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Imitatio, aemulatio or comparatio? Demetrius Poliorcetes and his attitude towards Alexander the Great's accomplishments and legacy**

Imitatio, aemulatio czy comparatio? Demetriusz Poliorketes i jego stosunek do osiągnięć i dziedzictwa Aleksandra Wielkiego

Abstract: This article examines Demetrius Poliorcetes' imitation of Alexander the Great. The assumption that *imitatio Alexandri* was his prevailing attitude towards Alexander's memory has been broadly accepted by modern researchers. Hence, they draw parallels between the rulers and recognise the Alexander's influence on Demetrius' actions. The author attempts to indicate that such a method might obscure the actual intentions and accomplishments of Demetrius.

Keywords: Demetrius, Alexander, *imitatio*, *aemulatio*, *comparatio*

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** The title refers to P. Green's article *Caesar and Alexander: Aemulatio, imitatio, comparatio*, in: *Classical bearings. Interpreting ancient history*, ed. P. Green, New York 1989, pp. 193–209. All dates refer to the time before Christ unless otherwise specified.

Streszczenie: Artykuł podejmuje problem naśladowania Aleksandra Wielkiego przez Demetriusza Poliorketesa. Pogląd, że *imitatio Alexandri* stanowiło dominujący stosunek tego władcy do pamięci o Aleksandrze, został zaakceptowany przez współczesnych badaczy. Z tego powodu porównują oni obu władców i oceniają Demetriusza przez pryzmat osiągnięć Aleksandra. Autor stara się zwrócić uwagę na problemy takiego podejścia, które utrudniają nam ukazanie osiągnięć Poliorketesa oraz poznanie rzeczywistych celów władcy.

Słowa kluczowe: Demetriusz, Aleksander, *imitatio*, *aemulatio*, *comparatio*

In his article on Alexander the Great's influence on the Diadochi, A. Meeus expressed a view that all of them "walked in Alexander's footsteps when it came to strategies of self-presentation and propaganda". Possible differences, says the scholar, were few and "limited to individual Successors in individual fields" only.[1] Although Meeus remains aware of the limitations of his analysis, the assumption that *imitatio Alexandri* constituted a crucial component of the actions of the Diadochi seems rather grounded in the scholarship on the subject.[2] According to the researchers, the memory of Alexander and his deeds had a particularly significant influence on Demetrius Poliorcetes, the son of Antigonus Monophthalmus. Since the determination to imitate Alexander has been ubiquitously ascribed to him, his actions are often juxtaposed and compared with the achievements of Philip's son.

Even though Demetrius' *imitatio Alexandri* has not yet been the subject of a separate study, it has been widely discussed as part of broader research on the ruler. Most scholars uphold the view that he indeed imitated

[1] A. Meeus, *The strategies of legitimation of Alexander and the Diadochoi: Continuity and discontinuities*, in: *The legitimation of conquest: Monarchical representation and the art of government in the empire of Alexander the Great*, eds. K. Trampedach, A. Meeus, Stuttgart 2020, p. 317.

[2] On Alexander's influence on the latter rulers cf. A. Stewart, *Faces of power. Alexander's image and Hellenistic politics*, Berkeley 1993; A. Kühnen, *Die imitatio Alexandri als politisches Instrument römischer Feldherren und Kaiser in der Zeit von der ausgehenden Republik bis zum Ende des dritten Jahrhunderts n. Chr.*, Diss. Duisburg-Essen 2005; K. Dahmen, *The legend of Alexander the Great on Greek and Roman coins*, New York 2007; A. Trofimova, *Imitatio Alexandri in the Hellenistic art*, Roma 2012.

Alexander.[3] Some go as far as to call him "the most Alexander-like (at least in intention)" among the Diadochi[4] or "fervent emulator of Alexander in every respect".[5] Recently, however, we have observed a rise in interest in his figure: some newly published studies tend to focus on innovative aspects of his actions, which may imply not only his independence from the other Diadochi, but also from Alexander himself.[6] That is why some researchers have recently expressed some doubt around his *imitatio Alexandri* by arguing that Demetrius' attitude towards Alexander was rather imbued with rivalry (*aemulatio Alexandri*).[7] In response to this, the purpose of this article is to examine whether ascribing such motives to Demetrius is supported by the source material and to determine if this approach does not perchance obscure numerous aspects of his original intentions. Another question to be

[3] Demetrius' *imitatio Alexandri*: J. Kaerst, *Demetrios (33)*, in: *Paulus Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, vol. 4, ed. G. Wissowa, Stuttgart 1901, pp. 2770, 2787, 2787–2789; G. Elkeles, *Demetrios der Stadtbelagerer*, Diss. Breslau 1941, pp. 86–87; E. Manni, *Demetrio Poliorcete*, Roma 1951, p. 62; C. Wehrli, *Antigone et Démétrios*, Genève 1968, p. 222; F. Pownall, *Folly and violence in Athens under the successors*, in: *Folly and violence in the court of Alexander the Great and his successors*, eds. T. Howe, S. Müller, Bochum–Freiburg, p. 55; P. Wheatley, C. Dunn, *Demetrios the Besieger*, Oxford 2020, pp. 13, 56 n. 35, 438; A. Meeus, *The strategies…*, pp. 298–299; P. Wheatley, C. Dunn, *Coinage as propaganda*, in: *Alexander the Great and propaganda*, eds. J. Walsh, E. Baynham, London 2021, pp. 180–182.

[4] J. Pollit, *Art in the Hellenistic age*, Cambridge 1986, p. 31.

[5] P. Wheatley, C. Dunn, *Demetrius…*, p. 56 n. 35.

[6] S. Müller, *In the favour of Aphrodite: Sulla, Demetrios Poliorcetes, and the symbolic value of the Hetaira*, "The Ancient History Bulletin" 2009, vol. 23, pp. 38–49; A. Chaniotis, *The Ithyphallic Hymn for Demetrios Poliorketes and Hellenistic religious mentality*, in: *More than men, less than gods: Studies on royal cult and imperial worship. Proceedings of the international colloquium organized by the Belgian school at Athens, November 1–2, 2007*, eds. P. Iossif, A. Chankowski, C. Lorber, Leuven 2011, p. 186; M. Günther, *Herrscherliche Inszenierungen in den Diadochenkriegenam Beispiel von Antigonos I. und Demetrios I*, in: *Des Charisma des Herrschers*, eds. D. Boschung, J. Hammerstaedt, Paderborn 2015, pp. 235–252; B. Eckhardt, *Der Krieg, die Götter, die Frauen. Zur Herrschaftsrepräsentation des Demetrios I. Poliorketes*, in: *Von Magna Graecia nach Asia Minor. Festschrift für L.-M. Günther*, eds. H. Beck, B. Eckhardt, Wiesbaden 2017, pp. 197–224.

[7] V. Alonso Troncoso, *Antigonus Monophthalmus and Alexander's memory*, in: *Alexander's legacy*, eds. C. Bearzot, F. Landucci, Roma 2016, p. 113–114; idem, *Alexander, the king in shining armour*, "Karanos" 2019, vol. 2, p. 25; B. Eckhardt, op. cit., p. 203.

discussed here is whether the similarities between the actions of Demetrius and those of his predecessors, as emphasised by previous research, allows us to argue that Demetrius was consciously copying other rulers' practices.

Definition

Before discussing Demetrius' *imitatio Alexandri*, we first ought to investigate the origin and definition of the term. Although Alexander became a point of reference for many ancient authors, the term is rather poorly documented in written sources. The first author to use it in its modern sense was probably Seneca the Younger: in his description of the bridge erected by Caligula, he states the emperor made it *furiosi et externi et infeliciter superbi regis imitatio*.[8] Though it is not certain which ruler is evoked by the passage, S. Malloch identifies Alexander as the main candidate.[9] Later, Ammianus Marcellinus, whilst recounting the restraint of Julian the Apostate towards young women, described it as *Alexandrum imitatus*.[10] We might also note that a similar Greek term has been used in the context of Julian: Philostrogius remarked that the emperor set his camp near Issos and in doing so he imitated Alexander (Ἀλέξανδρον μιμησάμενος). In a letter to philosopher Themistius, Julian himself confessed he had hoped at certain point to compete with Alexander or Marcus Aurelius (…πρός τε τὸν Ἀλέξανδρον καὶ τὸν Μάρκον…εἶναι τὴν ἅμιλλαν) in bravery and virtue.[11]

The researchers identify the first indication of the *imitatio Alexandri* in the words of Demosthenes, who strove to inspire pugnacious spirit among the Athenians during the preparations for the Lamian War of 322. In one of his speeches, he stated the victories of Alexander were achieved through his qualities and he encouraged the Athenians to take the son of Philip

[8] Seneca, *De Brev. Vit.* 18.5.

[9] S. Malloch, *Gaius' Bridge at Baiae and Alexander-Imitatio*, "Classical Quarterly" 2001, vol. 51, pp. 208–209.

[10] Amm. 24.4.26–7; R. Smith, *The casting of Julian the Apostate "in the Likeness" of Alexander the Great: a* topos *in antique historiography and its modern echoes*, "Histos" 2011, vol. 5, pp. 68–69.

[11] Philos. VII. 4c; *ad Them.* 253a.

as an example and not to be afraid of toil. The speech is an interesting instance of *imitatio* not only because it is considered the first, but also because the *imitans* is the polis.[12] Naturally, though, *imitatio Alexandri* is commonly analysed in reference to individual ancient rulers and commanders. Modern studies have focused, on the one hand, on Alexander's influence on the actions of the Diadochi and later Hellenistic monarchs; and on the other, on the impact he had on the Roman commanders of the Late Republic and the emperors.[13]

When it comes to the studies of the reception of Alexander in the Roman world, J. S. Richardson (1974) first called attention to how exactly scholars understand *imitatio Alexandri*. He claimed the term had been applied too frivolously, and effectively described two separate phenomena, which the researchers failed to differentiate: (1) the report that a particular ruler or commander likened himself to Alexander; and (2) the fact that similarities between them were observed and postulated by a third party – usually an ancient writer.[14] Applying the term in various ways even led G. Wirth to state that *imitatio Alexandri* became a tool to describe everything, and as a result, it described naught.[15] The criticism prompted P. Green to attempt to clarify the definition. According to him, *imitatio Alexandri* ought to be divided into three distinct phenomena: real *imitatio* – a conscious attempt to copy some model, regardless of the motives; *aemulatio* – the desire to compete and surpass the model; and *comparatio* – the comparison made by a third party between the historical figure and the model. The latter should be treated as a false *imitatio*.[16]

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[12] Dem., *Epist.* 1, 13; E. Koulakiotis, *Attic orators on Alexander the Great*, in: *Brill's companion to the reception of Alexander the Great*, ed. K. R. Moore, Leiden–Boston 2018, p. 61; cf. S. Wallace, *Metalexandron: Receptions of Alexander in the Hellenistic and Roman worlds*, in: ibidem, pp. 165–170.

[13] J. Nabel, *Alexander between Rome and Persia: Politics, ideology, and history*, in: ibidem, p. 208.

[14] J. Richardson, review of O. Weippert, *Alexander-imitatio und Rdmische Politik in republikanischer Zeit*, Augsburg 1972, "The Journal of Roman Studies" 1974, vol. 64, p. 238.

[15] G. Wirth, *Alexander und Rom*, in: *Alexandre le Grand. Image et Réalité*, ed. E. Badian, Genève 1976, p. 184.

[16] P. Green, op. cit., pp. 193–195.

Green's tripartite categorisation has been broadly accepted as a convenient analytical criterion.[17] Looking at the literature of the subject, we are also able to specify what kind of actions are considered *imitatio* and *aemulatio Alexandri*. *Imitatio* is referred to when a particular individual refers to Alexander's name and appearance, his symbols of power and divinity, and fashions his own portraits (e.g. on coins or in sculpture) on those of Alexander by copying characteristic elements of his iconography. We may also add to the list the custom of naming newly founded cities with their own names. *Aemulatio*, on the other hand, refers to the efforts to match Alexander's achievements or surpass them. Thus, depending on which of the two phenomena we observe, the son of Philip is either the model and paradigm of a ruler (*imitatio*) or a rival to the title of the greatest conqueror and king (*aemulatio*).[18]

Although the distinction proposed by Green appears natural, its practical application leads to a number of problems. Firstly, the historicity of *imitatio* (and *aemulatio*) can only be established by clear testimony of the individual himself. All our information stems solely from written sources, which renders the task particularly complicated: the fact that an ancient author relates specific activity to Alexander-*imitatio* could equally constitute an instance of *imitatio* and *comparatio*.[19] Moreover, third party remarks were not necessarily limited to that: according to Roman rhetorical theories, there

[17] S. Malloch, op. cit., pp. 211, 214; C. Rubincam, *A tale of Two "Magni": Justin/Trogus on Alexander and Pompey*, "Historia" 2005, vol. 54, p. 266; C. B. R. Pelling, *Plutarch: Caesar*, Oxford 2011, pp. 26–28, 184, 439; D. Hengst, *Alexander and Rome*, in: *Emperors and historiography – collected essays on the literature of the Roman Empire*, eds. D. Burgersdijk, J. van Waarden, Leiden 2009, p. 69.

[18] K. Kopij, *When did Pompey the Great engage in his imitatio Alexandri?*, "Studies in Ancient Art and Civilization" 2017, vol. 21, p. 121; C. Monaco, *Alexander-imitators in the age of Trajan: Plutarch's Demetrius and Pyrrhus*, "The Classical Journal" 2017, vol. 112 (4), p. 422.

[19] For this reason, C. Monaco, op. cit., p. 422 accepts Green's terminology without *comparatio*. D. Spencer, *Telling it like it is: Seneca, Alexander and the dynamics of epistolary advice*, in: *Advice and its rhetoric in Greece and Rome*, eds. D. Spencer, E. Theodorakopoulos, Bari 2006, p. 81 n. 3: "Attempting to isolate *comparatio* and *imitatio* as separate strands is a thankless task", cf. J. Peltonen, *Alexander the Great in the Roman Empire, 150 BC to AD 600*, London–New York 2019, p. 30.

is also a component of rivalry in *comparatio*.[20] Juxtaposing two objects or characters by outlining their similarities and differences usually had a clear purpose: to determine which of the two is greater. Regardless of whether we perceive a given action as *imitatio* or *aemulatio*, a model – a reference point – emerges naturally. Moreover, Green's categorisation remains problematic also when applied to the iconographic material. We are faced with the question: are we not perhaps ignoring the primary relation between the author of the message and its recipient by treating some of his crucial attributes and motives as mere references to Alexander? Given the multilayered meanings of the symbols, we may ask whether the ancients would interpret a ruler's actions in the same manner as the historians of today.[21]

The final problem with Green's categorisation is the question of the conclusive distinction between *imitatio* and *aemulatio*. Even if we do not rigorously adhere to these terms, the line that divides them appears rather blurred. Our source material often does not make it easy for us to form an unambiguous opinion. The fact that numerous scholars apply Green's terms and yet they use them interchangeably (due to the impossibility of drawing a final distinction) is very telling.[22]

Demetrius' *imitatio Alexandri*: evidence and historiography

The first author to express the conviction that Alexander's deeds influenced Poliorcetes was Plutarch of Chaeronea in his *Life of Demetrius*, which also constitutes our primary source for the ruler. Plutarch is the only ancient au-

[20] J. Peltonen, op. cit., p. 30.

[21] R. Smith, op. cit., 48–49; K. Welch, H. Mitchell, *Revisiting the Roman Alexander*, "Antichthon" 2013, vol. 47, p. 83; M. Kovacs, *Imitatio Alexandri – Zu Aneignungs- und Angleichungsphänomenen im römischen Porträt*, in: *Imitatio Heroica. Heldenangleichung im Bild*, eds. R. von den Hoff, F. Heinzer, H. Hubert, A. Schreurs-Morét, Würzburg 2015, pp. 47–48; S. Wallace, op. cit., p. 163 n. 3.

[22] A couple of examples: F. Muccioli, *The ambivalent model: Alexander in the Greek world between politics and literature (1st century BC / beg. 1st century AD)*, in: *Brill's companion…*, pp. 277, 287, 289; S. Asirvatham, *Plutarch's Alexander*, in: ibidem, pp. 372–373; A. Kühnen, op. cit., pp. 87, 138 footnote 112; V. Alonso Troncoso, *Antigonus…*, p. 25 (the case of Demetrius himself).

thor who compared the two figures, while also claiming that Demetrius attempted to imitate Alexander.[23] He argues, however, that the only characteristic the two actually shared was their passion for luxury, implied by the fact that they both wore extravagant attire.[24] As noted by M. Catherine, Plutarch considered it acceptable for a ruler to imitate Alexander's opulence provided it was accompanied by other features of excellence.[25] Demetrius, however, is described here as a depraved king and incapable of the *areté* that characterised the son of Philip. Plutarch also states that, in certain cases, it was the Macedonians themselves who first drew the comparisons between Demetrius and Alexander: during one of the battles Poliorcetes fought as the king of Macedonia, his soldiers compared him to Pyrrhus of Epirus and only in the latter saw an image of the great Alexander's daring. We might conclude, then, that ascribing the attempts to adopt Alexander's characteristics to Demetrius was not simply a consequence of Plutarch's interpretation of his actions; the tendency was also noted by his contemporaries.[26]

Demetrius' image as outlined above has largely been accepted by modern researchers. Following Plutarch's representation, scholars attempt to identify his efforts to model himself on Alexander and compare the two. Their arguments can be grouped into three categories. The first has to do with Demetrius' youthful fascination with the Macedonian king. It is applied especially in the newest biography of the ruler, authored by P. Wheatley and C. Dunn.[27] They argue that the adolescent Demetrius, who grew up in Antigonus' satrapy in Phrygia, was impressed by the tidings of Alexander's achievements in the East; hence, "he consciously strove to model himself on Alexander".[28] This approach allows the authors to perceive some of Demetrius' actions from that period in the light of inspiration sparked by the Macedonian king. It is exemplified by their interpretation of Dem-

[23] Plut. *Demetr.* 10.3; 25.4–5; 29.2; 37.4; 44.1.

[24] Plut. *Demetr.* 41.4–5.

[25] C. Monaco, op. cit., p. 414.

[26] Plut. *Demetr.* 41.5; *Pyrr.* 8.1.

[27] See my review T. Zieliński, *Pat Wheatley, Charlotte Dunn, Demetrius the Besieger, Oxford University Press, Oxford–New York 2020, 528 pp; ISBN 9780198836049*, "Electrum" 2022, vol. 29, pp. 333–336.

[28] P. Wheatley, C. Dunn, *Demetrius…*, p. 13.

etrius' relationship with Mithridates, the future founder of the Pontic kingdom, in the *erastes-eromenos* category and the suggestion that it might have been modelled on the relationship between Alexander and Hephaestion. The authors also note a striking resemblance between Demetrius and Alexander's early years military careers. To this end, they evoke the source tradition on the position of Demetrius at the battles of Paratacene and Gabiene, and that of Alexander at Chaeronea.[29] They also argue that identifying the efforts to imitate the king of Macedonia would allow us to better understand Poliorcetes' motives in the context of later events – e.g., his decision to give battle to Ptolemy at Gaza in 312/311 in spite of the adversary's wider experience, greater army, and his advisors' advice against doing so. Wheatley and Dunn argue that the encounter with Ptolemy, Alexander's former companion, who commanded an army outnumbering his own, offered an excellent chance for Demetrius to display heroism that matched that of Alexander. The same goes for Demetrius' decision to name his second son Alexander, which the authors perceive as telling.[30]

Demetrius' coinage is another issue discussed regarding his *imitatio Alexandri*. Before the battle of Ipsus, Antigonids continued to mint Alexander's coin types; Demetrius himself upheld this practice in certain territories until the 90s of the 3rd century. Although there may be numerous reasons behind this decision, this is commonly perceived as a display of the Antigonids' loyalty towards Alexander and the Argead kings.[31] However, upon his father's death in 301, Poliorcetes largely abandoned the practice and adopted new types to the Antigonid iconography. In particular, he endeavoured to gradually advance his own portrait on coins, which eventually became systematic during his reign in Macedonia.[32] He is portrayed as a young, beardless man with wide eyes, curly hair, and upward gaze. His head is decorated with a diadem. It may be that portraits of Demetrius were designed to create an association with the posthumous portraits of Alexan-

[29] Diod. 16.86; 19.29.4; 40.1; Plut. *Alex.* 9.2.

[30] P. Wheatley, C. Dunn, *Demetrius…*, pp. 39–40, 51–56, 69, 226.

[31] Eidem, *Coinage…*, p. 180.

[32] F. Callataÿ, *Royal Hellenistic coinages: From Alexander to Mithradates*, in: *The Oxford handbook of Greek and Roman coinage*, ed. W. Metcalf, Oxford 2012, p. 180–181. On Demetrius' coinage cf. E. Newell, *The coinage of Demetrius Poliorcetes*, Oxford 1978.

der, well known from the coinage of other Successors, especially Lysimachus.[33] In other words, it was a visual strategy to link the two kings and emphasise Demetrius' connection to the legacy of the Argeads. This interpretation of Demetrius' portraits indeed invites the presumption that he adopted Alexander as a model.[34]

Among the aforementioned coins, one exceptionally characteristic type is worth emphasising: coins with Demerius' portrait in the diadem and bull horns on the obverse and the figure of 'Lateran Poseidon' on the reverse, a type whose creation is generally attributed to Lysippus. Historians disagree as to the origin of the horns;[35] however, they emphasise that they could have been, again, inspired by Alexander's images on the coins issued by the Diadochi. Some even point to a specific source of inspiration: the coin of Lysimachus, issued after 297, which featured the portrait of deified Alexander with the ram's horn of Ammon. And by placing Lysippus' Poseidon on the reverse, Demetrius singles him out as his patron deity – the equivalent of the enthroned Zeus on Alexander's coins.[36] Other scholars link Demetrius' coin to Ptolemy's, minted soon after Alexander's death. Their obverse featured the Macedonian king wearing a ram's horn and an elephant skin headdress, while the reverse depicts the enthroned figure of Zeus-Ammon. This iconography evoked the concept of Alexander's divine origins, as he himself propagated: hence, the horns emphasise his bond with the god depicted on the other side of the coin.[37] Since some sources

[33] P. Wheatley, C. Dunn, *Coinage…*, pp. 180–181.

[34] Eidem, *Demetrius…*, pp. 273–274; eidem, *Coinage…*, p. 180–182.

[35] They might reflect Demetrius' association with Dionysus (P. Thonemann, *The tragic king: Demetrius Poliorketes and the city of Athens*, in: *Imaginary kings: Royal images in the ancient Near East, Greece, and Rome*, eds. O. Hekster, R. Fowler, Stuttgart 2005, pp. 63–86) or Poseidon (K. Ehling, *Stierdionysos oder Sohn des Poseidon: Zu den Hörnern des Demetrios Poliorketes*, "Göttinger Forum für Altertumswissenschaft" 2000, vol. 3, pp. 153–160), cf. J. Kroll, *The emergence of ruler portraiture on early Hellenistic coins. The importance of being divine*, in: *Early Hellenistic portraiture: Image, style, context*, eds. P. Schultz, R. von den Hoff, Cambridge 2007, pp. 117–118.

[36] J. Pollit, op. cit., pp. 31–33.

[37] J. Holton, *Demetrios Poliorketes, son of Poseidon and Aphrodite. Cosmic and memorial significance in the Athenian Ithyphallic Hymn*, "Mnemosyne" 2014, vol. 67, p. 378.

claim that Demetrius was descended from Poseidon,[38] seeking links between Ptolemy's coins and those of Poliorcetes appears justified. Should such an approach be correct, it would imply that Poliorcetes was the first ruler after Alexander to promote his own divine lineage.[39]

Demetrius also used other elements traditionally belonging to Alexander's iconography, such as the images of Athena wearing a Corinthian helmet or winged Nike, which were unaccounted for in the Macedonian coinage before Alexander. The presence of the latter goddess on coins is particularly interesting: her figure on Demetrius' coins, where she evokes the king's great sea victory at Salamis in 306, strongly resembles the Nike of Alexander's golden staters. The similarities are especially pronounced in the manner her wings and dress are fashioned as well as in the *stylis* she holds.[40] During his reign in Macedonia, Demetrius issued coins depicting an image of a Macedonian rider carrying a spear – a motif that had been used by the Macedonian rulers at least since the times of Alexander I, including Alexander himself.[41]

The third category scholars employ to analyse Demetrius' efforts to invoke Alexander's tradition has to do with the king's actions during his reign in Macedonia. According to Plutarch, the ruler's passion for luxury and the distance he kept from his people did not inspire much sympathy.[42] Based on this, the researchers suggest he might have modelled his ruling style on Alexander's practices in Asia.[43] The lack of popularity did not, how-

[38] Ath. 6.253e. This issue has been recently examined by J. Holton, op. cit., pp. 370–390.

[39] G. Weber, *Herrscher, Hof und Dichter. Aspekte der Legitimierung und Repräsentation hellenistischer Könige am Beispiel der ersten drei Antigoniden*, "Historia" 1995, vol. 44 (3), p. 299; A. Meeus, *The strategies…*, 297–298. We may notice that before his death in 323 Alexander wished to be acknowledged by the Athenians as the son of both Zeus and Poseidon (Hyper. V 31).

[40] E. Newell, op. cit., pl. V; M. J. Price, *The coinage in the name of Alexander the Great and Philip Arrhidaeus*, vol. 1, Zurich–London 1991, p. 29; J. C. Bernhardt, *Das Nikemonument von Samothrake und der Kampf der Bilder*, Stuttgart 2014, pp. 63–64.

[41] P. Wheatley, C. Dunn, *Demetrius…*, pp. 374–375 call it "notably".

[42] Plut. *Demetr.* 41–42.

[43] G. Weber, op. cit., pp. 286, 299–300, 303; S. Müller, *Demetrios Poliorketes, Aphrodite und Athen*, "Gymnasium" 2010, vol. 117, pp. 570–571.

ever, hinder Demetrius' plans to march eastwards, which might have reflected Alexander's grand military vision.[44] Demetrius, in fact, intended to use Macedonia as a springboard to establish an empire – just as Alexander previously.[45] During the preparations for the expedition, Demetrius might have attempted to present himself as the ruler of the world: according to Duris of Samos the ruler was painted on the Athenian proscenium with *oikumene* at his feet (ἐπὶ τῆς οἰκουμένης ὀχούμενος).[46] Demetrius' aspirations were further illustrated by his magnificent cloak, on which were represented the world and heavenly bodies (εἴκασμα τοῦ κόσμου καὶ τῶν κατ᾽ οὐρανὸν φαινομένων) or stars and the twelve signs of the Zodiac (ἀστέρας ἔχων καὶ τὰ δώδεκα ζῴδια).[47] His attitude is juxtaposed with Alexander's universalism and, as such, it is considered an expression of analogous ambitions.[48]

It is clear that in this light, Demetrius' actions largely fit the definition of *imitatio Alexandri*. Poliorcetes models his coin image on that of Alexander, utilises Alexander's attributes and characteristic motifs, and copies his practices as a ruler. Although the exact purposes of his efforts remain vague, his actions would certainly affirm his affiliation to Alexander's legacy in the eyes of his contemporaries and aid his vision of bringing back the empire.

Nonetheless, the question remains: is such an interpretation of Demetrius' deeds limited to *imitatio* only? I would argue that at least some of his actions could also be considered *aemulatio*. This refers, for instance, to the fact that Demetrius deployed astronomical symbols on his cloak – a fashion choice that has not been attested in the case of Alexander.[49] We might

[44] P. Wheatley, C. Dunn, *Demetrius…*, p. 358.

[45] W. L. Adams, *Alexander's successors to 221 BC*, in: *A companion to ancient Macedonia*, eds. J. Roisman, I. Worthington, Malden 2010, p. 218.

[46] Ath. 12.536a.

[47] Plut. *Demetr.* 41.4; Ath. 12.535e–536a.

[48] L. O'Sullivan, *Le Roi Soleil: Demetrius Poliorcetes and the Dawn of the Sun-King,* "Antichthon" 2008, vol. 42, pp. 96–98; R. Strootman, *Hellenistic imperialism and ideal of world unity*, in: *The city in the classical and post-classical world: Changing contexts of power and identity*, eds. C. Rapp, H. Drake, Cambridge–New York 2014, pp. 43–44; P. Wheatley, C. Dunn, *Demetrius…*, p. 356.

[49] C. Michels, *Überlegungen zum ‚kosmischen' Herrscherornat des Demetrios I. Poliorketes*, in: *Von Magna Graecia …*, pp. 213–215; V. Alonso Troncoso, *Alexander…*, p. 25;

reach a similar conclusion as we look at the similarities between the images of the two rulers on coins. If Antigonus' son intended to somehow allude to Alexander's image from the Diadochi coins, then he did so by replacing the image of Philip's son with his own: on the very spot where one would normally expect deified Alexander, the viewer was confronted with a portrait of Demetrius – alive and active at the time – with divine attributes. We also ought to remember that Poliorcetes' coins were struck on the Attic standard, which puts them in the same category (as attested for instance by a 3rd century inscription from the island of Amorgos) as the coins of Alexander (νόμισμα <Ἀ>ττικὸν ἢ Ἀλε[ξάνδρειονἢ Δημητ]ρίειον).[50] Moreover, although on Demetrius' coins researchers identify features of distinguishable references to Alexander, there is no doubt that their designs were largely based on their personal significance to Poliorcetes.[51]

The problems we encounter as we attempt to assess the degree of Alexander's influence on Demetrius become even more pronounced when we note that the Macedonian conqueror was not the only Argead to whom Demetrius was compared or who was deemed to have been his model. We find echoes of another tradition in Plutarch, who occasionally mentions Philip II in the context of Poliorcetes.[52] The literature's overriding focus on Alexander did not offer enough room to question whether Demetrius could have also referred to Philip, even though their similarities did not escape the notice of several scholars.[53] In my view, a closer analysis of the question might illuminate further problems stemming from the pursuit of similari-

cf. O. Palagia, *Visualising the gods in Macedonia: From Philip II to Perseus*, "Pharos" 2016, vol. 22.1, p. 76.

[50] IG XII, 7 69, B l. 21–22.

[51] E. Newell, op. cit., pp. 166–169; P. Wheatley, C. Dunn, *Coinage…*, pp. 180–182.

[52] In *Demetr.* 20.3 Plutarch refers to another Macedonian ruler of the Argead dynasty – Aeropous II.

[53] J. Kaerst, s.v. *Demetrios (33)*, col. 2779; E. Carney, *Women and monarchy in Macedonia*, Norman 2000, pp. 206–207; M. Mari, *Ruler cult in Macedonia*, in: *Studi ellenistici XX*, ed. B. Virgilio, Pisa–Roma 2008, pp. 235–236; eadem, *A lawless piety in an age of transition: Demetrius the Besieger and the political uses of Greek religion*, in: *Alexander's legacy*, pp. 169–170.

ties between Demetrius and Alexander as well as from the overall tendency to analyse his actions in the light of other rulers.

Demetrius and his actions: a case for *imitatio Philippi*?

In his biography of Demetrius, Plutarch invokes Philip's name three times and makes direct comparisons between the two kings.[54] The first comparison is to be found in the passage on Poliorcetes being proclaimed the hegemon of the League of Corinth in 302 B: Plutarch informs us that earlier the office used to be held by Alexander and Philip. Then, we read that throughout his reign in Macedonia, Demetrius' subjects would fondly reminisce about Alexander's father, whose moderation and openness (ὡς μέτριος ἦν περὶ ταῦτα καὶ κοινός) stood in stark contrast with the style of their current king. Finally, in the *synkrisis* to *Demetrius-Antony*, Plutarch writes that Demetrius followed Philip and Alexander in their attitude towards marriage.

Although these testimonies might reflect either Plutarch's own opinion or that of his sources, some studies prove they may not be entirely unfounded. A number of researchers have already noted the similarity between the actions of Demetrius and Philip – e.g., in the manner they built and shaped their relations with the Greeks. This is mainly illustrated by the fact that the Antigonids renewed the Hellenic League, modelled on the organisation initially founded by Philip in 338.[55] Scholars also note that the decision to establish the Hellenic League was ratified by the Delphic Amphictyony.[56] In order to take such a step, the Antigonids might have replicated Philip's strategy, who – contrary to Alexander – viewed his membership in the or-

[54] Plut. *Demetr.* 25.4; 42.6; *Comp. Ant-Demetr.* 4.1. Besides these references, Plutarch mentions Philip's name twice (*Demetr.* 10.3; 22.2).

[55] C. Patsavos, *The unification of the Greeks under Macedonian hegemony*, Athens 1965; B. Smarczyk, *The Hellenic leagues of late classical and Hellenistic times and their place in the history of Greek federalism*, in: *Federalism in Greek antiquity*, eds. H. Beck, P. Funke, Cambridge 2015, pp. 458–461.

[56] ISE 72 = CID IV, 11, w. 1–2.

ganisation as an effective political tool.[57] Here, it is also worth mentioning Demetrius' attitude towards Thebes, which he conquered in 291. Unlike Alexander, Demetrius refrained from destroying the city – a decision analogous to that of Philip from 338.[58]

Another similarity between the Antigonids and Philip is their attitude towards Greek sanctuaries. The Antigonids, for instance, were in all likelihood involved in the reconstruction works at the *Dodekatheon* – the sanctuary of the twelve gods – on the island of Delos, dated to the turn of the 4th and 3rd centuries. Demetrius is often mentioned as a potential initiator of the project, and should that be the case, it would imply he chose to continue a project commenced by Philip, but abandoned altogether by Alexander.[59]

As much as Demetrius' involvement in these activities could have mirrored to a degree his father's politics, the fact that he led the celebration (ἀγωνοθεσία) of numerous religious festivals was his own characteristic. Demetrius' *agonothesia* is attested at the Argive Heraia in 303 and the Pythian Games of 290;[60] he probably also personally attended the Nemean Games of 303 as well as the games at Isthmia of 302 (which celebrated the revival of the Hellenic League in the same year).[61] If Demetrius' involvement in festivals was modelled upon another figure, it could not have been Alexander, as he did not use to frequent panhellenic games (as noted by C. Mann, he was involved only in the campaign *agones*).[62] In this, he differed from his father, who indeed led the games in honour of Zeus at Dion as well as the Pythian Games.[63]

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[57] M. Mari, *A lawless…*, p. 172.

[58] P. Treves, *Jeronimo di Cardia e la politica di Demerios Poliorcete*, "Rivista di Filologia" 1932, vol. 10, pp. 194–206.

[59] M. Mari, *A lawless…*, pp. 169–170.

[60] Plut. *Demetr.* 25.2; 40.7–8.

[61] T. Rose, *A historical commentary on Plutarch's Life of Demetrius*, Diss. Iowa 2015, pp. 227–228; A. Meeus, *The strategies…*, p. 302 n. 67.

[62] C. Mann, *Alexander and athletics or how (not) to use a traditional field of monarchic legitimation*, in: *The legitimation…*, pp. 61–76.

[63] A. Meeus, *The strategies…*, pp. 302–303.

What is no less intriguing is Demetrius' marriage policy. Plutarch's account on the subject might suggest that the ruler simply followed Philip and Alexander's suit by entering numerous marriages. W. Greenwalt has demonstrated that poligamy was practised at the Macedonian court since at least 5th century.[64] Yet, here our conclusions depart from those of Plutarch. Throughout his life, Demetrius married six wives, and each of those marriages was an effective tool to reinforce his status.[65] Two of his wives were Macedonian (Phila, the daughter of Antipater, and Ptolemais, the daughter of Ptolemy); the others were Eurydice of Athens, the daughter of Militiades, Deidamia of Epirus, the sister of Pyrrhus, Lanassa, the daughter of Agathocles, the tyrant of Sicily, and the woman from Iliria, whose name was not recorded by the sources. Given Demetrius' attitude towards his marriages and the role they played in fixing his position as well as due to the fact that the women came from geographically diverse regions, Alexander's inspiration in this instance is dubious. Demetrius' approach, however, resembles the marriage policy of Philip.[66]

What is more, Demetrius paid special attention to the celebratory aspect of marriage. His relationship with Deidamia was officially announced during the *Heraia* in Argos; and the wedding of his daughter, Stratonice, and Seleucus was accompanied by a lavish celebration.[67] The ceremonies that display the king's splendour and highlighted his links to the panhellenic

[64] W. Greenwalt, *Polygamy and succession in Argead Macedonia*, "Arethusa" 1989, vol. 22, pp. 19–45.

[65] S. Richter, *Demetrios I. Poliorketes. Historisches Scheitern auf hohem Niveau?*, in: *Von Magna Graecia…*, pp. 225–242.

[66] On Philip's marriage policy cf. A. Tronson, *Satyrus the Peripatetic and the marriages of Philip II*, "The Journal of Hellenic Studies" 1984, vol. 104, pp. 116–126; I. Worthington, *Philip II of Macedonia*, New Haven–London 2008, pp. 173–174. Philip II was probably the first Macedonian ruler who married non-Macedonian woman, cf. E. Carney, *Argead marriage policy*, in: *The history of the Argeads*: *New perspectives*, eds. S. Müller, T. Howe, H. Bowden, R. Rollinger, Wiesbaden, pp. 141–142.

[67] Plut. *Demetr.* 25.2; 32.2–3; E. Kosmetatou, *A joint dedication of Demetrios Poliorketes and Stratonike in the Delian Artemison*, in: *Studies in Greek epigraphy and history in honor of Stephen V. Tracy*, eds. G. Reger, F. Ryan, T. Winters, Bordeaux 2010, pp. 213–228.

tradition were modelled on Philip's weddings.[68] In the case of the relationship between Demetrius and Deidamia, there was yet another element that evokes associations with Alexander's father. As mentioned above, Deidamia was the sister of Pyrrhus; based on Plutarch, we know that in the years following the wedding, the king of Epirus remained Demetrius' loyal ally.[69] Their relation parallels that of Philip and Alexander I of Epirus, who became an ally and executor of the will for the Macedonian king.[70]

We could also link the fashion in which Demetrius celebrated some of his weddings to the theatrical component in his character. The most pronounced example of his theatrical tendencies was his appearance in the Athenian Theatre of Dionysus in 295/294, where he proclaimed his return to the city.[71] E. Moloney has recently proved that employing theatre for political purposes was a feature of Philip's politics. By supporting Greek actors, he turned them into his ambassadors, which enabled him to maintain relations with neighbouring territories.[72]

The same goes for Demetrius and Philip's analogous attitudes towards their own divinity. Although our sources mention numerous honours bestowed upon Poliorcetes in Greece, there are no hints that he expressed a fervent desire for deification – contrary to Alexander.[73] This makes Demetrius' choices similar to Philip's, who – as concluded by M. Mari – never "officially required or imposed a cult of himself".[74]

We ought to include yet another issue in our considerations. As we remember, coins which featured Demetrius' own lifetime portraits became systematic after the seizure of Macedonia. In doing so, he did not abandon the motifs of Poseidon and sea domination in his iconography. Moreover, during his reign the Greeks and Macedonians could also recall his besieg-

[68] E. Carney, *Women…*, pp. 206–207.

[69] Plut. *Demetr.* 31.2; *Pyrr.* 4.3–4.

[70] J. Kaerst, RE, IV, 2 (1901), s.v. *Demetrios* (33), col. 2779.

[71] Plut. *Demetr.* 34.4–6.

[72] E. Moloney, *Philippus in acie tutior quam in theatro fuit … (Curtius 9. 6. 25): The Macedonian kings and Greek theatre*, in: *Greek theatre in the fourth century B.C.*, eds. E. Csapo, H. Goette, J. Green, P. Wilson, Berlin–Boston, pp. 247–248.

[73] P. Wheatley, C. Dunn, *Demetrius…*, p. 358.

[74] M. Mari, *Ruler cult…*, p. 236.

ing skills (e.g. the siege of Athens in 295/294, Thebes in 291). This begs the question: did Demetrius' contemporaries notice the analogies between Philip's times and their own? Let us note that some scholars argue it was Philip to make the initial, discrete attempts to place his portrait on coins issued in Macedonia.[75] If this was indeed his intention, then the next Macedonian king to follow the suit was Demetrius.[76] We know from Plutarch that Philip personally supervised the commemoration of his victories at the panhellenic games in coinage, which could parallel Demetrius using coins to propagate his maritime military successes, also in Macedonia.[77] We must bear in mind also that Alexander's father played a major role in the expansion of the Macedonian fleet. As observed by H. Hauben, it was Philip who "took his nation to sea". In this, he differed from his son, whose attitude towards naval matters evolved only during his time in Asia.[78] Philip's naval ambitions were expressed in the construction of a riverine harbour in Pella and the fact that the coins he issued there feature Poseidon's trident head underlined the connection between the Macedonian capital and the god of the seas.[79] In the context of Demetrius, the two Argeads' interest in war machines and the science of siege warfare become particularly interesting. Even if Alexander's siege of Tyre created a great stir, the Greeks

[75] See e.g. M. Price, *Coins of the Macedonians*, London 1972, p. 22; O. Palagia, *Imitation of Herakles in ruler portraiture. A survey, from Alexander to Maximinus Daza*, "Boreas" 1986, vol. 9, p. 140; M. Günther, *Herrscher als Götter – Götter als Herrscher? Zur Ambivalenz hellenistischer Münzbilder*, in: *Studien zum vorhellenistischen und hellenistischen Herrscherkult*, eds. M. Günther, S. Plischke, Berlin 2011, pp. 101–102.

[76] According to P. Wheatley and C. Dunn (*Coinage…*, p. 186 n. 27) the majority of researchers agree that Heracles image on Alexander's coins did not depict the king himself, cf. M. Olbrycht, *Aspekty propagandy politycznej i portrety monetarne Aleksandra Wielkiego*, in: *Heac mihi in animis vestris templa. Studia Classica in memory of Professor Lesław Morawiecki*, eds. P. Berdowski, B. Blahaczek, Rzeszów 2007, pp. 85–92.

[77] Plut. *Alex.* 4.9. On Alexander's decadrachm (or silver 'medallions') see K. Dahmen, op. cit., pp. 7–9; P. Wheatley, C. Dunn 2021, *Coinage…*, pp. 170–172.

[78] H. Hauben, *The expansion of Macedonian sea-power under Alexander the Great*, "Ancient Society" 1976, vol. 7, pp. 79–105.

[79] N. G. L. Hammond, F. W. Walbank, *A history of Macedonia, 336–167 B.C.*, vol. 3, Oxford 1988, p. 481. On the Poseidon cult in Macedonia see P. Christesen, S. Murray, *Macedonian religion*, in: *A companion…*, p. 430.

and Macedonians alike had already been aware of the role of war machines in Philip's military strategy. Alexander's father was the first Macedonian king to use them on a larger scale to establish his position.[80]

As we discuss potential parallels the Macedonians of the period might have observed between Philip and Demetrius, we also ought to note the speech Poliorcetes made to the Macedonian soldiers in 294. He referred to the fact that his father used to serve under the Argeads' command and announced that he himself had already had a son, which gave him hope for the continuity of his dynasty.[81] Bosworth stated there was no basis for doubting the authenticity of Demetrius' arguments,[82] and the analysis of the speech leads to the conclusion that what he presented was a vision of a stable future for Macedonia – and such a vision would be associated with Philip rather than Alexander. É. Will states a symptomatic fact: after the death of Cassander in 297, Macedonia needed a new Philip, who would have the capacity to secure peace.[83]

As we ponder the analogies between Demetrius and Philip, we should nonetheless bear in mind that exploiting the memory of Alexander's father might have been a common thing during the Diadochi war. Some scholars notice this tendency in Cassander's activity in Macedonia or Antigonus' actions in Asia.[84] Although some recent studies question this view, we can state that our sources do not attest to Philip being generally preferred over

[80] Timokles, *Heros* fr. 12.5 K; P. Keyser, *The use of artillery by Philip II and Alexander the Great*, Chicago 1994, pp. 35–38; R. Gabriel, *Philip II of Macedonia*, Washington 2010, pp. 88–92.

[81] Plut. *Demetr.* 37.1–3.

[82] A. B. Bosworth, *The legacy of Alexander. Politics, warfare, and propaganda under the successors*, Oxford 2002, p. 251.

[83] E. Will, *The formation of the Hellenistic kingdoms*, in: *The Cambridge ancient history*, vol. VII.1, eds. F. W. Walbank, A. E. Astin, M. W. Frederiksen, R. M. Ogilvie, Cambridge 1984, p. 109.

[84] R. Billows, *Antigonos the One-Eyed and the creation of the Hellenistic state*, Berkeley–Los Angeles–London 1990, p. 3; A. Stewart, op. cit., pp. 149–50 n. 86. On the image of Philip over the centuries cf. S. Müller, *The reception of Alexander's father Philip II of Macedon*, in: *Brill's companion…*, pp. 72–95.

Alexander or the other way round.[85] This implies Demetrius could have expected referring to Philip's tradition to bring clear-cut benefits.

As we consider the outlined similarities between Demetrius and Philip, we are again faced with the question: could Philip be the model for Poliorcetes – the same model that scholars have long believed was Alexander? It is worth stressing that the analogies between the actions of Philip and Demetrius are notable in various periods and fields. We observe them during Poliorcetes' reign in Macedonia, but also long before that. Moreover, this also pertains to the aspects of his image in which we would naturally expect him to follow the footsteps of Alexander, such as the issue of his god-like status. Even though Demetrius' references to Philip shed the light on his efforts to present himself as the heir of the Argead dynasty, they evoke justified doubts as to whether Alexander's influence was dominant.

No need for Alexander?

We can all agree that seeking and identifying analogies between the actions of Demetrius and those of Alexander and Philip may offer an effective tool to better understand his political motives, especially in cases when no other relevant information is available in the source material. Nonetheless, a question remains as to whether such an approach does not, paradoxically, drive us further away from the course and obscure Demetrius' actual intentions. As we have seen, scholars are keen on singling out similarities between him and Alexander, even though the only premise that would produce such a conclusion is the general assumption of his *imitatio Alexandri*. Hence, less attention is drawn to the context of Demetrius' choices and the specific challenges he faced. Furthermore, we ought to ask how we can accommodate *imitatio/aemulatio Alexandri* with his potential *imitatio Philippi*. Here, we might return to Meeus' convincing observation that every researcher should determine whether the fact that we perceive surface similarities between Demetrius and Alexander's actions necessarily

[85] V. Alonso Troncoso, *Antigonus…*; A. Meeus, *Alexander's image in the age of the successors*, in: *Alexander the Great: A new history*, eds. W. Heckel, L. A. Tritle, Malden 2018, pp. 235–250.

implies that it was an instance of conscious imitation. Oftentimes, *imitatio Alexandri* could stem from the fact that Alexander's approach in certain situations was simply effective.[86] We can apply the same principle to the concurrencies between Demetrius and Philip. Given the political and geographical context, Demetrius and the two Argeads had to face largely similar challenges – hence, the perceivable analogies. Moreover, we need to bear in mind that issues like wearing luxurious attire or engaging in religious and athletic festivals had been important aspects of the royal self-fashioning long before Philip and Alexander, and represent the broader tendencies typical of the era.[87]

Therefore, a correct understanding of Demetrius' aims remains problematic: since we do not hear that Poliorcetes openly engaged in *imitatio Alexandri* or *imitatio Philippi* we might have some doubts whether contemporaries perceived his actions in the same manner as scholars of today: i.e., as a reference to Alexander or Philip. Thus, we must be very cautious about uncovering his intention because an erroneous interpretation of Demetrius' intentions will leave us with the results that would sabotage our original objective.

Nonetheless, we should admit that in comparing Demetrius to Alexander, modern historians adhere to the tendency that prevailed in ancient literature. J. Hornblower noted the changes in Demetrius' image as presented in Diodorus Siculus' *Bibliotheke* – our second most important (after the *Life of Demetrius*) source of information on the subject. We witness his transformation from a promising youth into a ruler deprived by flatterers and bad advisors. It is generally acknowledged that Diodorus based his Antigonids-related passages on the work of Hieronymus of Cardia – a historian whose work did not survive and who was a close friend of Antigonus and Demetrius.[88] According to Hornblower, Hieronymus might have observed the pernicious influence power had on Demetrius – the same effect

[86] A. Meeus, *The strategies…*, p. 316.

[87] See e.g. F. Pownall, *Dionysius I and the creation of a new-style Macedonian monarchy*, "The Ancient History Bulletin" 2017, vol. 1–2, pp. 21–38.

[88] Diodorus and his sources cf. E. Anson, *Eumenes of Cardia*, Leiden–Boston 2015, pp. 4–40.

he had earlier observed in Alexander; hence, he discussed the life of Poliorcetes through the prism of the life of Philip's son.[89]

The mechanism of juxtaposing the two rulers is, however, best exemplified by Plutarch. The research dedicated to his works revealed that Alexander and his biography played a major role in the concept of *Parallel Lives*. Plutarch saw Alexander as a model for other rulers and frequently compared him to the subjects of his biographies.[90] Nevertheless, the most recent studies state that Plutarch's juxtaposition mechanism was not only limited to the passages where Alexander's name is explicitly mentioned. It is also perceivable in the selection of similar events from the lives of the discussed figures and in corresponding rhetorical figures, with the use of which he builds a parallel. His aim, in fact, was to encourage the reader to make his own comparisons. Demetrius' biography appears exceptional in this respect, for it is filled with references to the Macedonian king and informative analogies to events from his life.[91]

Just as many modern scholars, ancient authors often did not feel the need to understand Demetrius' original intentions. It is well illustrated by the case of Poliorcetes' numerous relationships with hetairas. Greek authors, as well as their followers, treated them as a proof of his depravity and disregard for norms. Such a judgement was in line with the broader image of Macedonian kings, which resulted from Alexander's conquests and his adoption of eastern customs. The Greeks saw in Alexander the tendencies traditionally associated with tyrants and Persian kings: depravity and excessive manifestation of wealth.[92] S. Müller, however, points out that

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[89] J. Hornblower, *Hieronymus of Cardia*, Oxford 1981, pp. 230–232.

[90] G. Harrison, *The semiotics of Plutarch's Συγκρίσεις: The Hellenistic lives of Demetrius-Antony and Agesilaus-Pompey*, "Revue belge de Philologie et d'Histoire" 1995, vol. 73 (1), pp. 91–104.

[91] S. Asirvatham, *The memory of Alexander in Plutarch's Lives of Demetrios, Pyrrhos and Eumenes*, in: *Ancient Macedonians in the Greek and Roman sources*, eds. T. Howe, F. Pownall, Swansea 2019, pp. 215–255; T. Zieliński, *Odwołania do Aleksandra Wielkiego i ich rola w Żywocie Demetriusza Plutarcha z Cheronei*, "Collectanea Philologica" 2020, vol. 23, pp. 73–89; idem, *Anty-Aleksander? Obraz Demetriusza Poliorketesa w Żywocie Demetriusza Plutarcha z Cheronei*, "Collectanea Philologica" 2021, vol. 24, pp. 33–52.

[92] S. Müller, *Mehr als König Alexander hast du getrunken. Alkoholsucht im antiken griechischen dyskurs*, in: *An den Grenzen der Sucht*, eds. C. F. Hofftadt, R. Bernasconi, Bo-

the women from Demetrius' circle were involved in the cult of Aphrodite; hence, by maintaining relationships with them, Demetrius might have cultivated the ties with the goddess and make it a part of his royal self-fashioning, and by doing so, he also emphasised his divine fosterage.[93]

Finally, we also ought to note that the conviction about Demetrius' *imitatio Alexandri* stems also from the fact that his father held Alexander's deeds in high esteem and indeed treated him as a model. Is this proposition, however, attested by the sources? It is not difficult to notice that compared to other rulers, Antigonus did not play a major role in the development of the Alexander and Argeads myth.[94] Contrary to the coinage issued by Lysimachus, Seleucus, and Ptolemy, Antigonus and Demetrius' coins did not depict the portrait of deified Alexander.[95] We might observe an analogous situation if we look at the legends the Diadochi employed to justify their authority. Unlike other rulers, the Antigonids were not interested in disseminating tales of their connection to the diadem, a means of visually connecting the later rulers with Alexander's kingship. Moreover, although Diodorus lists Antigonus among the candidates to the hand of Cleopatra, Alexander's sister,[96] the marriage never came to be, and Meeus claims it was due to Cleopatra's antipathy for Antigonus, who hoped for her change of heart until the last moment. On the other hand, when discussing Ptolemy's later plans to marry Cleopatra, Meeus writes she was willing to agree to the marriage, because Ptolemy had proven he was more faithful to the memory of the Argeads than Antigonus.[97] In their attempts to explain the difference between the attitude of the other Diadochi and that of the Anti-

chum–Freiburg 2009, pp. 205–222; idem, *Make it big: "The New Decadence" of the Macedonians under Philip II and Alexander III in Graeco-Roman narratives*, in: *Folly and violence in the court of Alexander and his successors – Greco-Roman perspectives*, eds. T. Howe. S. Müller, Bochum–Freibug 2016, pp. 35–45.

[93] Idem, *In the favour…*, pp. 42–47.

[94] V. Alonso Troncoso, *Antigonus…*, p. 110.

[95] M. Günther, *Herrscherliche Inszenierungen…*, pp. 238–242.

[96] Diod. 20.37.4.

[97] A. Meeus, *Kleopatra and the Diadochoi*, in: *Faces of Hellenism: Studies in the history of the Eastern Mediterranean (4th century B.C.–5th century A.D.)*, ed. P. van Nuffelen, Leuven 2009, pp. 81–85.

gonids', the researchers note the latter's looser relationship with Alexander, which made it more difficult for them to evoke his memory in the same fashion other Diadochi did.[98] This observation, however, could also support the contrary thesis: having no strong personal ties to the Macedonian king, Antigonus and Demetrius felt no particular connection to his legacy.

In order to better illustrate the problem that arises from the attempts to interpret Poliorcetes' actions through the strands of *imitatio* or *aemulatio Alexandri*, let us look at Demetrius' planned expedition to Asia towards the end of his rule (288–287). A Macedonian king marching East evokes a natural association with Alexander – which is reflected, as we have seen, in several studies. Plutarch even compares the military assets of the two rulers.[99] In this case, we may suppose that Poliorcetes' goal was either to restore Alexander's empire or establish a new one. Depending on the angle we assume, this could constitute an instance of both *imitatio* and *aemulatio Alexandri*. We know, however, that the size of the army and the scale of preparations mobilised almost every other contemporary ruler against Demetrius – and this indeed may signal that he attempted to overshadow Alexander's anabasis.

However, we need to point out the numerous problems with such an interpretation. It appears that Demetrius' Alexander-inspired eastern campaign would have offered an excellent opportunity to articulate his goal of imitating the Macedonian king. However, Plutarch, our only source on the subject, stresses that Demetrius' intention was to reclaim the territories that had been subject to his father.[100] Let us note that this alone would be a sufficient reason to mobilise other rulers against him, as each of them had taken part in the partition of the Antigonids' state. Plutarch's account as such also calls for attention. The author claims Demetrius had gathered forces of a scale unseen since Alexander's times. This statement, however, is

[98] P. Wheatley, C. Dunn, *Coinage…*, p. 180.

[99] Plut. *Demetr.* 44.1

[100] Plut. *Demetr.* 43.3. On the Antigonids' preoccupation with the inheritance territory from their ancestors cf. R. Billows, *Kings and colonists: Aspects of Macedonian imperialism*, Leiden–New York–Köln 1995, pp. 45–55; M. Dixon, *Late classical and early Hellenistic corinth, 338–196 B.*, New York 2014, p. 78.

not fully justified, as the sizes of the armies Plutarch attributes to the Antigonids and their adversaries at Ipsos also outnumbered Alexander's forces.[101] Therefore, we might suppose that Plutarch purposely sought to create an association between Alexander and Demetrius – especially since the latter's expedition failed, thus, implying the superiority of Philip's son, who conquered the country with much smaller forces. In Plutarch's vision, Alexander was the paradigm to which every other ruler should aspire, but which could never be surpassed.

As we approach the conclusion, let us express the doubt as to whether it is possible to unambiguously determine the degree to which Demetrius regarded Alexander and the memory of his deeds. It is, first and foremost, because our sources lack conclusive remarks about Poliorcetes' intentions to imitate Alexander. Our knowledge on the subject stems principally from Plutarch and his own sources. Notably, even though some researchers have recognised the problems generated by Plutarch's biography they nonetheless continue to scout for similarities and draw comparisons between him and Alexander. In this context, reframing Demerius' actions as *aemulatio* does not alter the hitherto perspective in any significant manner, for it also centres the Macedonian conqueror as the model that determined Demetrius choices. Furthermore, the broad definitions of the terms *imitatio* and *aemulatio* allow us to interpret any action in the categories of imitation or rivalry with Alexander. Hence, the concentration on tracing Poliorcetes' model appears rather unreliable as a method for analysing his actions. We can also apply an identical principle to the analogy between him and Philip. Each attempt at evaluating this ruler ought to be cautious and diligent, for in our quest to seek out his similarities to Alexander and Philip, we run the risk of losing what is most important here – Demetrius himself.

[101] Plut. *Demetr.* 28.6.