumbered by his Thracian opponent, barely managed to escape total defeat, Diodorus (18.14.2-4) remarks that "then both armies withdrew from the area and (sc. the kings) began to collect greater forces for the decisive encounter." No account of any further battle between Lysimachus and Seuthes, however, is to be found in Diodorus or in our other two sources for these events, Arrian (*FGrH* 2B 156 F 1.10) and Pausanias (1.9.6), both of which seem to have emphasized Lysimachus' unexpected escape from disaster in the first battle. Scholars, nevertheless, generally have assumed that he did ultimately subdue Seuthes III and re-establish firm Macedonian control over all Thrace.²⁶ A considerably different scenario, however, is suggested by three pieces of, admittedly, circumstantial evidence, namely: (1) Diodorus' twice referring to Seuthes III as king, first in his account of the battle between him and Lysimachus in 323 (Diodorus 18.14.2) and again in his narrative of the revolt of the Dobruja cities in 313 (19.73.8); (2) Lysimachus' having an Odrysian wife (Pausanias 1.10.4); and (3) Appian's statement (*Syriaca* 1.1) that Lysimachus founded Lysimachia in 309 as an ἐπιτείχισμα, a bulwark against the Thracians. Taken together these items suggest that, far from subduing the Odrysian king, Lysimachus' recognized his de facto independence, concluded a marriage alliance with him, and then took steps to defend against possible future hostilities should the alliance fall.

Until recently interpretations along these lines have found little favor with scholars, the evidence on which they are based being either ignored or dismissed;²⁷ and this

21. For text and commentary see D.M. Pippidi, "Istros et les Gètes au II^e siècle: Observations sur le décret en l'honneur d'Agathocles, fils d'Antiphilos," *Scythica Minora* (Supra n. 19) 31-55. For the general situation in the Dobruja see D.M. Pippidi, "Die Beziehungen Histrias zu den Geten im 3. Jh. v. u. Z.," *Epigraphische Beiträge zur Geschichte Histrias in hellenistischer und römischer Zeit* (Berlin, 1962) 77-81.

22. *IGBR* 1².307, lines 2-16.

23. Helmut Berve, *Das Alexanderreich auf prosopographischer Grundlage* (Munich, 1926) s.v. Ζωπυρίων (Nr. 340).

24. Cf. Herodotus 4.77-78.

25. Theopompus, *FGrH*, 2B, 115 F 216; Jordanes, *Getica* 65.

26. E.g. G.B. Possenti, *Il Re Lisimaco di Tracia* (Florence, 1901) 57; F. Geyer, "Lysimachos," *RE*, 14 (1930) 3; and Giovanna Saitta, "Lisimaco di Tracia," *Kokalos*, 1 (1965) 65. In support Geyer cites the claim of the Heidelberg Epitome (*FGrH*, 2B, 155 F 1.4) that Antipater was unable to remove Lysimachus as satrap of Thrace in 321, a statement whose evidential value is limited in view of the lack of any evidence indicating that Antipater wished to remove Lysimachus at that time.

despite the closely parallel situation in the late 290's when Lysimachus was forced to conclude just such a marriage alliance with the transdanubian Getic ruler Dromochaetes as part of a treaty recognizing the Danube as the border between their respective territories after two attempts to gain the same objective by military means had failed disastrously.²⁸ Particularly welcome, therefore, is the recent discovery of archaeological evidence tending to confirm this reconstruction as a result of the excavation of Seuthes III's capital of Seuthopolis, located on the upper reaches of the Tundja River north of the Sredna Gora Mountains and controlling the vital Shipka Pass, the key to northern Thrace.²⁹

The evidence is both numismatic and epigraphic. The former consists of a number of bronze coins of Cassander and Lysimachus minted after 306 but overstruck with the name of Seuthes, clearly indicating that as late as the last decade of the fourth century Seuthes still enjoyed autonomy in his own territory.³⁰ Equally important is the evidence provided by the so-called Great Inscription (*IGBR* 1731) from Seuthopolis:³¹

Good Fortune. Oath given by Berenice and her sons to Epimenes. Since Seuthes is safe and well, she has turned Epimenes and his property over to Spartocus and Spartocus has given pledges concerning these matters on behalf of Epimenes, it has been decided by Berenice and her sons — Ebryzelmus, Teres, Satocus and Sadalas — and her grandsons, should any be born, that Epimenes shall remain alive and the property handed over to Spartocus shall be secure and that Epimenes shall serve Spartocus as faithfully as he can or anyone (sc. Spartocus) orders him to. The sons of Berenice shall lead Epimenes out from the temple of the Samothracian gods on this condition, that they harm him in no way, but turn him and his property over to Spartocus, and if Epimenes inflicts no injury on them, they will seize nothing of his property, but should it be clear that they have suffered some harm, let Spartocus be the judge. This oath shall be inscribed on stone steles and set up, one in Cabyle in the Phosphorion and another in the agora by the altar of Apollo and in Seuthopolis, one in the shrine of the Great Gods and one in the agora in the shrine of Dionysus.

Neither the exact historical context of this inscription nor its date are known. The known facts of Seuthes' life, however, suggest the last decade of the fourth century or, at the latest, the 290's.³² Likewise, the fact that affairs apparently were being managed by Seuthes' queen acting as regent for him and his sons and the reference to him being safe and well as a condition of Epimenes' safe conduct points to his having been the victim of an unsuccessful assassination plot. What is of particular importance to the present discussion, however, are not the precise circumstances that resulted in the agreement detailed in *IGBR* 1731 but two incidental facts referred to in the inscription, namely, that Seuthes had a Macedonian queen, most likely a daughter of Lysimachus,³³ just as the interpretation proposed above requires, and that the town of Cabyle was ruled by another independent Thracian dynast named Spartocus.³⁴ The latter is particularly

27. E.g. Tschirikower's ([Supra n. 8] 2) remark that Lysimachia was founded "nicht so sehr gegen die Thraker als vielmehr gegen Antigonos;" and the characterization of his Odrysian wife as probably only a "Nebenfrau" by Jakob Seibert, *Historische Beiträge zu den dynastischen Verbindungen in hellenistischer Zeit*, *Historia Einzelschriften*, 10 (Wiesbaden, 1967) 95-96.

28. Diodorus 21.11-12; Polyaeus 7.25; Pausanias 1.9.6; cf. Pippidi, *I Greci* (Supra n. 4) 92-93.

29. Dimitroff P. Dimitrov and Maria Čičikova, *The Thracian City of Seuthopolis*, M.P. Alexieva trans., BAR Supp. Ser. 38 (Oxford, 1978). For a brief account see R.F. Hodkinson, *Bulgaria in Antiquity: An Archaeological Introduction* (New York, 1975) 93-103. For historical reconstructions based on the new evidence see G. Mihailov, "La Thrace aux IV^e et III^e siècles avant notre Ère, *Athenaeum*, N.S. 39 (1969) 35-36; H. Bengtson, "Neues zur Geschichte des Hellenismus in Thracien und in der Dobrukscha," *Kleine Schriften zur alten Geschichte* (Munich, 1974) 378-379; and Dimitrov and Čičikova, 4-5.

30. Yordanka Youroukova, *Coins of the Ancient Thracians*, V. Athanassov trans., BAR Supp. Ser. 4 (Oxford, 1976) 24, 78-79.

important since Cabyle, located east of Seuthopolis, and like it occupying a strategic location on the upper Tondja River, had been colonized by Philip II³⁵ and served during his reign and that of Alexander as one of the anchors of Macedonian rule in Thrace. Taken together with the virtual independence of Seuthes III during the last quarter of the fourth century, the simultaneous occupation of a key Macedonian stronghold such as Cabyle by Spartocus can only mean that Lysimachus never succeeded in re-establishing Macedonian authority over the interior of Thrace prior to the Ipsus campaign of 302/1.

The implications of this conclusion are clear. In view of the fact that Lysimachus apparently never enjoyed more than nominal authority over the various people of the interior of Thrace, actions such as the garrisoning of the west Pontic cities and the consolidation of the small and weak cities of the Gallipoli Peninsula into his fortress capital of Lysimachia should not be viewed as reflecting a policy of arbitrary hostility to Greek freedom but as sensible security precautions taken by the satrap of a satrapy that was deficient in both manpower and financial resources³⁶ and faced the constant threat of attack along a lengthy frontier by powerful chiefdoms with traditional ties to those same cities. Nor is this surprising. Although historians tend to treat Lysimachus as one of the major actors in the events of the years between 323 and 302/1, one who even himself once briefly in 308 toyed with the idea of seeking the rule of the whole of Alexander's empire by marrying Cleopatra, Alexander's sister and then the sole surviving member of his immediate family (Diodorus 20.37.4), a close reading of the sources provides little support for such an interpretation. A follower rather than a leader in the disputes that broke out among his generals at Babylon after Alexander's death in 323,³⁷ Lysimachus, like Eumenes, was assigned a satrapy that had still to be conquered or, in his case, reconquered. The result is clear in the sources. Between 323 and 302/1 Lysimachus campaigned only against the Thracians and transdanubian Getes (Pausanias 1.9.6) and the rebellious cities of his satrapy and their allies while avoiding anything beyond the most perfunctory involvement in the affairs of Macedon and the Aegean. Establishing his authority in Thrace, not the succession to Alexander's empire, was Lysimachus' first priority in the first two decades of his reign. Only in the aftermath of the Battle of Ipsus in 301 and his acquisition of vast new territories in Anatolia would he emerge as a king of equal stature with his contemporaries, Cassander, Ptolemy, Seleucus and Demetrius.

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31. Although discovered in 1953, the Greek text of *IGBR* 1731 has still not been published. The translation in the text is based on the Latin version published by G. Mihailov in *IGBR*. For a German translation see C. Danov, "Seuthopolis," *R-E*, Supp. 9 (1962) 1376.

32. Since Seuthes already had at least two adult sons in 330 (*GHI* 193; Berve [Supra n. 23] s.v. Σευθης [Nr. 702]), he would have been at a minimum close to seventy in the last decade of the fourth century.

33. This has been denied by G. Mihailov (*IGBR* 3.148 ad 1731) who suggests that Berenice was a daughter of Antigonos married to Seuthes as part of the terms of the alliance concluded between them in 313 (Diodorus 19.73.8), but this is unlikely for two reasons. First, it is most improbable that such a marital alliance between Seuthes and Antigonos could have survived after the defeats inflicted in that same year on Seuthes and Antigonos' general Pausanias by Lysimachus (Diodorus 19.73.9-10); and, second, the active role played by Berenice's four sons in the events described in *IGBR* 1731 suggests that they were too old to have been the products of a marriage concluded in 313.

34. Spartocus' independence is implied by coins of his with the inscription [Σ]ΠΑΡΤΟΚΟΥ [ΒΑ]ΣΙΛΕΩΣ (Kamen Dimitrov, "New Types of Thracian Coins from the Excavations in Seuthopolis," *Bulgarian Historical Review*, 8 [1980] 78).

35. Cf. G.T. Griffith in N.G.L. Hammond and G.T. Griffith, *A History of Macedonia*, II 550-336 B.C. (Oxford, 1979) 557-558 and 673 for the importance of Cabyle. For a brief description of the site see Hodinott (Supra n. 29) 103-104.

36. Note the attempts to reinforce the population of Thrace by Antipater (Diodorus 18.18.4-5; Plutarch, *Phocion* 28.4) and Cassander (Diodorus 20.19.1). For Lysimachus' fiscal problems in the early years of his reign see Burstein, "Lysimachus the *Gazophylax*" (Supra n. 11) 59.

37. Arrian, *FGrH*, 2B, 156 F 1.2.