

HOW TO HANDLE A KING: MILETUS AND THE SUCCESSORS*

By

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In their trend to classify and neatly package antiquity, modern history books are often inclined to present the classical epoch as a period dominated by polis and the Hellenistic age as the times of kings in Greek history¹. To a degree we owe this mental scheme to the ancient literary sources. Few as they are, they tend to concentrate on the exploits of monarchs in describing the period aptly called “the Macedonian times” or “the times of the Macedonian kings”². Even if the battlefields of Chaeronea in 338³ and Amorgos in 322 marked the end of the polis’ prominence in power politics of the day, the Hellenistic age did not bring the demise of the Greek city-state. Quite the opposite, the sheer number of poleis increased markedly, to reach the high point in the early Roman Empire, and in fact the Hellenistic age produced all the largest Greek cities: Alexandria in Egypt, Antioch on the Orontes, Seleukeia on the Tigris. For the dearth of literary sources, the Hellenistic age produced an astounding number of epigraphic evidence, in that the most informative of them, the decrees of Greek states. Therefore, opposite to the classical epoch, not only Athens but plethora of poleis can be studied in the light of sources generated by them. What is important from the point of view of this paper, is that in the Hellenistic times the polis continued to be the basic form of Greek statehood and the focus of Greek self-definition while questions pertaining to relations between the polis and the king are among

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¹ OGDEN 2002b: X f.

² Μακεδονικοί χρόνοι, e.g.: Ath. VI 15 (referring to Juba II); Euseb. *Comm. in Isaiam* I 72; Procopius, *Comm. in Isaiam*, p. 2121; Sopater, *Scholia ad Hermogenis Status*, vol. V, p. 22; Epiph. *Panarion*, vol. I, p. 182. Clem. Al. *Strom.* I 21, 128, 3: τῶν Μακεδονικῶν βασιλέων οἱ χρόνοι.

³ All dates are BC, unless marked otherwise.