



## Missing Years in the Biography of Polyperchon (318/7 and 308 BC onwards)

### I. 318/7: Polyperchon in Asia (?) and the chronology of the Diadochi

The well-known decree of Nesos (an islet in the bay of Adramytteion)<sup>1</sup> in honour of its most distinguished citizen, Thersippos (*I. Adramytteion* II 34 [*OGIS* 4; *IG* XII 2, 645]),<sup>2</sup> records a mission Polyperchon led in Asia (ll. A.23-25): καὶ Πολυπέρχοντος εἰς τὰν Ἀσί[αν] | [. . . 5. . .] ντος διώικησε φίλον αὐτον τᾷ πό[λι] ὑπ[α]ρχην. The generally accepted restoration of the beginning of l. 24 is Paton's (*IG* XII 2, 645) [στάλε]ντος, with the kings Philip III and Alexander IV as the implied agent.<sup>3</sup> This restoration, however, poses three problems: a) contrary to ἀποστέλλω, the verb στέλλω is very rarely used in epigraphic texts and almost never in the sense «to send someone»;<sup>4</sup> b) it requires the assumption that an agent as important as the

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1. For the complex problem of the geographical names associated with the island and the neighbouring mainland (Nesos, Pordoselene, Poroselene, Hekatonnesoi), see Stauber, *I. Adramytteion* I, p. 198-213.

2. Apart from editions and bibliography cited by Stauber in *I. Adramytteion*, see also Poddighe, «Decreto» (with further bibliography in 95 n. 4). Dittenberger's comments in the *OGIS* remain the foundation for the understanding of the text. The fact that Thersippos was a citizen of Nesos is not explicitly stated in the decree; however, the number and importance of his benefactions, the absence of naturalization from the honours awarded to him and the prohibition of a future cancellation of honours for him and his offspring make this assumption practically certain. The nature of Thersippos' role as an intermediary between Nesos and various Macedonians of power in the age of the Diadochi is further explored in my monograph *Between City and King. Prosopographical Studies on the Intermediaries Between the Cities of the Greek Mainland and the Aegean and the Royal Courts in the Hellenistic Period* (322-190 BC), («Μελετήματα 59; Athens 2008) 408-413.

3. Earlier restorations include the awkward [ἔλθο]ντος, by the *ed. pr.*, and Droysen's [πέμψα]ντος, which is impossible without an object.

4. As far as I have been able to find out, it is used in this sense only in *IG* II<sup>2</sup> 858, l. 5 and 861, l. 20, where it is fully and partly restored respectively.

kings is implied, although a few lines below it is duly recorded (Il. A.26-27: τεταλ[γμένο]ις ὑπὸ τῶν βασιλῆων φίλοις); c) it does not clarify the nature of Polyperchon's mission,<sup>5</sup> which is odd, given that, throughout the text, sufficient context for the missions of other important Macedonians is provided.

Angelos Matthaiou —to whom I am grateful for this and other observations— suggested to me the restoration [διάβα]ντος. It has none of the disadvantages of [στάλε]ντος, produces a better structured and more comprehensible text and has plenty of parallels in its favour.<sup>6</sup> The text, therefore, should probably be restored:

καὶ Πολυπέρχοντος εἰς τὴν Ἀσί[αν]  
[διάβα(?) ]ντος διώικησε φίλον αὐτον τᾷ πό-  
[λι ὑπά]ρχην.

«... and when Polyperchon crossed (?) to Asia, he [*scil.* Thersippos] arranged for him to become a friend of the city».

In any case, the syntax clearly requires a participle of a verb of motion, thus making the assumption of a mission of Polyperchon in Asia obligatory. If the more plausible restoration [διάβα]ντος is accepted, the mission must be a military campaign, since, after Alexander III, διαβαίνω εἰς τὴν Ἀσίαν has clear military connotations in epigraphic and literary sources. Even if the —less plausible— restoration [στάλε]ντος or any other restoration is accepted, the assumption that the decree records a military campaign of Polyperchon in Asia remains necessary. In what follows, my aim will be to explore the ramifications of the assumption that the decree records a military campaign of Polyperchon to Asia.

Scholars either commenting on the decree or dealing with the thorny chronological issues of the age of the Diadochi have not dealt with a problem this decree poses: from the moment Polyperchon returns to Macedonia in summer 322 to his death (which, as I shall argue in section II, should probably be dated *ca.* 308), no mission of his in Asia is recorded by any other source. An easy way out of this

5. Whether στέλλω in the sense «to send [a subordinate] on a mission» has military or, e.g., diplomatic or administrative connotations usually depends on the context (for some uses of the verb in a military context, see e.g. Diod. Sic. 36.10.1 and 37.2.8; Arr., *Anab.* 4.27.5).

6. To limit myself to close epigraphic parallels, see e.g. *Marmor Parium*, *FGrHist* 239 B 11: ἀφ' οὗ Ἀντίγονος εἰς τὴν Ἀσίαν διέβη and 25: Λυσίμαχ[ο]ς [εἰς τὴν Ἀσίαν διέβη: (?)]; *I.Priene* 37, l. 146: Ἀλεξάνδρου διαβάντος εἰς τὴν Ἀσίαν; *ISE* III 184, ll. 18-19: διαβά[ντ]ων δὲ [τ]ῶν Ῥωμαίων εἰς τὴν Ἀσίαν; *IvP* 64: Ἀχαιῶν οἱ διαβάντες κατὰ συμμαχίαν πρὸς βασιλέα Εὐμένην ἐν τῷ συστάντι πρὸς Ἀντίοχον πολέμῳ; *SEG* XXV 664 with *SEG* XXIX 552: [ἀφ' οἱ οἱ πολῖτ]αι οἱ μετ' Ἀλεξάνδροιο | [κατέ]λθον, διαβάντες (?) ἐν] τὴν Ἀσίαν etc.

problem would be to suppose that the mission in question is, in fact, the dispatch of Kleitos by Polyperchon<sup>7</sup> in the summer of 318<sup>8</sup> to the Hellespont. If that was the

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7. Diod. Sic. 18.72.3-9; *Marmor Parium*, *FGrHist* 239 B 13; Trog., *Prol.* 14. Goukowsky, *Diodore XVIII* p. 98 n. 2 assumes that Kleitos' assignment and Polyperchon's Asian campaign attested in the decree for Thersippos are connected.

8. A long note on the dates used in this section is unfortunately required here, since the period under consideration (322-317) is part of the period for which the infamous debate on «high» vs. «low» chronology is still raging (the relevant literature is conveniently gathered by Boiy, «Aspects chronologiques» and *High and Low*). For reasons which cannot be presented here, I believe there is convincing literary and cuneiform evidence in favour of the «low» chronology for 323-320 (with the death of Perdikkas and the assembly at Triparadeisos dated to 320) and equally convincing literary, epigraphic and cuneiform evidence in favour of the «high» chronology for the following period (with the death of Phokion dated to May 318, and the siege of Megalopolis by Polyperchon and Kleitos' campaign in the Hellespont dated to the summer of the same year). This choice is not as paradoxical as it may seem (cf. already Bearzot, *Focione* 237 and Landucci Gattinoni, *Cassandro* 13-25) and now finds strong confirmation in Tom Boiy's thorough, methodologically sound and very convincing overview of cuneiform evidence («Aspects chronologiques» and *High and Low*, passim; Boiy reverts back to the «low» chronology for 312-311, but this period need not concern us here). It should be noted, however, that the choice of «high» or «low» chronology affects my arguments only as far as the period between the death of Antipatros and just before the death of Philip III is concerned (unanimously dated to autumn 319 and autumn 317 respectively). This is precisely the period for which there is no alternative to the «high» chronology. The «low» chronology for European affairs of this period put forward by Errington, «Diodorus» 482-96, rests upon an untenable reconstruction of Athenian affairs (see Osborne, *Naturalization* II 98 n. 377; Williams, «Note»; Bosworth, «Philip III» 67-70), which has been abandoned even by proponents of the «low» chronology (see e.g. Goukowsky, *Diodore XVIII* p. xxxvi-xxxvii; Gullath and Schober, «Chronologie» 338-47; Williams, «Note»; Heckel, *Marshals* 195-96; Bearzot, *Focione* 237; Landucci Gattinoni, *Cassandro* 13-19). What some of them apparently do not realize, however, is that a «high» chronology for European affairs unavoidably requires a «high» chronology for Asian affairs until 317 as well, since Phokion's death, Polyperchon's campaign in the Peloponnese and Kleitos' campaign at the Hellespont are closely interconnected. Proponents of the «low» chronology who date Phokion's death in spring 318 but still maintain Errington's date of the siege of Megalopolis and / or the battle at Bosporos in the campaigning season of 317, as required by the «low» chronology, have to resort to desperate solutions (cf. also n. 37, below). Thus, Williams, «Note» 305 implausibly stretches Polyperchon's campaign in the Peloponnese throughout the Attic year 318/7 by assuming lengthy diplomatic contacts with Peloponnesian leaders, in order to place the siege of Megalopolis in summer 317, while Gullath and Schober, «Chronologie» 351-56 date the siege of Megalopolis in 318 but dissociate it from the battle of Bosporos (which they date to 317), although they are recorded in the very same passage of Diodoros: in order to do this they are forced to assume that Polyperchon spends almost a year idle in Macedonia preparing a fleet, Kassandros spends more than a year

solution, the decree would be referring to Polyperchon, Guardian of the kings, as the authority who sent Kleitos to the area. However, this is not what the decree says. If Polyperchon was in fact absent from the scene, surely the decree would not say that it was Polyperchon who «crossed (?) to Asia»; moreover, there would be no reason why the decree did not identify the Macedonian whom Thersippos befriended as Kleitos, who is mentioned in the decree a few lines before, in a different context (Il. A 14-15). The decree clearly mentions by name only important Macedonians with whom Thersippos came into *personal* contact with, *at the time* they were in the vicinity of Nesos. We need, therefore, to locate a plausible time for an unattested campaign of Polyperchon in Asia. Since the decree (or, at least, Polyperchon's campaign) certainly predates the autumn of 317,<sup>9</sup> the date of his campaign should be sought between summer 322 and October 317.

Polyperchon's whereabouts in that period are presumably recorded in some detail.<sup>10</sup> The general returned to Macedonia in the summer of 322, second in command to Krateros.<sup>11</sup> The armies of Antipatros and Krateros, therefore Polyperchon

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in the Piraeus with the exception of a brief campaign in the Saronic Gulf, and Antigonos spends a year and a half in western Asia Minor (late winter 319/8 - summer 317), in activities which it is clear from Diodoros only lasted for a much shorter period.

9. Immediately after the mention of Polyperchon's campaign there is a passing reference to the kings, in plural (Il. A 27); this must mean that Philip III was still alive when Polyperchon was in Asia, or, at the very least, when his campaign was decided upon. It probably also means that the decree is dated either before Philip's death or soon afterwards, hence it is unanimously dated between 319 and 317 (see *I. Adramytteion* II p. 33 and Poddighe, «Decreto» 99-100, with earlier bibliography), with the exception of Chr. Habicht, «Zwei Angehörige des lynkestischen Königshauses», *Ancient Macedonia* II, («IMXA» 155, Thessaloniki 1977) 511-16, esp. 514-15, who dates it *ca.* 315, without comments. Habicht's date, if not a misprint, is highly improbable: by 315, Antigonos was the uncontested master of Asia and Polyperchon was a second-rate officer, about to offer his allegiance to the highest bidder; a decree of an Asian city mentioning by name a number of Antigonos' past enemies (Antipatros, Kleitos, Polyperchon) would be incomprehensible in that context. Poddighe, on the other hand, unnecessarily considers summer 318 as a *terminus ante quem* (and accordingly dates the decree to winter 319/8) because the death of Kleitos is not mentioned; the mention of Kleitos (Il. A 14-15), however, belongs to an incident explicitly set in the past and therefore offers no chronological indication for the date of the decree's enactment.

10. Cf. Heckel, *Marshals* 193-204 with the sources and bibliography. It is indicative of how unnoticed the decree of Nesos goes in modern scholarship that Heckel only mentions it as a source for the general's name (188 n. 87).

11. Polyperchon was second in command to Krateros during the return of the veterans from Opis to Macedonia (Arr., *Anab.* 7.12.4) and Krateros crossed the Hellespont in the spring or summer of 322 (Diod. Sic. 18.16.4).

as well, were then involved in the last stage of the Lamian War, the post-war settlement of affairs in the revolted cities and, afterwards, with the campaign against the Aitolians. When Antigonos fled to Macedonia to escape Perdikkas, Antipatros and Krateros hastened to sign a truce with the Aitolians (late winter 321/0),<sup>12</sup> so as to be free to deal with Perdikkas in Asia. Since the Antipatrid forces were thus occupied in Europe, it is highly unlikely that Polyperchon returned to Asia during that period (summer 322 – early 320).

When Antipatros and Krateros crossed to Asia immediately after the Aitolian campaign (Diod. Sic. 18.29.4), Polyperchon was appointed commander of the forces of Antipatros in Europe (Diod. Sic. 18.38.6; Just. 13.6.9). His appointment makes it impossible that he campaigned in Asia until Antipatros' return to Macedonia, in late winter 320/19 (Diod. Sic. 18.39.7; Arr., *Succ.* 1.44-45; Grayson, *ABC* 10, obv., l. 7).<sup>13</sup> In fact, we are told that he had to deal with an invasion of the

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12. Diod. Sic. 18.24-25 (the only source for this campaign) mentions it after the negotiations with Athens (autumn 322) and Krateros' marriage to Phila, daughter of Antipatros. Proponents of the «high» chronology for the period place the campaign already in winter 322/1 (e.g. Briant, *Antigone* 159 n. 1; H. Hauben, «The first war of the Successors: chronological and historical problems», *AncSoc* 8 [1977] 85-120, esp. 87), but Errington, «Babylon» 76 and E. M. Anson, «Diodorus and the Date of Triparadeisus», *AJP* 107 (1986) 208-17, esp. 215-16 convincingly argue that such a difficult campaign cannot have been undertaken at the end of a campaigning season as arduous as that of 322, and accordingly place the beginning of the campaign in 321 and its end in late winter 321/20 (cf. also Goukowsky, *Diodore XVIII* p. xxxiii; Heckel, *Marshals* 192; E. M. Anson, *Eumenes of Cardia. A Greek among Macedonians* [«Studies in Philo of Alexandria and Mediterranean Antiquity» 3; Boston-Leiden 2004] 90 n. 49).

13. «High» and «low» chronology do not differ on the date of that event (e.g. Errington, «Diodorus» 487; Bosworth, «Philip III» 59-60). The fact that the Babylonian *Diadochi Chronicle* (Grayson, *ABC* 10; for a preview of the forthcoming edition of I. Finkel and R. J. van der Spek in: *Babylonian Chronicles of the Hellenistic Period*, see <<http://www.livius.org/cg-cm/chronicles/bchp-diadochi/diadochi-01.html>>) dates this event «year 5 of Philip, month unknown» is not an important problem and does not necessarily corroborate Bosworth's hypothesis that the first year of Philip III is actually 324/3, when he was supposedly proclaimed king of Babylon (Bosworth, «Philip III» 75-79). This hypothesis is now invalidated by accumulated cuneiform evidence which clearly shows that Philip III's first regnal was, as expected, 323/2 (Boiy, «Aspects chronologiques» 65 and 70). As to why this event was recorded in Philip's fifth year, i.e. 319/8, Bosworth himself («Philip III» 60) provides the answer: there was obviously some uncertainty as to the precise time of the king's departure for Macedonia (cf. the awkward note: «month unknown»), and if Antipatros and the kings crossed to Europe in, e.g., January 319, a scribe with imprecise information could easily have recorded it in the entry for the next Babylonian year, beginning in April 319.

Aitolians in Thessaly (Diod. Sic. 18.38). Theoretically, there is time for a campaign in Asia in 319, from Antipatros' return early in the year to early autumn, when, shortly before his death, Antipatros appointed Polyperchon as *epimeletes* of the kings and plenipotentiary general (Diod. Sic. 18.48.4). However, dating the missing Asian campaign to 319 is again very implausible. First of all, the Antipatrid forces had just returned from a long and difficult campaign, during which there were at least two mutinies of soldiers demanding their pay;<sup>14</sup> a new campaign in Asia would have proven an impossible strain for the resources of the viceroy. Moreover, the political situation at Pella should prevent any ambitious officer from distancing himself from the court: soon after his return, Antipatros fell seriously ill (Diod. Sic. 18.48.1 and 4) and it would be rather imprudent for Polyperchon to leave for Asia at a time when the hierarchy was about to change.

Polyperchon most probably remained in Macedonia during the winter of 319/8, presumably consolidating his new position and preparing for next year's campaign in southern Greece against phrourarchs loyal to Kassandros. Even if one wished to squeeze an Asian campaign in autumn / winter 319, this would not make sense for historical reasons. A campaign to Asia in winter 319 would obviously be targeted against Antigonos; however, open hostility between Antigonos and Polyperchon officially broke out slightly later, after the following events. First of all, Kassandros fled to Antigonos for support (Diod. Sic. 18.54.1-3; *Marmor Parium*, *FGrHist* 239 F B12, winter 319/8).<sup>15</sup> Kleitos, until then satrap of Lydia, in fear of meeting the fate of Arrhidaios, satrap of Hellespontic Phrygia, who had just been ousted by Antigonos (Diod. Sic. 18.51.1-52.4), established garrisons in several cities of his satrapy and fled to Macedonia, in order to formally accuse Antigonos in front of Polyperchon and the kings (Diod. Sic. 18.52.5-6; late winter / early spring 318).<sup>16</sup> Antigonos, immediately afterwards, stole money sent to the kings (Diod. Sic. 18.52.7; Diodoros acknowledges that this was his first open act of defiance against the kings [18.52.8]). Finally, Polyperchon wrote a letter by which he in effect re-

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14. One at Triparadeisos (Arr., *Succ.* 1.32-33; Polyainos 4.6.4) and one immediately prior to Antipatros' crossing back to Europe (Arr., *Succ.* 1.44-45). One should add that a considerable portion of Antipatros' army was handed over to Antigonos in Asia (Arr., *Succ.* 1.42).

15. On the date, see Bosworth, «Philip III» 67; Landucci Gattinoni, *Cassandro* 39-40.

16. Antigonos was informed of Arrhidaios' move against Kyzikos while he was in winter quarters at Kelainai (Diod. Sic. 18.52.1); he immediately set out against him and Kleitos' flight followed, hence the dating of Kleitos' arrival in Macedonia in late winter / early spring 318; cf. Bosworth, «Philip III» 68.

placed Antigonos with Eumenes as general over Asia (18.57.3-4, early spring 318).<sup>17</sup> In other words, a campaign of Polyperchon against Antigonos cannot be envisaged before spring 318. However, from the beginning of the campaigning season of 318 to the summer of the same year, there is ample evidence that Polyperchon remained in Europe.<sup>18</sup>

The inescapable conclusion is that the more plausible date for the campaign of Polyperchon in Asia required by the more plausible restoration of the decree for Thersippos is the period between late summer 318 and autumn 317. Such a date is perfectly compatible with the sequence of events recorded in the decree. Three military incidents are there recorded: the war in the context of which Antipatros ordered the Greek cities to proceed to an obligatory *eisphora* (Il. A 9-14), which is most probably the war against Eumenes decided at Triparadeisos,<sup>19</sup> the —otherwise unknown— campaign of Kleitos in Cyprus (Il. A 14-16), which can only be dated between Triparadeisos and late 319,<sup>20</sup> and Polyperchon's campaign, which should postdate the other two.

In fact, a closer look on the narrative of Diodoros reveals that, even without the decree for Thersippos, we should easily have assumed the existence of a campaign of Polyperchon in Asia in 318/7. Earlier in 318,<sup>21</sup> Polyperchon had written to Eumenes urging him to continue the war against Antigonos, offering to share the

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17. Polyperchon's letter postdates Kassandros' flight to Antigonos and predates Eumenes' withdrawal from Nora, since Eumenes received it immediately after that (Diod. Sic. 18.58.1). Eumenes left Nora in spring 318 (cf. Nepos, *Eum.* 5.7 with E. M. Anson, «The siege of Nora: a source conflict», *GRBS* 18 (1977) 255-56; Gullath and Schober, «Chronologie» 349; Bosworth, «Philip III» 67). It should be noted that the winter of 319/8 is where «high» and «low» chronology begin to diverge, since Errington, «Diodorus» 485 and 487 puts the whole sequence of events in Kyzikos, Phrygia and Lydia slightly later (Boiy, «Aspects chronologiques» 86 and High and Low 118-24 thinks there is no difference between the two dating schemes until the spring of 318).

18. He was in Phokis in spring (Diod. Sic. 18.66.1; Plut., *Phoc.* 33) along with Kleitos (Plut., *Phoc.* 34.2); when Kassandros sailed into the Peiraeus during the summer, Polyperchon hastened to Attica (Diod. Sic. 18.66.2); later that summer he was in the Peloponnese (Diod. Sic. 18.68-71; Polyainos 4.14; Bielman, *Retour* no 14 [SVA III 419; ISE 52]). This sequence of events invalidates Poddighe's assumption («Decreto» 100 n. 36) that Polyperchon's campaign was an answer to Kleitos' call for help in early 318.

19. See Dittenberger *ad OGIS* 4 and Briant, *Antigone* 208 n. 6 with earlier literature.

20. Briant, *Antigone* 215 n. 9 with earlier literature; Billows, *Antigonos* 67 n. 29; Poddighe, «Decreto» 97; on Kleitos, cf. also Heckel, *Marshals* 185-87, with no mention of the decree of Nesos.

21. Cf. above, n. 17.

Guardianship of the kingdom with him and promising him that, if needed, he and the kings would come to his succor in Asia (Diod. Sic. 18.57.3-4). This is not a false promise: later in 318, Eumenes was in Phoinike, gathering ships for a fleet with which Polyperchon could cross to the Asian front whenever he wished (18.63.6). In the summer of the same year,<sup>22</sup> Polyperchon broke off the siege of Megalopolis in the Peloponnese and «turned to other, more immediate needs» (18.72.1: ἐφ' ἑτέρως ἀναγκαιοτέρας πράξεις ἐτρέπετο). These needs are never mentioned by Diodoros. Simultaneously (also 18.72.1), Polyperchon sent Kleitos to the Hellespont with strict orders to prevent the enemy from crossing to Europe. After an initial victory of Kleitos over Kassandros' admiral Nikanor, Antigonos inflicted a crushing defeat over Kleitos, who was then murdered by forces of Lysimachos while attempting to reach Macedonia (18.72.4-9; cf. *Marmor Parium*, *FGrHist* 239 B 13; Trog., *Prol.* 14.); immediately afterwards, Antigonos moved to Kilikia, in order to secure the land from the forces of Eumenes (Diod. Sic. 18.73.1), while his fleet was sent to Phoinike against Eumenes himself; *en route*, Antigonos' navy met a squadron of Eumenes' fleet which was carrying a significant amount of money (Polyainos 4.6.9), perhaps financial aid to facilitate Polyperchon's promised expedition. Eumenes himself left Phoinike for the Upper satrapies (Diod. Sic. 18.73.2).

After that, Diodoros' book 18 comes to a hasty end; apparently, he attempted to wrap up European and Asian affairs in order to begin his next book with Sicilian affairs.<sup>23</sup> To achieve this, he concludes book 18 with two passages summarizing later developments. His summary account of Eumenes' movements (18.73.3-4) clearly belongs to the next campaigning season<sup>24</sup> and is in fact repeated in more detail —and more accurately—<sup>25</sup> in the appropriate place (19.12-14). The same must be true for his summary account of European affairs (18.74.1-75.2); the difference is that Diodoros left these events out of his book 19 where they belong. We are told that the Greeks gave up on their hopes for Polyperchon and went over to Kassandros, including the Athenians, who signed a peace and friendship treaty with Kassandros, and accepted a censitary régime under Demetrios of Phaleron (18.74) —Demetrios, however, did not rise to power until mid-winter 318/7, perhaps not even before early spring 317.<sup>26</sup> We are also told that Nikanor returned

22. Cf. Bosworth, «Philip III» 70.

23. Cf. Bosworth, «Philip III» 71 with earlier literature.

24. Eumenes had spent the winter in Babylonia (Diod. Sic. 19.12.1).

25. The Euphrates of 18.73.3 is in fact the Tigris (19.13.6) and the Persis of 18.73.4 is in fact the Sousiane (19.13.6).

26. The *terminus post quem* is the last decree voted by the short-lived democratic

triumphant to the Piraeus, where he was assassinated by Kassandros, who then invaded Macedonia (18.75.1-2) – these events also belong to spring 317 onwards<sup>27</sup> and Polyperchon is still not mentioned. The next reference to him by Diodoros comes only in 19.11.2: he is now in Epirus with Olympias and is about to return to Macedonia to confront Eurydike, who has already assumed the *de facto* rule of the kingdom. This is only weeks before the death of Philip III in October 317.<sup>28</sup> In other words, for European affairs between autumn 318 and autumn 317, Diodoros provides us only with two short, prospective and confused<sup>29</sup> passages, with no record of Polyperchon's movements; moreover, all events in Diod. Sic. 18.74-75 clearly belong to the campaigning season of 317.<sup>30</sup> The same gap affects Asia Minor as well. During the period under examination (autumn 318 – autumn 317), Asia Minor only enters Diodoros' account in a sensationalist, isolated and irrelevant to this study episode, probably taking place in Greater Phrygia (19.16).<sup>31</sup>

Are we to assume that Polyperchon remained idle in southern Greece, Macedonia, Aitolia<sup>32</sup> or Epirus, from late summer 318 to autumn 317, in a period when his influence in Greece collapsed, Kassandros, unhindered, conquered one Greek city after another, invaded Macedonia and then returned to the Peloponnese, while in Macedonia Eurydike gained influence at court, convinced her husband to dismiss Polyperchon and offered the Guardianship of the kingdom to

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régime of 318-317; this is either Osborne, *Naturalization* D38 (*IG* II<sup>2</sup> 448), dated 318/7, Pryt. IV 35, last day of Maimakterion, or Osborne, *Naturalization* D39 (*IG* II<sup>2</sup> 350), ll. 36 ff., dated 318/7, Pryt. VII 18, if indeed there is some connection between this decree and the hopes of Athenian democrats for help against Kassandros from Olympias, as has been assumed (E. Schweigert, «Greek Inscriptions», *Hesperia* 8 [1939] 1-47, esp. 32-34; Elisabetta Poddighe, *Nel segno di Antipatro. L'eclissi della democrazia ateniese dal 323/2 al 319/8 a.C.*, [«Collana del Dipartimento di storia dell'Università degli studi di Sassari» 2; Rome 2002] 196).

27. Diodoros explicitly dates Nikanor's return *after* the installation of the new régime in Athens (18.75.1: μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα); the natural assumption is that Nikanor returned to the Piraeus as soon as the weather permitted, in spring 317.

28. Cf. Bosworth, «Philip III» 71.

29. In 18.75.2: Ὀμοίως δὲ καὶ εἰς τὰς Ἑλληνίδας πόλεις ἐνέπεσέν τις ὁρμή τῆς Ἀντιπάτρου συμμαχίας. Ὁ μὲν γὰρ Πολυπέρχων ἀργῶς ἐδόκει καὶ ἀφρόνως προστατεῖν τῆς τε βασιλείας καὶ τῶν συμμαχῶν..., Diodoros more or less repeats what he had said a few lines before (18.74.1): Πολυπέρχοντος διὰ τὴν ἐλάττωσιν τῆς κατὰ τοὺς Μεγαλοπολίτας πολιρκίας καταφρονηθέντος αἱ πλεῖσται τῶν Ἑλληνίδων πόλεων ἀφιστάμεναι τῶν βασιλέων πρὸς Κάσσανδρον ἀπέκλιναν.

30. Interestingly, 318/7 is also missing from the *Marmor Parium* (*FGrHist* 239).

31. Cf. Heckel, *Marshals* 182-83.

32. As Heckel, *Marshals* 197-98 unnecessarily assumes.

Kassandros (Just. 14.5.3)? Polyperchon's inaction is incomprehensible<sup>33</sup> if he was on European soil throughout this time and can only be explained by the assumption that, at least for part of the period in question, he was in Asia, as the decree for Thersippos –most probably– attests.

The fact that we have knowledge of later developments –Polyperchon's misfortunes and Kassandros' successes– makes such a campaign look far more adventurous than it really must have seemed to Polyperchon in winter 318/7. Polyperchon's forces may have suffered a crushing defeat near the Hellespont, but he was still the Guardian of the kings and could count on the resources of the throne and on the loyalist feelings of a significant number of officers, in Europe and in Asia. His chief enemy in Europe, Kassandros, may have had some success on the battlefield and could count on some phourarchs in southern Greece still loyal to the family of Antipatros and on some powerful, yet distant, allies, but, for the time being, he was in effect hiding in a fortress at a hostile city and his main asset, his fleet (borrowed from Antigonos), was led by someone who obviously contended his authority. Polyperchon's chief enemy in Asia, Antigonos, was the undisputed ruler of Asia,<sup>34</sup> but at present he was in far away Mesopotamia, with most of his troops,<sup>35</sup> against Eumenes, who had proved a resilient and resourceful adversary more than once. All in all, 318/7 presented Polyperchon with a realistic opportunity to wrest western Asia Minor from the hands of Antigonos, thus cutting off the main rival to his office, Kassandros, from any future reinforcements in money, men or ships.

A closer look at the disparate and allusive pieces of information on European affairs in 317 may allow even more precision of the context of Polyperchon's Asian campaign –the reader should be warned, however, that we now enter the unstable realm of hypothetical reconstructions. As we have seen, Polyperchon was planning to cross to Asia at least since early 318, when he promised to Eumenes to do so. Kleitos' assignment to the Hellespont in the summer of 318 was the dispatch of a vanguard, by which Polyperchon hoped to prevent further reinforcements to Kassandros from Asia, encircle Antigonid forces and assure his rear during his Asian expedition. The «other, more immediate needs» which led him to break

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33. Cf. Heckel, *Marshals* 199: «... the lethargy and ineffectiveness of Polyperchon's party».

34. See Diod. Sic. 18.73.1: θαλασσοκρατῆσαι δὲ ἔσπευδε καὶ τὴν τῆς Ἀσίας ἡγεμονίαν ἀδήριτον περιποιήσασθαι.

35. In pursuit of Eumenes, Antigonos had taken with him an infantry of 20,000 and a cavalry of 4,000 (Diod. Sic. 18.73.1).

off the siege of Megalopolis probably reflect the preparations for his Asian campaign.<sup>36</sup> He suffered two important setbacks, however: Kleitos was defeated and killed, and Eumenes' fleet and money never reached him; accordingly, he was obliged to gather what forces he could during the winter and wait for the next campaigning season.

The next crucial event was Kassandros' first invasion to Macedonia (Diod. Sic. 18.75.1);<sup>37</sup> this must have occurred after the spring of 317, since it is placed, as we saw, after the installation of Demetrios of Phaleron, the return of Nikanor in early spring and his assassination. Other than that, it is an event riddled with uncertainties. We may plausibly assume that Kassandros was in contact with the Macedonian nobility, probably even with Eurydike herself.<sup>38</sup> We know that he enjoyed some success, since he captured some of Polyperchon's elephants (Diod. Sic. 19.35.7), but obviously failed to consolidate his sway over Macedonia, otherwise he would not return so hastily to the Peloponnese.<sup>39</sup> Finally, we may assume that Eurydike's bid for power and the dismissal of Polyperchon came during this first

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36. It is sometimes assumed (e.g. Bosworth, «Philip III» 71) that Polyperchon had to return to Macedonia, because of the growing discomfort in Macedonia against him, recorded in Diod. Sic. 18.74.1 and 75.2. This is implausible, not only because 18.74-75 belongs to 317, as we saw, but also because, in the troubled times of the Diadochi, where defeats and victories often came in close succession, a failed siege in the Peloponnese hardly seems a sufficient reason for Macedonian nobility (until then very supportive of the general; cf. Diod. Sic. 18.48.4 and 54.2) to lose their faith in Polyperchon.

37. It should be noted that the first invasion of Kassandros poses serious difficulties for proponents of the «low» chronology, who place the battle of Bosporos in late summer 317, only a couple of months before Philip III's death, thus allowing no time for a first invasion. Some resort to denying its very existence; but to deny the existence of a campaign explicitly described in late 317 as «the previous campaign» by Diod. Sic. 19.35.7 (τὴν προτέραν ἐμβολήν) and almost certainly implied, if one reads Justin 14.5.5 (cf. n. 40 below) or Theophr., *Char.* 8.5-9 (see in the text below) without bias, requires the elaborate but desperate ingenuity that Gullath and Schober, «Chronologie» 363-76 display.

38. In order to arrest Nikanor, Kassandros lured him to a private house with a letter by Macedonian noblemen summoning him to Macedonia to take over the affairs of the kingdom because of their wrath against Polyperchon (Polyainos 4.11.2). Despite Bosworth's objections («Philip III» 71 n. 83, with earlier literature), the letter was most probably forged, one of those ruses of which Polyainos was so fond of documenting. Nevertheless, if the letter was to look plausible, contacts of Kassandros with the nobility of Pella must have existed.

39. Kassandros was still in the Peloponnese when he learnt of Philip III's murder (Diod. Sic. 19.35.1); his actions there forced the Spartans to wall their city for the first time (Just. 14.5.6-7).

invasion, presumably on its outset.<sup>40</sup> Where was Polyperchon during all this? Two fabricated stories may prove useful.

One of the *Characters* of Theophrastos is the News-monger (*Char.* 8). To illustrate his fixation on circulating inaccurate rumours, Theophrastos has him spreading sensational «news» (which displease the city leaders): Kassandros has been defeated and killed by Polyperchon and «the king», in a battle fought most probably in Macedonia (*Char.* 8.5-9). The story is of course fictitious, but if the character's portrayal was to have impact, the setting should appear realistic. In this case, we need to date the following context: Athens is led by leaders friendly to Kassandros, Kassandros and Polyperchon are both present in Macedonia, they are at war, and Philip III, by far the likeliest candidate for the identity of «the king»,<sup>41</sup> is still alive. Since Kassandros' invasion in late 317 occurred only after Philip's death, the setting of the fabricated story can only be Kassandros' first invasion.<sup>42</sup> This would mean that, at some point in the invasion, Polyperchon was present in Macedonia and confronted Kassandros.

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40. Justin gives the distinct impression that Kassandros was in Macedonia when Eurydike officially handed over the administration of the kingdom to him: he mentions letters to Polyperchon and Antigonos on the subject (14.5.3), but no letter to Kassandros, who is then described as leaving *for* Greece (14.5.5: *Dein profectus in Graeciam*), presumably from Macedonia (cf. Bosworth, «Philip III» 72 n. 5; Carney, *Women* 295 n. 64; Bosworth has an unnecessary alternative). In any case, Eurydike would never have made such a move without reasonable hope that Kassandros would prevail in the battlefield (cf. Landucci Gattinoni, *Cassandro* 42-43); his invasion and his initial successes may have given reason for such hope.

41. The other two options (see J. Diggle, *Theophrastus: Characters*, [Cambridge 2004] 29-32 with bibliography) are Alexander IV and Herakles, the supposedly illegitimate son of Alexander III, whom Polyperchon proclaimed king and soon afterwards murdered in 309 (Diod. Sic. 20.28.1-3). The former is implausible because the fictitious story implies that «the king» was present in battle and the latter is impossible (*pace* Lane Fox, «Characters» 138): Kassandros may have pretended to accept the legitimacy of Herakles' proclamation (20.28.2) in order to buy time to convince Polyperchon to murder him, but he certainly did not accept his royal title in earnest; moreover, one cannot imagine that an Athenian would call a pretender of dubious origin whose power was anything but consolidated «the king» nor that Theophrastos would refer to such a figure as «the king» and expect to be understood by his audience.

42. The only other alternative (preferred by C. Cichorius *et al.*, *Theophrasts Charaktere*, [Leipzig 1897] p. lvii-lxii) would be a date in late 319 / early 318; but Kassandros was not in Macedonia at the time and he certainly did not possess the strength that the passage implies (cf. Lane Fox, «Characters» 137).

There also was a real-life news-monger, Eumenes. In *ca.* September 317,<sup>43</sup> he fabricated a letter which he presented to the troops of his allies gathered at Persepolis, in order to augment his status in the eyes of the satraps of the Upper satrapies, who were questioning his leadership (Diod. Sic. 19.23.1-3): the letter was supposedly written by Orontes, satrap of Armenia, and conveyed news that Olympias had taken control of Alexander IV and the kingdom, Kassandros had died, and Polyperchon had crossed to Asia along with his force of elephants, was marching against Antigonos, and had already reached Kappadokia. Once again, this fictitious story had to sound realistic if it was to convince its targeted audience. That Olympias was in Macedonia, in control of Alexander IV and the court, was certainly convincing, since Polyperchon had invited her to Pella (Diod. Sic. 18.57.2) and Alexander IV was later with her in Epeiros (19.11.2). Kassandros' death would also sound a realistic possibility if news of his first invasion in Macedonia and its undecisive outcome had already reached Persis; to the same conclusion points the reference to the elephants, clearly aiming to confute the news that Kassandros had captured some of them and to assure Eumenes' audience that Polyperchon was marching against Antigonos with his full force. Polyperchon's crossing to the Asian front equally sounded convincing, since it must have been common knowledge that he was planning to come to Asia already in the previous year; it would sound even more convincing if Polyperchon had actually crossed to Asia, as the decree for Thersippos attests.

Can all these observations be fitted into a plausible scenario? I believe they can: Polyperchon crossed to Asia early in 317 (as soon as his hasty preparations for the campaign were concluded), as he had promised to Eumenes one year before. What happened during that expedition, other than the fact that Polyperchon was at the vicinity of Adramyttion bay, is unknown to us. Kassandros realized that this was a golden opportunity for him: he secured Athens under the rule of Demetrios of Phaleron, exterminated the threat that Nikanor posed for his authority, and, after securing some support from the Macedonian nobility, invaded Macedonia, in late spring or summer 317. Then, if not already before the invasion, he reached an agreement with Eurydike, who conveyed the Guardianship of the kingdom to him. This presented a mortal danger for Polyperchon, since it undermined the main source of his power and status.<sup>44</sup> Accordingly, he rushed back to Macedonia to deal with the invader and contender to his office, in late summer 317; he succeeded in

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43. Bosworth, «Philip III» 62 n. 35. For the historical context, see mainly Bosworth, *Legacy* 98-168, esp. 121-23.

44. The parallel argument of Bosworth, «Philip III» 63 (see also Bosworth, *Legacy*

repelling Kassandros, who retreated to the Peloponnese. The news of his folding back to Europe did not reach Persepolis until September, thus allowing Eumenes to spread the news that Polyperchon was actually marching against Antigonos. Since there was no definite victor in the Macedonian front, Polyperchon rushed to Epirus to secure more allies for the inevitable conclusion of the confrontation; this is where he is next mentioned by Diodoros in 19.11.2, in early autumn 317.

## II. Polyperchon's death: 308 rather than 303-301

The last assured mention of Polyperchon's moves belongs to autumn 309; it is the incident of Herakles, supposedly an illegitimate son of Alexander III, whom Polyperchon was convinced by Kassandros to assassinate in Tymphaia, in exchange of his appointment as general over the Peloponnese (Diod. Sic. 20.20 and 28; Trog., *Prol.* 15). However, the —by then very old—<sup>45</sup> general, hindered by Boiotian and Peloponnesian forces, did not manage to reach the Peloponnese, and was forced to spend the winter in Lokris (Diod. Sic. 20.28.4).

Despite the obvious inability to give an account of Polyperchon's actions after 309 and his almost complete disappearance from the sources in the eventful period after 307, all scholars place his death not soon afterwards (in 308?) but between 303 and 301, or even later.<sup>46</sup> The reason lies in two passages of Diodoros which belong to a context of 303. In the first of these (20.100.6) it is recorded that Demetrios Poliorketes hastened to free Greek cities, «because those whom Kassandros and Polyperchon had so authorized in the past had conquered the greater part of Greece» (οἱ γὰρ περὶ Κάσανδρον καὶ Πολυπέρχοντα τὸν ἔμπροσθεν χρόνον ἄδειαν ἐσχηκότες ἐπόρθουν τὰ πλεῖστα μέρη τῆς Ἑλλάδος). The sentence ends with the phrase «and he prepared for war against those appointed by Kassandros and Polyperchon» (πρὸς δὲ τοὺς περὶ Πολυπέρχοντα καὶ Κάσανδρον διαπολεμεῖν παρεσκευάζετο). The second passage (20.103.6) records Poliorketes' actions after taking control of Orchomenos in Arkadia; among them was the painful death he inflicted on «Strombichos, whom Polyperchon had appointed phrourarch» (Στρόμβιχον τὸν ὑπὸ Πολυπέρχοντος καθεσταμένον φρούραρχον).

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100-102) on the main source of Eumenes' legitimacy and power (his mandate in the name of the kings) is *a priori* even more valid for Polyperchon, Guardian of the kings.

45. Heckel, *Marshals* 189 plausibly assumes that he was born in the 380's.

46. See Heckel, *Marshals* 204 with earlier literature. The reconstruction of the last years of Polyperchon's career by K. J. Beloch (*Griechische Geschichte* IV<sup>2</sup> 2, [Berlin / Leipzig 1927] 444-45) is characteristic of the amount of unwarranted assumptions prevailing in modern scholarship on the general's whereabouts after 309.

The first impression conveyed by the second phrase of the first passage is, indeed, that Polyperchon was still alive. Nevertheless, Diodoros is clearly repeating the wording of the first part of the passage (οἱ γὰρ περὶ Κάσανδρον καὶ Πολυπέρχοντα — πρὸς δὲ τοὺς περὶ Πολυπέρχοντα καὶ Κάσανδρον), where the actions of local leaders or Macedonian officers appointed by Polyperchon and Kassandros and, consequently, their appointment is explicitly set in the past (τὸν ἔμπροσθεν χρόνον). The same goes for the second passage: there is absolutely no reason to assume that the appointment of Strombichos was recent;<sup>47</sup> it may just as well belong to 308. Between the short and unsuccessful campaign of Ptolemy I in 308 (Diod. Sic. 20.37.1-2) and the sweeping campaign of Poliorketes in 303 (Diod. Sic. 20.100.5-7 and 102-103; Plut., *Demetr.* 25), no major military operations in the Peloponnese are attested; therefore, the assumption that Strombichos was able to maintain his position at Orchomenos from 308 to 303 even if Polyperchon had died in 308 remains a perfectly plausible one.<sup>48</sup>

The consensus on dating Polyperchon's date after 303 led Felix Jacoby to place in 303/2 a comment on Polyperchon's drinking habits from the seventeenth book of Duris (*FGrHist* 76 F 12). The comment, according to Jacoby, belonged to an «abschließenden Würdigung» and should therefore belong to the context of the general's death.<sup>49</sup> Even if one accepted this assumption, however (which is far from certain),<sup>50</sup> the chronological repartition of Duris' books by Jacoby has met with

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47. Cf. Diod. Sic. 19.74.1 and the reference to «cities with a garrison by Alexandros» (ὑπὲρ Ἀλεξάνδρου φρουρουμένους πόλεις), although Alexandros son of Krateros has been dead for ten chapters (19.64.1).

48. One could object that Ptolemy's campaign in 308 (in the context of which he probably visited Arkadia as well; see *IG* V 2, 549-550) is incompatible with the assumption that an officer of Kassandros and Polyperchon remained in power. However, that campaign clearly involved very limited military operations; Ptolemy's main interest was a display of power and status, by which he hoped he could *diplomatically* win over the cities of the Peloponnese. Moreover, his attempt met with blatant failure; by the end of the short campaign, Ptolemy reached an agreement with Kassandros, «by the terms of which, each was to remain master of the cities he had in his possession» (Diod. Sic. 20.37.2). Strombichos, having been appointed by Polyperchon (obviously in 308, immediately before his death), was Kassandros' officer; once again, I see no reason why he should not have maintained his hold over Orchomenos in 308 and then until 303.

49. *FGrHist* IIC *Komm.* 119; cf. Landucci Gattinoni, *Duride* 125-26.

50. As Pédech, *Trois historiens* 333-34 points out, a digression on Polyperchon's drinking habits could very well have been inserted at any point in the general's long and eventful career.

justified criticism,<sup>51</sup> and thus provides no independent corroboration of the date of Polyperchon's death. An unbiased look at the fragments of Duris does not even allow us to attribute precise dates to the four fragments explicitly belonging to books 11-21, which cover the long and eventful period 323-290, let alone accurately devise a chronological repartition which would help us date the fragment mentioning Polyperchon,<sup>52</sup> and even if it did, this would still not provide evidence for the date of his death.

Finally, placing the death of Polyperchon in 308 helps explain an otherwise peculiar incident. During Ptolemy's short Peloponnesian campaign of 308, Kratesipolis, widow of Alexandros and daughter-in-law of Polyperchon, hastened to offer the Acrocorinth to Ptolemy (Polyainos 8.58). Judging from the next known incident in Kratesipolis' life, her attempt to marry Poliorketes (Plut., *Demetr.* 9.5-7), it is usually assumed that in 308 Kratesipolis tried something similar: to marry Ptolemy Soter, obviously without the approval of Polyperchon.<sup>53</sup> Placing Polyperchon's death in 308 makes the motivation of Kratesipolis much simpler: she merely hastened to secure herself an alliance with a powerful leader because her protector and father-in-law had just died.

If these two adjustments of Polyperchon's biography are accepted, the prevailing image of the general in modern scholarship should be accordingly slightly modified. Polyperchon is usually portrayed as a more or less incompetent leader, having risen to power almost by chance, and afterwards proceeding to improvised actions, wandering here and there with no precise strategic plan, often letting power slip from his hands, and ending up no more than a soldier of fortune. This appears to be a partly unjustified portrait: Polyperchon now appears less inactive in 318/7 and his 'soldier of fortune' years are a much shorter period. A not thoroughly unflattering

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51. Only to be replaced by equally hypothetical repartitions: Pédech, *Trois historiens* 330-37; Landucci Gattinoni, *Duride* 66-75.

52. F 8 (book 10) probably belongs to the Harpalos affair; F 13 (book 22) records the famous ithyphallos for Poliorketes, dated *ca.* 290; all four fragments in between (F 9-12), including the one on Polyperchon (F 12) are practically impossible to date, as the widely diverging chronological schemes put forward by Jacoby, Pédech and Landucci Gattinoni testify. F 9 (book 15) is a mythological reference to Orchomenos; F 10 (book 16) is a portrait of Demetrios of Phaleron and his rule, which can belong to any point during his rule (317-307); F 11 (also book 16) is a mythological reference to Iolkos.

53. Grace H. Macurdy, «The political activities and the name of Cratesipolis», *AJPh* 50 (1929) 273-278, esp. 274-76; Carney, *Women* 229; cf. Heckel, *Marshals* 204.

summary of his career is even possible. Immediately after his appointment as Guardian of the kings in autumn 319, Polyperchon played the card of «the freedom of the Greeks» in order to protect his position against Kassandros —the ingenuity of this move is proved by the fact that Antigonos and his son, and later Ptolemy I, would soon follow the same path. He then won over various important cities in Greece and boldly crossed to Asia, in an effort to cut off support for, and then hunt down Kassandros, the main rival to his office. He failed miserably but then, defeated and without allies, sought the help of Olympias, the only ally he could get. After his second failure against Kassandros, he again took the only course available to him, an alliance with (in fact subordination to) his former enemy. Despite his shortcomings at the battleground, despite, perhaps, the lack of a solid grasp of the big picture of the balance of power, it would certainly be unfair not to admit that Polyperchon displayed energy and vision.

### Abbreviations

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### Summary

In the first part of the article, the decree of Nesos in honour of Thersippos (*I. Adramytteion* II 34) is exploited as a source for the Second War of the Diadochi. It is argued that ll. 23-25 of the decree refer to an otherwise unattested (but alluded to in the literary sources) campaign of Polyperchon in Asia in 318/7. The connection of this campaign with Kassandros' invasion of Macedonia and with the struggle between Antigonos and Eumenes in Asia, as well as its ramifications for our understanding of Diodoros' books 18-19 and for the debate on the chronology of the 310's are further explored. In the second part of the article, it is argued that Polyperchon's death should be dated to 308 and not after 303.