

Demetrius Poliorcetes' Headdress in Macedonia

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A NEGATIVE OPINION prevails in historiography about the six-year rule of Demetrius Poliorcetes in Macedonia (294–288).¹ It suffices here to quote the opinion of Tarn, who went so far as to claim that Macedonia never had a worse king.² This view stems largely from our written sources which imply that Demetrius tried to lord over the Macedonians just as he had treated his subjects in Asia and offended the Macedonian court by introducing into it Asiatic practices. In modern scholarship Demetrius' behaviour is considered the result of his upbringing at his father's court in Celaenae, the capital of Greater Phrygia, where he would have met with cosmopolitan environment and heavy influence of Asian culture.³ At the same time,

¹ E.g. G. Elkeles, *Demetrios der Stadtbelagerer* (diss. Breslau 1941) 86–87; F. W. Walbank, in *A History of Macedonia III* (Oxford 1988) 225, 229; R. M. Errington, *A History of Macedonia* (Berkeley 1990) 152–154; W. L. Adams, in J. Roisman et al. (eds.), *A Companion to Ancient Macedonia* (Malden 2010) 218; For a more balanced view see A. B. Bosworth, *The Legacy of Alexander: Politics, Warfare, and Propaganda under the Successors* (Oxford 2002) 252–259.

² W. W. Tarn, in *CAH VI* (1928) 80.

³ P. Wheatley, “The Young Demetrius Poliorcetes,” *AHB* 13 (1999) 1–13, at 3–5. According to some researchers Demetrius' Anatolian connection might explain eastern elements in Demetrius, especially in the Anaktorion (or alternatively the Tetrapyrion): G. Weber, “Herrscher, Hof und Dichter. Aspekte der Legitimierung und Repräsentation hellenistischer Könige am Beispiel der ersten drei Antigoniden,” *Historia* 44 (1995) 283–316, at 288–289; P. Marzloff, in W. Hoepfner et al. (eds.), *Basileia. Die Paläste der hel-*

because Demetrius grew up in Asia Minor, he had never experienced Argead royal self-fashioning in Macedonia. Moreover, during his childhood he was impressed by the tidings of Alexander's achievements in the East, hence it is assumed that he might have modelled his ruling style on Alexander's practices in Asia.⁴

Demetrius seized Macedonia as the result of Cassander's death (297), which threw the country into civil war between the dead king's sons. Among the Macedonians Poliorcetes' accession to the throne raised hopes for a stable future. In his speech to them Poliorcetes presented himself as the man would secure a peace (Plut. *Demetr.* 37.1–3). But the Macedonians quickly realized that Demetrius was neither a new Philip nor Alexander, and when they started to compare him to these predecessors the result was not favourable (41.3–4, 42.3). One of the key issues which did not inspire sympathy for Demetrius was his headdress: according to our sources he wore a *kausia* with a gilded mitra (*mitra chrysopestos*). As we shall see, the great majority of scholars interpretate this gesture as a clear indication of Demetrius' passion for eastern tradition (and as such unacceptable to the Macedonian idea of kingship), and imitation of Alexander. In response to this, the purpose of this article is to examine whether such a claim is supported by the source material.

I

The description of Demetrius' headdress was originally provided by Duris of Samos (350–280), Demetrius' contemporary

lenistischen Könige (Mainz 1996) 148–163, at 158; G. S. Miller, in M. M. Miles (ed.), *A Companion to Greek Architecture* (Chichester 2016) 288–300, at 296. On this towered construction see F. M. Ferrara, “Demetriade in Tessaglia. La polis e il palazzo reale macedone,” *ArchCl* 65 (2014) 181–226, at 193–195, 215–218.

⁴ É. Will, in *CAH*² VII.I (1984) 109; Weber, *Historia* 44 (1995) 299–300, 303; S. Müller, “Demetrios Poliorketes, Aphrodite und Athen,” *Gymnasium* 117 (2010) 559–573, at 570–571; P. Wheatley and C. Dunn, *Demetrius the Besieger* (Oxford 2020) 380–381.

who composed a *Macedonian History*.⁵ The relevant fragment has been preserved for us by Athenaeus. A secondary description derives from Plutarch, who almost certainly was drawing on Duris.⁶

Duris *FGrHist* 76 F 14 = Ath. 535E–536A

In the twenty-second book of his *Histories*, Duris says: Pausanias, the king of the Spartans, laid aside the traditional threadbare cloak and began to wear Persian attire. Dionysius, the tyrant of Sicily, took up the long robe and the gold crown as well as the buckled cloak(?) worn by tragic actors. When Alexander had gained control of Asia, he began to wear Persian attire. Demetrius, however, exceeded them all. He had his footwear specially made at great expense. As to its shape, it was constructed as almost a half-boot, with a felt covering of the most expensive purple. Upon it, the craftsmen had woven a large intricate pattern of gold in the back and in the front. His military cloaks had a lustrous sheen of brownish grey, and the universe with golden stars and the twelve signs of the zodiac were woven in. His headress was studded with gold, and it held fast his felt hat, made of genuine purple dye (μίτρα δὲ χρυσόπαστος ἦν, <ἦ> καυσίαν ἀλουργῆ οὖσαν ἔσφιγγεν), and the fringed edges of its material went down to his back. (transl. after Landucci Gattinoni)

Plut. *Demetr.* 41.4:

And there was in truth much of the theatrical about Demetrius, who not only had an extravagant array of cloakings and headgear—double-mitred *kausia* (διαδούμενον περιπτῶς καυσίαις διμίτροις) and purple robes shot with gold, but also equipped his feet with gold-embroidered shoes of the richest purple felt. And there was one cloak which was long in the weaving for him, a magnifi-

⁵ Duris was also the author of other works, see R. Kebrick, *In the Shadow of Macedon: Duris of Samos* (Wiesbaden 1977); F. Landucci Gattinoni, *Duride di Samo* (Rome 1997); F. Pownall, “Duris of Samos (76)” in *BNJ*.

⁶ T. Rose, *A Historical Commentary on Plutarch's Life of Demetrius* (diss. U. Iowa 2015) 302; R. Dubreuil, *Theatrical and Political Action in Plutarch's Parallel Lives* (diss. Edinburgh 2016) 78–81. Some scholars see in Duris' work the main source for Plutarch's *Life of Demetrius*, e.g. Kebrick, *In the Shadow* 50–55; A. Chaniotis, in P. Iossif et al. (eds.), *More than Men, Less than Gods: Studies on Royal Cult and Imperial Worship* (Leuven 2011) 157–195, at 168.

cent work, on which was represented the world and the heavenly bodies; this was left behind half-finished when the reversal of his fortunes came, and no succeeding king of Macedonia ventured to use it, although not a few of them were given to pomp and luxury. (transl. B. Perrin)

Based on these passages scholars have assumed that Demetrius during his reign in Macedonia followed Alexander by adopting a mixture of Macedonian and foreign elements: in ancient authors the *kausia* was a hat attributed to the Macedonians,⁷ while the *mitra* was characteristically eastern headgear. They differ, however, about what exactly we should understand by this latter term. Some confine themselves to the claim that a *mitra* was a typically Persian garment or describe it as foreign dress, but without deeper explanation.⁸ Other scholars, however, seem to follow Hugo Brandenburg, according to whom, although a *mitra* was basically an oriental headdress, resembling a turban, it was also a sign of kingship for the Eastern royalty, primarily Cypriote kings.⁹ In this context the *mitra* must have been a type of headband similar to the chaplet of athletic victors or Dionysiac *komastai* shown on Greek vases of the seventh-to-fifth centuries. Given that the practice of wearing a *kausia* with one royal diadem is associated with Alexander,¹⁰ Brandenburg acknowledged that Demetrius' aim was to surpass Alexander by replacing his diadem with a more magnificent, embellished with

⁷ C. Saatsoglou-Paliadeli, "Aspects of Ancient Macedonian Costume," *JHS* 113 (1993) 122–147; E. Janssen, *Die Kausia. Symbolik und Funktion der makedonischen Kleidung* (diss. Göttingen 2007).

⁸ Weber, *Historia* 44 (1995) 300, "'orientalischer' Ornat"; Pownall, in *BMJ* 76 F 14, "head-dress (μίτρα) was a typically Persian garment"; Rose, *A Historical Commentary* 302–303, "the *mitra* was characteristically Persian"; Wheatley and Dunn, *Demetrius* 385, "Demetrius was following the model of Alexander the Great's attempting to combine Macedonian and Persian elements within his official dress."

⁹ Hdt. 7.90; cf. LXX Ez 26:16, Bar 5:2.

¹⁰ Ehippus *FGrHist* 126 F 5 = Ath. 537E; Aristobulus *FGrHist* 139 F 55 = Arr. *Anab.* 7.22.2.

gold, *mitra*.¹¹

According to Frances Pownall, we cannot rule out that Demetrius wore the Dionysiac fillet. According to a tradition preserved by Diodorus, the wine-god wore a headband which had the power to nullify or lessen the effects of alcohol-induced headaches; hence he bore the epithet *μυτηφόρος* (4.4.4). Given that some authors state that Demetrius modelled himself on Dionysus (Diod. 20.92.4, Plut. *Demetr.* 2.3), Pownall's view seems reasonable.¹² If so, Demetrius could attempt to adopt the new royal image, inaugurated by Alexander, by associating himself with the wine-god.

Recently, Judith Mossman has expressed a very different view. Referring only to Plutarch's testimony she suggests that the two headbands indicating royal status should be identified with the double diadem. In her opinion, it was an extraordinary practice, given the fact that Alexander wore the *kausia* with one royal diadem. It is therefore probable that Demetrius' intention was to lay claim to both Europe and Asia and surpass Alexander in splendor.¹³

¹¹ H. Brandenburg, *Studien zur Mitra: Beiträge zur Waffen- und Trachtgeschichte der Antike* (Münster 1966) 154–159, 178–179. Cf. R. Tölle-Kastenbein, “Zur Mitra in klassischer Zeit,” *RA* (1977) 23–36, at 28; O. Andrei et al., *Vite parallele Plutarco: Demetrio e Antonio* (Milan 1989) 230 n.287; Janssen, *Die Kausia* 49; Rose, *A Historical Commentary* 302–303; R. Hirschmann and J. Renger, “Mitra,” *BNP*.

¹² F. Pownall, “Duris of Samos and the Diadochi,” in V. Alonso Troncoso et al. (eds.), *After Alexander: The Time of the Diadochi* (Oxford 2013) 43–56, at 49. Also M. Papadopoulou, in C. Brøns et al. (eds.), *Textiles and Cult in the Mediterranean Area* (Oxford 2017) 65–73; at 68, however, she seems to ignore the existence of a diadem in that period.

¹³ J. Mossman, “Dressed for Success?: Clothing in Plutarch's *Demetrius*,” in R. Ash et al. (eds.), *Fame and Infamy: Essays on Characterization in Greek and Roman Biography and Historiography* (Oxford 2015) 149–160, at 152–157; cf. A. W. Collins, “The Royal Costume and Insignia of Alexander the Great,” *AJP* 133 (2012) 371–402, at 376; O. Palagia, “The Frescoes from the Villa of P. Fannius Synistor,” in H. Hauben et al. (eds.), *The Age of the Successors and the Creation of the Hellenistic Kingdoms* (Leuven 2014) 207–231, at 212.

Such views are dominated by the conviction that Demetrius looked to Alexander. Regardless of scholars' identifications of Demetrius' *mitra*, his actions are viewed as an attempt to imitate or surpass Alexander. Such a tendency is deeply rooted in modern scholarship, in which Demetrius has been considered to have been a fervent emulator of Alexander in every respect.¹⁴

II

Before we address the main problem, we should look closer at the attributes in question. The *mitra* is generally assumed to be a traditional eastern headdress consisting of a strip of woolen cloth worn as a turban.¹⁵ As such the *mitra* was borrowed by the Greeks who considered it to originate from Lydia, a land they associated with foreign luxury and extravagance.¹⁶ However, it seems plausible that in the first half of the fifth century the term was transferred to the ordinary tied fillet. In the Greek context the word would not apply every time to a piece of cloth of the same shape. Therefore, the *mitra* could be worn in different ways and it changed over time. It can denote a type of headband or hairband, or a strip of cloth of varying widths and lengths, placed

¹⁴ Elkeles, *Demetrius* 86–87; C. Wehrli, *Antigone et Démétrios* (Geneva 1968) 222; J. J. Pollitt, *Art in the Hellenistic age* (Cambridge 1986) 31; F. Pownall, “Folly and Violence in Athens under the Successors,” in T. Howe et al. (eds.), *Folly and Violence in the Court of Alexander the Great and his Successors* (Milan 2016) 47–58, at 55; Wheatley and Dunn, *Demetrius* 13, 56 n.35, 438, and in J. Walsh et al. (eds.), “Coinage as Propaganda: Alexander and His Successors,” *Alexander the Great and Propaganda* (London 2021) 180–182; A. Meeus, in K. Trampedach et al. (eds.), *The Legitimation of Conquest: Monarchical Representation and the Art of Government in the Empire of Alexander the Great* (Stuttgart 2020) 291–317, at 298–299.

¹⁵ Brandenburg, *Studien* 111–127; M. Lee, *Body, Dress, and Identity in Ancient Greece* (Cambridge 2015) 159–160. S. Shahbazi, *Encyclopaedia Iranica* V.7 723–737 (<http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/clothing-ii>), is alone in his view that the *mitra* was a shorter or taller fluted hat most commonly associated with ‘Persian’ dignitaries, in contrast to the plain cylindrical hat worn by the Persian kings. The *mitra* could also be tied around the body, see Hirschmann and Renger, “Mitra,” *BNP*.

¹⁶ Brandenburg, *Studien* 53, 57.

below the hairline, most often tied toward the back with long ends falling on or towards the shoulders.¹⁷ Considering the variety of form which the term *mitra* intended, it is not surprising that Greek authors used it describe headbands worn by women, victors, priests, or Dionysus himself.¹⁸ In two cases, Callimachus' *Hymn to Delos* (166) and Theocritus' *Idylls* (17.19), it may denote an emblem of Hellenistic royalty, probably identical with a diadem.¹⁹

In contrast to the term *mitra*, which authors applied to a broad range of headgear, far clearer for us is how the Dionysiac *mitra* and the diadem looked. Both were a flat band tied in a reef knot behind, with the ends left free-hanging. Thus, it is often difficult to decide which of the two we are dealing with. The main difference seems to be in their arrangement. The prevailing opinion is that Dionysus wore his headband below the hairline, while the Hellenistic kings wore it further back in the hair.²⁰ What is notable, however, is that representations of headbands on Hellenistic coins and works of art identified as the Dionysiac *mitra* show that the most common type was the *mitra* without free-hanging ends, in contrast to the diadem which in the vast majority of cases clearly had a visible fringe. In this context recall that according to Duris the fringed edges of Demetrius' head-dress went down to his back (ἐπὶ τὸ ὠτόν φέρουσα τὰ τελευταῖα καταβλήματα τῶν ὕφασμάτων).

As we have seen, according to Brandenburg the *mitra* worn by the Cypriot kings was similar to the headbands of athletic victors

¹⁷ D. Kurz and J. Boardman, *Greek Vases in the J. Paul Getty Museum III* (Malibu 1986) 50–56.

¹⁸ LSJ s.v. μίτρα II: “headband, snood (...) victor’s chaplet at the games (...) headband as badge of rank at the Ptolemaic court (...) oriental head-dress, perh. a kind of turban (...) as a mark of effeminacy (...) diadem (...) head-dress of the priest of Heracles at Cos (...); of the Jewish high-priest.”

¹⁹ W. H. Mineur, *Callimachus. Hymn to Delos* (Leiden 1984) 164–165; R. Hunter, *Theocritus. Encomium of Ptolemy Philadelphus* (Berkeley 2003) 115.

²⁰ K. Dahmen, *The Legend of Alexander the Great on Greek and Roman Coins* (New York 2007) 42; Wheatley and Dunn, *Demetrius* 174 n.63.

or Dionysiac *komastai* and became an insignia of ruling power in the Hellenistic period, equaling a diadem. What he seems to ignore, however, is the evidence of Cypriot sculpture, which has recently received much attention. The monuments, e.g. a limestone head in the Louvre, the Amathus sarcophagus, or even smaller terracotta figurines, do not confirm that the Cypriote kings or an elite group emulating royal means of visual representation wore such headbands. Recent studies consistently identify their headgear as a kind of turban, a thick piece of cloth that surrounds the head, and call it the *mitra*.²¹ Brandenburg also admitted that, in contrast to a diadem, the *mitra* was not an attribute of power of the Great King or his satraps, and it is impossible to observe this headgear (as he understood it) in Achaemenid iconography. Except for Demetrius, our sources are also silent on other Hellenistic kings wearing such insignia, nor combined with a *kausia*. And it raises a question: for what reason would Demetrius, desiring to surpass Alexander, adopt an attribute worn by the Cypriot kings, technically the Great King's subjects (Diod. 16.42.4, cf. 15.9.2)?

Brandenburg holds that the term *mitra* is rarely used by Hellenistic authors and appears mostly in poetry, and that the purpose of using this word was to create a specific impression in the reader and emphasize the extravagance of the person described. Hence it was a more appropriate word than the clear and familiar *diadema*.²² This last observation seems important, especially when we look again at Duris' account. Indeed, he is preoccupied with the increasingly extravagant dress and Eastern affectations of prominent Greeks, and there is no doubt that according to him Pausanias and Alexander began to wear Persian attire. The

²¹ A. Satraki, "The Iconography of *Basileis* in Archaic and Classical Cyprus: Manifestations of Royal Power in the Visual Record," *BASOR* 370 (2013) 123–144, at 132, 136; A. Hermary and J. R. Martens, *The Cesnola Collection of Cypriot Art: Stone Sculpture* (New York 2014) 359; A. Cannavò, in B. Jacobs et al. (eds.), "Cyprus," *A Companion to the Achaemenid Persian Empire I* (Hoboken 2021) 245–258, at 252.

²² Brandenburg, *Studien* 176.

case of Dionysius, however, it is not so obvious. Although he wore the ξυστίς, a robe of rich and soft material reaching to the feet, a garment with connotations of luxury, effeminacy, and showiness, features generally associated with the eastern tradition,²³ it was not a garment worn by the Persians themselves. Moreover, Duris considered Poliorcetes distinct from the rest of the kings, claiming that he exceeded them all (Δημήτριος δὲ πάντας ὑπερέβαλεν), and does not ascribe to him Persian attire. It has been demonstrated that Duris' attitude to the Macedonians was moral, condemning them for their excesses,²⁴ so his claims should be read with caution. It is likely then that Duris' intention was to create an image of the deteriorating morality of the rulers, which culminated in the person of Demetrius.²⁵ He chose to draw a comparison between him and selected kings who began to wear Persian garments or attire associated with eastern traditions. Therefore it should not surprise us that Duris used the word *mitra*. If, according to him, Demetrius' robes were more lavish than those worn by the Persians, he tried to demonstrate that it must have been a luxury that had never been seen before.

What is also overlooked by Brandenburg and those who follow him is the fact that the shape of the diadem and its decorations varied. In his insightful analysis of the representations on Hellenistic coinage and in works of art, Dieter Salzmann has demonstrated that apart from the most common type—a flat band—we can see the diadem with stripes, as many as three or four.²⁶ They are depicted on the coins of the Bactrian and Parthian kings but can be seen also on a bronze coin of Syracuse

²³ Collins, *AJP* 133 (2012) 391; F. Pownall, "Dionysius I and the Creation of a New-style Macedonian Monarchy," *AHB* 31 (2017) 21–38, at 25.

²⁴ On Duris' agenda see Pownall, in *After Alexander* 43–56.

²⁵ Landucci Gattinoni, *Duride* 130.

²⁶ D. Salzmann, "Anmerkungen zur Typologie des hellenistischen Königsdiadems," in A. Lichtenberger et al. (eds.), *Das Diadem der hellenistischen Herrscher* (Münster 2012) 337–383, at 341–344. V. S. Curtis, in J. Wiesehöfer (ed.), *Das Partherreich und Seine Zeugnisse* (Stuttgart 1998) 61–74, at 63 calls this a "ridged diadem."

showing Heracles with striped *tainia*, dating to the rule of Agathocles (317–289). According to Salzmann there are two possible explanations for these stripes: either they are an attempt to reflect a natural *knot* at the back, an example of which we see in the Charioteer of Delphi, a bronze votive statue connected with the Pythian Games of 474, or we are dealing with a headband embroidered with gold and emphasizing its symbolic character, as in the case of Demetrius' *mitra chrysopastos* described by Duris. We could support this second hypothesis with the remark of Agnieszka Fulińska who points out that on some of the coins and gems stripes are depicted on the entire visible part of the diadem. Hence, it would be reasonable to assume that it was a calculated attempt to show the royal headband's adornment.²⁷

For Demetrius to adopt the *mitra* would also be surprising because he is consistently portrayed on coins wearing a diadem, including those issued in Macedonia,²⁸ which Brandenburg seems to ignore. Moreover, there is no doubt that a diadem became the symbol of kingship in the Hellenistic period.²⁹ It was

²⁷ A. Fulińska, *Atrybuty królewskie władców hellenistycznych – studium wizerunku publicznego* (diss. Kraków 2016) 181–182. On Persian insignia see M. J. Olbrycht, *Aleksander Wielki i świat irański* (Rzeszów 2004) 284–285.

²⁸ See E. Newell, *The Coinage of Demetrius Poliorcetes* (London 1927).

²⁹ H. W. Ritter, *Diadem und Königsherrschaft. Untersuchungen zu Zeremonien und Rechtsgrundlagen des Herrschaftsantritts* (Munich 1965) 57; A. Lichtenberg, “Gibt es eine vorhellenistische makedonische tradition für das Diadem?” in *Das Diadem* 163–179. Different hypotheses on the origins of the Hellenistic diadem: adopted from the Achaemenids, Olbrycht, *Aleksander Wielki* 284–285, 290–291 (following Ritter), and “The Diadem in the Achaemenid and Hellenistic Periods,” *Anabasis. Studia Classica et Orientalia* 5 (2014) 177–187; A. Collins, *AJP* 133 (2012); the headband of Dionysus, R. R. R. Smith, *Hellenistic Royal Portraits* (Oxford 1988) 34–38; E. A. Fredricksmeier, “The Origin of Alexander's Royal Insignia,” *TAPA* 127 (1997) 97–109; K. M. Meyer, in *Das Diadem* 209–231; the headbands of agonistic contestants, A. Alföldi, *Caesar in 44 v. Chr. I Studien zu Caesars Monarchie und ihren Wurzeln* (Bonn 1985) 105–131; S. Lehmann, “Sieger-Binden im agonistischen und monarchischen Kontext,” in *Das Diadem* 181–208; C. Mileta, “Ein Agon um Macht und Ehre,”

quite a natural decision, then, to be depicted with such an attribute. Besides, as Salzmann has noted, on some tetradrachms minted in Demetrias, dating to 290–289, on the ends of Demetrius' diadem is a symbol shaped like the letter Δ or Λ. He suggests that it may point to another adornment, Demetrius' name.³⁰ If this is correct, then we could safely assume that Demetrius laid much weight on this attribute and its symbolic character.

Highly problematic in this context is a passage of Herodian (1.3.3). He states that after Alexander, Antigonos “imitated Dionysus in every way, even wearing a crown of ivy instead of a Macedonian hat and diadem and carrying a thyrsus instead of a sceptre” (Ἀντίγονος δὲ Διόνυσον πάντα μιμούμενος καὶ κισσὸν μὲν περιτιθεὶς τῇ κεφαλῇ ἀντὶ καυσίας καὶ διαδήματος Μακεδονικοῦ, θύρσον δὲ ἀντὶ σκῆπτρου φέρων). Because Herodian refers to Antigonos, this passage is overlooked in discussions of Demetrius' headdress. We know, however, of no Antigonos who imitated Dionysus. For Angelos Chaniotis it is clear therefore that Herodian meant Demetrius, who was associated with Dionysus;³¹ he further suspects that Herodian is describing the moment of Demetrius' arrival in Athens during the Dionysia in 291/0 when the king joined the revelers.³² Herodian's “Macedonian diadem” was not the silver gilt “diadem” found in Tomb II in Aigai;³³ for him Μακεδονικοῦ was a byword for the Hellenistic diadem.³⁴ Should that be the case, we could assume that Herodian's testimony refers to the reign of Demetrius in Macedonia and

in *Das Diadem* 315–334; F. Pownall, *AHB* 31 (2017) 26–28. According to R. Strootman, *Courts and Elites in the Hellenistic Empires* (Edinburgh 2014) 218–220, the Hellenistic diadem may have referred to several backgrounds simultaneously.

³⁰ D. Salzmann, in *Das Diadem* 356.

³¹ Already suggested by Fredricksmeyer, *TAPA* 127 (1997) 98.

³² A. Chaniotis, in *More than Men, Less than Gods* 170.

³³ M. Andronikos, *Vergina. The Royal Tombs and the Ancient City* (Athens 1993) 171–175.

³⁴ Lichtenberger, in *Das Diadem* 165.

confirms that the king wore a diadem around his *kausia*. Nevertheless, the question arises to what extent this passage would reflect specifically Demetrius, rather than simply a general assumption about the attributes worn by the Hellenistic kings.

The same question about the reliability of our sources applies for Plutarch. How should we understand his statement that Demetrius wore a double-mitred *kausia*? Did he mean double Dionysiac *mitra* or double diadem? So far as I know, only two representations depicting a Hellenistic king wearing double headbands have survived, and both come from the Ptolemaic Egypt. One is a marble head in the Louvre identified as Ptolemy III (246–221). He is depicted wearing two bands, one low down on forehead like a *mitra*, the other above like a diadem. It is difficult to see the reasons for such gesture. Perhaps Ptolemy's aim was to emphasize the symbolic connection between those two attributes.³⁵ If the head in the Louvre is to be a guide in interpreting Demetrius' *mitra chrysopestos*, it should be assumed that his goal was to express his royal status, connection with Dionysus, and ambition to regain the East.

The other representation is a ring with an engraved portrait of Ptolemy VI (180–145) wearing the double crown of Upper and Lower Egypt. The ends of the first diadem flow out from under the double crown, the second diadem is tied around the crown. Such a depiction might have been related to Ptolemy's actions in 145, when, having driven Alexander I Balas out of Syria, he was crowned with two diadems as monarch of Asia and Egypt.³⁶ If that is so, it is difficult to resist the impression that Demetrius, wearing double-mitred *kausia*, intended to express an aspiration to rule over Europe and Asia, as Mossman has already suggested.

It seems to me, however, that we might interpret Plutarch differently, by comparing his account with that of Duris. There

³⁵ A. Fulińska, *Atrybuty* 197–198.

³⁶ E. R. Bevan, *The House of Ptolemy* (London 1927) 304; P. J. Kosmin, *The Land of the Elephant Kings* (Cambridge [Mass.] 2014) 125.

is no doubt that both share similarities, and it is not my intention to question the view that Plutarch used Duris as a source. However, as Mossman has explored in detail, there is every reason to think that Plutarch used his own terms to describe Demetrius' clothing and suggest hidden depths to his character by implication.³⁷ Moreover, apart from the difference regarding Demetrius' *mitra* (*mitra chrysopestos*, Duris) vs. double-mitred *kausia* (Plutarch), there is one more issue here that has escaped notice. According to Duris, Demetrius owned multiple cloaks decorated with the whole celestial sphere including stars and the zodiac (αἱ δὲ χλαμύδες αὐτοῦ ἦσαν ὄρφνινον ἔχουσαι τὸ φέγγος τῆς χροᾶς, τὸ δὲ πᾶν [ὁ πόλος] ἐνούφαντο χρυσοῦς ἀστέρας ἔχον καὶ τὰ δώδεκα ζῳδία). Plutarch, on the other hand, states that the king had only one such cloak, which was "half-finished" (ἦν δέ τις ὑφανομένη χλανὶς αὐτῷ πολὺν χρόνον, ἔργον ὑπερήφανον, εἴκασμα τοῦ κόσμου καὶ τῶν κατ' οὐρανὸν φαινομένων (...)) ὁ κατελείφθη μὲν ἡμιτελὲς ἐν τῇ μεταβολῇ τῶν πραγμάτων): if so, we would naturally infer that it was never worn. Surprisingly, when Plutarch describes events at the end of the reign of Demetrius in Macedonia (*Demetr.* 44.6), he claims that the king, afraid of his own soldiers, put on a dark cloak in place of his stage-ropes of royalty, and stole away unnoticed (μεταμφιέννυται χλαμύδα φαίαν ἀντὶ τῆς τραγικῆς ἐκείνης, καὶ διαλαθὼν ὑπεχώρησεν). As Christopher Pelling has rightly pointed out, the "tragic" one does seem to refer to the cloak richly described earlier.³⁸ This would imply that Plutarch was perfectly aware that Demetrius' cloak had been finished.

This raises the question why he earlier said something that seems to be contrary. The answer appears to lie in Plutarch and his agenda in *Life of Demetrius*. He wanted to portray Demetrius as an example of men whose great nature was corrupted later in

³⁷ Mossman, in *Fame and Infamy* 149–169.

³⁸ C. Pelling, "Tragic Colouring in Plutarch," in J. Opsomer et al. (eds.), *A Versatile Gentleman: Consistency in Plutarch's Writing: Studies Offered to Luc Van der Stockt* (Leuven 2016) 113–133, at 126 n.46.

life.³⁹ He often distinguishes Demetrius from other rulers, claiming that he was the most dissolute of the kings when he had leisure for drinking and luxurious living (σχολάζων τε περὶ πότους καὶ τρυφᾶς καὶ διαίτας ἀβροβιώτατος βασιλέων, *Demetr.* 2.3) or that he had the worst reputation of all the kings of his time (μάλιστα δὴ περὶ τὴν ἡδονὴν ταύτην κακῶς ἀκούσαι τῶν τότε βασιλέων, 14.3). Seen from this perspective, it should not surprise us that according to Plutarch Demetrius wore, unusually, a double diadem (διαδούμενον περιττώως καυσίαις διμίτροις): Plutarch knew that the standard practice of Hellenistic kings was one diadem. We might even be tempted to push the argument yet one step further. Perhaps what inspired Plutarch was how the *kausia* was sometimes depicted. The fine bronze portrait head recovered from the sea near Kalymnos, identified as Philip V of Macedon, shows the king wearing a *kausia* with a padded headband. The cylindrical element below the headdress resembles a *strophion*, a convex and rolled band, considered to be a stylistic variant of the diadem, and probably meant to secure the *kausia*.⁴⁰ If so, such a *kausia* with the diadem might have given an impression that Demetrius wore a double headband. As another potential inspiration for Plutarch, we could point to a literary device. The term δῖμιτρος appears only in the *Life of Demetrius*. This could be related to the change in the pronunciation of η to ι: we cannot rule out some word play by Plutarch on the name Demetrius, and understandable to his readers.

III

From the above reflections, that Demetrius in Macedonia wore a diadem tied around a *kausia* is as likely as that he wore a *mitra*, or even more so. The question remains what motive he might have had for wearing such headgear. In fact, except for the years 294–288, none of our sources describe the king as wearing such a headdress. Moreover, a *kausia* appears neither

³⁹ Rose, *A Historical Commentary* 14–40.

⁴⁰ C. A. Picón and S. Hemingway, *Pergamon and the Hellenistic Kingdoms of the Ancient World* (New York 2016) 213.

when Demetrius received a diadem from his father and was crowned (*Demetr.* 18.1), nor when his fleet put in at Corinth after his death with the cinerary urn—it was adorned only with the king's diadem (53.4). It should be added that Demetrius' coin portraits, including those minted in Macedonia, do not show a *kausia*, rather the diadem and bull's horns.

The practice of wearing a diadem with a *kausia* does appear in some later Hellenistic kings. Good examples are coin portraits of Bactrian rulers⁴¹ or a marble portrait head of Ptolemy XV⁴² (or his brother Ptolemy Philadelphos).⁴³ The prevailing opinion is that in adopting a *kausia* they wanted to emphasize their links to the Macedonians and to Alexander and his legacy.⁴⁴ But there is a serious problem with such an interpretation. The diadem as a royal attribute of Alexander is mentioned in sources 36 times, but only three times in combination with a *kausia*.⁴⁵ Hence, as Marek Olbrycht has pointed out, Alexander's practice of wearing both headgears combined was merely sporadic. It seems that he used the *kausia* only while on the march and traveling. It is also significant that after his death, when his regalia were put on display, a *kausia*—in contrast to the diadem—was not there.⁴⁶ We can wonder, then, to what extent wearing a diadem wrapped around a *kausia* would be a clear reference to Alexander.

The same question arises whether we should view the *imitatio Alexandri* ascribed by scholars to Demetrius as a consistent policy

⁴¹ Janssen, *Die Kausia* 51–54, 60–67.

⁴² P. E. Stanwick, *Portraits of the Ptolemies: Greek Kings as Egyptian Pharaohs* (Austin 2002) 35; Z. Kiss, “En marge des sceaux de Nea Paphos: l'iconographie de Césarion,” *ÉtTrav* 20 (2005) 82–86, at 83.

⁴³ Fulińska, *Atrybuty* 226–227.

⁴⁴ Plut. *Ant.* 54.5–6; Stanwick, *Portraits* 79; Janssen, *Die Kausia* 244–245; S. Glenn, *Money and Power in Hellenistic Bactria* (New York 2020) 38.

⁴⁵ Ritter, *Diadem und Königsherrschaft* 55–58.

⁴⁶ Curt. 10.6.4; Olbrycht, *Aleksander* 291, and “Royal Insignia of Alexander the Great: Arrian's Evidence and Omissions,” in R. Rollinger et al. (eds.), *The World of Alexander in Perspective. Contextualizing Arrian* (Wiesbaden 2022) 345–355, at 350.

across all of the king's actions. Recent studies tend to focus on innovative aspects of his activity and provide examples where Demetrius' actions clearly differ not only from the other Successors but also from Alexander himself.⁴⁷ This applies above all to Demetrius' shaping a new image as Antigonid king based on his engineering skills and by emphasizing the pronounced physical and personal character of his rule.⁴⁸ For these reasons some scholars have expressed doubt about Demetrius' *imitatio Alexandri*, arguing that his attitude towards Alexander's memory was imbued with rivalry (*aemulatio Alexandri*)⁴⁹ or suggesting that tracing Poliorcetes' model might obscure his actual intentions.⁵⁰

The question remains: if not a reference to Alexander, what was the reason for Demetrius' decision to wear the *kausia diadematoros* during his reign in Macedonia? The *kausia* was the symbol for leadership, strength, traditional Macedonian values, and commonly referred not only to the position of the king, but also to the prerogatives of the Macedonians themselves. At the

⁴⁷ S. Müller, "In the Favour of Aphrodite: Sulla, Demetrios Poliorcetes, and the Symbolic Value of the Hetaira," *AHB* 23 (2009) 38–49; A. Chaniotis, in *More than Men, Less than Gods* 186; L.-M. Günther, "Herrscherliche Inszenierungen in den Diadochenkriegen am Beispiel von Antigonos I. und Demetrios I.," in D. Boschung et al. (eds.), *Das Charisma des Herrschers* (Paderborn 2015) 235–252, at 242–251; B. Eckhardt, "Zur Herrschaftsrepräsentation des Demetrios I. Poliorketes," in H. Beck et al. (eds.), *Von Magna Graecia nach Asia Minor: Festschrift für Linda-Marie Günther* (Wiesbaden 2017) 197–210.

⁴⁸ T. Zieliński, "Demetrius Poliorcetes' Nickname and the Origins of the Hostile Tradition concerning his Besieging Skills," *AHB* 37 (2023) 120–141, at 127–130.

⁴⁹ V. Alonso Troncoso, "Antigonos Monophthalmus and Alexander's Memory," in C. Bearzot et al. (eds.), *Alexander's Legacy* (Rome 2016) 97–119, at 113–114, and "Alexander, the King in Shining Armor," *Karanos* 2 (2019) 19–27, at 25.

⁵⁰ T. Zieliński, "Imitatio, aemulatio or comparatio? Demetrius Poliorcetes and his Attitude towards Alexander the Great's Accomplishments and Legacy," *Klio. Czasopismo poświęcone dziejom Polski i powszechnym* 65 (2023) 5–29; B. Eckhardt, in *Von Magna Graecia nach Asia Minor* 203.

same time, the recipients of this message identified as members of one group: the symbol intended to strengthen their solidarity, distinguish them from others, and signal their pursuit of common interests.⁵¹ Considering that Demetrius wore the diadem compounded with the *kausia* only during his reign in Macedonia, we can interpret his decision as an attempt to inspire shared loyalty among his subjects. It is not a coincidence that in 290 he introduced a series of gold staters showing on the obverse his portrait with diadem and bull's horns, on the reverse the well-known Macedonian cavalryman but wearing a *kausia*. It was a representation of attributes associated with Macedonian kingship and one of the main motifs in the coinage of the Argead kings.⁵² Thus, in placing such a motif on coins, Demetrius must have been aware of its meaning. It has even been suggested that the horseman now was intended as another representation of Demetrius himself.⁵³ In any case, this is the first and last time when the king employed exclusively Macedonian imagery on his coins, and Wheatley and Dunn are probably right that he wanted to emphasize his role as the Macedonian king.⁵⁴

To sum up: arguments for identification of Demetrius' headress in Macedonia with an Eastern headband or Dionysiac fillet seem unconvincing in light of the available evidence. It is more likely that the king wore an embroidered diadem combined with a *kausia*. Although wearing both of these attributes has been viewed as a reference to Alexander, Demetrius likely adopted the *kausia* with diadem specifically to appeal to the Macedonians and so used a traditional Macedonian symbol in order to gain

⁵¹ Janssen, *Die Kausia* 244.

⁵² On the horseman motif see C. Picard, in L. Kahil et al. (eds.), *Iconographie classique et identités régionales* (Paris 1986) 67–76; A. M. Prestianni Giallombardo and B. Tripodi, "Iconografia monetale e ideologia reale macedone: I tipi del cavaliere nella monetazione di Alessandro I e di Filippo II," *REA* 98 (1996) 311–355.

⁵³ O. Morkholm, *Early Hellenistic Coinage from the Accession of Alexander to the Peace of Apamea* (Cambridge 1991) 80.

⁵⁴ Wheatley and Dunn, *Demetrius* 374–375.

the favor of his subjects. Whether this decision turned out to be the right one is another story. Nevertheless, these conclusions can serve as an argument to challenge the view that Demetrius adopted an Eastern style of kingship and imitated Alexander.

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