

Craterus and the Dedication Date of the Delphi Lion Monument

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Craterus, one of the Companions of Alexander the Great, was responsible for the commission of a great bronze hunting group that was situated at Delphi. This monument featured a depiction of Alexander and Craterus, accompanied by hunting dogs, fighting a lion. According to Plutarch, the statue group was commissioned in order to celebrate a historical hunt.¹ The event is thought to have taken place in approximately 332 BC, and was of significance as Craterus distinguished himself on this occasion by saving the king's life (Plut. *Alex.* 40.5).² Work on the monument appears to have begun sometime after the death of Alexander in 323 BC, but Craterus himself was killed before the monument's completion.³ The date of the completion and dedication of the monument is uncertain, but two schools of thought appear to have developed over the last century. It may have been dedicated by Craterus' wife Phila, on behalf of their infant son, sometime soon after 321 or 320 BC, or else by Craterus' son, the younger Craterus when he reached adulthood, placing the date anywhere between 16 to 30 years later.⁴ A third possibility is that the monument and inscription were set up some time apart, and the matter merits further scrutiny.

The monument itself does not survive, but it is described by two of the ancient sources. Plutarch gives the most detailed description, stating that: '*Craterus later had this hunting scene represented in bronze and dedicated it at Delphi: it showed the figures of the lion, the hounds, the king fighting with the lion, and Craterus advancing to help him. Some of these sculptures were executed by Lysippus, and some by Leochares*' (Plut. *Alex.* 40.5).⁵ Pliny may

¹ Hunting and lions played a significant role during Alexander's reign, and during the later struggles of the Successors; for detailed discussion see below. Cf. also Curt. 8.1.13-17; Plut. *Demetr.* 27.3; Paus. 1.9.5; Just. 15.3.6-11. See Cohen (2010) 76; also Briant (1991) 215-16; 222; Heckel (1992) 268-9; Lund (1992) 6-8; Palagia (2000) 183.

² See Plut. *Alex.* 40.4-5; with Hamilton (1969) 107; Palagia (2000) 184.

³ Craterus died in battle against Eumenes in either 321 or 320 BC (on the chronology, see below): Plut. *Eum.* 7.5-6; Arr. *Succ.* 1.26; Nepos, *Eum.* 4.3-4; Diod. 18.30.5; Parian Marble, *FGrH* 239 F B11; with Heckel (2006) 99.

⁴ There have been a number of different dates proposed by scholars. One suggestion has been that the monument was established well after the death of Craterus in 321 or 320 BC, likely between 300-265 BC, once Craterus II reached adulthood: see Homolle (1897) 600; Perdrizet (1899) 274; von Roques de Maumont (1958) 27; Hamilton (1969) 107; Moreno (1974) 94; (1987) 182-3; Moretti (1975) 6-7; Voutiras (1984) 58 n. 7; Billows (1990) 396. Those who argue for an earlier date note that Lysippus was unlikely to have been active beyond 320 BC, so work on the monument must have begun before Craterus' death: see Gardner (1905) 245-6. It may be that the monument was completed earlier and the inscription referring to Craterus II was added at a later date: Stewart (1993) 270-7 and n. 24-26, with Holscher (1973) 182-3; Willers (1979) 23; and Voutiras (1984) 58-9. An additional possibility is that the monument was dedicated sometime before 316 BC by Phila, or during the regency of Polyperchon c. 319-316 BC: see Palagia (2000) 183-5, 203-6; and Bosworth (2002) 277 n. 118.

⁵ Ἐπέτεινεν οὖν ἔτι μᾶλλον αὐτὸς ἑαυτὸν, ἐν ταῖς στρατείαις καὶ τοῖς κυνηγεσίοις κακοπαθῶν καὶ παραβαλλόμενος, ὥστε καὶ Λάκωνα πρεσβευτήν, παραγενόμενον αὐτῷ λέοντα καταβάλλοντι μέγαν, εἰπεῖν· Καλῶς γ' Ἀλέξανδρ

also refer to this particular monument, as he comments: ‘*Lysippus is also famous for his Topsy Girl playing Flute...he also executed Alexander’s hunt, which is dedicated at Delphi*’, though he does not specify that this was the statue group commissioned by Craterus (Plin. *NH* 34.19.63-4).⁶ All that survives of Craterus’ monument today is the stone niche at Delphi where the statue group once stood, and the accompanying dedicatory inscription.⁷ The niche measures approximately 15.27m in length, 6.35m in depth, and 4m in height, suggesting that the monument must have been of a considerable size, although the dimensions of the niche may also indicate that it held more than one monument.⁸

There are a number of important factors to consider when determining the likely date of this monument. First of all, although the actual hunt was said to have taken place in 332 BC, it is very unlikely that Craterus commissioned the monument before Alexander’s death in 323 BC.⁹ The subject matter of the royal hunt theme in art did not become relevant to the Successors until after this time, particularly the scenes which made use of lion iconography.¹⁰ The popularity and importance of this theme was a direct result of the struggles of the Successors to establish themselves in positions of power after the death of their king.¹¹ During this time, they realised that promoting a former close, personal relationship with Alexander was an ideal way to demonstrate their own leadership qualities, and to earn support for their claims to power and authority. The royal hunt was something that only Alexander’s closest companions and members of the Macedonian elite had participated in, and so this became a symbolic way in which to promote this relationship.¹² The additional associations between lions and royalty were also an important way in which the Successors could demonstrate their suitability for these positions of power, especially as they developed royal aspirations.¹³

ε πρὸς τὸν λέοντα ἡγώνισαι περὶ τᾶς βασιλείας. τοῦτο τὸ κυνήγιον Κρατερὸς εἰς Δελφοὺς ἀνέθηκεν, εἰκόνας χαλκᾶς ποιησάμενος τοῦ λέοντος καὶ τῶν κυνῶν, καὶ τοῦ βασιλέως τῷ λέοντι συνεστῶτος, καὶ αὐτοῦ ποσβοηοῦντος, ὧν τὰ μὲν Λύσιππος ἔπλασε, τὰ δὲ Λεωχάρης.

⁶ *nobilitatur Lysippus et temulenta tibicina ... item Alexandri venationem, quae Delphis sacrata est.*

⁷ Discussed in further detail below.

⁸ Stewart (1993) 270-1; cf. Perdrizet (1899) 273-4.

⁹ Stewart (1993) 270.

¹⁰ Palagia (2000) 167, 175ff.

¹¹ No doubt it was also not prudent to remind the king that he owed his life to anyone, and so a large statue group commemorating Craterus’ role in saving Alexander’s life may not have been appropriate. Cf. Plut. *Alex.* 50. See also Stewart (1993) 270.

¹² Palagia (2000) 183-5.

¹³ Plutarch’s comments, for example, suggest that the killing of a lion was associated with royalty: καλῶς γ’ Ἀλέξανδρε πρὸς τὸν λέοντα ἡγώνισαι περὶ τᾶς βασιλείας (Plut. *Alex.* 40.4). See Palagia (2000) 181; Bosworth (2002) 276 n. 115; Lane Fox (2011) 10-13. The ancient tradition suggests that hunting was a quintessential

Craterus himself had enjoyed a privileged position while the king was alive, and had been very popular among the Macedonian soldiers.¹⁴ He also appears to have been strongly in favour of maintaining Macedonian traditions, which would support the idea that this monument was likely to have been commissioned after Alexander's death, as of course the royal hunt theme was borrowed from the Persian and Assyrian traditions.¹⁵ Therefore work on the monument must have begun somewhere between the death of Alexander and the death of Craterus, which is, unfortunately, one of the 'nodal' events in an intense chronological debate.¹⁶ On one scheme (the so-called 'High' chronology), Craterus is thought to have perished in mid-321 BC, while on the other (the 'Low' chronology), he dies in 320. Whichever system is espoused, it would appear that the date for the commission of the monument can be placed sometime between 323 and 320 BC, and it is reasonable to suggest Craterus decided to fulfil his vow shortly after the battle of Crannon and the end of the Lamian war.¹⁷

Confusion over the date of the monument also stems from the interpretation of the inscription which accompanies it.¹⁸ The inscription states that the offering was dedicated by the younger Craterus, in fulfilment of a vow made by his father Craterus (ll. 1-4).¹⁹ The first concern is that the epigraphic evidence appears to imply that Craterus II was in his infancy at the time of his father's death, which is difficult to reconcile with the chronology. It has, however, been argued that the inscription may be equally consistent with the child's

Macedonian pastime, see, for instance, Polyb. 31.29.3-4; Athen. 1.18a; Paus. 6.5.5. On images of hunting and royalty, see in particular Cohen (2010) 73ff.

¹⁴ On Craterus and his status with both Alexander and the Macedonians, see Arr. *Anab.* 7.12.3; Plut. *Alex.* 47.9-10; *Eum.* 6.3, 7.2-3; *Demetr.* 14.2; *Mor.* 181d; Diod. 17.114.1-2; Curt. 6.8.2; Nepos, *Eum.* 4.3; with Bosworth (1988a) 161; Heckel (1992) 107; Ashton (1992).

¹⁵ Palagia (2000) 175ff.

¹⁶ The authors do not intend to diverge into full discussion of the inevitable chronographic problems that beset studies of the Diadoch period, but some explanation may be helpful. The controversies pivot around certain 'nodal' events, one of which is the death of Craterus, and these events can feasibly be placed in two separate years, depending on the reconstruction of the historical sequence made by opposing scholars. On the starting date and the chronology of the First Diadoch War the debate is ongoing; see the theories of Anson (2002/3); *contra* Bosworth (1992a & b; 1993); and Wheatley (1995). For detailed surveys of the chronographic problems afflicting the Diadoch period, see Wheatley (2007); Boiy (2007); Landucci Gattinoni (2008), XXIX-XXXIV; and Yardley, Wheatley & Heckel (2011) 8-22, cf. 162-3.

¹⁷ The battle of Crannon is specifically dated by Plutarch to 7th Metageitnion (= 5th August) 322; Plut. *Cam.* 19.5; cf. *Dem.* 28.2; *Phoc.* 26.1; Diod. 18.17; Arr. *Succ.* 1.12; with Landucci Gattinoni (2008) 97-101.

¹⁸ Moretti (1975) *ISE* no. 73 (with earlier bibliography); also accessible in Stewart (1993) 390-1; Palagia (2000) 184-5, n. 73.

¹⁹ Ὑῖος Ἀλεξάνδρου Κράτερος τάδε τῶπóλλωνι ἠϋῥατο τιμáεις καὶ πολύδοχος ἀνὴρ/στᾷσε τὸν ἐμ μεγάροις ἐτεκνῶσατο καὶ λίπε παῖδα πᾶσαν ὑποσχεσίαν πατρὶ τελῶν Κράτερος (ll. 1-4).

posthumous birth.²⁰ This would fit acceptably with the proposed dates for the marriage of Phila and Craterus: he likely met the recently-widowed Phila on his arrival in Cilicia in late 324 BC, and their official marriage would have taken place after the Lamian War (cf. Diod. 18.18.7).²¹ This also follows the 'High' chronology, suggesting Phila and Craterus were married by c. November 322 BC and that Craterus' date of death was in the summer of 321 BC.²² It is also worth noting that Phila herself was later married to Demetrius Poliorcetes, the son of Antigonius Monophthalmus. As their son Antigonius Gonatas is known to have died in his eighties in early 239 BC,²³ Phila and Demetrius must have been married by September 320 BC. This then retrojects the birth of the younger Craterus to between 322 and early 320 BC.²⁴ He was likely dead by the early 250s BC, which provides an absolute terminus for the date of the Delphi lion monument's dedication.²⁵

The actual inscription is thought to date between c. 300-270, due to the style of lettering used.²⁶ Some have suggested that the younger Craterus could not have dedicated his father's monument until he reached manhood, which is therefore consistent with this date range.²⁷ However, the artists associated with the monument, Leochares and Lysippus, would have

²⁰ The problem arises from line 3 of the inscription (...καὶ λίπε παῖδα), implying that Craterus the Younger was already born and therefore orphaned at his father's death: see, for instance, Perdrizet (1899) 274; Gullath & Schober (1986) 355; Badian (1988) 118; Billows (1990) 396; Heckel (1992) 132, n. 368. However, the wording of the epigram by no means precludes the possibility that the child was born *after* his father's death: Seibert (1967) 13, n. 9; Bosworth (1993) 426, n. 34.

²¹ Craterus left Opis with the ten thousand veterans in c. August (Arr. *Anab.* 7.12.3-4; Diod. 18.4.1; 12.1; Just. 12.12.9; Curt. 10.10.15), and arrived in Cilicia approximately three months later, by the end of 324 BC; see Badian (1961) 34-7; Bosworth (1971) 125; (1988a) 161; (1988b) 208; Ashton (1992) 126-9; Atkinson (2009) 238-9. Other sources attest that it was in the winter of 322 BC that Craterus arranged a marriage for his Persian wife, Amastris, to Dionysius, the tyrant of Heraclea Pontica, (Memnon *FGrH* 434, F 4.4; cf. Diod. 20.109.7), likely related to the anticipated marriage to Phila, the daughter of Antipater. One other possibility not usually considered is that Phila potentially could have already been pregnant before her official marriage to Craterus, raising the possibility that the younger Craterus may have been born early in 322.

²² This is supported by evidence from Diodorus (18.18.7), where he appears to suggest that Antipater and Craterus were conspiring to work together for Craterus to march back to Asia as early as the winter of 322/321 BC, which may place the marriage of Phila in this context as well: Stewart (1993) 272.

²³ Porphyry, *FGrH* 260, F 3[12]; cf. Lucian, *Macrob.* 11; with Hammond and Walbank (1988) 313, n. 6, 581-2; and see the analysis of Bosworth (1994) 61, n. 33.

²⁴ Craterus II was subsequently brought up at the Antigonid court and went on to become one of the trusted generals of his half-brother Antigonius Gonatas: Plut. *Mor.* 253a; 486a cf. 219a; Polyaeus 2.29.1; with Tarn (1913) 195, 204, 287, 298; Billows (1990) 396-7.

²⁵ Perdrizet (1899) 274. The precise date of the younger Craterus' death is unknown: see, for instance, Tarn (1913) 355; Hammond and Walbank (1988) 296; Billows (1990) 396.

²⁶ Moretti (1975) no. 73. The letters for example have both thick and thin strokes, and the omega is of a particular shape unique to Delphi during this particular date range: see also Perdrizet (1899) 274, n. 3.

²⁷ Perdrizet (1899) 274; and see above, n. 4.

been quite elderly by this time, and the latest date for their activity is thought to be around 320 and 315 BC respectively.²⁸ Other scholars have suggested that the monument must have been completed before 316 BC, as this is the date of Lysippus' last recorded activity, when he provided the design of an amphora for the foundation of Cassandria in 316 BC (Athen. 11.784c-d), but this of course is inconsistent with the dating of the monument's inscription.²⁹ However, one solution to this problem may be seen in the two specific lines describing Craterus II's filial piety (3-4).³⁰ Stewart suggests that these lines are somewhat awkward and may in fact be an interpolation into the text.³¹ If so, perhaps the original poem was composed before 320, and was then edited following Craterus' unexpected death, which would reinforce a later date for the inscription.³²

Also important to consider is the intended purpose of the monument, as its interpretation appears to support the notion that the work must have been completed very close to the time of Craterus' death. At the time of his death, Craterus was intending to take Asia from his rival, the regent Perdiccas, and many appear to have supported his ambition.³³ Therefore the timely commission of such a monument, which promoted Craterus' own glory and close relationship to Alexander, may have been a way of declaring his political intentions, and to help build support through presenting himself as Alexander's heir.³⁴ The monument, with its theme of the royal hunt, and the subsequent implications of the depiction of Craterus saving Alexander's life, was likely an attempt to promote Craterus' credentials in preparation for this return, and perhaps even an attempt to secure Apollo's favour for the campaign.³⁵ The monument had a propagandistic purpose, in that it was an attempt to compensate for any weakness or ambiguity regarding Craterus' position or status in the

²⁸ Both of these sculptors appear to have begun their careers in the early 360s BC. See Perdrizet (1899) 275; Stewart (1993) 271.

²⁹ Cassander may have visited this monument after assuming control of Macedonia at the end of the Second Diadoch War in 316, which again may suggest the monument's completion at an earlier date; cf. Plut. *Alex.* 74.6; with Palagia (2000) 185; see also Gardner (1905) 245-6.

³⁰ '*But he who placed them here was Craterus, his orphaned child/fulfilling every promise for his father*'; Stewart (1993) 390.

³¹ Stewart (1993) 271.

³² Stewart maintains that the inscription's position on the back wall of the niche supports this conclusion, as the walls were the last element to be assembled: Stewart (1993) 271; cf. Willers (1979) 23; Voutiras (1984) 58-9.

³³ Stewart (1993) 274: The monument therefore stood as 'an index of his credentials and a symbol of the position he merited in the world of the Successors'. Professor Anson rightly reminds us that Craterus' ambitions may not have been fully realised at this early stage, and likely should be viewed as a response to the later revelation of Perdiccas' machinations.

³⁴ Sources: Curt. 10.5.4; Just. 12.15.12; Diod. 17.117.3; cf. Palagia (2000) 185.

³⁵ See Voutiras (1984); Stewart (1993) 274.

framework of the new political settlement hammered out at Babylon after Alexander's death.³⁶ In addition to this, the sanctuaries, such as Delphi where this monument was established, were frequented by unemployed mercenaries as well as other potential recruits, indicating that the monument would have been set up in an ideal location to deliver Craterus' political message to his intended audience.³⁷

The monument's message was clearly more relevant to the political climate of 321/320 BC. Although this would not firmly eliminate the possibility that Craterus the Younger was completely responsible for the dedication, it seems likely that the elder Craterus would have expected the monument to be completed within a fairly short timeframe, close to the beginning of his campaign in Asia. In further support of this, it is also worth considering that Craterus' monument was one of the earliest, if not the first, example of this sort of royal hunt and lion theme that later dominated the art and propaganda of the Successors.³⁸ The story of Craterus' lion hunt probably reflects more credit on its protagonist than lion hunt anecdotes involving other Successors, depicting him in the role of saving Alexander's life, and making it a logical choice for commemoration. The other stories are less positive or focused on Alexander overall, which may suggest that they were only later promoted following Craterus' example.³⁹ It is not inconceivable, then, that Craterus' monument may have set the precedent for these works, as well as the lion or royal hunt themed anecdotes that came to be connected with the individual Diadochoi. This theme gradually came to be less relevant after the deaths of the Successors, and appears to have declined in popularity once the Diadochoi had established themselves as kings of their own independent territories.⁴⁰

As a result, the most plausible context suggested by the available evidence is that the lion monument was completed at an early date, possibly very soon after Craterus' untimely death, sometime between 321-320 BC. The dating of the palaeographic evidence would mean that it was only the dedicatory inscription that was set up at a later date, under the guidance

³⁶ On Craterus' position as *prostates*, and the nebulous titles bestowed by Perdiccas at Babylon in 323, see for instance Hammond (1985) 156-60; Anson (1992); and now Meeus (2008) 61-6, 79-80; (2009) 292-6.

³⁷ Stewart (1993) 274.

³⁸ Lions did, however, appear on Hephaestion's funeral pyre, prior to the likely date of Craterus' monument, see Palagia (2000) 167, 181-3; see also Cohen (2010) 73; Lane Fox (2011) 10-13; Stewart (1993); Carney (2002) 61. Another apparently early example of this theme is the lion hunt pebble mosaic from Pella, Macedonia, dated to c. 325-300 BC, which has sometimes been interpreted as having been based on Craterus' monument. See Petsas (1978) 95; Moreno (2002) 40, 42-4; Cohen (2010) 64, 76 n. 39, 41.

³⁹ Perdiccas is said to have stolen lion cubs from a den (Aelian, *VH* 12.39). Alexander is also said to have had Lysimachus thrown to a lion, but he was later reprieved (Just. 15.3.7-10; cf. Curt. 8.1.14-17); for discussion see Yardley, Wheatley and Heckel (2011) 259-61. See, however, the arguments of Lund (1992) 7-8, who suggests that such stories were intended to show that Lysimachus and Alexander were equals; and also Stewart (1993) 270.

⁴⁰ Palagia (2000) 183.

of Craterus II. One possible historical context that would fit the evidence relates to Cassander's control of Greece from 317-304 BC: Craterus II may have had the opportunity to dedicate the monument after Demetrius was able to drive Cassander's army out of Attica and Boeotia in 304.⁴¹ The Besieger campaigned in Greece until summoned to Asia to aid his father in mid-autumn 302, in the lead up to the battle of Ipsus, and this may well have given Craterus, who was likely in his entourage, a suitable window. Alternatively, it may be worth considering Plutarch's assertion that Demetrius held the Pythian games at Athens rather than Delphi in 290 BC (Plut. *Demetr.* 40.7-8), due to the Aetolian control over the passes which led to Delphi.⁴² This could suggest that Craterus II acted sometime between Demetrius' seizure of the Macedonian throne in 294, and 290, or whenever the Aetolians took control of access to Delphi. Of course, these hypotheses cannot firmly eliminate the possibility of a different date outside of this range. It is also known that the younger Craterus acted as a governor of Corinth for his half-brother, Antigonus Gonatas, in Greece from 280 until his death probably in the 250s BC, potentially indicating another even later date range for the dedication of the hunting group.⁴³ The sources fail us in the detail, but at least it is possible to offer some historical contexts which might accommodate both the palaeographic and literary material, and explain the anomalous nature of this monument.

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⁴¹ He pursued them as far as Thermopylae and by the end of 304 had freed the Greeks south as far as Corinth and Sicyon from Macedonian rule: Plut. *Demetr.* 23.1-3; Diod. 20.100.5-6; Trogus, *Prol.* 15; with Billows (1990) 169-73.

⁴² Hammond and Walbank (1988) 224; Habicht (1997) 94; Mikalson (1998) 97-8; Scholten (2000) 20.

⁴³ Tarn (1913) 195; Hammond and Walbank (1988) 270, n. 2; Billows (1990) 396-7.

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