



Summary :

Macedonian 'guardian' of Philip V and 'general' following the death of the Macedonian king Demetrius II, he later received the royal title. The campaign he conducted in Caria (227-225 BC) is a continuation of the first Antigonid attempts and underlines Antigonid interest in Asia Minor.

Date and Place of Birth

263 BC

Date and Place of Death

221 BC

Main Role

King of Macedonia

1. Biography

Antigonus, son of Demetrius the Fair, half brother of [Antigonus Gonatas](#) (reigned 277-239 BC) and governor of Cyrene and of the Thessalian Olympiad, became known under the appellation 'Doson'.¹ Antigonus Doson (c.263-221 BC)² obviously received basic education in the Macedonian capital of Pella, at the court of Antigonus Gonatas, without, however, harbouring any ambitions of ascending to the Macedonian throne. At Pella he probably met with the poet [Aratus of Soloi](#), the Stoic philosopher Perseus of Kition, the [Cynic Bion](#), the historians Dionysius of Heraclea and Hieronymus of Cardia.³ Doson was designated 'guardian' of the young Philip V and 'general' following the death of the Macedonian king [Demetrius II](#) during a battle against [Dardani](#) invaders (229 BC).⁴ Doson married the Epirote widow of Demetrius II and mother of Philip V, Phthia (Chrysis).

2. Military activities

The young Antigonus repelled the Dardani invaders, intercepted the incursions of the Aetolians into Thessaly by ceding them Achaea Phthiotis and temporarily abandoned aspirations to restore Macedonian influence south of Thermopylae. Early in 229 BC, shortly before an imminent mutiny in the army, he received the royal title. His policy allowed the reconstitution of the [Thessalian League](#) and led to the restoration of Macedonian influence in the Peloponnese.⁵ The campaign he waged in [Caria](#) in 227 BC, obviously against the Ptolemies, allowed him to create only a short-lived sphere of influence in the area around Carian [Mylasa](#), reviving Antigonid interest in the coast of Asia Minor.⁶ In the Peloponnese the [Achaean League](#) was so repressed by the Spartan king Cleomenes III, that in 227-226 BC its leader Aratus was forced to request the help of Antigonus promising him Acrocorinth in return. Doson led his troops to the Isthmus, recaptured Arcadia in two campaigns, and in the winter of 224 BC he formed a 'joint coalition' of all his allies under his command, aimed at providing mutual support to all participants in case of war. In 222 BC he defeated the Spartan king Cleomenes at Sellasia and captured Sparta.⁷ He immediately turned to expel the Illyrians that had invaded Macedonia. He died in a battle against the Dardani in the summer of 221 BC, having first taken steps to ensure his succession by his son, Philip, making sure that important state functions were taken over by experienced advisors.⁸ His policy revolved around traditional axes, but he managed to revitalize Macedonia and created the strong material infrastructure that would support Philip V's policies.



1. Doston's brother, Echecrates, is mentioned in Titus Livius: Liv. 40. 54.4.
2. On Doston's date of death, see. Polyb. 2.44.2.
3. Le Bohec, S., *Antigone Doston, Roi De Macédoine* (Nancy 1993), pp. 84-85. Le Bohec assumes that Doston stayed in Athens in order to receive further education, but she does not adduce any substantial evidence for this.
4. Plut., *Aem.*1-3.
5. Le Bohec, S., *Antigone Doston, Roi De Macédoine* (Nancy 1993), pp. 113-196.
6. Crampa, J., *Labraunda. Swedish Excavations and Researches*, vol. 3.1 The Greek Inscriptions (Lund 1969), p. 124 (with the relevant bibliography). See Le Bohec, S., *Antigone Doston, Roi de Macédoine* (Nancy 1993), pp. 327-361; Billows, R.A., *Antigonos the One-Eyed and the Creation of the Hellenistic State* (Berkeley - Los Angeles - London 1990), p. 324, note 15.
7. Le Bohec, S., *Antigone Doston, Roi De Macédoine* (Nancy 1993), pp. 363-446
8. On the end of Doston's reign, see Le Bohec, S., *Antigone Doston, Roi De Macédoine* (Nancy 1993), pp. 447-487.

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Ancient Coinage of Macedonia, Kings, Antigonos Doson

http://www.wildwinds.com/coins/greece/macedonia/kings/antigonos_doson/i.html

Glossary :

Achaean League

Confederation of twelve Achaean cities, centered to the worship of Zeus Amarios. The confederation is first attested in 453 B.C. and it was revitalized in 281/280 B.C. when it extended beyond Achaea. Under the leadership of Araton of Sicyon the confederation developed an expansive anti-Macedonian policy from 250 B.C. onwards, although in 224 B.C. they came to terms with Macedonia and finally adopted Macedonian policy by 198 B.C.

Dardani

Balkan Illyrian tribe connected with Thrace and Asia Minor. The Dardani mainly occupied the area NW of the Macedonian kingdom and they often came in confrontation with the Macedonian kings between the 4th and 2nd centuries BC and later with the Romans. They were eventually defeated by Marcus Antonius in 39 BC or by Marcus Licinius Crassus in 29/28 BC. They became part of the Roman province of Mysia and after the late 1st century BC part of Upper Mycia.

Thessalian League

Thessalian confederation under the leadership of an initially elected *tagos* (leader). The power of the leader was based on the support of the Thessalian noblemen and their followers.

Chronological Table

c.263 BC: Birth of Antigonos Doson.

229 BC: The Macedonian king Demetrius II is killed during an invasion of the Dardani; Doson is designated 'guardian' of the legitimate heir, the young Philip V, and 'general'. Doson adopts the royal title.

227 – 225 BC: Doson campaigns in Caria, obviously against the Ptolemies.

227 – 226 BC: Aratus, the leader of the Achaean League, enlists the support of Doson; Doson campaigns in the Peloponnese.

222 BC: Doson is victorious over the Spartan king Cleomenes in Sellasia. Sparta is captured. The Illyrians are driven out of Macedonia.

221 BC: Antigonos Doson is killed during a battle against the Dardani.