

## CHAPTER 1      A MACEDONIAN HEGEMONY

The title of this chapter is intended to be as much a question as it is a label. Too often, the Macedonian conquest of the old Achaemenid domains is seen in terms of unquestionable western military and political superiority by which the indigenous populations were subdued and suppressed leaving their own cultures with little room to develop or flourish. However, this was clearly not the case across the majority of the newly occupied territories. Undoubtedly, the Macedonian military machine was more powerful and versatile than that which had previously existed and this, by the very nature of ancient geo-politics, led to the domination of Hellenised political institutions. But these political institutions were not untempered by the political, social and religious environment over which they were created to rule. The earlier pre-conquest systems of government and religion were incorporated by various degrees within the new colonial world and were used as legitimators of the Hellenistic kings. In addition, religious beliefs held the potential to provide one of the few unifying forces in what proved to be, politically, a tumultuous period in Syrian history.

The extent to which the Greco-Macedonians truly held a cultural hegemony over Seleukid Syria is certainly a subject open to question. The term Hellenistic, coined by Droysen to define the epoch of cultural interaction after Alexander the Great,<sup>1</sup> was derived from the Greek *hellenistai*, a term from the New Testament *Book of Acts* (6.1, 9.29) used to identify non-Greeks who had chosen to imitate the Greek colonisers. An equally appropriate term, *hellenismos* was used in II *Maccabees* 4.13 to segregate those Jerusalemite Jews who had adopted Greek athletic practices to the abhorrence of some of their contemporaries. It is this cultural interaction at the very heart of the concept „Hellenistic“ which is considered below.

This chapter provides the narrative framework upon which the religious discussion of the following chapters may rest – without the political narrative, the actions of individual kings and communities cannot be placed in their proper cultural context.<sup>2</sup> The account begins with a brief geographic outline of the regions to be discussed throughout the study and is to be read in conjunction with the accompanying map (**fig.1**). The chronological outline which follows arranges the history of the Hellenistic Levant into four discreet units.

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<sup>1</sup> Droysen 1877.

<sup>2</sup> This is especially true in regards to the numismatic data discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, see for example the preface of Mørkholm 1966: 7.

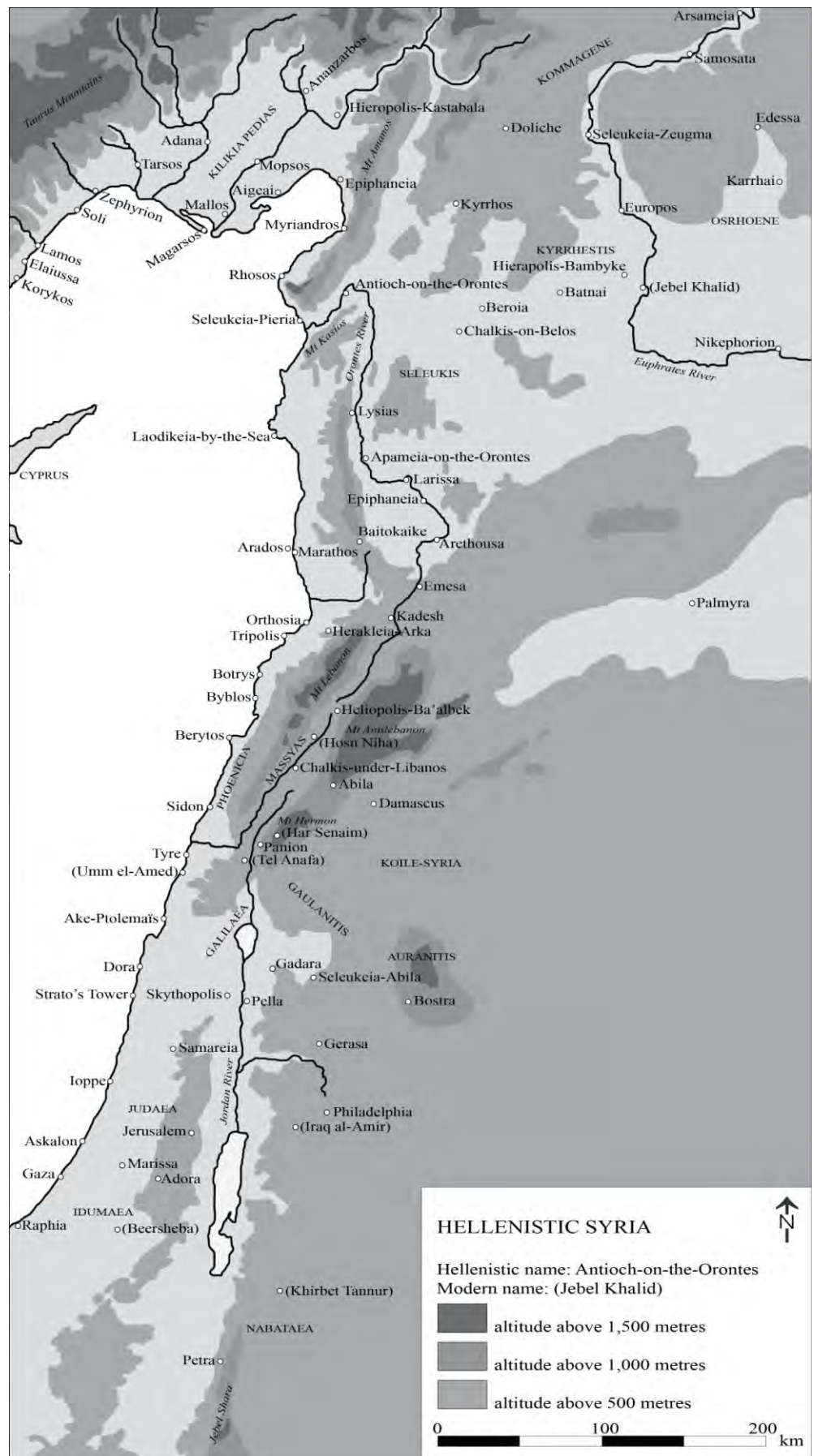
The first covers the period between Alexander's conquest of the area in 333 BC until the division of the Levant between Seleukos I Nikator and Ptolemy I Soter following the battle of Ipsos in 301 BC. The second division encompasses the early Seleukid period, a time typified by dynastic unity and strength, covering the occupation of north Syria from 301 BC until the death of Seleukos IV in 175 BC, including the Seleukid conquest of Koile-Syria and Phoenicia. The later Seleukid period is subdivided into two sections. The late Seleukid I period begins with the usurpation of Antiochos IV Epiphanes in 175 BC and covers the time of dynastic strife down to the death of Kleopatra Thea in 121 BC. This period saw chronic fighting between the senior branch of the Seleukid family and the descendants of Epiphanes, but also a change in the religious perceptions of the monarchy. The late Seleukid II period runs from the sole reign of Antiochos VIII Grypos (121-96 BC) until the transformation of the kingdom into the Roman province of Syria in 64 BC. The period was again disrupted by endemic feuding between two branches of the royal house and the dramatic rise in localised autonomy felt by both cities and indigenous dynasts. The third section of this chapter discusses numerous perceptions of ethnicity and questions the total dominance of Hellenism in Seleukid Syria.

## **1.1 A GEOGRAPHIC OUTLINE OF SELEUKID SYRIA**

The terms „Syria“ and „Levant“ are used synonymously throughout this work as encompassing terms for the grouping of disparate geographic units at the eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea. It is essential to emphasise from the outset that although much of modern Syria falls within its ancient counterpart, the Hellenistic appellation covers a far more extensive stretch of land extending from the Taurus mountains of Anatolia in the north, to the Negev desert in the south.<sup>3</sup> The Mediterranean coastline forms the western border which contrasts with its far more malleable eastern counterpart. The western extent of the Euphrates river provides a fixed border between Syria and Mesopotamia in the north-east but south of that, the eastern fringe gradually fades into the Arabian desert and out of the immediate focus of this work.

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<sup>3</sup> Strabo *Geography* 16.2.1-2. For more on the application of the toponym „Syria“ see (among others) Jones 1937: 227-8; Butcher 2003: 10-1; Green 2003: 153-4; Cohen 2006: 22.



**Figure 1. Map of Hellenistic Syria (N.L. Wright).**

The region is subdivided by a number of mountainous or highland zones which roughly align north-south to create two parallel ranges reaching their highest peaks in the Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon ranges which rise to 3,088 and 2,629 metres above sea level respectively.<sup>4</sup> Between these ranges, the Massyas/Bekaa valley (a northern extension of Africa's Great Rift Valley) forms the watershed for the Orontes and Jordan rivers, two of the three main water courses of the region – the third being the Euphrates. From the Bekaa, the Orontes river flows north, reaching the Mediterranean through the gap between the Amanos and Bargylos mountains. The Jordan river passes south below Mount Hermon (a southern extension of the Anti-Lebanon rising to 2,814 metres above sea level),<sup>5</sup> briefly widens into the Sea of Galilee before emptying into the Dead Sea. A populous and naturally fertile coastal strip exists between the Amanos-Bargylos-Lebanon range and the sea and broadens out into a wider plain to the south of the Galilean highlands. Highland zones also exist further inland descending from the Taurus in the north and stretching from the Auran along the east bank of the Jordan. These highland zones gradually flatten out into an arable upland steppe before merging with the desert. This ill-defined “desert coast”<sup>6</sup> to the south and east of the mountains and highlands is punctuated by perennial springs and fertile oases which enabled large inland polities to grow and survive.<sup>7</sup>

Today, ancient „Syria“ is divided between six modern political entities: the Republic of Turkey, the Syrian Arab Republic, the Republic of Lebanon, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, the State of Israel and the Palestinian Territories. By the Hellenistic period, Syria's numerous sub-regions had acquired Greek names which shall be employed throughout this work to distinguish between the various areas. Starting in the north-west, the two Kilikias formed the gateway between the Anatolian plateau and Syria proper. Kilikia Pedias (Smooth Kilikia) formed a fertile alluvial plain watered by rivers which drained from the Taurus mountains. The ring of the Taurus which framed Kilikia Pedias to the west and north was known as Kilikia Tracheia (Rough Kilikia).<sup>8</sup> Immediately to the east, Mount Amanos divided Kilikia from the highlands of Kommagene and the steppe of northern Syria which was itself roughly sub-divided into Seleukis in the west along the Orontes,

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<sup>4</sup> Dar 1993: 2.

<sup>5</sup> Dar 1993: 2.

<sup>6</sup> Jones 1937: 227-8.

<sup>7</sup> Bevan 1902: 1.207-22; Jones 1937: 227-8; Butcher 2003: 11-5.

<sup>8</sup> Strabo *Geography* 14.5.1-20.

Kyrrhestis further north and east and Chalkidike on the south-eastern steppe.<sup>9</sup> South of Seleukis, between the coast and the massif of Mount Lebanon lay Phoenicia. Beyond the mountain to the east and south lay Koile-Syria (Hollow Syria)<sup>10</sup> which like its northern counterpart was further subdivided to include Massyas and Abilene on either side of the Anti-Lebanon and the highlands of Gaulanitis, Trachonitis and Auranitis. Continuing south of Phoenicia, the Galilean highlands flattened out into Samareitis, Judaea and Idumaea between the Mediterranean and the Jordan. East of the Jordan lay the smaller regions of Peraea, Ammanitis and Moab, much of which would later form Pompey's Decapolis.<sup>11</sup>

Before the Hellenistic period, most urbanised settlements appear to have existed along the Mediterranean coast, principally in Kilikia Pedias and Phoenicia. The village or tribe seems to have been the dominant settlement type of the interior with the exception of a few centres such as Aleppo/Beroia, Manbog/Bambyke, Damascus and Petra.<sup>12</sup> The latter settlement is a reminder that beyond the desert frontier, the Nabataeans maintained a culturally sophisticated, mixed settled-nomadic existence which not only included many small permanent settlement sites but did much to irrigate and utilise what would otherwise have been unusable desert.<sup>13</sup> Such was the situation on the eve of the Macedonian conquest. Beyond this, as Millar has stated, "we find that almost nothing is known, from either literary or documentary or archaeological evidence, about what these places were like in the Achaemenid period ..."<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Strabo *Geography* 16.2.1-12.

<sup>10</sup> The exact parameters of Koile-Syria as a geographic unit were confused and changed throughout antiquity (see Bickerman 1947). It is used here in the general sense known to Polybius (*Histories* 1.3.1, 2.71.9, 5.67.3-8, 28.1.1-9) and later specified by Strabo (*Geography* 16.2.21) as "... the whole of the country above the territory of Seleuceia [Seleukis], extending approximately to Aegypt and Arabia ..." (Loeb translation). This use of the term essentially covered the inland area of the Ptolemaic province of „Phoenicia and Syria“ before the battle of Panion in 200 BC. After its incorporation within the Seleukid empire, the same territory was known as „Phoenicia and Koile-Syria“ to distinguish it from the northern satrapy.

<sup>11</sup> Strabo *Geography* 16.2.13-37. However, the first references of any kind to the Decapolis are much later, in the first century AD, see *Mark* 5.20, 7.31; *Matthew* 4.25; Pliny *Natural History* 5.74. Although Strabo was clearly interested in city leagues (eg the Lykian League, *Geography* 14.3.2-3) and refers to individual cities of the Decapolis after Pompey's removal of them from Judaeian control (*Geography* 16.2.46), he fails to mention any formal political unit in the region. Josephus (*Jewish Antiquities* 14.74-6; id. *Jewish War* 1.155-7) likewise discusses Pompey's removal of the Koile-Syrian cities from the Hasmonaeans and their incorporation within the province of Syria but speaks nothing of the creation of the Decapolis. On the Imperial foundation of the Decapolis see Wenning 1994: 1-2, 11-2.

<sup>12</sup> Diodorus Siculus *Library of History* 19.97-8; Strabo *Geography* 16.2.20; Jones 1937: 197-8; 235-7; Seyrig 1970b: 293-8; 1971: 11-21; Lightfoot 2003: 8-9, 38-9.

<sup>13</sup> Glueck 1965: 47-64; Bowersock 1994: 12-27.

<sup>14</sup> Millar 1987: 111; see also Clarke and Jackson (forthcoming).

## 1.2 THE HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

### 1.2.1 FROM ISSOS TO IPSOS (333-301 BC)

Early in 333 BC, the Macedonian king Alexander III (the Great) passed through the Taurus mountains into the plains of Kilikia Pedias, leaving behind him Kappadokia, Anatolia and Europe. After a tour of the Kilikian cities, prolonged in Tarsos by a bout of fever, Alexander continued east, headed for northern Syria through the Syrian Gates between Mount Amanos and the Mediterranean.<sup>15</sup> The Achaemenid Persian king, Darius III, passed Alexander on the far side of the Amanos and emerged north of the Macedonian position, effectively cutting off the latter's supply lines. Alexander promptly turned back and on the banks of the Pinaros River near the town of Issos, the Macedonian and Persian kings fought for control of the Levant. The battle was a resounding victory for Alexander and Darius withdrew east towards Babylon.<sup>16</sup>

Alexander sent his most trusted lieutenant Parmenion to capture Damascus while the king continued south to Marathos where he accepted the submission of Strato, prince of Arados and the neighbouring settlements and rejected peace terms sent by Darius.<sup>17</sup> The Macedonian king moved further south accepting the surrender of each of the Phoenician cities in turn until he arrived off Tyre which resisted a six month siege before falling.<sup>18</sup> The rest of Koile-Syria offered little resistance with the exception of Gaza which was held briefly for the Achaemenid cause by the eunuch Batis and a body of Arab mercenaries.<sup>19</sup> Beyond Gaza to the west, Alexander reached the border fortress of Peleusion and passed into Egypt. He spent the winter in Egypt including six weeks travelling to Siwa in the Libyan desert before he passed back through Koile-Syria en route to Mesopotamia in the spring and summer of 331 BC.<sup>20</sup> Although he personally spent less than two years in the area of this study, Alexander's conquest brought long lasting political and cultural ramifications to the region and its people.

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<sup>15</sup> Arrian *Anabasis* 2.4-6; Quintus Curtius *History of Alexander* 3.4.1-7.15; Justin *Epitome* 11.8.

<sup>16</sup> Arrian *Anabasis* 2.7-12; Quintus Curtius *History of Alexander* 3.9.1-11.27; Justin *Epitome* 11.9.

<sup>17</sup> Arrian *Anabasis* 2.14-6; Quintus Curtius *History of Alexander* 3.13.1-4.1.14; Justin *Epitome* 11.10.1-9. Further terms were sent to Alexander during the course of the siege of Tyre which he again rejected; see Arrian *Anabasis* 2.26; Quintus Curtius *History of Alexander* 4.5.1-7.

<sup>18</sup> Arrian *Anabasis* 2.16-25; Quintus Curtius *History of Alexander* 4.1.15-26, 4.2.1-4.19; Justin *Epitome* 11.10.10-4.

<sup>19</sup> Arrian *Anabasis* 2.26-7; Quintus Curtius *History of Alexander* 4.6.7-31; Wilcken 1967: 112.

<sup>20</sup> Arrian *Anabasis* 3.1-6; Quintus Curtius *History of Alexander* 4.7.1-8.16.

With the departure of Alexander, the ancient sources lose interest in Syria until the wars of the *Diadochoi* following the king's death in 323 BC. However, some scraps of information concerning Syria during the intervening years can be pieced together. One glimpse is provided by the sanctuary at Bambyke (later Hierapolis). Just as the Phoenician cities had been left with their traditional forms of government, at least this one settlement of the interior held similar privileges. Bambyke started to produce quasi-autonomous silver coinage in this period. The issues bear Aramaic legends initially naming the high-priests, Abdhadad or Abyata, as the issuing authority and only later, perhaps prudently, included the name Alexander.<sup>21</sup> Shortly before production ceased, around 300 BC or just after, the name of Alexander was replaced by the letters ΣΕ probably in reference to Seleukos.<sup>22</sup> Lucian of Samosata informs us that a temple already standing on the site was rebuilt early in the third century BC by Stratonike, then wife of Seleukos I.<sup>23</sup> The Seleukid restoration of the site corresponded with the extension of the king's power and therefore necessitated the cessation of all statements of even the most local autonomy.

Within ten years of the Macedonian conquest of the Levant, Alexander was dead (June, 323 BC). He left no competent heir and moments before his death, was said to have prophetically uttered "I foresee that a great combat of my friends will be my funeral games."<sup>24</sup> The news of the conqueror's death bore little or no effect on the indigenous population of Syria. Will is almost certainly correct in interpreting the native response as "indifference".<sup>25</sup> It is true that the region had been continually occupied in a political sense since the rise of Assyria in the mid-late eighth century BC and the death of one more alien conqueror would have resulted in little latent nationalism. In fact the only immediate effect of Alexander's death was the revolt of Greek veterans settled by the late king in Baktria (quashed by Peithon, satrap of Media) and a federated attempt by the Greek cities to break free from Macedonian hegemony (the Lamian war) which was dealt with by Alexander's old regent Antipater.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Seyrig 1971: 11-21; Millar 1987: 126; Zahle 1990: 128-9; Mildenberg 1999: nos.1-6, 9-24.

<sup>22</sup> *SC* 1: 26-7. Bambyke would not have the relative autonomy to mint its own coins again until the reign of Antiochos IV in the mid-second century BC, see *SC* 2: nos.1432-3.

<sup>23</sup> Lucian *The Syrian Goddess* 17.

<sup>24</sup> Arrian *Anabasis* 7.26; Quintus Curtius *History of Alexander* 10.5.5; Diodorus Siculus *Library of History* 17.4-5; Justin *Epitome* 12.15.6-8; Heckel 2002: 81-95.

<sup>25</sup> Will 1984: 29.

<sup>26</sup> On the Baktrian revolt: Diodorus Siculus *Library of History* 18.7. On the Lamian war: Diodorus Siculus *Library of History* 18.3.1-3, 18.8-18; Justin *Epitome* 13.5.

However, between the various Macedonian officers who had served under Alexander, conflict broke out within days of the latter's death. The resulting wars over the succession were to last the next 51 years. Two opposing camps initially formed either side of the notion of „imperial unity“. The centralists, ostensibly fighting to maintain the integrity of the empire for the new joint kings – Philip III Arrhidaios, the disabled half-brother of Alexander, and Alexander IV, the latter's posthumous half-Iranian son by the Sogdian Rhoxane, were led by the Macedonian aristocrat Perdikkas and Eumenes of Kardia. Opposed to Perdikkas was an alliance led by Antipater in Macedonia, Antigonos Monophthalmos in Phrygia and Ptolemy in Egypt, separatist satraps who resented Perdikkas' authority and distrusted his ambitions.<sup>27</sup> Perdikkas left Eumenes in Asia Minor to guard against aggression from Europe and turned first against Ptolemy. After a disastrous attempt by Perdikkas to cross the Nile in the spring of 321 BC, a group of his officers including Seleukos, the *hipparch* of the *hetairoi* (roughly the equivalent of a modern chief-of-staff) – estranged by his arrogance – murdered the regent in his tent.<sup>28</sup> The army went over to Ptolemy en-masse.<sup>29</sup> The separatists met with the murderers at Triparadeisos in northern Syria late in 321 BC. Here Antipater, as the most senior in age and experience, redistributed the satrapies, rewarding those who had assisted the separatist cause and punishing those who had remained loyal to Perdikkas. Eumenes fled into the eastern Taurus, Antipater obtained the guardianship of the two kings, Ptolemy retained Egypt (and presumably much of the army of Perdikkas) and Seleukos was rewarded for his assistance with the central satrapy of Babylonia.

Antigonos Monophthalmos, appointed *strategos* (general) of Asia, carried on the war against the refugee Eumenes of Kardia. The former's ambitions were made blatant to his colleagues when he began rounding off his own territory by annexing neighbouring satrapies. Antigonos was now the major threat to the autonomy of the various satraps and his actions showed that he did not feel at all bound by the treaty of Triparadeisos.<sup>30</sup> In response, Ptolemy advanced from Peleusion into Koile-Syria and Phoenicia, establishing a military buffer zone between Egypt and the greater powers of Asia in the manner of his

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<sup>27</sup> Arrian *Events after Alexander* 1.5; Diodorus Siculus *Library of History* 18.14.1-2, 18.25.4; Justin *Epitome* 13.6.4-20, 13.8.1. Will (1984: 29) uses the wonderful expressions “unitary” and “particularist tendencies” to describe the opposing parties.

<sup>28</sup> Justin *Epitome* 13.8.2.

<sup>29</sup> Diodorus Siculus *Library of History* 18.34.6-36.5.

<sup>30</sup> Heckel 2002: 91.



Pharaonic predecessors. In 319 BC, word of the death of Antipater removed the last check holding the various parts of the empire together.<sup>31</sup> The following year Eumenes crossed the Taurus into Kilikia where he levied soldiers to continue the fight against Antigonos.<sup>32</sup> He moved south to push Ptolemy out of his Levantine holdings but the arrival of Antigonos in Kilikia forced Eumenes to retire east, into the Upper Satrapies across the Euphrates. In Babylonia, Seleukos put up a nominal resistance to Eumenes but appears to have allowed the latter to pass through to the Iranian plateau.<sup>33</sup>

Antigonos followed Eumenes in due course and late in 317 or early 316 BC Eumenes and his allies were finally defeated in a great battle in the region of Gabiene, western Iran.<sup>34</sup> Antigonos wintered in Media and reorganised the satrapal commands of the east. In 316 BC he was well received by Seleukos until he demanded that the latter account for all his revenues. Stating that Antigonos did not hold the authority to command an audit and fearful of his power and ambition, Seleukos took flight across the desert and sought sanctuary with Ptolemy in Egypt. Seleukos was made *navarch* (admiral) of the Egyptian fleet and Ptolemy formed an alliance with Antipater's son Kassandros and Lysimachos, satrap of Thrace against the power of Antigonos Monophthalmos and his son Demetrios (later to be called Poliorketes).<sup>35</sup> Antigonos campaigned through Syria for much of the following year, gaining control of Kilikia and the Phoenician port-cities of Tripolis, Byblos and Sidon, and perhaps others.<sup>36</sup> Seleukos meanwhile cruised up and down the coast and it is possible that at this stage he seized control of Arados and used it as his base of operations and mint.<sup>37</sup> Houghton and Lorber's rejection of Seleukos' occupation of Arados based on Diodorus' statement that Antigonos was in Phoenicia is flawed.<sup>38</sup> Although Antigonos was certainly active in the area, Diodorus clearly states that Antigonos' forces were disheartened because Seleukos dominated the sea. The capture of the Phoenician port-cities by Antigonos was part of an attempt to construct an Antigonid fleet to try to counter the Ptolemaic threat posed by Seleukos. Arados was, and still is, an island and control of the seas enabled Seleukos to land anywhere at will. In 315 BC for example, Seleukos besieged

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<sup>31</sup> Diodorus Siculus *Library of History* 18.50-2.

<sup>32</sup> Diodorus Siculus *Library of History* 18.59.1-3, 18.61.4-5.

<sup>33</sup> Diodorus Siculus *Library of History* 18.73.

<sup>34</sup> Diodorus Siculus *Library of History* 19.39-44.

<sup>35</sup> Appian *Syrian Wars* 53; Diodorus Siculus *Library of History* 19.55-7.

<sup>36</sup> Diodorus Siculus *Library of History* 19.58.3.

<sup>37</sup> Diodorus Siculus *Library of History* 19.58.5; Houghton 1991: 116; Kritt 1997: 87.

<sup>38</sup> *SC* 1: 34-5.

Erythrai in the middle of Antigoniid controlled Ionia and was able to slip away unmolested when Antigonos approached with a superior land force.<sup>39</sup>

The following years saw Ptolemaic and Antigoniid forces moving up and down the Levant and across Cyprus. In 312 BC Ptolemy and Seleukos faced Demetrios the son of Antigonos outside Gaza and completely routed the Antigoniid army. Ptolemy once more occupied Koile-Syria and provided Seleukos with a small land force for an attack on Babylon.<sup>40</sup> Seleukos crossed the Euphrates and marched into Babylonia where he was welcomed by the indigenous population on account of the good relations he had maintained there in the years after Triparadeisos.<sup>41</sup> Ptolemy held his Levantine possessions for less than a year before Antigonos joined his son and once more drove the Ptolemaic forces back to Egypt. Early in 311 BC, Ptolemy, Kassandros and Lysimachos agreed on a peace treaty with Antigonos based on the *status quo*. Seleukos, who was campaigning against the Antigoniid satraps of the Iranian plateau, was not included.<sup>42</sup>

Intermittent fighting flared up between Ptolemaic and Antigoniid forces in Kilikia, Lykia and Cyprus in the ensuing years although, until 306 BC, there were no actions of any consequence.<sup>43</sup> In that year Demetrios defeated Ptolemy in a vicious naval battle off Salamis in Cyprus. The victory had two immediate results, Ptolemy abandoned Cyprus to the Antigoniids and Antigonos and Demetrios both assumed the diadem, becoming the first of the *Diadochoi* to claim the kingship in their own names.<sup>44</sup> Philip III Arrhidaios and Alexander IV had both been murdered in the Machiavellian struggles for power in Macedonia and the Antigoniid proclamation of kingship was soon mirrored by Ptolemy, Lysimachos, Kassandros and Seleukos. After an abortive Antigoniid assault on Egypt through Koile-Syria (306 BC)<sup>45</sup> and the equally unsuccessful siege of Rhodes (305-304 BC, during which Demetrios received his popular epithet „Poliorketes“ or the Besieger),<sup>46</sup> the remaining *Diadochoi* formed a last alliance against Antigonos and Demetrios which reached its climax in 301 BC on the field of Ipsos in Phrygia where Lysimachos and

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<sup>39</sup> Diodorus Siculus *Library of History* 19.60.4.

<sup>40</sup> Appian *Syrian Wars* 54; Diodorus Siculus *Library of History* 19.82-6; Justin *Epitome* 15.1.6-9; Plutarch *Demetrius* 5-6.

<sup>41</sup> Appian *Syrian Wars* 54; Diodorus Siculus *Library of History* 19.90-1.

<sup>42</sup> Diodorus Siculus *Library of History* 19.105.1-5; Will 1984: 49-50.

<sup>43</sup> Diodorus Siculus *Library of History* 20.19.3-5, 19.21, 19.27.

<sup>44</sup> Diodorus Siculus *Library of History* 20.49-53; Plutarch *Demetrius* 16-8.

<sup>45</sup> Diodorus Siculus *Library of History* 20.73-6.

<sup>46</sup> Diodorus Siculus *Library of History* 20.91-100.

Seleukos defeated the Antigonids. Antigonos was killed during the fighting and his son was driven from Asia with the exception of a few port-cities.<sup>47</sup>

Throughout the period 333-301 BC, Greco-Macedonian armies and navies campaigned the length of Syria numerous times as the nominal borders between successor states waxed and waned. One can only wonder at the effect this had on the settled local population. We know that Bambyke continued to mint its quasi-autonomous coinage in the name of Alexander and it appears that the Phoenician and Kilikian cities provided shipyards and recruiting grounds for the various Macedonian navies. Beyond these two cases, we know little of the social and cultural impact on the ground. What we can say is that during the first three decades after Alexander's conquest, the foundations were laid which would transform the region politically from an oppressed political backwater into one of the foremost centres of Hellenism in the Mediterranean. Numerous colonies of Greco-Macedonian or at least Hellenised settlers appeared across the less urbanised zones of the Levant (particularly northern Syria and inland Koile-Syria) in this initial phase of occupation. In 307 BC, Antigonos consolidated his personal rule over Syria by founding the short lived capital of his new empire at Antigoneia on the Orontes river.<sup>48</sup> Alexandria-by-Issos in Kilikia Pedias was probably founded in this period either by Alexander himself, or else in his name by one of the satraps in commemoration of the great victory.<sup>49</sup> A colony of Macedonians was settled at Pella on the upper Orontes at this time on the site later refounded by Seleukos as Apameia.<sup>50</sup> Kyrrhos in Kyrrhestis and Marathos and Orthosia in Phoenicia may also have received Macedonian settlers.<sup>51</sup> Tyre was rebuilt by Alexander after the siege and repopulated. By 321 BC it was once again a fully fortified city of great importance.<sup>52</sup> In Koile-Syria, there is evidence for Greco-Macedonian settlement in this early period at Dion, Gerasa, Pella and Samareia.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Diodorus Siculus (*Library of History* 20.106-13) provides a detailed commentary on the build up of the opposing forces although sadly his account of the battle itself has been lost.

<sup>48</sup> Diodorus Siculus *Library of History* 20.47.5; Cohen 2006: 76-7.

<sup>49</sup> Cohen 2006: 75.

<sup>50</sup> Cohen 2006: 94-5, 121-4.

<sup>51</sup> Cohen 2006: 181, 211-2.

<sup>52</sup> Diodorus Siculus *Library of History* 18.37.3-4; Justin *Epitome* 18.3.19; Cohen 2006: 221-2.

<sup>53</sup> Cohen 2006: 245, 248, 265, 274-6.

### 1.2.2 THE EARLY SELEUKID PERIOD (301-175 BC)

By the time the dust of Ipsos had settled, the borders of the Levant had been redrawn and with them, the seeds of animosity were sown between the previously friendly courts of Seleukos and Ptolemy. As we have seen, Ptolemy first marched into southern Syria in 320 BC and continued to return at every opportunity until his final conquest of Koile-Syria and Phoenicia in 301 BC – while Antigonos and Demetrios were distracted with the Ipsos campaign north of the Taurus by Seleukos and Lysimachos. By right of conquest, these last two divided the Antigonid Asiatic possessions between them. Lysimachos received the Anatolian lands north of the Taurus and Seleukos claimed Syria, Koile-Syria, Phoenicia and those parts of Mesopotamia not already occupied by Seleukid forces. Kassandros, who had provided the victors with men and money, was granted free reign in Greece and Macedonia and his brother Pleistarchos was given Kilikia. The defeated Demetrios Poliorketes still controlled a strong fleet and a few strategic cities in Greece, Cyprus and Phoenicia but for the meantime maintained a kingdom without a true territorial base. Ptolemy had taken no part in the Ipsos campaign and as such, the victors assigned him none of the spoils. His occupation of the Levant as far north as the Eleutheros river meant that he controlled a significant proportion of the new territory nominally in the possession of his friend and ally Seleukos.<sup>54</sup> Seleukos is said to have overlooked the immediate disagreement on account of the good relations between the two kings, but the foundation had been laid for a state of perpetual hostility between the two houses which amounted to six separate disputes (the Syrian Wars) over the next century and a half.

In the division of 301 BC, Ptolemy secured the vast majority of the urbanised areas of the Levantine coast and probably the important inland centre of Damascus. Under the Ptolemies, these cities lost their relative autonomy and by 274 BC, the last of the Phoenician dynasts had been removed.<sup>55</sup> All that remained to Seleukos was the open steppe of northern Syria, the inland centres of Beroia/Aleppo and Hierapolis-Bambyke, Arados off the coast and the half constructed Antigoneia-on-the-Orontes. His first action seems to have been to attempt to consolidate his hold on this predominantly rural territory. To this end, Seleukos furthered the colonising work of his immediate predecessors and laid the foundations of the tetrapolis of Seleukis, the four great cities given the dynastic names Seleukeia-Peria (after the king), Antiocheia-on-the-Orontes (after the king's father),

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<sup>54</sup> Diodorus Siculus *Library of History* 20.113, 21.1.5.

<sup>55</sup> Jones 1937: 239.

Laodikeia-by-the-Sea (after the king's mother) and Apameia-on-the-Orontes (after Seleukos' Baktrian wife). Antigoneia suffered under the new regime and it would appear that much of its population was resettled in Antioch and Seleukeia.<sup>56</sup> All told, Appian states that Seleukos built nine Seleukeias, sixteen Antiochs, five Laodikeias, three Apameias and one Stratonikeia (after his second wife and subsequently the wife of his son Antiochos I). Appian then goes on to cite a large number of settlements bearing the names of towns in Greece and Macedonia of which the certified Syrian examples include Aigeai, Beroia, Arethusa, Larissa, Perinthos, Tegeia, Maroneia, Chalkis-on-Belos and Amphipolis.<sup>57</sup> Like their Ptolemaic counterparts, the early Seleukids do not seem to have favoured local dynasts in their urbanised centres. As noted above, the priestly-dynasts of Hierapolis-Bambyke lost their autonomy in the early 290s BC and the ruling Aradian dynasty was suppressed in 259 BC.<sup>58</sup>

The battle of Ipsos marked the ultimate collapse of any unitary ideology maintained by the remaining monarchs. Each was established with equal legitimacy, roughly comparable resources and with the exception of Seleukos in his last few months, no king was in a position to restore Alexander's empire into a single state.<sup>59</sup> In the political fallout following the division of territory in 301 BC, new dynastic links were forged between Alexander's remaining successors. Lysimachos and his son both married daughters of Ptolemy. Demetrios was reconciled with Seleukos when the latter married Demetrios' beautiful and well connected daughter, Stratonike.<sup>60</sup> Demetrios himself soon drove Pleistarchos out of Kilikia and established a new power base in Macedonia. The meteoric rise in fortune prompted the other kings to form an alliance against him and in the ensuing war he was driven from his new conquests and ended up drinking himself to death under house arrest in northern Syria. Kilikia was joined as a natural extension to Seleukid Syria and for a few years formed the empire's north-western border. However, in the late 280s BC Lysimachos and Seleukos fell out and the latter rounded off his kingdom with the conquest of Lysimachos' territories in Anatolia and Thrace. At this point, Ptolemy Keraunos, the disinherited eldest son of Ptolemy of Egypt attached himself to the Seleukid

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<sup>56</sup> Cohen 2006: 77-8.

<sup>57</sup> Appian *Syrian Wars* 57.

<sup>58</sup> Jones 1937: 239.

<sup>59</sup> Cohen 1974: 177-9.

<sup>60</sup> The pseudo-love triangle that emerged between Seleukos, Stratonike and Antiochos is one of the few well documented events in early Seleukid history, see Appian *Syrian Wars* 59-61; Lucian *The Syrian Goddess* 17-8; Plutarch *Demetrius* 38.

court and as Seleukos marched through Thrace towards Macedonia, turned on his elderly patron and quite literally stabbed him in the back.<sup>61</sup>

The fragile peace between the Seleukids and Ptolemies did not outlive the dynastic founders by long. Two decades into the third century BC saw the second generation of Hellenistic kings in Asia and Egypt and the son and successor to Seleukos, Antiochos I (who unlike any of the Ptolemies, had actually fought at Ipsos) did not bear the same respect and camaraderie for Ptolemy II that had kept the peace between their fathers. The late 270s BC saw the outbreak of the first of the so-called Syrian Wars, where both houses struggled to assert their dominance over the disputed territories of Koile-Syria and Phoenicia. The First Syrian War appears to have had little lasting impact, although at some stage in the 270s BC,<sup>62</sup> there was a moment when it looked like Antiochos might lose northern Syria to revolt.<sup>63</sup> Likewise, the Second Syrian War (260-253 BC) had little effect on the wider political situation.<sup>64</sup> A marriage between Antiochos II and Berenike, daughter of Ptolemy II, was intended to secure a more permanent peace but took no account of the spirit and determination of Antiochos II's first wife Laodike. Berenike brought with her a tremendous dowry (after which she received the nickname Phernephoros – dowry-bearer) which included the Ptolemaic holdings in Kilikia Tracheia and the income of Ptolemaic controlled Koile-Syria. In turn, Ptolemy II's grandson would succeed to the Seleukid throne.<sup>65</sup>

Laodike, however, did not take kindly to the thought of either of her own children being disinherited. Antiochos II was lured to Sardes where Laodike had him poisoned (246 BC). Their eldest son Seleukos II was proclaimed king and Ptolemy III, the new king of Egypt marched on Seleukis to defend the rights of his sister Berenike and her newborn son.<sup>66</sup> Thus opened the third Syrian or „Laodikean“ War. Ptolemy III was ultimately repulsed from most of Seleukis but retained a garrison in the strategically important and dynastically significant port-city of Seleukeia-Pieria.<sup>67</sup> Seleukos I had been buried at

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<sup>61</sup> Appian *Syrian Wars* 62; Justin *Epitome* 17.1.7-2.5. It was Ptolemy Keraunos' fate to die fighting against the Galatians in northern Macedon the following year. His head left the battlefield on the tip of an enemy spear, see Justin *Epitome* 24.5.1-7.

<sup>62</sup> Grainger 2010: 73-87.

<sup>63</sup> Known as the War of the Seleukid Succession and perhaps prompted by Ptolemy II, the disruption is known only from an inscription at Ilion, see *OGIS* 219 = Austin 2006: no.162.

<sup>64</sup> Grainger 2010: 117-36.

<sup>65</sup> Macurdy 1932: 87.

<sup>66</sup> Appian *Syrian Wars* 65; Justin *Epitome* 27.1.1-8.

<sup>67</sup> Grainger 2010: 153-70.

Seleukeia-Pieria and while it remained in Ptolemaic hands it lingered as a thorn in the side of Seleukid Syria. The reign of Seleukos II – called Kallinikos after his initial victories against Ptolemy III – was not one of stability. His mother Laodike promoted his younger brother Antiochos Hierax to the throne in Sardes and while the royal family was divided by internecine struggles in Syria, Baktria and Parthia seceded from the empire's East and the Attalids of Pergamon took most of the Seleukid possessions in Anatolia.<sup>68</sup>

Meanwhile, the Ptolemaic empire under Ptolemy III Euergetes reached its most powerful. Ptolemy seems to have held for a brief moment not only the entire Levantine coast, but also crossed the Euphrates and plundered the Seleukid eastern provinces. Seleukid Thrace was also won over by Egyptian admirals during Ptolemy III's reign. Whether he ever intended to maintain permanent control of the newly won eastern territories is uncertain. When Ptolemy was called back to Egypt to face some uncertain trouble, he carried back with him over 40,000 talents of silver and images of the gods taken by the Persians during their rule over Egypt.<sup>69</sup> In Ptolemy's absence, Seleukos II was able to reconquer most of northern Syria as far as Damascus as well as Mesopotamia and Media.

Over the course of the next generation, the tables were turned in favour of the Seleukid house. Seleukos II's younger son Antiochos III (the elder son falling victim to a palace plot) reigned 36 years and would come to be known as *Megas* Antiochos, Antiochos the Great. Under his rule the Seleukid empire stretched once more from Thrace to Sogdiana and for the first time, from Armenia as far south as Gaza.<sup>70</sup> In 192/1 BC he even occupied much of central Greece. During the Fourth Syrian War (221-217 BC) Antiochos pushed the Ptolemies out of Phoenicia and Koile-Syria, however, at Raphia on the Egyptian border he suffered a disastrous reverse at the hands of Ptolemy IV and withdrew back to Seleukis.<sup>71</sup> It was not until the Fifth Syrian War of 202-198 BC that he was in a position to challenge the Ptolemies again and in the Jordan valley near the small sanctuary at Panion, Antiochos III won the decisive victory over the young Ptolemy V that secured Phoenicia and Koile-Syria as Seleukid provinces.<sup>72</sup> In the intervening years Antiochos had imposed his authority over

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<sup>68</sup> Appian *Syrian Wars* 65; Justin *Epitome* 27.3.1-5, 41.4.3-10; Holt 1999: 94-8.

<sup>69</sup> Bevan 1927: 192-203.

<sup>70</sup> Appian *Syrian Wars* 1.

<sup>71</sup> Polybios *Histories* 5.79-87; Grainger 2010: 195-218.

<sup>72</sup> Polybios *Histories* 16.18-9; 28.1.3; Grainger 2010: 245-71.

most of western and central Asia and finally succeeded in expelling the Ptolemaic garrison from Seleukeia-Pieria.<sup>73</sup>

Although the Seleukids now dominated all of Greater Syria politically, in cultural terms, the south was still subject to the Ptolemaic influence it had felt for the previous century. For the population on the ground, there could not have been too many life changing ramifications of Seleukid domination. Hellenised Egyptian cults continued to flourish (as they did all along the Levantine coast)<sup>74</sup> and the local elites transferred their allegiance quickly and quietly to the new overlords. They may even have been thankful for the apparent incorporation of the local non-Greek elite within the Seleukid provincial administration.<sup>75</sup> Many Phoenician cities minted regal coinage for the Seleukid kings although these were often produced on a dual standard – a series based on the Attic tetradrachm of 16.8 grams with types akin to the central mint of Antioch for trade with the rest of the Seleukid empire, and a local series based on the Phoenician (and Ptolemaic) tetradrachm of 14.3 grams with reverse types very similar to their Ptolemaic forebears, presumably for local use.<sup>76</sup>

Between 192 and 188 BC, Antiochos the Great fought an unsuccessful campaign against Republican Rome and her allies. In the general peace signed at Apameia in Phrygia in 188 BC, Antiochos acknowledged defeat and conceded his European possessions, along with all Anatolian territories north of the Taurus mountains.<sup>77</sup> The huge war indemnities imposed on the Seleukid king saw Antiochos once more campaigning in the east in an attempt to fill the royal coffers. In 187 BC during an attempted sack of a temple in Elymais, the king was killed and the throne passed to his eldest surviving son, Seleukos IV. The shock of the king's death caused a ripple of unrest during which many of his eastern conquests managed to secede from the empire and regain their independence. Little is recorded of the reign of Seleukos IV and he appears to have spent much of his time consolidating what was left of his still substantial kingdom (including Kilikia, the whole of the Levant, Mesopotamia, Elymais and Media) and paying off the war debt to Rome.

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<sup>73</sup> Polybius *Histories* 5.61.1-2.

<sup>74</sup> See for example, Magness 2001; Sosin 2005; See also Chapters 5.1, 5.5.3 and 5.6 below.

<sup>75</sup> Sherwin-White and Kuhrt 1993: 50.

<sup>76</sup> Rogers 1927: 2-3; Mørkholm 1991: 9.

<sup>77</sup> Livy *History of Rome* 38.38. For a modern treatment on Antiochos' war with Rome see Grainger 2002.



### 1.2.3 THE LATE SELEUKID I PERIOD (175-121 BC)

In 175 BC, Seleukos IV died, leaving two sons, neither of whom were in a position to rule the Seleukid kingdom competently; one (Demetrios I) was a hostage in Rome and the other (Antiochos „the son“) was still a minor. Seleukos“ brother Antiochos IV Epiphanes returned to Syria from Athens (where he was resident) and as the most senior adult representative of the royal house assumed power, initially co-reigning with his young nephew Antiochos. Although technically a usurper, Epiphanes“ rule proved popular with the Syrian population and he was able to restore the kingdom to a position of strength.<sup>78</sup>

In 170-168 BC the Sixth Syrian War was fought between Ptolemy VI and Antiochos Epiphanes. Ptolemy, who was attempting once more to impose Ptolemaic control over Koile-Syria was not only defeated by Epiphanes but was captured, restored as a Seleukid puppet, revolted, defeated again and besieged in Egyptian Alexandria by the Seleukid king. A provincial administration was established in Egypt and agents of the Syrian king actively encouraged the Egyptian populace to rise up against the Ptolemies.<sup>79</sup> Only the timely arrival of the Roman ambassador G. Popillius Laenas (known as the Day of Eleusis after the Alexandreian suburb in which Popillius encountered Epiphanes) prevented the unification of the two kingdoms under the Seleukid king. Epiphanes retired as far as Palestine, keeping control of Peleusion as an open gateway directly into Egypt should the need arise in the future.

Under Epiphanes the integrity of the Seleukid kingdom was both strengthened and weakened. There appears to have been a concerted program of unification of the disparate parts of the empire through the worship of the king as the manifestation of the supreme god of the sky, thunder and mountains – a syncretised Ba“al-Zeus figure.<sup>80</sup> At the same time, Epiphanes fostered a sense of civic pride and quasi-autonomy within individual cities. Over the course of the next century, the autonomy of civic centres and the power exercised by indigenous elites was recognised with increasing regularity by Seleukid princes and can be viewed as one of the factors that brought about the downfall of the kingdom.

After the death of Epiphanes in 164 BC, civil war between quarrelling branches of the Seleukid house became endemic. During the late Seleukid I period, conflict arose between the descendants of Antiochos Epiphanes, several of whom had only dubious

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<sup>78</sup> Appian *Syrian Wars* 45; Athenaeus *Banquet of the Learned* 5.193d; Livy *History of Rome* 41.20-1; Polybius *Histories* 30.25-6.

<sup>79</sup> Plantzos 2002; Lorber 2007; Grainger 2010: 291-308.

<sup>80</sup> Wright 2005.

claims to the throne, and the senior branch stemming from Seleukos IV; Demetrios I (who escaped from Rome and ruled Syria 162-150 BC), his sons and grandsons. During this period, members of the house of Ptolemy once more crept into positions of power within Syria, only now they came as wives and queens rather than generals. Although the Seleukids were not yet weak enough to allow for an easy Ptolemaic military coup, in their struggle for control of the state, numerous Seleukid princes married into the Ptolemaic family in order to use the economic resources of Egypt and Cyprus in their own struggles. These resources appear to have been freely given by an Egyptian court that (when not engaged in civil war itself) must have been delighted to watch its ancestral enemy literally tear itself apart. On a few occasions Ptolemaic armies did march once more across Koile-Syria but these were fleeting.<sup>81</sup>

The vehicle of three Syro-Egyptian alliances was manifested in the form of the Ptolemaic princess Kleopatra Thea.<sup>82</sup> This most extraordinary of women married Alexander I Balas, an illegitimate son of Epiphanes shortly after he launched his claim for the Seleukid throne (150 BC).<sup>83</sup> Although only in her early teens at the time of the marriage, Kleopatra seems to have taken a leading role in the Seleukid court.<sup>84</sup> In 148/7 BC Kleopatra's father Ptolemy VI dissolved her marriage to Alexander and transferred Kleopatra and Ptolemaic support to the young Demetrios II, son of Demetrios I. Kleopatra's second marriage was not much longer than her first. Following Alexander Balas' death (145 BC), his son by Kleopatra was brought forward as a new (rival) king by a Macedonian officer called Diodotos Tryphon. Rather than confront the immediate threat of Tryphon and his ward Antiochos VI Dionysos, Demetrios I marched east to attack the Parthians and was there captured.<sup>85</sup> Kleopatra, fearing the aggression of Tryphon, invited Demetrios' young brother Antiochos (VII Sidetes) to marry her and succeed to the Seleukid throne. Thus began her third and perhaps most successful marriage.<sup>86</sup> Antiochos Sidetes proved to be "not only opportune but able"<sup>87</sup> and soon unified what remained of the Seleukid kingdom, now reduced to Kilikia, northern Syria and most of Phoenicia and

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<sup>81</sup> Strabo *Geography* 16.2.8.

<sup>82</sup> Whitehorne 1994: 149-63.

<sup>83</sup> Josephus *Jewish Antiquities* 13.80-2; I *Maccabees* 10.51.

<sup>84</sup> Houghton 1988.

<sup>85</sup> Diodorus Siculus *Library of History* 32.27.9d; Justin *Epitome* 36.1.7; Josephus *Jewish Antiquities* 13.131-2.

<sup>86</sup> Josephus *Jewish Antiquities* 13.222.

<sup>87</sup> Bellinger 1949: 57-8.

Koile-Syria.<sup>88</sup> Sidetes too marched east against the Parthians. He briefly reoccupied Mesopotamia and Babylonia before dying in battle. His brother Demetrios II, released by the Parthians just weeks before the death of Sidetes to create internal strife among the Seleukidai, resumed his throne but not his wife.

Kleopatra, perhaps tired of the lack of Seleukid competence had Demetrios murdered (126/5 BC).<sup>89</sup> Her eldest son by Demetrios, Seleukos V now made a claim for the throne but the ambitious Kleopatra Thea, fearful that an adult son would relieve her of her powers had him slain within months. What followed appears to have been roughly a year of sole-rule by Kleopatra before she brought Demetrios II's second son, Antiochos VIII Grypos, home from an education in exile at Athens and raised him to the throne, maintaining her position as dowager-queen and regent for her young son.<sup>90</sup> Whatever reasons she may have had for recalling Grypos are now lost but it is quite possible that the Syrian population had a problem with the sole rule of a monarch who was both female and a Ptolemy by birth. Regardless, her son soon married his cousin, the Ptolemaic princess Kleopatra Tryphaina whose dowry included the financial support of the court at Alexandria.<sup>91</sup> Simultaneously Grypos embarked on a campaign against Alexander II Zabinas, a supposed illegitimate son of Alexander I Balas who had also been adopted by Antiochos Sidetes and claimed the throne following the latter's death.<sup>92</sup> Antiochos Grypos soon established a distinct disregard for his mother's seniority and in 121/0 BC the dominating Kleopatra Thea was fated to drink poisoned wine she had prepared for her restless son. The start of Antiochos VIII Grypos' sole reign in 121 BC initiated the last five or six peaceful years to be experienced by any ruling member of the Seleukid house.<sup>93</sup>

Although the Syrian Wars and internecine struggles occupied much of the competing Seleukid and Ptolemaic monarchies' time, there is evidence to suggest that the colonising actions of the first *Diadochoi* were followed by the successors of Seleukos and Ptolemy I. Ptolemy II founded Philadelphia, Philoteria (somewhere on the Sea of Galilee) and perhaps Skythopolis in Koile-Syria and refounded Ake as Ptolemais in Phoenicia whilst Pella was refounded as Berenike under Ptolemy III.<sup>94</sup> The Seleukid plantation

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<sup>88</sup> Eusebius *Chronicle* Schoene-Petermann edition p.256.

<sup>89</sup> Newell 1939: no.7.

<sup>90</sup> Appian *Syrian Wars* 69; Justin *Epitome* 39.1.9; Bellinger 1949: 64; Wright 2008.

<sup>91</sup> Whitehorne 1994: 161.

<sup>92</sup> Wright 2007-08: 537-8.

<sup>93</sup> Justin *Epitome* 39.2.7-8; Bellinger 1949: 66.

<sup>94</sup> Cohen 2006: 213, 265, 268, 273, 290-3.

scheme in Syria ceased following the death of Seleukos I but began afresh under the sons of Antiochos the Great. Seleukos IV established colonies in Koile-Syria at Gadara, Seleukeia-Abila, Gaza and Seleukeia-in-the-Gaulan.<sup>95</sup> His younger brother Antiochos IV Epiphanes developed a wide range of settlements into colonies including Tarsos and Epiphaneia in Kilikia Pedias, Antioch-Pieria and Epiphaneia in Seleukis, Epiphaneia-on-the-Euphrates in Kyrrhestis, Antioch-by-Hippos, Gerasa and Jerusalem in Koile-Syria. In Phoenicia, Epiphanes refounded Berytos as Laodikeia-in-Canaan and once again refounded Ake-Ptolemaïs as Antioch-in-Ptolemaïs.<sup>96</sup> Damascus was briefly renamed Demetrias, probably under Demetrios II in the late second century BC.<sup>97</sup>

#### 1.2.4 THE LATE SELEUKID II PERIOD (121-64 BC)

The turbulent career of Kleopatra Thea ultimately laid the foundations for the next stage of instability and civil war. Conflict had already existed between her own court and rival parties formed around her sons Antiochos VI Dionysos (her son by Alexander I) and Seleukos V (her son by Demetrios II). Following her death, the major internal conflict within the Seleukid kingdom developed between Antiochos VIII Grypos (Thea's second son by Demetrios II) and Antiochos IX Kyzikenos (Thea's third son by Antiochos VII Sidetes) and continued amongst their sons and grandsons. This last period of Seleukid rule is notoriously badly documented in the ancient sources and the same pattern has been carried forward into the modern narratives. Bevan devotes a single chapter of his two volume work *The house of Seleucus* to the last 15 Seleukid monarchs.<sup>98</sup> Bellinger made a major contribution to the understanding of the period with a more detailed study which has become the cornerstone of late Seleukid history; his account still covered a century in only 51 pages.<sup>99</sup> Downey sums up the period with a succinct: "From this time [129 BC] until the occupation of Syria by the Romans in 64 BC, the history of Syria ... is a confusing and depressing record of growing weakness and dissolution..."<sup>100</sup> The reigns of Ptolemaic-born

<sup>95</sup> Cohen 2006: 277, 282-3, 286, 289.

<sup>96</sup> Pliny *Natural History* 5.93; II *Maccabees*. 4.9-10; Cohen 2006: 79, 106, 169, 206, 213-4, 227, 231, 248-9; SC 2: 55.

<sup>97</sup> Cohen 2006: 242-3; see also Chapter 5.2 below.

<sup>98</sup> Bevan 1902: 2.247-68.

<sup>99</sup> Bellinger 1949.

<sup>100</sup> Downey 1961: 126.

Seleukid queens have received slightly more attention than their husbands and sons in the publications of Macurdy and in Whitehorne's *Cleopatra*s.<sup>101</sup>

Much of what is known of the chronology of the period has been deduced from studies of the coinage of the rival Seleukid kings which, outside of Antioch, often bore dates in this period based on a Seleukid era starting in 312 BC – the return of Seleukos I to Babylon. Without the numismatic studies of scholars like Newell, Houghton, Lorber and Hoover, modern historians would have little material to work with.<sup>102</sup> In recent years, the possibility of a previously unattested king, the elusive Seleukos VII, has been hotly debated on numismatic grounds and the issue has yet to be satisfactorily resolved.<sup>103</sup>

Shortly after Antiochos VIII Grypos' assumption of sole rule, his half-brother, cousin and brother-in-law Antiochos IX Kyzikenos declared his claim to the Seleukid throne and invaded the reduced kingdom. Kyzikenos was initially successful and Grypos was forced to abandon Syria completely, spending some time in Aspendos near the Pamphylian coast (113/2 BC). In 112 BC Grypos returned with fresh forces and drove Kyzikenos from Seleukis and much of the Levantine coast. Thus the pattern continued for the better part of 20 years – one prince gaining the upper hand for a short period of time before over-extending his resources and being forced to withdraw until both claimants had exhausted all revenue. Josephus describes the two as boxers or wrestlers who found themselves exhausted yet were both too proud to yield.<sup>104</sup> The bitter enmity between these two Seleukids was fuelled by animosity felt between their respective wives, Kleopatra Tryphaina and Kleopatra IV, both daughters of Ptolemy VIII. When Antiochos Grypos returned from Aspendos, he captured Kleopatra IV when his forces reoccupied Antioch. Against Grypos' wishes, Tryphaina sent soldiers to execute her sister as she clung to the cult statue of one of the city's temples.<sup>105</sup> When Kyzikenos took Antioch back in 109 BC, he slew Kleopatra Tryphaina in revenge.

At this stage, the inter-relations between the Ptolemaic and Seleukid courts becomes even more entangled.<sup>106</sup> Antiochos Grypos next took the third daughter of Ptolemy VIII, Kleopatra Selene, as his wife. Selene had previously been married to her brother, Ptolemy

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<sup>101</sup> Macurdy 1932: 93-101; Whitehorne 1994: 149-73.

<sup>102</sup> See Bibliography for the extent of these scholars' works. For the most recent (and much needed) revision of the traditional chronology see Hoover 2007.

<sup>103</sup> Kritt 2002; Burgess 2004; Hoover 2005.

<sup>104</sup> Josephus *Jewish Antiquities* 13.327.

<sup>105</sup> Justin *Epitome* 39.3.5-12.

<sup>106</sup> See Appendix B.

IX whose own first wife was the Kleopatra IV mentioned above, the later wife of Antiochos IX! When Ptolemy IX was expelled from Egypt by his co-reigning mother, Kleopatra III, his marriage to Selene was dissolved and the latter was dispatched to Syria to marry Grypos and tie him once more into a dynastic alliance with Kleopatra III's court in Alexandria.<sup>107</sup> In 96 BC, Antiochos Grypos was assassinated by Herakleon, one of his own officers, and Antiochos Kyzikenos gained control of all of the Seleukid kingdom and married his brother's widow, Kleopatra Selene.<sup>108</sup> Herakleon established himself as independent tyrant of Herakleia and Hierapolis-Bambyke in Kyrrhestis following his assassination of the king. There was a contemporary tyrant named Strato who controlled nearby Beroia but he was removed by either Herakleon or his son and successor Dionysios who thus added the city to their territory to form a political unit of some importance in north-eastern Syria.<sup>109</sup> Kyzikenos was himself dispossessed and killed by the eldest son of Grypos, Seleukos VI, in the following year. Kyzikenos' son Antiochos X Eusebes claimed the throne as his father's legitimate successor and to secure his position, became the fourth husband of his stepmother Kleopatra Selene.<sup>110</sup>

Despite these internecine conflicts, the chronology of the principal Seleukid seats of the late Seleukid II period, Antioch and Damascus, has been untangled through a series of numismatic studies.<sup>111</sup> Antiochos X Eusebes defeated Seleukos VI who was forced to commit suicide. However, Grypos had five sons and the death of the eldest amounted to chopping the head off a Seleukid hydra. Three of his brothers came forward to take their revenge on Antiochos Eusebes. Demetrios III Eukairos was established in Damascus with the backing of Ptolemy IX. Demetrios' brothers Antiochos XI and Philip I, the twins Philadelphoi, struck at Antioch from a base in Kilikia. According to Josephus, Antiochos X Eusebes was defeated and killed by the Parthians around 92 BC<sup>112</sup> although how they were involved in the conflict is unclear. Perhaps they were already allied with Philip I as they would be later in his war against Demetrios III. Appian however, declares that Antiochos X Eusebes continued to reign somewhere in Syria for a further decade although it is possible that Appian has confused Eusebes with his son Antiochos XIII Asiaticos in this passage.<sup>113</sup>

<sup>107</sup> Justin *Epitome* 39.3.2, 39.4.1-4.

<sup>108</sup> Appian *Syrian Wars* 69; Eusebius *Chronicle* Schoene-Petermann edition p.259.

<sup>109</sup> Josephus *Jewish Antiquities* 13.365, 13.384; Strabo *Geography* 16.2.7.

<sup>110</sup> Appian *Syrian Wars* 69.

<sup>111</sup> Newell 1939; Houghton and Möseler 1990; Hoover 2007.

<sup>112</sup> Josephus *Jewish Antiquities* 13.371.

<sup>113</sup> Appian *Syrian Wars* 47, 70; Bellinger 1949: 75 n.73.

Regardless, with Eusebes either dead, captured or a spent force, Philip I and Demetrios III turned on each other in the struggle to control Antioch. The dynasts of Hierapolis-Bambyke and Beroia were powerful enough to influence the outcome of the war and although Demetrios managed to drive Philip out of Seleukis, Philip sought shelter in Beroia and called upon the assistance of Aziz, the local Arab *phylarch* (chieftain), and Mithridates, the Parthian satrap of Mesopotamia. Demetrios III was captured and spent the rest of his life in sumptuous captivity at the Parthian royal court. Philip regained Antioch and in the south, the fifth son of Grypos, Antiochos XII Dionysos assumed the diadem in Damascus (88/7 BC).<sup>114</sup>

Philip reigned for an uncertain period of time in Antioch and we are not provided with an account of his death. Antiochos XII maintained control of Damascus although he suffered from endemic depredations from Ptolemaios the tetrarch of the Ituraeans, the Nabataean king Aretas III, and the Hasmonaean ruler Alexander Jannaeus. He died in battle against a combined Judaeo-Nabataean force in 83 BC and Damascus opened its gates to Aretas rather than accept the neighbouring Ituraeans as its new rulers.<sup>115</sup> Meanwhile, the claim of the sons of Antiochos X Eusebes and Kleopatra Selene to the Seleukid throne were upheld by the boys' mother. The eldest son, Antiochos XIII Asiatikos certainly co-reigned with Selene maintaining their position in Koile-Syria around Damascus and parts of the coast. Coin hoard evidence suggests that sometime after 80 BC, the pair reclaimed Damascus for the Seleukid house although they were not fated to hold it for too long.<sup>116</sup> Selene may have become estranged from Antiochos XIII at some stage between 83 and 75 BC and co-reigned separately with a second son named Seleukos (VII) although this is highly conjectural and depends wholly on the reading of a single badly preserved bronze coin.<sup>117</sup>

One non-Seleukid monarch who emerged in the early first century BC deserves special attention at this point – Tigranes II of Armenia. Following Alexander's defeat of Darius at Gaugamela in 331 BC, Orontes, the Achaemenid satrap of Armenia declared his independence and with few interludes his dynasty retained its autonomy until the reign of

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<sup>114</sup> Josephus *Jewish Antiquities* 13.384-7.

<sup>115</sup> Josephus *Jewish Antiquities* 13.387-92.

<sup>116</sup> Hoover 2005: 98-9; SC 2: 615-6; Wright 2010: 243 no.200.

<sup>117</sup> Kritt 2002; Burgess 2004; Hoover 2005.

Antiochos III the Great.<sup>118</sup> Antiochos III intervened in the internal politics of Armenia and established the Armenian prince Artaxias as one of his *strategoi* over what was intended to remain a Seleukid satrapy. Following the Peace of Apameia in 188 BC, Artaxias assumed the Armenian throne in his own name and established a new dynasty. Antiochos IV Epiphanes again brought Armenia within the Seleukid empire but during the troubles of the late Seleukid I period it again seceded.<sup>119</sup> Henceforth, Armenians played little role in the ambitions and careers of the Seleukid kings until the reign of Tigranes II (95-55 BC).

Justin states that Tigranes was invited by the cities of northern Syria to replace the squabbling Seleukid princes as their monarch although Appian makes his acquisitions (of all the lands between Kilikia and Egypt) far more sinister.<sup>120</sup> Tigranes certainly entered Antioch around 74 BC and Damascus by 72/1 BC and established his dominance over the local kings and dynasts.<sup>121</sup> The Armenian king besieged Kleopatra Selene in Ake-Ptolemaïs in 69 BC and captured her along with the city. Selene was taken to Seleukeia-Zeugma in Kommagene and there executed. The Armenian noble Magadates was made governor of the new Artaxiad satrapy of Syria while Tigranes retired to northern Mesopotamia where he forcibly settled 300,000 Arabs, Greeks, Kappadokians and Kilikians at his new southern capital which he named – with typical Hellenistic imagination – Tigranokerta, after himself.<sup>122</sup> The ancient sources concerning Tigranokerta's exact location contradict each other and modern scholarship has tended to place it at either Meiafarkin or Tell Ermen/Kiziltepe to the north or south of the Tigris respectively.<sup>123</sup> Tigranes maintained complete control of most of Syria until the campaign of L. Lucullus in 69 BC forced him to withdraw his forces. In 64 BC, the expedition of Gn. Pompey combined with the revolt of the king's son (Tigranes the younger) forced him to relinquish his Levantine claim and retire permanently to Armenia.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> Justin *Epitome* 38.7.2; Burney and Lang 1971: 191; Redgate 1998: 61-3; Chahin 2001: 188. Whilst Burney, Lang and Redgate give only summary accounts, Chahin's more detailed but fiercely partisan outlook must be treated with caution.

<sup>119</sup> Strabo *Geography* 11.14.15; Burney and Lang 1971: 192; Gera and Horowitz 1997: 241, 243-8; Redgate 1998: 67; Chahin 2001: 193-6.

<sup>120</sup> Justin *Epitome* 40.1 seems to date the advent of Tigranes to 83 BC, however Josephus *Jewish Antiquities* 13.419-20 supported by the numismatic evidence (Hoover 2007: 296-8) makes it almost certain that Tigranes' occupation of Seleukis could not have happened until c.74/3 BC. Appian *Syrian Wars* 48.

<sup>121</sup> Josephus *Jewish Antiquities* 13.419-21; Strabo *Geography* 16.2.3; Redgate 1998: 69; contra Safrastian (1970) whose nationalistic approach to Tigranes' Levantine campaigns must be treated with much caution.

<sup>122</sup> Appian *Mithridatic Wars* 67, 84; Plutarch *Lucullus* 21.4, 26.1; Strabo *Geography* 11.14.15, 12.2.9; Holmes 1917; Burney and Lang 1971: 198; Syme 1983: 61.

<sup>123</sup> See for example Holmes 1917; Burney and Lang 1971: 198; Syme 1983.

<sup>124</sup> Appian *Mithridatic Wars* 82-8; Plutarch *Pompey* 33.



In the wake of Tigranes' withdrawal, the victorious Lucullus accepted the rights of Antiochos XIII Asiatikos to his ancestral throne and Antiochos seems to have been established as a Roman client-king.<sup>125</sup> Sometime around 67/6 BC, Philip II Philorhomaïos (also known as Philip Barypous) the son of Philip I Philadelphos, made his own claim for the kingship and with the assistance of Aziz the Arab (probably the same dynast who had aided Philip I against Demetrios III), managed to expel Antiochos XIII Asiatikos from Antioch. Antiochos sought an alliance with Sampsigeramos, the dynast of Emesa but the latter made a private agreement with Aziz to divide Syria between them. Antiochos was held prisoner although Philip managed to hold off Aziz outside of Antioch where the Seleukid was recognised as an allied king by Q. Marcius Rex, proconsul of that part of Kilikia Pedias around Adana which had been made a Roman province.<sup>126</sup> In 66/5 BC, P. Clodius Pulcher (that arch-agitator of the late Roman Republic), arrived in Antioch offering his assistance in the war against the Arabs. For some unrecorded reason, Clodius incited the Antiochene population to rebel against their king and Philip II temporarily vanished from the scene.<sup>127</sup> Sampsigeramos, hoping to install a puppet king, released Antiochos who resumed his place as ruler in the great Syrian metropolis. In 64 BC, Gn. Pompey commenced his famous „settlement“ of the East in which he reordered the disparate assemblage of Syrian dynasts, cities and kingdoms along lines which he found most profitable or beneficial towards his own ends. As part of the settlement, Antiochos XIII was removed from power and Syria was converted into a Roman province, with Antioch granted the status of a free city.<sup>128</sup>

Although Antiochos is not mentioned in any of the extant sources following his removal by Pompey, both his brother Seleukos and Philip II later played minor parts in the history of the Ptolemies in Alexandria. In 58 BC Ptolemy XII Auletes was driven out of Alexandria by his daughter Berenike IV who assumed control of the government in her own name.<sup>129</sup> She summoned Seleukos – nicknamed Kybiosaktes, „fishmonger“ or „packer of salted fish“ by the Alexandrians – to Egypt whom she married and ruled with briefly as king-consort before having him strangled.<sup>130</sup> Porphyry (quoted in Eusebius) claims that an

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<sup>125</sup> Appian *Syrian Wars* 49; Justin *Epitome* 40.2.2.

<sup>126</sup> Downey 1951: 151-8.

<sup>127</sup> Cassius Dio *Roman History* 36.17.3; Bellinger 1949: 82-4.

<sup>128</sup> Appian *Mithridatic Wars* 106; Appian *Syrian War* 49-50, 70; Justin *Epitome* 40.2.3-5.

<sup>129</sup> Macurdy 1932: 180-4.

<sup>130</sup> Cassius Dio *Roman History* 39.57; Strabo *Geography* 17.1.11.

unnamed Seleukid prince invited to marry Berenike died of a sudden illness before arriving in Egypt.<sup>131</sup> This has often been supposed to relate to Seleukos although he is not the only candidate. We know that around 56 BC the dethroned Philip II (Eusebius confused him with his father Philip I) put himself forward as a potential groom for Berenike and therefore a potential king of Egypt. He was compelled by Gabinius to stay in Syria and there is a good case to suggest that it was he who died suddenly.<sup>132</sup> From 55 BC, the Roman provincial government in Syria started to produce posthumous issues in the name of Philip I (or Philip II), a move inconceivable if Philip II was still alive and so we must understand that he had died by this date.<sup>133</sup> Thirty-six years later, the Ituraean tetrarch Zenodoros was detained in Antioch by the Roman government and he likewise died of a sudden, mysterious illness. It seems that Roman Antioch did not agree with the health of ambitious eastern royalty.<sup>134</sup>

The situation in the countryside during the late Seleukid II period appears to have closely resembled the disturbances that had wreaked havoc in Babylonia in the 130s and 120s BC. The Babylonian Astronomical Diaries indicate that following the collapse of firm Seleukid control, Babylon faced attacks from neighbouring dynasts and Arab tribes. For long periods the hinterland of the city remained unsafe and agricultural production suffered resulting in economic turmoil. The Arabs even managed to sack the city on one occasion although at other times they were bought off.<sup>135</sup> The chronic political instability was perpetuated by the numerous petty kings and dynasts (both Seleukids and their indigenous successors) who each vied for power. None powerful enough to achieve complete hegemony, but all too assertive to allow another to reign unchallenged. The new indigenous successor states were the real victors during the late Seleukid civil wars. As each new Seleukid prince entered the stage, they vied with one another for the support not only of Ptolemaic Egypt but also from the indigenous dynasts who ruled small principalities within the Seleukid state. Of the Levantine states that arose out of the collapsing Seleukid kingdom, the most powerful seem to have been (from north to south) Kommagene along the upper Euphrates,<sup>136</sup> Emesa on the desert frontier south of Apameia, the Ituraean

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<sup>131</sup> Eusebius *Chronicle* Schoene-Petermann edition p.261.

<sup>132</sup> Bevan 1902: 2.268; id. 1927: 356.

<sup>133</sup> *RPC* 606-7; Burgess 2004: 24; Hoover 2007: 299-300; *CSE* 2: nos. 825-9.

<sup>134</sup> Joseph *Jewish Antiquities* 15.359.

<sup>135</sup> Grainger 1999: 319.

<sup>136</sup> See Appendix C.

tetrarchy in the Massyas valley between the Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon ranges, the Hasmonaean kingdom in Judaea and the Nabataeans of Arabia.

### **1.3 QUESTIONS OF ETHNICITY IN THE HELLENISTIC EAST**

The Semitic populations of Syria had lost their political independence centuries before the arrival of Alexander the Great and the Greco-Macedonians. However, the indigenous communities continued to maintain a strong cultural identity which they expressed through their religious beliefs and practices. The royal patronage of certain aspects of their subjects' indigenous heritage had the potential to translate into a wider support base for the royal house. Therefore, it is expedient to consider the diversity of ethnic groups present in Syria during the Seleukid period. A group or individual's sense of identity and belonging must be taken into account when discussing their religious beliefs and practices; it is suggested here that the variety and fusion of the religious forms and processes visible during the period is directly related to the mixture of ethnic entities in Hellenistic Syria.

The concept of „ethnicity“ can be best defined as a social construction – a series of delineated groupings that enable a population to be broken down and categorised according to definable sub-groups. However, it falls to modern scholars to discern how exact or defined these sub-groups may have been in any given time and space and just as importantly, what significance was placed upon them in their original context. Broadly speaking, ethnicity itself may be broken down into two principal categories: 1) genetic or physical ethnicity and 2) cultural ethnicity. Genetic or physical ethnicity is something that is passed down to an individual through the genes of their parents and is thus unalterable, determining physical appearance. Other than subtle variations in bone structure or DNA analysis, there is no archaeological way to differentiate genetic ethnicity as per definition 1) and any cultural conclusions drawn through such investigations must be particularly broad. Cultural ethnicity is quite different. It is based on internal and/or external perceptions of an individual or group and is therefore malleable. Cultural ethnicity must be learned but may be based upon environmental factors, or assumed or adopted through conscious choice. Cultural ethnicity by its intrinsic meaning may leave traces of „material culture“ in the archaeological record. Material indicators of cultural ethnicity may be found in all aspects

of the archaeological record, from town planning and architecture to ceramics and diet although these indicators lack the explicit ethnic labels found in the written sources.<sup>137</sup>

Cultural ethnicity may exist as multiple layers of identity; at a family or community level, within a civic framework, under umbrella „national“ labels, or based upon a perceived ancestry. But how much of this ethnic definition is a realistic reflection of Hellenistic attitudes and how much is a modern imposition? We know from historical sources that in Antioch-on-the-Orontes, the citizen population was considered „Antiochene“, but individual Antiochenes also treasured internal divisions which connected them with their ancestral origins, real or perceived. Thus we find that among the Antiochene *demos* for example, there existed a distinct memory of whether individuals were descended from Athenians, Macedonians, Argives, or any number of discreet Hellenic populations, together with Jews (who shared in the citizenship) and a multitude of other non-Greeks (who did not).<sup>138</sup> Claimed ethnicities based on descent may also have been preserved and perpetuated by the formation of Antioch’s 18 *phyle* or tribes which Ramsay suggests were based on the origins of the colonists.<sup>139</sup> Similar ethnic distinctions are perhaps best illustrated by the many preserved papyri fragments from contemporary Egypt. In a record of a dispute dated to 218 BC, the plaintiff describes himself as an “Argive by descendance” whilst the accused is a “Lykian by descendance”. It is obvious that both men’s families had been settled in Egypt for some time but their „ethnic“ origins were considered a thing of great importance.<sup>140</sup> Nevertheless, both parties listed in this example should be considered Hellenised as opposed to the great number of non-Hellenic indigenous populations who co-habited the same regions. At Dura-Europos on the Middle Euphrates, there are no known cases of non-Greeks listed as *Europaioi* – citizens of Europos – on the earliest surviving register of names dated to 190 BC.<sup>141</sup> Nor indeed are there any in records until after AD 180, despite the commencement of non-Greek political control in the period around 100 BC.<sup>142</sup>

It has often been found convenient to draw an ethnic schism between the „Hellenised“ urban centres and their indigenous hinterlands: “Outside the cities, the

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<sup>137</sup> On the distinction between genetic and cultural ethnicity see Weber 1978: 385-98; Morely 2004: 100-4. Central to the ongoing discussion of of cultural identity is Barth 1969; id. 1994. For archaeological identifiers see Jones 1997; Clarke and Jackson (forthcoming).

<sup>138</sup> Josephus *Jewish Antiquities* 12.119; Libanius *Oration* 11.91, 11.119; Malalas *Chronicle* 8.15, 8.30; Strabo *Geography* 16.2.5.

<sup>139</sup> Ramsay 1918: 184-5.

<sup>140</sup> *P. Enteuxeis* 66; Lewis 2001: 65-6.

<sup>141</sup> *P. Dura* 12; Welles 1951: 262.

<sup>142</sup> *P. Dura* 19. 28-9; Welles 1951: 255; Edwell 2008: 101-2.

peasants lived according to the rhythms of the seasons and their ancestral habits; languages, gods, attitudes changed but slowly here.”<sup>143</sup> To a large extent this appears to have been the case, but the distinction was certainly not exclusive. Hierapolis-Bambyke once more provides a little clarity in an otherwise blurred overview. A papyrus letter from the Zenon archive, dated to 156 BC, mentions a slave who was “by race a Syrian from Bambyke ... tattooed on the right wrist with two barbarian letters.”<sup>144</sup> The non-Greek practice of tattooing was still practised at Hierapolis at the time of Lucian’s visit in the second century AD<sup>145</sup> even though the city had probably been „Hellenised“ and received a Greco-Macedonian colony by the reign of Antiochos IV Epiphanes (if not before) and produced Seleukid period municipal coinage that conformed to normal Greek types. Despite the close contact between Greek and native facilitated during the Hellenistic period there could still be ethnic disparity within the urban centres.

Prior to the Macedonian conquest, cuneiform archives from Mesopotamia reveal the region to have been alive with ethnic awareness, a proverbial melting pot of Babylonian, Aramaic, Arabic, Jewish, Iranian, Kilikian, Phoenician and Egyptian populations who maintained their ethnic consciousness for generations, even after intermarriage with other groups.<sup>146</sup> Elsewhere we find little evidence in the written record of the perceptions held by non-Hellenic populations, either of themselves or of their neighbours until after the Achaemenid period; even after Alexander’s conquests the evidence is less than plentiful. What little we do have from the Hellenistic period is recorded in Greek, the language of the colonists, so that it is clear that even here we are only dealing with the perceptions of an educated elite. The economic pressures involved in obtaining a Greek education and enrolment in the *gymnasion* or *palaistra* ensured a certain sense of exclusivity and granted its participants a common social identity apart from the cultural melange of the rest of the population.<sup>147</sup>

The complexities of ethnic perception in the Hellenised East are illustrated by the autobiographical brief provided (in Greek) by Meleager of Gadara: “The island of Tyre reared me but the land where I was born is Gadara, the new Attica of the Syrians ... Is there anything surprising if I am a Syrian? The only fatherland, foreigner, is the world we

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<sup>143</sup> Harl 1987: 2.

<sup>144</sup> *P. Zenon* 121.

<sup>145</sup> Lucian *The Syrian Goddess* 59

<sup>146</sup> Dandamayev 2004.

<sup>147</sup> Harl 1987: 4.

inhabit. The same chaos has produced all mortals”.<sup>148</sup> Meleager was born around 140 BC in the Macedonian colony of Gadara which probably received Greek *polis* status (and further colonists?) in the reign of Seleukos IV Philopator and was thereafter known as Seleukeia.<sup>149</sup> Meleager was obviously well educated in Greek, although that education seems to have been acquired in the Hellenised Phoenician city of Tyre. In the early first century BC he moved to the Aegean island of Kos where he was based until his death, yet throughout this period he could be perceived as „Syrian“.

Dionysius of Halicarnassus (first century BC) defined *to Hellenikon*, being Greek, as the use of the Greek language, living in a Greek manner, acknowledging the same gods and living by reasonable laws.<sup>150</sup> This perception of what made an individual „Greek“ echoes the discussion of Herodotus on the same subject<sup>151</sup> although where Herodotus placed emphasis on blood kinship, any reference to genetic ancestry or lineage is distinctly absent from Dionysius – perhaps because the latter was trying to reconcile the Hellenised East with Roman rule. By Dionysius’ definition, Meleager was Greek and yet Meleager himself claimed to be Syrian.<sup>152</sup> Was this perhaps a case of a geographic distinction? Did Meleager perceive himself to be Greek in a cultural sense within a Syrian context, but Syrian in the geographic sense when living abroad in the Greek Aegean? Unfortunately we are unable to say, but clearly such identities did matter to individuals in the Hellenistic age, much as they continue to do today. Cohen demonstrated the malleable tendencies of seemingly simple ethnic umbrella labels in an illuminating paper in which she identified eleven different meanings for the term *Ioudaios/Judaeus* in the Greco-Roman world which ranged from ancestry to association and geography.<sup>153</sup> In Ptolemaic Egypt too, “the cleavage between the two ethnic groups [Greek and Egyptian], and the consciousness of their separateness, remained the dominant fact of socio-political life”.<sup>154</sup>

In the second century AD the works of the satirist Lucian of Samosata and the novelist and rhetorician, Iamblichos (both writing in Greek) provide a supplementary body of evidence to the investigation of Hellenistic ethnic perceptions. Lucian was born in

<sup>148</sup> Meleager *Greek Anthology* 8.418 (translation in Teixidor 1990: 70). On Gadara as a centre of Hellenic learning, see Geiger 1985.

<sup>149</sup> Cohen 2006: 282-6.

<sup>150</sup> Dionysius of Halicarnassus *Roman Antiquities* 1.89.4.

<sup>151</sup> Herodotus *The Histories* 8.144.

<sup>152</sup> Indeed, if patronymics can be used to approximate racial ethnicity then there is a case to define Meleager, the son of Eukrates, as a Greek even by Herodotus’ much narrower definition.

<sup>153</sup> Cohen 1990.

<sup>154</sup> Lewis 2001: 29.

Samosata, the capital of Roman Kommagene and described himself as a Syrian speaking a barbarian tongue (or perhaps heavily accented Greek) and wearing Assyrian garb in his youth.<sup>155</sup> Iamblichos saw himself as “not one of the Greeks inhabiting Syria, but one of the natives, speaking their language and living by their customs”.<sup>156</sup> Iamblichos was born in the Hellenised Ituraean city of Chalkis-under-Libanos in Koile-Syria and although he clearly received a Greek education, he bore an indigenous name, claimed that both his father and mother were non-Greek Syrians, and perceived himself to be apart from the Greek colonisers.<sup>157</sup> Both individuals espouse their Syrian origins while embracing many, if not most, aspects of Hellenic education and culture. It is this same type of synthesis between Hellenic and Semitic culture that appears to have been present already in Syria by the mid-late second century BC (late Seleukid II period) if not before, and continued to flourish into the Roman period.

### 1.3.1 THE ‘ETHNICITY’ OF THE ROYAL HOUSE<sup>158</sup>

The litany of unions between the Seleukid royal house and neighbouring dynasties reflects a program of cementing foreign policy through marriage. However, the ultimate result was to undermine any sense of ethnic homogeneity maintained by the royal family. With the exception of a marriage between Antiochos, the eldest son of Antiochos III the Great, and his sister Laodike (196/5 BC),<sup>159</sup> no attempt seems to have been made to retain any sort of purity of dynastic blood as was found repeatedly in the court of their Ptolemaic contemporaries.<sup>160</sup> In contrast, Seleukos I Nikator had been the only prominent *Diadoch* not to repudiate his Iranian wife following the death of Alexander the Great. In 324 BC Seleukos had married Apame, the daughter of the Baktrian noble Spitamenes, at the mass wedding organised by Alexander at Susa.<sup>161</sup> The Persian and Median wives of Ptolemy, Perdikkas and their associates disappear from the sources following 323 BC and the various

<sup>155</sup> Lucian *Double Indictment* 14, 27; id. *The Way to Write History* 24; id. *The Scythian* 9. Lucian may have been responsible for the production of *The Syrian Goddess*, which provides further insights into the author’s concepts of ethnicity and self perceptions (especially *The Syrian Goddess* 1 and 60; Dirven 1997:163-9; see also Chapter 4.5 below) although his authorship has been hotly debated, see Stocks 1937: 16; Goossens 1943: 17; Oden 1977: 4-24; Dirven 1997; Polański 1998; Lightfoot 2003: 184-208.

<sup>156</sup> Millar 1971: 6.

<sup>157</sup> Vanderspoel 1988.

<sup>158</sup> See also Appendix B

<sup>159</sup> Appian *Syrian Wars* 4.

<sup>160</sup> Contra Ogden 1999: 117-70 throughout.

<sup>161</sup> Arrian *Anabasis* 7.4. Spitamenes led the Baktrian and Sogdian resistance to Alexander the Great (329-328 BC) and has been described as the “most formidable opponent who ever faced Alexander”, see Rubin 1987: 343; Holt 2005: 45-81.

generals proceeded to marry amongst themselves to shore up their relative positions in the prevailing uncertainty. Seleukos must have found marriage to the Iranian Apame favourable in his eastern landscape and if the names of city foundations are any basis, appears to have been proud of his match.<sup>162</sup> Apame bore Seleukos his son and heir (later Antiochos I Soter) within a year or two of the marriage, probably in Babylon. Antiochos therefore was not only half-Iranian by descent, but was born and raised in Asia. He never travelled to mainland Greece and any „Greek thought“ or belief he may have held would have been taught. To be sure, Seleukos“ court (as with those of his successors) appears to have been dominated by a Greco-Macedonian elite, but these cannot have been the only influences on the young Antiochos.<sup>163</sup> It is interesting to note for example that Antiochos I had the Babylonian priest Berossos prepare three books on his native history. These were based on the Babylonian chronicles but produced in Greek and followed the principles of Hellenistic historiography.<sup>164</sup> There was clearly a royal interest in learning about their pre-Greek forebears.

The Iranian connection was refreshed four generations later when Soter“s great-grandson and namesake, Antiochos III the Great, married into the Iranian Mithridatidai of Pontos. The marriage was ceremonially conducted on the bridge at Zeugma (221 BC), symbolically uniting the twin towns of Seleukeia and Apameia, bride and groom, Macedonian and Persian, east and west. The bride, Laodike (III) was the daughter of a Seleukid princess although her father, Mithridates II, was descended from one of the seven great noble families of Achaemenid Persia.<sup>165</sup> Both sons who succeeded Antiochos the Great were born of Laodike III and thus, all subsequent Seleukid kings were further incorporated into an eastern dynastic complex. It even seems that the boy who would grow up to be Antiochos IV Epiphanes may have been initially named Mithridates in honour of his maternal grandfather and only adopted his dynastic name after the death of his eldest brother, Antiochos.<sup>166</sup> The use of Iranian nomenclature for a legitimate child of Antiochos

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<sup>162</sup> Appian (*Syrian Wars* 57) cites three Apameias founded by Seleukos including the colony commonly referred to as Seleukeia-Zeugma where the Seleukeia (on the west bank of the Euphrates) was joined by a bridge with its twin settlement, Apameia, on the east bank. See also Tarn 1929: 139-40; Macurdy 1932: 77-8; Grainger 1990a: 12. The memory of the Iranian blood of Apame was perpetuated in the names of the Apame, daughter of Antiochos I, and Apames, son of Antiochos II, see Appendix B.

<sup>163</sup> Eddy 1961:62-4 stresses the important role of the queen mother in legitimating the king“s right to rule in the eyes of the Iranian nobility; see also Bernard 1976b: 257.

<sup>164</sup> Kuhrt 1987: 53-6.

<sup>165</sup> Justin *Epitome* 38.7.1; Polybios *Histories* 5.43; Bosworth and Wheatley 1998: 155.

<sup>166</sup> Grainger 1997: 22.



the Great emphasises that intermarriage with Iranian dynasts was not merely a pragmatic process to secure foreign relations. The Iranian descent of Antiochos' children was stressed with the naming of Mithridates-Antiochos as indeed it was with his brother Ardys and his daughter (or sister) Nysa.<sup>167</sup>

That is not to say that Greco-Macedonian princesses were excluded from the dynasty. Rather, until the middle of the second century, all other Seleukid queens appear to have come from a Hellenised elite. The wife of Antiochos Soter was Stratonike, the beautiful daughter of Demetrios Poliorketes, granddaughter of both Antigonos Monophthalmos and Antipater, Alexander the Great's Macedonian regent.<sup>168</sup> The wives of Antiochos II Theos, Seleukos II Kallinikos and Seleukos III Soter were all daughters of an eminent Greco-Macedonian family from Asia-Minor who have been tentatively reported to have been a junior branch of the Seleukid family, descended from Seleukos Nikator and Apame.<sup>169</sup> Seleukos IV and Antiochos IV married Laodike IV in turn, and there are good grounds to view her as an Antigoniid by birth.<sup>170</sup> Where we have the information, it is clear that the later queens of the Seleukid kingdom were drawn primarily from the Ptolemaic dynasty – a house of predominantly Macedonian stock but with a modicum of Egyptianisation in customs.<sup>171</sup>

Where clothing is concerned, the scarcity of full-body representations of Seleukid rulers leaves a significant lacuna. Seleukid heads are well illustrated through numismatic portraiture and a small number of surviving sculpted busts, but the few coin depictions of standing or mounted kings grant little indication of dress.<sup>172</sup> The numismatic portraits and sculptural remains universally depict the king wearing a diadem, the physical Hellenistic expression of kingship developed by Alexander the Great out of Achaemenid traditions.<sup>173</sup> A small and unusual series of silver coins produced by Seleukos I at Ekbatana provides one illuminating full body illustration. Here a mounted warrior was shown wearing a horned Attic helmet, a long-sleeved *chiton* with a flowing *chlamys* and, perhaps, even a pair of

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<sup>167</sup> Ardys, Livy *History of Rome* 33.19.9-10; although see also Grainger (1997: 81) who disputes Ardys' royal parentage. Nysa: Grainger 1997: 52.

<sup>168</sup> Appian *Syrian Wars* 59-61; Lucian *On the Syrian Goddess* 17-8; Plutarch *Demetrius* 38.

<sup>169</sup> Strabo *Geography* 13.4.2; Bevan 1902: 1.157. This is disputed by Grainger 1997: 127-8.

<sup>170</sup> Helliesen 1981: 224-8.

<sup>171</sup> Kleopatra Thea, Kleopatra IV, Kleopatra Tryphaina and Kleopatra Selene. See Macurdy 1932: 93-101; Whitehorne 1994: 149-73.

<sup>172</sup> For the sculptural remains see Houghton 1986; Smith 1988: nos. 21, 30, 32-3, 36, 93-5, 121.

<sup>173</sup> Smith 1988: 34-8.

trousers.<sup>174</sup> The identity of the figure has been much disputed but in reality, can be no one except the reigning king, Seleukos I.<sup>175</sup> Seleukos' Macedonian heritage is expressed through his Attic helmet and *kontos*, the long Greco-Macedonian cavalry spear. However, the long-sleeved *chiton* and possible trousers signify an Iranian influence infusing the royal iconography.<sup>176</sup> Certain bronze coin reverses of Seleukos II and Antiochos III also show the full length figure of the king<sup>177</sup> although of these, only one image is large enough to confidently discern the costume of the monarch. On this coin, a large bronze from the ΔΕΛ monogram mint associated with Antioch-on-the-Orontes, the mounted king is described by Houghton and Lorber as in "Macedonian attire", he is diademed and wears a long-sleeved *chiton* and flowing *chlamys*. There is no evidence for trousers.<sup>178</sup>

The ancestor stelae of Antiochos I of Kommagene provide a further set of Seleukid portraits. All told, fragments of seven Seleukid kings are depicted on the Hierothesion at Nemrud Dağ, none of which are complete.<sup>179</sup> However, from the known remains, it is clear that each king was dressed in a similar fashion, wearing a diadem tied around the hair and a long-sleeved *chiton* below a muscled cuirass. Their legs were left bare in the Greek manner.<sup>180</sup> A possible final posthumous depiction of Seleukos I (AD 159) from the temple of the Gaddé at Dura-Europos may show the king in military dress; a plain cuirass with elaborate *pteryges* over a long-sleeved *chiton* with a *chlamys* fastened with a brooch at the right shoulder. His legs are left bare except for a pair of cavalry boots.<sup>181</sup>

One constant in all the above examples is the long-sleeved *chiton*. To Classical Greeks, male garments with long sleeves were considered to be characteristic of barbarian, especially Iranian, garb.<sup>182</sup> Alexander had adopted aspects of Achaemenid dress, but

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<sup>174</sup> SC 1: nos.203, 209, 213. The presence of trousers is maintained by Hoover (2002b), although iconographically the evidence is tenuous.

<sup>175</sup> See Chapter 3.3.1 below. On the contested identity see Newell 1938: nos.481-2 (Seleukos I); Houghton and Stewart 1999 (Alexander on Boukephalos); SC 1: no.203 (Hero "with Dionysiac attributes"); Hoover 2002b (Seleukos I); Millar and Walters 2004 (Seleukos I).

<sup>176</sup> Hoover 2002b.

<sup>177</sup> Seleukos II – SC 1: nos.709, 767-8 (mounted), 779-80 (on foot); Antiochos III – SC 1: nos.1259-63 (mounted).

<sup>178</sup> SC 1: 709.

<sup>179</sup> See Appendix C.

<sup>180</sup> Sanders 1996: 430-3.

<sup>181</sup> Rostovtzeff *et al.* 1939: 258-60. The figure may actually represent the Gad or Tyche of Europos in the form of Seleukos, see Rostovtzeff 1939: 288-9. See fig.

<sup>182</sup> See for example, Herodotus *The Histories* 7.61-2; Strabo *Geography* 15.3.19; Xenophon *Cyropaedia* 8.3.13; Miller 1997: 156-65.

rejected others (such as trousers) to create a fusion, symbolic of his new world empire.<sup>183</sup> Alexander was shown wearing a long-sleeved *chiton* in the Alexander mosaic from Pompeii although the event depicted (probably the battle of Issos) predates his supposed adoption of Persian dress. Long sleeves also feature on the sarcophagus of Abdalonymos from Sidon, worn by all of the clothed Macedonians, as well as by Alexander and the Persians (or Persianised Sidonians). It is therefore difficult to attribute the long-sleeved *chiton* to a purely Iranian origin. It may have been a feature of pre-Alexandrian Macedonian military dress. Alternatively, it may have been shown on the later mosaic and sarcophagus as an illustration of Alexander's trend towards a fusion of styles and perhaps influenced by fashions current at the Seleukid court.

The Seleukid monarchs ultimately expressed themselves as Greco-Macedonians, utilised Greek language and ruled over their kingdom with the aid of a Hellenised elite. To all intents and purposes, the dynasty's outward appearance was that of a Hellenic monarchy. However, there was no sense of exclusion from the government based on race. Rather, the use of the language of government, Greek, appears to have been the precondition of holding power within the kingdom.<sup>184</sup> During the Laodikean war, the unfortunate Seleukid satrap of Kilikia bore the Iranian name Aribazos,<sup>185</sup> as did his namesake the *strategos* of Sardes under Achaïos<sup>186</sup> and the Seleukid military commander in Persis, Oborzos.<sup>187</sup> Thirteen Seleukid divisional commanders were named at the battle of Raphia and these include two non-Greek names (Aspasianos the Mede and Zabdibelos the Arab) and a third figure who was a barbarian with a Greek name (Lysimachos the Galatian). The others are specifically or implicitly Greco-Macedonians from Hellenised areas (such as Menedemos of Alabanda in Karia).<sup>188</sup> The dynasty itself, whilst maintaining a definite „Greekness“, reinforced through intermarriage with other Macedonian dynasties, was localised beyond the old Greek heartland and was situated very much in an eastern landscape. To the wider Mediterranean oriented world, the Seleukids ruled over a kingdom

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<sup>183</sup> Arrian *Anabasis* 4.7.4, 4.9.9, 7.6.2; Diodorus Siculus *Library of History* 17.77.5; Justin *Epitome* 12.3.8; Plutarch *Alexander* 45; id. *On the fortune of Alexander* 8; Quintus Curtius *History of Alexander* 6.6.1-10.

<sup>184</sup> Sherwin-White 1983a: 214-5; Sherwin-White and Kuhrt 1993: 153.

<sup>185</sup> *P. Petrie* 2.45; Bevan 1902: 1.185; Jones and Habicht 1989: 335.

<sup>186</sup> Bevan 1902: 2.7.

<sup>187</sup> Polyaeus *Stratagems* 7.40.

<sup>188</sup> Polybius *Histories* 5.79. Although Habicht (2006: 30-1) admits the presence of non-Greeks among the Seleukid ruling class, he unnecessarily downplays any possibility of their significant involvement in power.

of Syrians and were themselves perceived as „Syrian“.<sup>189</sup> However, imprecise though this perception was, the kings must have accepted both the reality of their geography, and their joint descent from the old Persian nobility through Apame and Laodike III – a descent advertised through the use of Iranian names for members of the royal house. From the scant evidence available, it appears that the dominating „culture“ of the royal family was an uneven synthesis, dominated by Hellenic traditions but incorporating customs and behaviours pre-eminent in the Achaemenid court – a fusion of Persian and older traditions inherited from Babylonia and Mesopotamia, hereafter termed „Babylono-Iranian“.<sup>190</sup>

### 1.3.2 ETHNIC COMPOSITION OF THE SELEUKID ARMY

The bulwark of Seleukid power was the military, particularly the royal army. The support of the army enabled Seleukos I to establish himself first as satrap of Babylon and later as king – none of his successors were able to maintain their position without the army's support. As a body, the army provides a second insight into the ethnic composition of the population living under the kings. Unfortunately the extant historical sources, deficient at the best of times in regards to the Seleukids, provide the modern scholar with only three detailed breakdowns (listing nationalities and numbers) of the Seleukid order of battle. Of these, two represent the army in pitched battle (Raphia, 217 BC and Magnesia, 190 BC), the other is a description of a festive military parade (Daphne, 167 BC). That said, the three examples taken together can be used to extract a great deal of information regarding the sources of manpower in the royal army during the late third and early second centuries BC.

In 217 BC, the Fourth Syrian War was decided outside Raphia on the border of Koile-Syria and Egypt. Antiochos III the Great commanded a large field army that had thus far been successful in driving the Ptolemies out of Koile-Syria. Polybius provides a detailed description of the troops present and their respective roles in the battle in which Antiochos commanded the right flank in person and forced his opponents to flee the field. With their commander distracted, the Seleukid left flank was defeated and the centre outflanked and routed.<sup>191</sup> Antiochos was forced to abandon his conquests and the region remained Ptolemaic for another 17 years until the Koile-Syrian question was settled in favour of

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<sup>189</sup> Livy *History of Rome* 39.16; Strabo *Geography* 17.1.11.

<sup>190</sup> Bevan 1902: 2.273-84; Sherwin-White and Kuhrt 1993: 48-51, 90; McKenzie 1994; Austin 2006: no.166. During the first Syrian War, Antiochos I had his entire army celebrate a “Persian festival”, see Polyaeus *Stratagems* 4.15.

<sup>191</sup> Polybius *Histories* 5.79-87.

Antiochos at the battle of Panion. The Seleukid infantry at Raphia were broken down into the following contingents: 20,000 *phalangites* and 10,000 elite *agyraspidai* all equipped in „Macedonian“ fashion; 5,000 Greek mercenaries; 1,500 Cretans; 1,000 neo-Cretans; 2,000 Thracians; 500 Lydian javelineers; 1,000 Kardakes; 2,000 Agrianian and Persian archers; 5,000 mixed Dahai and Kilikian light infantry; 5,000 mixed Medes, Kadousians, Karmanians and Kissians and 10,000 Arabs. The cavalry are described as being in two bodies, 2,000 and 4,000 strong respectively. The former most likely composed of the elite *hetairoi* and *agema* regiments (both normally represented as units of 1,000 each), the latter representing the line and light cavalry.

By 190 BC, Antiochos the Great was on the defensive in western Anatolia. Faced by two experienced Roman legions aided by Achaian and Pergamene allies, Antiochos issued an emergency call-to-arms and mobilised all available royal forces. The opposing sides faced off in the Hermos valley just to the north-east of the city of Magnesia and although the Seleukid right flank (once more led by Antiochos himself) carried all before it, the Romans prevailed on the Seleukid left and centre and the victory ultimately went to Rome. The resulting Peace of Apameia (ratified in 188 BC) was to have a far reaching affect on the course of Seleukid history. Appian and Livy provide complementary accounts of the Seleukid army at Magnesia which can be reconstructed as follows.<sup>192</sup> Infantry: 16,000 *phalangites* (including 6,000 *agyraspidai*) fighting in the „Macedonian“ fashion; 3,000 Galatians; 3,000 Trallians, 1,500 Cretans, 1,000 neo-Cretans, 1,500 Karians and Kilikians; 6,700 assorted Phrygians, Lykians, Pisidians and Pamphylians; 2,500 Thysian archers; 8,000 Kyratian slingers and Elymaïote archers and 2,000 Kappadokian auxiliaries furnished by Antiochos“ son-in-law, Ariarathes IV. The mounted arm was no less diverse: an uncertain amount of *hetairoi* cavalry; 1,000 *agema* cavalry; *agyraspidai* cavalry of uncertain strength; 6,000 cataphracts; 2,500 Galatian cavalry; a unit of Tarantines; 1,400 Mysian, Dahai, and Elymaïote mounted archers and what must have been a large host of Arab camelry. The Seleukid line was supported by numerous scythed chariots and 54 elephants. The total strength of the army is given at 70,000 men although only 56,100 of these are numbered among the contingents above. The *hetairoi* cavalry probably numbered 1,000 as they did at Daphne and the bulk of the remaining discrepancy was probably made up by the Arabs whose contingent at Raphia had numbered 10,000.

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<sup>192</sup> Appian *Syrian Wars* 32-3; Livy *History of Rome* 37.40.

Following the cessation of the Sixth Syrian War, Antiochos IV Epiphanes organised a pseudo-Triumph at the Antiochene sanctuary-suburb of Daphne (167 BC), perhaps mimicking that held by L. Aemilius Paullus at Amphipolis.<sup>193</sup> Whilst not representing an actual field army, Polybius' list of the forces represented at the parade displays the military power available to the Seleukids and was surely meant as a clear reminder that even after the Peace of Apameia and despite the embarrassment of the Day of Eleusis, the Seleukid kingdom was not an entity to be trifled with.<sup>194</sup> Represented in the pseudo-triumph were 5,000 *agyraspidai* reformed as imitation legionaries; a phalanx equipped in „Macedonian“ fashion (including un-reformed *agyraspidai*) 20,000 strong; 5,000 Galatians; 3,000 Thracians; 5,000 Mysians; 3,000 Kilikians; 1,000 *hetairoi* cavalry; 1,000 *agema* cavalry; a further 1,000 Median cavalry; a regiment of royal *philoi*, again 1,000 strong; 3,000 civic militia cavalry; an unspecified number of cataphracts; 140 scythed chariots and 36 elephants.<sup>195</sup>

We can perhaps view the three lists as examples of the Seleukid army in different states of preparedness. We can assume that the Seleukid phalanx was composed of Greco-Macedonian colonists almost certainly supplemented by non-Greeks who had received a Greek education and training.<sup>196</sup> Together with the *hetairoi* cavalry (described as “Syrian” at Magnesia, probably referring to Greco-Macedonian colonists) and assorted Greek mercenaries, these troops comprised the „Greek“ component of the Seleukid army.<sup>197</sup> The bulk of the cavalry was composed of Iranians with the *agema* (forming the elite regiment)

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<sup>193</sup> The Daphne parade was either followed or preceded a similar celebration of the kingdom's military vitality held at Babylon (dated to 169 BC) commemorating the same campaigns, see Gera and Horowitz 1997: 240-3; Linszen 2004: 119-20. It is probable that the event was not restricted to these two cities alone.

<sup>194</sup> Polybius *Histories* 30.25; Aperghis 2004: 191.

<sup>195</sup> The scythed chariot corps, present also at Ipsos (301 BC), against Demetrios Poliorketes in Kyrrhestis (285 BC) as well as Magnesia (190 BC) and perhaps with Lysias in Judaea (162 BC) testifies to the continued Seleukid willingness to experiment with traditional Persian arms, see Diodorus Siculus *Library of History* 20.113; Livy *History of Rome* 37.41-2; Plutarch *Demetrius* 28.3, 48.2; II. Maccabees 13.2; Bar-Kochva 1979: 83-4.

<sup>196</sup> Bar-Kochva 1979: 40, 45, 56, 296-7. Alexander the Great had provided Macedonian training and Greek education to 30,000 *epigonoi*, non-Greek youths who were to form the basis of his future phalanx (Arrian *Anabasis* 7.6; Diodorus Siculus *Library of History* 17.6; Plutarch *Alexander* 47.6; Quintus Curtius *History of Alexander* 8.5.1) and Eumenes and Antigonos Monophthalmos are both recorded as having employed *pantodapoi*, phalangites of mixed origins during the late fourth century BC, see Diodorus Siculus *Library of History* 19.27, 19.29; Griffith 1935: 48-9; Billows 1997: 357; Aperghis 2004: 195-6.

<sup>197</sup> I have classified the neo-Cretans as non-Greeks on the interpretation that they were a body of Asians equipped after the Cretan fashion (bow, sword and *pelta*) and used the same way (elite skirmishers). The designation neo-Cretan therefore being a pseudo-ethnic title. Spyridakis (1977) makes a good case for viewing the neo-Cretans as newly enfranchised non-Dorians from Crete, comparable to Spartan *Neodamodes*. However, as the strength of the contingent is only ever listed as 1,000 strong, their nationality makes little impact statistically on the overall make up of the Seleukid army.

described as the best of the Medes and the surrounding peoples.<sup>198</sup> The remainder of the army comprised national contingents from among the non-Greek populations who fought and we may imply, were educated, in their pre-Greek traditional manner, races such as the Kilikians, Elymaïotes and Arabs.

At Raphia, Antiochos the Great commanded a successful field army that appears to have been formed for the purpose of the Fourth Syrian War. Proportionately, 54.35% of his field army was sourced from Hellenised populations from both within and without the kingdom. The remaining 45.65% were non-Greeks. Antiochos' army 27 years later at Magnesia on the other hand was hastily brought together in an emergency and we see the relative proportions (Hellenised, 31.19%: non-Greek, 68.81%) inversed dramatically. The proportion of the actual national contingents at Magnesia would almost certainly increase if we were provided with the number of Arabs in the army. At Daphne we see the return of similar proportions to Raphia with 62.5% Hellenised and 37.5% non-Greek forces.<sup>199</sup> The rough proportions of the Seleukid standing army both before and after Apameia seems to have hovered between 50:50 and 60:40 in favour of the Hellenised elements of the kingdom. In times of crisis, additional national contingents could swell the army until they reached 70% or more of the total number of soldiers. At Raphia Polybius specifically states that the king was accompanied by interpreters when making his pre-battle orations and it can only be presumed that for the Seleukids this must have been common practice.<sup>200</sup>

As the chronic war between the descendants of Seleukos IV Philopator and Antiochos IV Epiphanes progressed, the kingdom continued to lose territory and therefore recruitment potential, particularly in the East. The manpower shortage seems to have been filled at least partially by the increased presence of southern Syrians. We have already seen large contingents of Arabs serving under Antiochos the Great and it can only be presumed that such forces continued to appear in the armies of his successors. Alexander I was decapitated by an Arab prince, Zabdiel, in the service of Demetrios II and Ptolemy VI.<sup>201</sup> Antiochos the Great had also realised the military potential of the (Babylonian) Jews and

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<sup>198</sup> Livy *History of Rome* 37.40; Polybius *Histories* 5.44.1; Bar-Kochva 1979: 45.

<sup>199</sup> Many of the forces (the Galatians, Mysians and Thracians, not to mention the elephant corps) marching at Daphne also clearly showed Antiochos Epiphanes' disregard for the stipulations of Apameia which stated in no uncertain terms that the Seleukids were not to recruit north of the Taurus, nor were they permitted to own elephants, Livy *History of Rome* 38.38.

<sup>200</sup> Polybius *Histories* 5.83.7.

<sup>201</sup> Josephus *Jewish Antiquities* 13.118.

settled 2,000 Jewish families as military settlers in Phrygia (c.200 BC).<sup>202</sup> In 152 or 151 BC Demetrios I Soter offered to enrol 30,000 Judaeans into his army although the high-priest Jonathan seems to have equipped a smaller force for Alexander I Balas instead.<sup>203</sup> A contingent of 3,000 Jewish soldiers suppressed the Antiochene mob for Demetrios II and a great many more (led by the Jewish high-priest, John Hyrkanos I) accompanied Antiochos VII Sidetes on his *anabasis* (130-129 BC).<sup>204</sup>

Like the Seleukid royal house, the Seleukid military exhibited a Hellenised core around which non-Greek auxiliaries were appended. Perhaps representing the limits of Hellenic manpower, the proportion of Greco-Macedonians in the army never reached as high as 65%. Naval forces appear to have been drawn almost exclusively from Kilikia and Phoenicia. Non-Greek elements were therefore of crucial importance to the kingdom's defence and prowess and must have formed an integral part of the „Seleukid“ consciousness.

### 1.3.3 ETHNIC INDICATORS AND THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORD

An attempt to show the difficulties in discerning cultural or ethnic identities from archaeological evidence has recently been undertaken by Clarke and Jackson, the principal excavators of the Seleukid settlement at Jebel Khalid on the Euphrates.<sup>205</sup> Their analysis deals with a variety of material remains including town planning, ceramics and cuisine and some of the key issues deserve to be summarised below as a showcase of the complexities of „ethnicity“ in the archaeological record.

The initial settlement at Jebel Khalid was planned according to a Hippodamian grid, adhering to a strictly orthogonal (north-south/east-west) street plan with regular insulae and civic structures flanking the principal axis and a great circuit wall which utilised the topography to greatest effect. All of these features conformed to Hellenistic ideals of town planning.<sup>206</sup> The administrative structure or palace on the acropolis was also predominantly Greek in design and appearance with orthogonal wings opening off a Doric peristyle court, with evidence for internal plastered walls in masonry style and an upper level in the Ionic order. However, the central court had gardens and broad antechambers that separated this

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<sup>202</sup> Josephus *Jewish Antiquities* 12.147-53.

<sup>203</sup> I. *Maccabees* 10.36-7; Josephus *Jewish Antiquities* 13.38, 13.45-6.

<sup>204</sup> Josephus *Jewish Antiquities* 13.134-42, 13.249-50.

<sup>205</sup> Clarke and Jackson (forthcoming).

<sup>206</sup> Clarke and Jackson (forthcoming).



area from the main hypostyle reception rooms to north and south – features inherent in the Babylo-Iranian traditions of the Achaemenids.<sup>207</sup> The Jebel Khalid temple will be dealt with below (Chapter 4.4) but it suffices to say that it too, while bearing a superficial resemblance to Greek design, was laid out, and must have functioned, after a Mesopotamian fashion. North of the temple but situated on the same main street, lay the *palaistra* – that characteristically Greek educational facility which so alienated some of the indigenous populations under Seleukid control.<sup>208</sup> The establishment of such an institution implies an active wish of the civic body to participate in, and have their children brought up according to, a Hellenic *agoge* (training) and *paideia* (education).

The location of the main housing insulae, just to the north of the civic area situated on a south-facing slope, suggests a further familiarity with Hellenic ideals of town planning.<sup>209</sup> The insulae were built of fieldstones, roofed with Laconian style terracotta roof tiles, and decorated internally with painted plaster which, as at the acropolis palace, conforms with Hellenistic masonry style.<sup>210</sup> Flooring was much more utilitarian, probably making use of tapestries or carpets over packed earth, a practice which was neither specifically Greek nor Eastern, but practical none the less.<sup>211</sup> The layout of rooms, arranged around a central courtyard, is again non-specific in terms of cultural influences but the entry vestibule with offset doorways argues for a Semitic rather than Greek antecedent.<sup>212</sup> The domestic pottery is dominated by imported or locally produced Hellenic table wares suggestive of Greek-style dining practices although prevailing cooking ware vessels were produced in line with traditional Iron Age Syrian shapes.<sup>213</sup> Clarke and Jackson suggest that the dearth of Greek casseroles in the domestic quarter<sup>214</sup> may be related to another surprising absence from the housing insulae – fish bones. Fish was a major part of the Greek diet and one of the principal ingredients in casserole cooking. The Euphrates, even in

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<sup>207</sup> Nielsen 1999: 47-51.

<sup>208</sup> I *Maccabees*. 1.14-5; II *Maccabees*. 4.9-15; Lucian *Anacharsis*. The initial report on the *palaistra* will be published in *Meditarch* 22, Graeme Clarke *pers. comm.*

<sup>209</sup> Clarke and Jackson (forthcoming); Aristotle *Economics* 1.4.7; Xenophon *Memoirs of Socrates* 3.8; id. *The Economist* 9.4.

<sup>210</sup> Jackson 2009.

<sup>211</sup> A similar practice seems to have been employed for the flooring of the houses at Aī Khanoum, see Clarke and Jackson (forthcoming).

<sup>212</sup> Clarke and Jackson (forthcoming), where the Jebel Khalid private entrances are compared with Assyrian Assur (Preusser 1954: pl.11), Seleukid Seleukeia-on-the-Tigris (Coppa 1981: 727) and Parthian Dura (Hopkins 1934: 31).

<sup>213</sup> JK 3 common wares types 21-3.

<sup>214</sup> Casseroles or lopades were common at most Greek sites, particularly in the eastern Mediterranean, see Berlin 1997: 94; Rotroff 2004: 459.

its reduced modern state as it passes Jebel Khalid, continues to provide large fish for the local population and one would have expected the ancient settlers to make use of the food source. However, the indigenous Syrian abstinence of fish meat and the prominence of the nearby indigenous sanctuary of Hierapolis-Bambyke where fish were sacred, may have influenced dietary habits at Jebel Khalid.<sup>215</sup> While cooking practices may have been influenced by the cooks themselves, probably indigenous Syrians, the house owners were apparently acquiescent to local traditions. The Jebel Khalid mortuary practices “suggests the overlay of a basic local grave tradition with Hellenistic refinement.”<sup>216</sup> Bodies were lain supine in wooden coffins and placed in vernacular capped cists cut into the bedrock. Simple burial goods were placed with the bodies – any valuables appear to have been looted but locally produced dining, drinking and food preparation ceramic vessels have been found *in situ*. A large torpedo shaped amphora was placed on top of each capstone, against the wall of the pit in a similar manner to the jars found in the Hellenistic tombs at Dura-Europos.<sup>217</sup>

While the written language of a settlement may not reveal the ethnicity of its population, it does illuminate the dominant cultural influences acting upon the settlers. The corpus of written material from Jebel Khalid is comprised of six dipinti, 67 graffiti, 95 stamped amphorae handles, and numerous masons marks.<sup>218</sup> Within the corpus, the lettering and onomastics are overwhelmingly Greek suggesting that among the majority of the literate population, Greek was the dominant language. However, two of the stamped amphorae types contain Semitic theophoric names transliterated into Greek script (Abidsalma and Bargates) and two of the dipinti contain Semitic names written in Aramaic (Abdalaha and Abimah) – as pointed out by Clarke and Jackson, a fruitless exercise unless legible by their users.<sup>219</sup> It is particularly noteworthy that the stamped handles in question belonged to locally manufactured pseudo-Coan vessels designed for the transport and storage of olive oil and wine, both quintessentially Greek.<sup>220</sup> All evidence of Semitic onomastics come from the late Hellenistic phase at Jebel Khalid (after c.145 BC) but it does indicate some form of integration of non-Greeks into the settlement at different levels of

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<sup>215</sup> Clarke and Jackson (forthcoming). On the taboo regarding consumption of fish, see Appendix E.

<sup>216</sup> JK 1: 69.

<sup>217</sup> JK 1: 103-6; Clarke and Jackson (forthcoming).

<sup>218</sup> Dipinti and graffiti: JK 1:206-16; Clarke and Jackson 2005. Stamped amphora handles: JK 1: 273-89; Clarke 2005; Clarke 2008a. For examples of masons marks: JK 1: 38.

<sup>219</sup> Clarke and Jackson (forthcoming); JK 1: 216, 286-7; Clarke 2005: 181-3, 198.

<sup>220</sup> The olive seems to have been introduced to the Jebel Khalid hinterland during the Seleukid period, see Fairburn and Asouti 2005.

society. While the dipinti could only have been utilised by individuals literate in Aramaic and may have served a purely private purpose, the stamped handles, by their very nature commercial, must have been produced to serve a designated purpose, be it commercial or administrative, within the settlement.

Comparative material for the stamped handles may be found in Koile-Syria. A large archive of late sixth century BC bullae from Achaemenid Judaea has been shown to correspond with the vernacular ceramic stamped handles of the same period. Many of the inscriptions, including official titles and even one personal name along with the name of the province (YHWD/HNNH – *Yehud/Hanana*) link the two artefact types to a common purpose – provincial administration.<sup>221</sup> The sixth century BC names stamped on ceramic vessels in Judaea are thus considered to give official sanction to the jars' contents which are presumed to be a collection of taxes-in-kind.<sup>222</sup> A similar system of official stamps on jar handles continued into the Ptolemaic administration of Judaea, perhaps even differentiating between taxes gathered for the temple and those gathered for the government.<sup>223</sup> Abidsalma and Bargates represent examples of Semitic individuals manufacturing a product for a Hellenised market. While their names were transliterated into Greek text, it is apparent that they did not feel the need to adopt Greek names themselves. Furthermore, of the nine stamped handles in the names of Abidsalma or Bargates,<sup>224</sup> two were found in the acropolis palace excavations while the other seven all came from the Area B, the immediate vicinity of the temple. This evidence may suggest that, at Jebel Khalid, we are dealing with temple administrators after the Judaeian examples rather than potters or merchants. If this is the case, then we find further illuminating evidence in support of a strong Semitic flavour inherent in the Jebel Khalid temple.<sup>225</sup>

## 1.4 REFLECTIONS ON A MACEDONIAN HEGEMONY

How is it best to summarise the Macedonian hegemony over Syria during the period 301-64 BC? There can be no question that politically speaking, the region was dominated by

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<sup>221</sup> Avigad 1976.

<sup>222</sup> Avigad 1976: 21, 35.

<sup>223</sup> Lapp 1963: 33-4.

<sup>224</sup> In the name of  $\text{ABID\text{S}ALMA}$ : JK SH.39 (Inv. 89.774), JK SH.40 (Inv. 87.029), JK SH.41 (Inv. 89.899), JK SH.63 (Inv. 02.499), JK SH.64 (Inv. 93.771), JK SH.65 (Inv. 05.980). In the name of  $\text{BARGATES}$ : JK SH.42 (Inv. 87.169), JK SH.66 (Inv. 02.248) JK SH.67 (Inv. 05.572).

<sup>225</sup> See Chapter 4.4.4 below.

Hellenic or Hellenised populations and that there was, at least in places, a conscious adoption of Greco-Macedonian institutions such as the *palaistra* to better fit within a Hellenic dominated world. From its inception, the Seleukid state employed a policy of benign if expedient Hellenisation. It was Greek language that was the key to political or senior military office rather than Greek birth and it was possible for non-Greeks to reach the highest levels of satrapal governance. The royal dynasty preserved an outwardly Macedonian appearance and was maintained by a military that adhered, as best it could, to Hellenistic ideals. However, just as the army and navy could not have functioned without large non-Greek national contingents, so the Seleukid house could not have ruled efficiently without its own non-Greek aspects. From the second generation, the Seleukids carried Iranian blood in their veins and with it the seeming acceptance of a great part of the empire's populace of their right to rule. Antiochos I Soter's commission of Berossos' Babylonian history speaks volumes of a Seleukid interest in their realm and its population and shies away from the concept of a broadly imposed xenophobic Hellenic imperialism.<sup>226</sup>

Seleukid settlement foundations appear to have housed a mixed Hellenic and indigenous population although, on the whole, it would seem that the two functioned on disparate social levels. The thought that a purpose-built military colony such as Jebel Khalid might be established and expected to flourish without an indigenous element is really untenable. Without a domestic population, especially women, a *katoikia* would remain nothing more than a permanent military camp – and even military camps were known to collect followers. The large scale movement of „valuable“ Greco-Macedonian families and women to a minor provincial settlement like Jebel Khalid is most unlikely and given the nature of people, a large proportion of the site's population after the first generation must have been non-Greek, genetically if not culturally. Jebel Khalid is important in archaeologically exhibiting many Hellenising features; the *palaistra*, the façade of the palace and temple, the urban plan and placement of certain structures; while illustrating that all of these Greek features are tempered, to a greater or lesser extent, by non-Greek aspects. The temple especially was only superficially Greek and may even have been run by a Semitic priesthood. In Jebel Khalid we have a physical manifestation of

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<sup>226</sup> See also Chapter 2 below for further indications of the Seleukid interest in their non-Greek subjects and heritage.

Droysen's concept of *Hellenismus* and the Hellenistic age, a fusion of Greco-Macedonian and eastern cultures into a composite, if at times confusing, whole.<sup>227</sup>

Indeed, it is under the umbrella of religion that we find the greatest malleability of cultural distinctions. To repeat Lightfoot's assertion, the syncretic nature of polytheistic belief systems provided a theatre through which "patriotic localism could coexist with allegiance to the centre".<sup>228</sup> Although the Semitic populations of Syria had long ago lost their political independence, they could still maintain a cultural identity expressed through their religious beliefs and practices. Seleukid patronage of such indigenous beliefs could in turn reorient local loyalties towards loyalty to the royal house.

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<sup>227</sup> Droysen 1877.

<sup>228</sup> Lightfoot 2003: 207.

## CHAPTER 2 STATE PATRONAGE OF RELIGION

The study of the Seleukid state's attitude towards religion (and by inference, the kings' own beliefs) is illuminated best through a numismatic approach supplemented by other types of evidence where possible. As emphasised by Touratsoglou, "at no other time in the past did issues of coins produce formats on which were imprinted so eloquently the ambitions, tenacity, and absurdity of the rulers."<sup>1</sup> The imagery that was used to define and decorate ancient coinage was directly linked to the heart of the state's prestige and power – a practice that continues into modern times. The modern Euro might carry the badge of the European Union on the obverse, but the reverse retains iconography specific to the populations who produce and use them – for example, the iconic Attic owl for Greece or the Irish harp. The Seleukid kings or their agents prepared coin types that illustrated specific issues that were considered important to the reigning monarch and the continuation of the kingdom. Although some Seleukid coins bore military and naval themes stressing the prowess of the armed forces, the vast majority highlighted the prevailing religious trends of the king, court and, by inference, the kingdom.

The true strength of the numismatic evidence is found in the completeness of the record. Our knowledge of much of late Seleukid History is heavily based on the evidence from royal coin production, but the same material can be used to inform us of wider religio-cultural patterns. In no other data set can we find symbols or messages laid out for almost every Seleukid ruler. Nor can any other type of evidence show us how consistent or varied the production of such messages were across the whole extent of the Seleukid realm. The task of using Seleukid coins as a major source of evidence has recently been rendered immeasurably easier with the publication of the two volume work *Seleucid coins: a comprehensive catalogue* by Houghton, Lorber and Hoover (2002 and 2008). *Seleucid coins* obviously owes a great deal to earlier studies by the likes of Babelon, Newell, Seyrig, Mørkholm and Le Rider, but supersedes its predecessors in terms of the comprehensive nature of the investigation and in the analytical approach to the attribution of coins to specific rulers and mints.

Most Seleukid coinage, whether of gold, silver or bronze, followed a pattern whereby the obverse was occupied by a head or bust (usually of the king but often of a

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<sup>1</sup> Touratsoglou 2000: 65.

deity), while the reverse depicted the full length figure of the king's or region's patron god or goddess. Seleukid gold coinage was rarely produced, useful only for very large state payments and would have seen little circulation; therefore, the following study (and that of Chapter 3) will predominantly focus on the abundant silver and bronze coinage.<sup>2</sup> A discussion of the impact of coin iconography on its audience is discussed in Chapter 2.2.

## 2.1 DIVINE PATRONAGE

### 2.1.1 THE EARLY SELEUKID PERIOD (312-175 BC)

Although there was considerable variation, Seleukos I's production of silver drachms and tetradrachms was dominated by iconography that utilised Alexander's familiar coin types, thereby linking his legitimacy back to a relationship with his ultimate predecessor, Alexander the Great. The principal type combined a youthful head of Herakles with a seated mature Zeus (**figs.2-3**).<sup>3</sup> The silver denominations of the eastern mints were dominated by the imagery of Zeus on the obverse and various elephant-based themes emphasising military strength and prowess on the reverse.<sup>4</sup> Unlike Lysimachos in Thrace or Ptolemy in Egypt (whose coin issues would have been familiar from the period of Seleukos' service as Ptolemaic *navarch* and the kings' subsequent close relationship),<sup>5</sup> Seleukos made little use of direct Alexander portraiture, focusing instead on the established Herakles/Zeus type that had become so iconically „Alexandrian“ following its inception after 333 BC. Although Zeus had long been a symbol of the kings of Macedon, it has been argued that Alexander's use of the Zeus and Herakles imagery not only referred to

Figure 2. AR tetradrachm, Seleukos I, Antigoneia-on-the-Orontes or Seleukeia-Pieria (SC 1: pl.1.28.2a).



Figure 3. AR tetradrachm, Seleukos I, Seleukeia-Pieria (SC 1: pl.1.29.1b).



<sup>2</sup> A recent analysis by Aperghis (2004: 213-46) has shown the large silver tetradrachm to have been the dominant coin type both in terms of quantities produced and distribution.

<sup>3</sup> It might be noted that following initial emissions of the Zeus Aitophoros reverse, Seleukos modified the type by replacing the eagle with a wreath-bearing Nike, the so called Nikephoros type. The Nikephoros variety dominates the western mints and the change may allude to the Seleukid victories against the Antigonids and later, Lysimachos, see SC 1: 8.

<sup>4</sup> SC 1: 7-8.

<sup>5</sup> Diodorus Siculus *Library of History* 19.55-7, 21.1.5. Seleukos' close relationship with Ptolemy I probably informed his use of the elephant-drawn chariot, produced by Ptolemy after 300 BC and introduced at the Seleukid mints at Seleukeia-on-the-Tigris and Susa around 295 BC (Mørkholm 1980: 154; SC 1: 7; Lorber 2005: 60; Bosworth 2007: 21-2). Other than this one example, the Ptolemies appear to have had little iconographic impact on Seleukos I's choice of coin types.

the king's supposed divine descent but used images that were familiar to his new Oriental subjects.

Both Zeus and Herakles already enjoyed a history of syncretic adoption in Asia where Zeus was associated with the numerous localised Ba'al's. The form of the enthroned Zeus employed by Alexander and Seleukos is often referred to as Zeus Olympios and at first glance appears to have been inspired by the monumental cult statue of Zeus at Olympia by Pheidias.<sup>6</sup> However, a comparable seated bearded deity with sceptre and eagle was already identified in Aramaic on Tarsiate coinage as the local Ba'al (Ba'al'tars) in the mid-fourth century BC (**fig.4**). Alexander's earliest issues often adorned the brow of the seated Zeus with a wreath of berries in the tradition of Ba'al'tars in northern Syria and Kilikia, or else bull's horns in Damascus, Phoenicia, Babylon and Egypt reminiscent of Assyrian and other traditional Semitic images of the divine. It might also be noted that the Pheidian Zeus' Hellenic Nike was replaced with a more versatile eagle on the coinage of Alexander and the early issues of Seleukos I. By the fourth century Herakles was also identified with certain eastern deities such Melkart in Phoenicia, Sandan in Kilikia and perhaps Gilgamesh in Babylonia.<sup>7</sup> Alexander's choice of images "conform with his ideas of a „fusion“ of Greek and Orientals in order to create a stable government."<sup>8</sup> Posthumous coins of the Alexander type were recognisable and acceptable to a broad audience. They lacked explicit reference to individual power but relied instead on the memory of the Macedonian conqueror king.<sup>9</sup>

Just as coin issues of Seleukos I focused on Zeus as the new kingdom's patron, so it would seem that Zeus in his various local incarnations received the most attention and benefaction from the first Seleukid. The oracle of Apollo at Didyma was responsible for a series of prophesies foretelling the foundation of the Seleukid kingdom and was indeed honoured with specific reverence by the kings.<sup>10</sup> Seleukos I funded the rebuilding of the Didyma sanctuary shortly after the battle of Ipsos and returned the cult statue of Apollo that



**Figure 4.** AR stater, Mazaïos, Tarsos (SNG Levante pl.6.106).

<sup>6</sup> Pausanias *Description of Greece* 5.11.1-9; Richter 1966.

<sup>7</sup> Frazer 1932: 96; Zervos 1979: 296-303; Zahle 1990: 126-7.

<sup>8</sup> Zahle 1990: 126-7, although the model of conscious unification by Alexander of his Macedonian and eastern subjects is controversial, see also Bosworth 1980.

<sup>9</sup> Posthumous Alexanders continued to be minted by smaller cities well into the Hellenistic period. A total of 59 autonomous cities are known to have minted posthumous Alexanders, many of which never directly encountered the Macedonian king, and some of which were not founded until after his death.

<sup>10</sup> Appian *Syrian Wars* 56; Diodorus Siculus *Library of History* 19.90; Welles 1934: no.5; *OGIS* 227 = Rehm 1958: no.493; Dignas 2002: 39-43; Austin 2006: no.175.



Figure 5. AR dekadrachm, Alexander III 'Elephant Medallion' (British Museum 1926.4.2.1).



had been removed by Darius following the Ionian revolt in 493 BC.<sup>11</sup> However, the dynastic mythology that made Apollo the family's progenitor seems to have solidified only late in the reign of Seleukos or early in the reign of Antiochos I.<sup>12</sup> Regardless of the prophecies from Didyma,<sup>13</sup> Seleukos Nikator was far more concerned with showing his dedication to the cult of Zeus. A famous oracular sanctuary of Apollo (and Artemis) may have been established by the king in the Antiochene suburb of Daphne, but the tutelary deity of both Antioch and Seleukeia-Pieria – the two most important settlements in North Syria – was Zeus.<sup>14</sup>

Historically, the kings of the Macedonians held the roles of the chief priest of Zeus and president of their kingdom's religious festivals.<sup>15</sup> Close links were forged between Macedonian kings and the king of the gods and both Philip II and Alexander III (the Great) ultimately assumed part of the deity's greatness. After Philip II's benefactions to Eresos on Lesbos, the *demos* dedicated two altars to a syncretised Zeus Philippeios.<sup>16</sup> In the following generation, Apelles depicted Alexander the Great holding a thunderbolt in a painting for the temple of Artemis at Ephesos<sup>17</sup> and the king is shown with the same attribute on the reverse of the famous „elephant medallion“ dekadrachm dated c.324 BC (fig.5).<sup>18</sup>

Inscriptions from the mountain sanctuary of Olba in Kilikia Tracheia<sup>19</sup> show that Seleukos I was concerned with the repair and maintenance of the local Zeus sanctuary and, in Kyrrhestis, the great indigenous cult centre of Atargatis and Zeus-Ba'al Hadad at

<sup>11</sup> Pausanias *Description of Greece* 1.16.3, 8.46.3; *OGIS* 213-4; Rehm 1958: no.480; Parke 1986: 125; Austin 2006: no.51.

<sup>12</sup> Justin *Epitome* 15.4; Hadley 1969: 152 argues that the Justin passage post dated the battle of Ipsos (301 BC) but was probably current by 278 BC since Apollo is referred to as the ancestor of the dynasty in *OGIS* 219 = Austin 2006: no.162.

<sup>13</sup> It should be remembered that Seleukos also received prophecies from other sources, such as the Chaldaean astronomers of Babylon (Appian *Syrian Wars* 56; Diodorus Siculus *Library of History* 19.55.7-9); see Hadley 1969 for a full account of early Seleukid mythology.

<sup>14</sup> Libanius *Oration* 11.85-8; Malalas *Chronicle* 8.12-3; Strabo *Geography* 2.6; *CIG* 4458; Downey 1961: 67-8, 82-6; Cabouret 1997: 1007-13. The epithet "Daïttoi", given to Artemis at Daphne and at Susa is difficult to ascribe to a Hellenic origin and it has been conjectured that it may be an adopted non-Greek title perhaps referring to a local syncretised deity, see Welles 1934: 183; Boyce and Grenet 1991: 25, 37-8.

<sup>15</sup> le Bohec-Bouhet 2002: 44. See also the discussion of Archelaos' foundation of the Olympian games at Dion found in Badian 1982: 35; Borza 1990: 173-4, n.30.

<sup>16</sup> le Bohec-Bouhet 2002: 43.

<sup>17</sup> Pliny *Natural History* 35.92; Plutarch *Alexander* 4.3.

<sup>18</sup> For a comprehensive account of the elephant medallion discussion, see Holt 2003.

<sup>19</sup> Cook 1940: 642 n.1; MacKay 1968: 82-3; Teixidor 1989: 88.

Hierapolis-Bambyke received significant royal attention during this period.<sup>20</sup> Combined with the total dominance of Zeus as a coin type, the epigraphic and historic record suggest that Seleukos appears to have played the role of the „Macedonian king“ by making Zeus the primary focus of his religious attention. In giving pre-eminence to Zeus-Ba‘al, the Macedonian king was also conforming to vernacular Semitic traditions which saw the ruler’s authority as a derivative of the power of the local sky-god.<sup>21</sup> Seleukos’ legitimacy as king of Asia stemmed initially from his friendship with Alexander the Great, but was ultimately „spear-won“, made through his own military conquests.<sup>22</sup> He never ruled in his homeland. Although he founded many new cities over the course of his reign, Seleukos was still forced to rely greatly on his Oriental subjects to whom he was potentially just another alien ruler.<sup>23</sup> Through the iconography used on his coin types, Seleukos was showing the sources of his legitimacy, his relationship with Alexander and the obvious divine consent from the king of the gods. It mattered not whether the king of the gods was the Zeus of the Greco-Macedonian settlers or the Semitic Ba‘al in one of his many local manifestations.<sup>24</sup>

The true plasticity of Zeus iconography and the figure’s inherent popularity would become abundantly clear in later generations. However, in the interim, Seleukos’ son and successor, Antiochos I Soter, produced an entirely different series of coin types. Although his first issues were duplicates of those of his father, Antiochos soon began to employ various images and/or attributes of the god Apollo on his coin types in both bronze and silver.<sup>25</sup> To a large extent, Antiochos Soter standardised the types that would remain dominant until after the accession of Antiochos IV Epiphanes in 175 BC. For the next century, Apollo dominated both the silver and bronze issues either as a laureate head, a full length figure standing by a tripod or seated on the *omphalos*, or else alluded to through attributes such as the *kithara* or tripod (**figs.6-15**). Numerous stories linked Apollo to the



Figure 6. AR tetradrachm, Antiochos I, Antioch-on-the-Orontes (SC 1: pl.18.335.4c).



Figure 7. Æ denomination, Antiochos I, Antioch-on-the-Orontes (SC 1: pl.70.336).

<sup>20</sup> Aelian *On Animals* 12.2; Lucian *The Syrian Goddess* 17.

<sup>21</sup> Green 2003: 172-3, 285-8.

<sup>22</sup> In an interesting parallel, “Baal’s preeminence in the Syrian pantheon was gained not by divine right through hereditary succession but by divine power through conquest,” see Green 2003: 176.

<sup>23</sup> Appian *Syrian Wars* 57-8.

<sup>24</sup> Note however, that the many Ba‘als were essentially local manifestations of Hadad, see Green 2003: 173-5.

<sup>25</sup> SC 1: 115-6.



**Figure 8. AR tetradrachm, Antiochos II, Antioch-on-the-Orontes (SC 1: pl.27.571.1).**



**Figure 9. Æ denomination, Antiochos II, Antioch-on-the-Orontes (SC 1: pl.77.572a).**



**Figure 10. AR tetradrachm, Seleukos II, perhaps Antioch-on-the-Orontes (SC 1: pl.33.704.1b).**



**Figure 11. AR drachm, Seleukos II, Antioch-on-the-Orontes (SC 1: pl.33.691.2).**



**Figure 12. AR tetradrachm, Antiochos III, Tarsos (SC 1: pl.52.1025c).**



**Figure 13. AV octodrachm, Antiochos III, Antioch-on-the-Orontes (SC 1: pl.53.1040).**



Seleukid House and, as we have seen, Apollo had already received limited Seleukid attention under the kingdom's founder. Apollo of Didyma was said to have foretold both Seleukos Nikator's kingship and his death.<sup>26</sup> Justin built on this and relays the slightly later myth that Apollo was the divine father of Seleukos and thus the progenitor of the Seleukid dynasty.<sup>27</sup>

Antiochos I was the first of the Hellenistic monarchs able to subdue the savage Galatians who were rampaging through Anatolia in the 270s.<sup>28</sup> In so doing, the king assumed the role that the god Apollo Soter (Apollo the Saviour) was believed to have taken in the defence of Delphi against the same foe several years earlier. The legitimacy of Antiochos I was based upon divine right. Apollo was his grandfather, Apollo's priests at Didyma had foretold the creation of the Seleukid empire and, through the grace of Apollo, Antiochos had defeated the barbarians and protected his Greek subjects.<sup>29</sup> After suppressing rebels in northern Syria at the beginning of his reign,<sup>30</sup> Antiochos did not face the uncertainty over his support base which must have plagued his father. He was able to produce coinage bearing the unmistakably Greek image of the naked Apollo – the paragon of the Hellenic pantheon, the patron of Greek civilisation and the arts.

The most common Apollo types, the god on the *omphalos* and the god by the tripod bore distinct Delphic connotations which at first sight jars with both the Seleukid empire's eastern setting and the kings' adoption of Apollo of Didyma as their patron. However, the Hellenistic period oracle of Didyma had been restored following the Delphic model rather than a resurrection of the pre-Persian sack rites – the exact rituals of which seem to have been forgotten over the intervening century and a half.<sup>31</sup> In the second century BC, a new *omphalos* or „navel“ was to be created at the crossroads of Epiphaneia, the Antiochene



Figure 14. AR tetradrachm, Seleukos IV, Antioch-on-the-Orontes (SC 2: pl.2.1313.1).



Figure 15. Æ denomination, Seleukos IV, Antioch-on-the-Orontes (SC 2: pl.59.1315.3e).

<sup>26</sup> Appian *Syrian Wars* 56.

<sup>27</sup> Justin *Epitome* 15.4.3-9.

<sup>28</sup> Appian *Syrian Wars* 65; see also Bar-Kochva 1973: 1-8.

<sup>29</sup> The paucity of evidence relating to the Galatian campaign means that it is difficult to assess the relevance of the Antiochos' Elephant victory on the introduction of the new Apollo types. The change-over between the Alexander type and Apollo cannot be firmly dated, nor can the Elephant victory (perhaps after 272 BC, see Bar-Kochva 1973: 5) but the possibility must be allowed that besides alluding to the divine ancestry, the new types directly commemorated Antiochos' success against the Galatians.

<sup>30</sup> *OGIS* 219 = Austin: 2006: no.162.

<sup>31</sup> Parke 1986: 124.

suburb founded by Antiochos IV – further reinforcing the sense of „Greekness“ in the new eastern landscape. Therefore, while still unmistakably Greek in concept and design, the attributes of the Seleukid Apollo could equally locate the god in the new world of the Hellenistic East.

Like his father, Antiochos Soter was an active patron of native temples, specifically the Babylonian sanctuaries of Esagila (Babylon) and Ezida (Borsippa). The Babylonian astronomical diaries of 274/3 and 271/0 BC refer to the manufacture of temple bricks and the completion of the renovation of the great temple of Marduk (Esagila) initiated by Alexander the Great as well as the provision of beasts for regular sacrifice. Beyond sporadic direct involvement in local rituals, the acknowledgement of the power and benefactions of the Seleukid king and his family were inserted into the indigenous ceremonies at Esagila from the reign of Seleukos III.<sup>32</sup> At Borsippa, Antiochos I funded the vernacular construction of the Ezida temple dedicated to Nabû, god of writing and enlightenment.<sup>33</sup> Under Antiochos II and Antiochos III, continued building work is recorded at the Rēš sanctuary of Anu and Antu at Uruk.<sup>34</sup> The comparison drawn by Sherwin-White and Kuhrt between the Seleukid patronage of indigenous sanctuaries and the attitude of the British colonial administration in India perhaps best illustrates the practicalities of such actions. However, contrary to Hellenistic thought, there was little room in the British colonial mentality for „going native“ through the adoption of local religious customs.<sup>35</sup> Under the Seleukids, especially in the last century of the kingdom, the kings stressed their adoption of, and participation in, the vernacular cults.<sup>36</sup> However, despite the obvious royal interest in these indigenous religious centres during the early Seleukid period, any explicit reference to native deities was completely absent from the state ideology as expressed by the numismatic record.

### **2.1.2 THE LATE SELEUKID I PERIOD (175-121 BC)**

Two of the sons of Antiochos III the Great, Seleukos IV and Antiochos IV Epiphanes, succeeded their father in turn. Both of these men left successors of their own and the next 50 years saw chronic bouts of civil war between the two branches of the Seleukid house. A

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<sup>32</sup> Arrian *Anabasis* 3.16, 7.17; Kuhrt 1996: 47-8.

<sup>33</sup> Kuhrt and Sherwin-White 1991; Austin 2006: no.166.

<sup>34</sup> Kuhrt 1996: 50.

<sup>35</sup> Sherwin-White and Kuhrt 1993: 155.

<sup>36</sup> Sherwin-White and Kuhrt 1993: 38-9.



study of the coin types produced in western – Levantine – mints by the competing branches reveals a distinct pattern. Although not mutually exclusive, the descendants of Seleukos IV maintained their visual affinity with the dynastic Apollo or introduced personal types (such as the standing Athena Nikephoros). Opposed to them were Antiochos Epiphanes and his line who reintroduced Zeus Nikephoros as the dominant reverse type for their western silver issues.<sup>37</sup> Through grants of pseudo-autonomous minting rights, Epiphanes and his sons also opened the gate to a proverbial flood of new variations within the corpus of bronze coin types. By using the seated Zeus, Epiphanes may have been associating himself with the kingdom’s glorious founder although there is good reason to see Epiphanes’ Zeus as a syncretic deity who could be understood as Baʿal, the all-pervasive Semitic sky god, in a Hellenised render.<sup>38</sup> The reverse legends on Epiphanes’ regal coinage began to list deifying epithets and at the same time his obverse came to wear a radiate crown on most of the bronze and some of the smaller silver denominations. We can only understand these images as the physical attributes identifying the king as a living god. The fact that the radiate portraits were only produced on lower value denominations indicates that the image was intended for a domestic audience rather than the wider Greek world.

While his brother, nephews and their sons employed the dynastic Apollo and sought support from their traditional powerbase, the soldiers and large cities, Antiochos Epiphanes – a usurper from the junior line of the family – needed to establish his own pool of support. It could be suggested that by granting special minting rights to municipal centres and the reintroduction of the Zeus coin type (**fig.16**), adaptable and palatable to both his Hellenic and Semitic subjects, Epiphanes was securing his own position and that of his descendants. Newell saw the adoption of Zeus by Antiochos Epiphanes as an attempt to standardise the multiple manifestations of Baʿal found across the kingdom into a single common figure.<sup>39</sup> Combining the Hellenic cult of Zeus and the indigenous worship of



**Figure 16. AR tetradrachm, Antiochos IV, Antioch-on-the-Orontes (SC 2: pl.5.1397a).**

<sup>37</sup> SC 2: 48. It should be noted that from the reign of Epiphanes until the loss of the satrapies east of the Euphrates (c.140 BC), the eastern mints predominantly maintained the Apollo reverse type and were not subject to the constant changes seen in the west. This will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 2.1.3 below.

<sup>38</sup> Bickerman 1937: 94-6; Rostovtzeff 1939: 294-5; Seyrig 1939c: 300; Wright 2005; id. 2007-2008; Aliquot 2008: 84-5. The attempt by Lichtenberger (2008: 135-6) to dismiss the syncretic nature of the enthroned Zeus is unconvincing.

<sup>39</sup> Newell 1918: 23.

Figure 17. Æ denomination, Antiochos IV, Antioch-on-the-Orontes (SC 2: pl.63.1414).



Figure 18. Æ denomination, Antiochos IV, Antioch-on-the-Orontes (SC 2: pl.63.1412).



Figure 19. Æ denomination, Antiochos IV, Antioch-on-the-Orontes (SC 2: pl.63.1413).



Ba'al into a Seleukid royal cult, Epiphanes was creating a unifying focal point for the diverse population of the Seleukid kingdom in the aftermath of the Treaty of Apameia and the loss of the Hellenic stronghold of western Asia Minor. By employing Zeus-Ba'al iconography, Epiphanes was also tapping into the mythological traditions of both his Hellenic and Semitic subjects; just as Epiphanes had seized power that was not his by right of direct hereditary descent, so too had Zeus and Ba'al-Hadad.<sup>40</sup>

For the late Seleukids, culturally isolated in a foreign landscape, the campaign for dominion over, and acceptance by, their subjects did not call for the imposition of blatant Hellenic institutions as has often been suggested.<sup>41</sup> Instead, continued Seleukid rule required a meshing of two cultures which resulted in the integration of Greek ideas and beliefs with the existing framework of Oriental culture and religion. Sullivan's statement regarding the religious policies of the later kings of Kommagene and their neighbours might just as easily be applied to the Seleukids: "the cultivation of religious loyalty among the populace accorded both with Eastern tradition and with sound national policy."<sup>42</sup>

### 2.1.2.1 Egyptian imports

Under Antiochos IV Epiphanes, the earliest indication of the flourishing non-Greek cults began to appear in the numismatic record. However, the first of these non-Greek deities to be utilised as Seleukid coin types were not indigenous Syrian gods but Hellenised Egyptians. A corn-wreathed head of Isis occupied the obverse of a large Ptolemaic style bronze denomination produced at Antioch during the Sixth Syrian War (170-168 BC).<sup>43</sup> The issue was paired with two even larger types adorned with a curly haired head of Zeus recalling the Zeus-Sarapis of Ptolemaic Alexandria (figs.17-9).<sup>44</sup> All three types utilised the Ptolemaic eagle

<sup>40</sup> Burkert 1985: 127; Green 2003: 176.

<sup>41</sup> See for example, Bevan 1902: 1.17; Bellinger 1949: 55; Tarn 1952: 54-5, 162-3; Walbank 1992: 125; Lichtenberger 2008: 134-6.

<sup>42</sup> Sullivan 1978: 915.

<sup>43</sup> SC 2: no.1414.

<sup>44</sup> SC 2: nos.1412-3.

standing on the thunderbolt on the reverse, although the Seleukid bird faces left rather than the more customary Ptolemaic right. Newell linked the issues to Epiphanes' victories over Egypt, suggesting a celebratory nature for the iconography.<sup>45</sup> The lack of any reference on the coins to Nike (or even the military) combined with the unusually large size, weakens the suggestion. Mørkholm took an alternate view and saw the issues as propaganda intended for a domestic audience, advertising the intended invasion.<sup>46</sup> However, it is clear that prior to the Day of Eleusis (168 BC), Antiochos planned to annex Cyprus and perhaps parts of Egypt proper. The Egyptianising series was perhaps produced in anticipation of the need for an acceptable, familiar currency in the newly acquired Ptolemaic territories.<sup>47</sup> The eagle imagery used by the Ptolemies as a representation of Zeus, was well established as the avatar of Hadad/Ba'al Šamīn in the Semitic Levant.<sup>48</sup> Its increasing use as a reverse type by late Seleukid rulers, especially in Phoenicia, was perhaps as much an adoption of a local motif as it was a symbol of anti- or pro-Ptolemaic policy or the pragmatic use of a familiar coin type.

A contemporary but completely different set of Egyptian imagery appeared at Epiphanes' mint at Byblos. The millennia of continuous contact between Egypt and Phoenicia was clearly indicated by the strength of Egyptian cults at the city. Byblos produced three bronze denominations that employed religious iconography referring to Egyptian cult during the reign of Epiphanes. A standing Isis wearing a *kalathos* and holding a sceptre, or holding a sail and tiller occupied the reverse of the two larger denominations. The two smaller bronze fractions showed the child Harpocrates-Horus squatting on a lotus flower sucking his thumb and a facing bovine head crowned by the headdress of Isis (**figs.20-3**).<sup>49</sup>

In the generations that succeeded Antiochos Epiphanes, military and financial support from Ptolemaic Egypt perpetuated a prolonged period of dynastic strife. It benefited Egypt politically to prevent the Seleukid kingdom from dominating its neighbours as it had during the reigns of Antiochos III and IV. Ptolemaic support in the



Figure 20. Æ denomination, Antiochos IV, Byblos (SC 2: pl.64.1442).



Figure 21. Æ denomination, Antiochos IV, Byblos (SC 2: pl.65.1445).



Figure 22. Æ denomination, Antiochos IV, Byblos (SC 2: pl.65.1446).



Figure 23. Æ denomination, Antiochos IV, Byblos (SC 2: pl.65.1447).

<sup>45</sup> Newell 1918: 26-7.

<sup>46</sup> Mørkholm 1963: 22-3.

<sup>47</sup> Diodorus Siculus *Library of History* 31.1-2; Livy *History of Rome* 45.11; Polybius *Histories* 26.

<sup>48</sup> Cook 1914: 188-93; Glueck 1965: 472.

<sup>49</sup> SC 2: nos.1442, 1445-7.



Figure 24. Æ denomination, Antiochos VII, Antioch-on-the-Orontes (SC 2: pl.84.2071).



Figure 25. Æ denomination, Kleopatra Thea and Antiochos VII, Ake-Ptolemaïs (SC 2: pl.88.2274.3).



period 150-121 BC was conveyed in the guise of the princess Kleopatra Thea who as we saw in Chapter 1.2.3, married three successive Seleukid kings in turn as their predecessors lost favour with the Alexandreian court. With Kleopatra's ascendancy, Egyptian themes further influenced Seleukid coinage. The headdress of Isis became the most common reverse type on the bronze coinage of Antioch under her third husband Antiochos VII Sidetes<sup>50</sup> and reappeared on the coinage of her son Antiochos VIII Grypos. Grypos used the type at Ake-Ptolemaïs during the period of his mother's regency (125-121) but it quickly disappeared after his mother's murder and with it went the last of the distinctly Egyptian religious motifs to adorn Seleukid coinage (figs.24-5).<sup>51</sup>

### 2.1.2.2 Ancient Luwians

Figure 26. Æ denomination, reign of Antiochos IV, Tarsus (Classical Numismatic Group).



Further north, Tarsos in Kilikia (under the dynastic name Antioch-on-the-Kydnos) was one of more than a dozen cities that received special minting rights during the reign of Antiochos IV Epiphanes. Perhaps in acknowledgement of the importance of the city as the main centre of the Kilikian satrapy (the kingdom's north-western border since 188 BC), the mint was allowed to produce pseudo-autonomous bronze coinage that omitted the king's obverse portrait and replaced it with the turreted head of the Tyche of the city.<sup>52</sup> The reverse of these issues depict a local Kilikian god in a vernacular manner reminiscent of Hittite prototypes (fig.26). The god in question, Sandan, was equated by the Greeks with Herakles and the latter's club had been used as a control mark of the Seleukid mint at Tarsos since the reign of Antiochos I Soter (281-264 BC).<sup>53</sup> However, the new representation showed a bearded deity standing stiffly in profile, facing right. He wears either a tall conical hat or the *kalathos* typical of Hellenised eastern fertility gods and (normally) a long tunic. The right hand is raised in salute and the left holds a *labrys* or double-headed axe. Several objects, interpreted as bow, quiver and sword sheath project from the back of the figure. Sandan stands on the back of a horned lion whose folded wings are sometimes visible. The image is a world away from Hellenistic Greek conventions but

<sup>50</sup> SC 2: nos.2066-7.

<sup>51</sup> SC 2: no.2274.

<sup>52</sup> SNG Levante nos.1270-81. Zoroğlu 2004: 377.

<sup>53</sup> SC 1: no.332.1.

occurs on contemporary terracotta votive plaques found during the excavations at Tarsos.<sup>54</sup> It is clear that while an indigenous (Luwian) cult continued to flourish at Tarsos following the Greco-Macedonian conquest, it did not find expression on a state level until the mid-second century BC and even then the pseudo-autonomous coins which bore the image were only intended for local circulation.

Epiphanes' nephew and ultimate successor, Demetrios I Soter, went further still in acknowledging the vernacular religious traditions of Kilikia. At some stage, probably late in his reign, a small workshop was opened in the Kilikian city of Mallos and began striking royal silver coins in the king's name and bearing his portrait as the obverse type. The reverse depicted the cult statue of the goddess of Magarsos (a sanctuary attached to Mallos), identified by the Greeks as Athena Magarsia (**fig.27**).<sup>55</sup> The deity is depicted standing in a stiff frontal pose on a tiered basis. Her upper arms are held close to her body and her forearms extend to either side. She wears a triple crested helmet such as the one that had adorned the obverses of the earlier Classical coinage of the city. The figure is dressed in a *peplos* with a circular disc between her breasts reminiscent of both Athena's *gorgonion* and the Semitic tradition of using celestial deities as pectorals. Multiple snake heads fringe the statue below the arms to complete the allusion to the *aegis*. A spear is held in the right hand and two stars or suns float either side of her head.<sup>56</sup> While the helmet, *aegis* and spear make it clear that the goddess was to be understood as Athena, the eastern nature of the representation suggests that the Athena identity had been grafted onto an earlier cult figure, perhaps involving a local variant of one of the Semitic warrior goddesses, Ištar/Astarte or Anat.<sup>57</sup> While Sandan had already occupied the reverse of bronze coinage for local use, the Athena Magarsia coins of Demetrios I represent the first instance of an indigenous cult figure adorning silver coins issued in the name of a Seleukid king. With the exception of the short usurpation of Diodotos Tryphon (142-138 BC), every Seleukid king to hold Mallos continued to utilise the local type for their silver regal issues produced



**Figure 27. AR tetradrachm, Demetrios I, Mallos (SC 2: pl.12.1618).**

<sup>54</sup> Goldman 1940: 544-5; id. 1949: 169-70, 174. For comparative iconography employed by the Iron Age Luwian god see Bunnens 2006.

<sup>55</sup> SC 2: nos.1618-9.

<sup>56</sup> Fleischer 1973: 260-3. Note that Fleischer attributes the earliest coinage of this type to Demetrios II. The revised chronology showing that the coinage was initiated under Demetrios I is provided in SC 2: 162.

<sup>57</sup> Houghton 1984: 104-10. The star was often used as the symbol of Ištar and her associated goddesses Astarte, Nanâ, Anāhitâ and Atargatis.



Figure 28. AR drachm, Alexander I, Tarsos (SC 2: pl.21.1778).



Figure 29. AR tetradrachm, Antiochos VIII, Tarsos (SC 2: pl.47.2288.1).

there. Following the city's independence, Athena Magarsia continued to appear on the civic coinage of Mallos.

Under Alexander I Balas (150-145 BC), the precedent set by Demetrios I at Mallos spread back to Tarsos and for the first time Sandan appeared on Tarsiote regal silver coinage.<sup>58</sup> The god would preside as the main reverse type of the mint until the city seceded from Seleukid control in the first century. On the drachms the deity continued to be shown standing on the back of his horned lion, but on the larger tetradrachms (from the reign of Antiochos VI),<sup>59</sup> Sandan and his companion were shown on a built sub-structure within (or before) a triangular feature topped by an eagle, the avatar of Zeus-Ba'al (figs.28-9). The same composition was shown on the terracotta plaques from Tarsos and interpretations vary as to whether it depicts the cult statue before a holy mountain (such as Mount Argaios shown on Kappadokian coinage) or an effigy of the god standing within a ritual pyre.<sup>60</sup>

### 2.1.2.3 Syncretised Semites

When Antiochos IV Epiphanes allowed Tarsos to produce its pseudo-autonomous bronze coinage following the conclusion of the Sixth Syrian War, the privilege was extended to nineteen other cities across the western half of the kingdom.<sup>61</sup> In the Seleukid Levant, these issues gave voice to the indigenous gods worshipped in the Seleukid heartland for the first time in both syncretised and purely vernacular forms. The pseudo-autonomous bronzes almost exclusively used the radiate royal portrait as the obverse type but combined it with a reverse type which usually had local significance. The holy city of Hierapolis-Bambyke in Kyrrehestis was among the mints granted pseudo-autonomy in this period. The radiate king's head took up the obverse while the reverse utilised an image of a standing Zeus holding out a wreath. This Zeus appears to resemble one of the most popular reverse types used across the Levant under Epiphanes except for the addition of a lion sub-type (figs.30-

<sup>58</sup> SC 2: no.1778.

<sup>59</sup> SC 2: no.1996.

<sup>60</sup> Goldman 1949.

<sup>61</sup> SC 2: 45-6.

2).<sup>62</sup> The lion was known as the companion and avatar of Atargatis and its appearance beside the Zeus of Hierapolis cements the type to the sanctuary and its divine couple, Baʿal Hadad and Atargatis. A related type, utilising a Zeus-Baʿal figure seated on a *diphros*, holding a palm branch and accompanied by a seated lion had been produced by the Bambyke mint before its annexation by Seleukos I (**fig.33**).<sup>63</sup> A rare variation of the Hierapolis bronzes under Epiphanes replaced the lion sub-type with a bull, the zoomorphic manifestation of Hadad himself.<sup>64</sup> The local religious significance was apparent in the issues of Antiochos IV but the iconography had been Hellenised to a point where Hadad was now indistinguishable from Zeus and indeed, so it was with the deity's cult statue at Hierapolis.<sup>65</sup>

Alongside the three Egyptian types at Byblos, Epiphanes produced a fourth bronze denomination which showed the local supreme sky-god, syncretised in this case with Kronos by the Greek colonists.<sup>66</sup> The deity walks stiffly to the left while his torso is depicted frontally in a formal Egyptianised style (**fig.34**). As a ruler-god, Ēl-Kronos holds out an Egyptianised *was*-sceptre in his right hand. The truly exceptional aspects of the figure are the three wings that extend from behind each shoulder which further distinguishes the type from any Greek iconographic traditions. The fusion of Greek and non-Greek deities persisted, although at Byblos the non-Greek iconography predominated, retaining only the Greek name. The deity on the reverse is shown with the same radiate crown as the king on the obverse, further assimilating the monarch with the local supreme god. The type was replicated by Epiphanes' illegitimate son, Alexander Balas, on a smaller denomination and thereafter the Byblian mint ceased production until its independence in the late second century BC. Upon resumption of coining, the city continued to produce the types instituted under Epiphanes replacing the king's head with that of Tyche or Astarte.

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<sup>62</sup> SC 2: nos.1432-3.2. Other examples of the standing Zeus Stephanophoros were produced at Antioch (SC 2: nos.1416-8) and Ake-Ptolemaïs (SC 2: no.1480), or at Laodikeia-by-the-Sea where the god was accompanied by a dolphin (SC 2: no.1429). Zeus also appeared with alternative familiars on the quasi-autonomous coinage of Epiphanes' son Alexander I Balas at Kyrrhos (an owl, SC 2: no.1809) and Laodikeia-by-the-Sea (a dolphin, SC 2: no.1807).

<sup>63</sup> The type is known only from a unique example bearing the name of Alexander in Aramaic ('LKSND[R]) that failed to sell in the Numismatica Ars Classica's auction 46, 2 April 2008, lot 286. The association between Atargatis and lions at Hierapolis is amply illustrated on other pre-Seleukid coins produced by the city, see for example Mildenberg 1999: nos. 28-9, 31-5.

<sup>64</sup> SC 2: no.1433.3.

<sup>65</sup> Lucian *The Syrian Goddess* 31-2; see also Chapter 4.5.1.2 below.

<sup>66</sup> SC 2: nos.1443-4.

**Figure 30. Æ denomination, Antiochos IV, Hierapolis-Bambyke (SC 2: pl.64.1432.5).**



**Figure 31. Æ denomination, Antiochos IV, Antioch-on-the-Orontes (SC 2: pl.63.1416.3).**



**Figure 32. Æ denomination, Antiochos IV, Ake-Ptolemaïs (SC 2: pl.66.1480.1d).**



**Figure 33. AR stater, Alexander III the Great, Bambyke (Numismatica Ars Classica).**



**Figure 34. Æ denomination, Antiochos IV, Byblos (SC 2: pl.64.1444.1).**





However, Epiphanes' program of religious fusion was not universally popular. It produced an indigenous backlash in Judaea and to a much lesser extent, in Babylonia. In Babylon, the installation of "unsuitable" Hellenised statues into the Esagila sanctuary (dedicated to Marduk) roused the anger of certain Babylonian individuals who forced their way into the sanctuary and removed the statues. The vandals were later dragged before the pro-Seleukid authorities and condemned to death.<sup>67</sup> In Jerusalem, Epiphanes attempted to integrate the worship of Zeus and Dionysos with the indigenous Yahweh cult.<sup>68</sup> The resulting unrest was carried forward by a wave of public support that had been lacking for the dissenters in Babylon. The Judaeen (Maccabean) revolt was thus more successful and ultimately resulted in the establishment of the fully autonomous Hasmonaean kingdom by 129 BC.

For almost half a century after the death of Antiochos IV Epiphanes (164 BC), his reigning descendants were challenged (and eventually ousted) by the legitimate branch of the Seleukidai. Throughout the period, the Epiphanaic line continued to make great use of the seated Zeus Nikephoros reverse type for their larger silver coins (**fig.35-7**). Meanwhile, the legitimate line (descendants of Epiphanes' older brother Seleukos IV) utilised new personalised deities or else returned to the dynastic Apollo as its primary coin types. The senior line did not make use of Epiphanes' radiate form of portraiture. With the exception of the coinage of Demetrios Soter, the main silver types of each of these kings maintained purely Greek forms for their respective deities. In a wide ranging reform, Demetrios introduced a new type as his personal badge on his tetradrachms at Antioch and across the kingdom from Kilikia to Mesopotamia. The



**Figure 35.** AR tetradrachm, Antiochos V, Antioch-on-the-Orontes (SC 2: pl.10.1575.5).



**Figure 36.** AR tetradrachm, Alexander I, Ake-Ptolemais (SC 2: pl.23.1841).



**Figure 37.** AR tetradrachm, Alexander II, Antioch-on-the-Orontes (SC 2: pl.43.2217.3b).

<sup>67</sup> Eddy 1961: 135-6, 144-5.

<sup>68</sup> I *Maccabees* 1.20-4, 41-55; II *Maccabees* 5.15-21; 6.1-6; Mørkholm 1966: 147; Collins 2001: 51-2. Scurlock (2000: 142-5) views Epiphanes' policy towards the Jews in 167 BC in terms of an educated Greek reform of Judaism in line with what was perceived to be the historic cult of the Jews, namely an Egyptianised Dionysos. Seven years earlier, Jerusalem had been renamed Antioch and „promoted“ to the status of *polis*. Interestingly, religious change had not been part of this transition, although cultural change was: see Mørkholm 1966: 137-45; Kennell 2005: 10-24. Religious reform only came about as a result of political instability in the region.



Figure 38. AR tetradrachm, Demetrios I, Antioch-on-the-Orontes (SC 2: pl.14.1635b).



Figure 39. AV stater, Demetrios I, Seleukeia-on-the-Tigris (SC 2: pl.16.1684).

reverse depicted a seated goddess of uncertain origin.<sup>69</sup> The figure, commonly accepted as representing Tyche, sits on a *diphros* or stool supported by a winged tritones. Her hair is pulled back in a bun and she usually wears the *kalathos* headdress. Her lower half is always draped although she initially appeared naked to the waist.<sup>70</sup> She holds a sceptre in her extended right hand and cradles a cornucopia in her left arm (figs.38-9).

Demetrios' goddess is certainly expressed in a Greek style although her various attributes preclude her identification as any of the Olympian goddesses and the type is certainly distinct from the *polis* Tyche seen at Antioch and Damascus during Tigranes II's occupation (74-69 BC).<sup>71</sup> The turreted crown that linked Tyche directly to the protection of a particular city is absent; instead she wears the fecund *kalathos*. To the author's knowledge, Tyche is never depicted in an undraped state during the Hellenistic period, nor, with the exception of Aphrodite, do the Olympian goddesses appear naked or semi-naked.<sup>72</sup> As

with Aphrodite's nudity, we can perhaps read in Demetrios' goddess a reproductive motherly aspect. Likewise, the cornucopia underlines the fertile, productive nature of the figure, while the sceptre speaks of sovereignty and authority. Lucian's (second century AD) description of the great Syrian mother-goddess, Atargatis, states that her image takes many forms, resembling at once Hera, Athena, Aphrodite, Selene, Rhea, Artemis, Nemesis and the Fates.<sup>73</sup> Certainly Demetrios' goddess amalgamated aspects of some of these figures,

<sup>69</sup> SC 2: nos. 1609-17, 1620-2, 1624-6, 1633-41, 1643, 1649-53, 1659, 1678, 1681-2, 1686-90. The confused identity of the figure was noted but left unexplored by Newell 1918: 37-8. Helliesen 1981: 219-28 explored the question more thoroughly although here too the conclusions reached were not totally satisfactory. One suggestion put forward was that the goddess matched Malalas' description of the Tyche of Antigoneia-on-the-Orontes (Malalas *Chronicle* 8.14) and alluded to the king's joint Antigonid descent. Helliesen further suggests that the wreath surrounding the obverse portrait may allude to Apollo and the return of the legitimate Seleukidai. However, as Professor John Pearn pointed out at the Numismatic Association of Australia Conference (24<sup>th</sup> Nov. 2007), the wreath borders utilised on the silver tetradrachms of Demetrios I and his successors (Demetrios II, Antiochos VII, VIII, IX, Demetrios III and Antiochos XII) have lanceolate leaves which sprout opposite each other from the stems, as an olive (*Olea europaea*) or myrtle (*Myrtus communis*) bough, rather than sprouting alternatively as a laurel (*Laurus nobilis*). These coins may perhaps be intended to fit within a local „*stephanophoroi*“ tradition but the wreaths should not be seen as allusions to Apollo.

<sup>70</sup> SC 2: nos.1633-6.

<sup>71</sup> Bedoukian 1978: 13-4, nos.7-87, 89, 91-8, 108-11.

<sup>72</sup> The Roman period syncretised Astarte-Isis-Tyche of Caesarea Maritima was depicted with the right breast bared, "dressed as a fighting Amazon," see Gersht 1996: 307-11.

<sup>73</sup> Lucian *The Syrian Goddess* 31-2; see also Chapter 4.5.1.2 below.

particularly Aphrodite, Rhea and Hera. In addition, the tritoness figure who supports the seated goddess recalls both Atargatis' coastal alter-ego Derketo and a lost relief sculpture from Hierapolis-Bambyke noted by several early European travellers on which two tritonesses supported the Syrian Goddess with their joined fish tails.<sup>74</sup>

The only king to reproduce the type of Demetrios I was his son Demetrios II Nikator during his first reign (145-140 BC), and then only at Seleukeia-on-the-Tigris (**fig.40**). In the Levantine mints he returned once more to a seated Apollo type, or a Phoenician (Ptolemaic style) eagle (**figs.41-2**).<sup>75</sup> A small bronze issue from an uncertain mint in Syria or northern Mesopotamia during this reign may further the identification of Demetrios I's goddess with a Hellenised rendering of Atargatis. The issue in question depicts a standing draped goddess clasping the hand of a standing draped, bearded god (both deities had appeared separately on the coinage of Seleukeia-on-the-Tigris under Demetrios I).<sup>76</sup> Both figures wear the *kalathos* and carry cornucopiae (**fig.43**). Again the identity of the deities is disputed<sup>77</sup> but the composition and attributes suggest a divine couple who were clearly worshipped as providers of fertility and abundance – the supreme couple of the Hellenistic Semitic pantheon, Atargatis and Hadad, are the most likely candidates.

In Koile-Syria, local cult was by no means ignored. At Askalon, Gaza and Marisa, Alexander Balas produced bronze denominations utilising images of a local deity as the reverse type (**fig.44**). The god is probably to be identified as Ba'al Marnas "Lord of the rains" who was particularly revered at Gaza and its surrounds.<sup>78</sup> Unlike other Seleukid depictions of Zeus, the figure does not hold up a wreath or other symbol. Rather, in all three depictions of „Marnas“, the god is shown to extend his right arm as some form of ritualised gesture or salutation similar to that maintained by Sandan at Tarsos.<sup>79</sup>

At Jerusalem, more often than not a problematic city for the Seleukids, strong indigenous religious traditions were also maintained. However, unlike other centres, the vernacular traditions were reflected on the city's coinage through not displaying the local

<sup>74</sup> Lucian *The Syrian Goddess* 14; Maundrell 1740: 154; Pococke 1745: 166-7; Drummond 1754: 211; Lightfoot 2003: 67.

<sup>75</sup> le Rider 1995: 391-404.

<sup>76</sup> SC 2: no.1695-5 (Demetrios I), 1978-80 (Demetrios II).

<sup>77</sup> Here I follow the identification of the supreme Semitic couple posited by Seyrig (1970a: 86-7); for alternative identifications, see *BMC Syria* 78 (describing the couple as Tyche and a figure in Parthian costume) and Moore 1986: 130-5 (suggesting the couple represent Agathos Daimon and Agathe Tyche).

<sup>78</sup> Mark the Deacon *Life of Porphyry of Gaza* 19.7-10; SC 2: nos.1847, 1850, 1853.

<sup>79</sup> Mussies 1990: 2446-7.





**Figure 40.** AR tetradrachm, Demetrios II, Seleukeia-on-the-Tigris (SC 2: pl.28.1984.1).



**Figure 41.** AR tetradrachm, Demetrios II, Antioch-on-the-Orontes (SC 2: pl.26.1906.2f).



**Figure 42.** AR tetradrachm, Demetrios II, Tyre (SC 2: pl.28.1959.1a).



**Figure 43.** Æ denomination, Demetrios II, uncertain Syrian or Mesopotamian mint (SC 2: pl.81.1978).



**Figure 44.** Æ denomination, Alexander I, Marisa (SC 2: pl.77.1850.2).



cult.<sup>80</sup> Under Antiochos VII Sidetes (138-129 BC), the only Seleukid known to have minted coins in the city, the Jewish prohibition on graven images was respected (**fig.45**).<sup>81</sup> Rather than the king's divine head, the obverse of Antiochos' Jerusalemite bronzes was occupied by a lily flower as an inoffensive symbol of prosperity. The reverse bore the king's name and title around an anchor, a symbol of stability but also one of the dynastic symbols that had been in use as a sub-type since the earliest coins of Seleukos I.<sup>82</sup> Seleukid rule and the benefits it brought were plainly alluded to by the Jerusalem series, although Antiochos clearly appreciated the vigour of contemporary Jewish sensibilities.



Figure 45. Æ denomination, Antiochos VII, Jerusalem (SC 2: pl.85.2123.2).

### 2.1.3 THE 'ROYAL ARCHER' AND APOLLO IN THE EAST<sup>83</sup>

The constant iconographic changes to coin types during the late Seleukid I period outlined above effected only the mints situated west of the Tigris river, in the Luwian and Semitic regions of the Levant and Mesopotamia. The mints among the Iranian populations east of the Tigris (Susa, Antioch-on-the-Persian Gulf, Ekbatana and a further as yet unidentified mint), maintained a strict continuation of the Apollo seated on the *omphalos* type for their silver issues under Antiochos IV, Antiochos V, Demetrios I and Alexander I. Apollo continued to dominate in this area despite the reforms undertaken by both Antiochos IV and Demetrios I, until the Parthian conquest in the late 140s BC. Indeed, early Parthian issues adapted the seated Apollo type for their own use – modified only slightly to take the form of a bearded, diademed archer seated on the *omphalos* (**fig.46**). The coinage of the first two Parthian kings, Arsakes I and Arsakes II (c.238-191 BC) depicted a royal archer seated on a throne or *diphros* (this type was returned to in the later part of the reign of Mithridates II, 123-88 BC). However, in the period following their renewed independence from the Seleukids – under



Figure 46. AR tetradrachm, Alexander I, Susa (SC 2: pl.23.1867.1).

<sup>80</sup> Exodus 20.22-3; Deuteronomy 4.15-9.

<sup>81</sup> An earlier series of bronze coins depicting the radiate head of Antiochos IV Epiphanes on the obverse and a seated goddess on the reverse have been attributed to Jerusalem by Barag (2000-2: 59-77) although the rationale behind the attribution is somewhat flawed and the suggestion has been dismissed by Houghton, Lorber and Hoover (SC 2: 94-5) whose view is followed here.

<sup>82</sup> SC 2: no.2123.

<sup>83</sup> This sub-section (2.1.3) is an expansion of a paper prepared in collaboration with Kyle Erickson (University of Exeter) for the 14<sup>th</sup> International Numismatic Congress (Glasgow) delivered on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2009.

Mithridates I (171-138 BC), Phraates II (138-127 BC), Artabanos I (127-124 BC) and Mithridates II (123-88 BC) – the archer on the reverse of Parthian silver coinage appropriated Apollo's *omphalos* as his seat of choice.<sup>84</sup> Although strictly a departure from the Syrian focus of this work, a digression to discuss the reception of Seleukid iconography further east will provide insight into the royal understanding and manipulation of indigenous traditions.

The continued use of the Apollo type in the East down to the Parthian conquest is evidence that the same imagery might be understood to contain different symbolism depending on the cultural predilections of the audience. Among the Iranian populations, the Seleukid Apollo *may* have been understood as the Hellenised Mithras. The Hierothesion of Antiochos I of Kommagene at Nemrud Dağ included two colossi of a god identified epigraphically as Apollo-Mithras-Helios-Hermes together with two relief sculptures showing a *dexiosis* (hand clasping) scene between the deceased king and the syncretic deity.<sup>85</sup> The trouble with making the Apollo-Mithras connection for the second century BC eastern Seleukid silver lies in the chronology. There is no record of any syncretic association between the Greek Apollo and Mithras, the junior Zoroastrian figure, before the construction of the Hierothesion. To be sure, Antiochos I of Kommagene must have been drawing upon established religious models, but through the rest of his sculpture program it is clear that he was consciously blending his dual Seleukid-Hellenic and Achaemenid-Iranian ancestry into a single composite form. It is unclear to what extent the Nemrud Dağ figures were established deities and how much they were the personal innovation of Antiochos I of Kommagene.

The Parthian adaption of the seated Apollo type may allude to a second explanation for the continued use of Apollo as the sole Seleukid silver coin type in the East. There seems to have been a broad tradition in the East which saw a depiction of the „archer“ as the preferred representation on coins – from the sigloi and darics of the Achaemenids and Alexander, through the Apollo on the *omphalos* of the Seleukids to the bearded archer on the *omphalos* under the Parthians. Under the Achaemenids, a massive quantity of silver (sigloi) and gold (darics) was struck at the city of Sardes bearing the royal Achaemenid

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<sup>84</sup> Shore 1993: nos.5-20, 24-7, 29 (Mithridates I), 40-55 (Phraates II), 57-65 (Artabanos I), 66-76 (Mithridates II).

<sup>85</sup> Sanders 1996: 184-7, 197-9, 225-6, 237-40; Moormann and Versluys 2002: 87; see also Appendix C.

type of the running archer wearing the royal crown (**fig.47**).<sup>86</sup> When Agesilaos, king of Sparta, was forced to abandon his Asiatic campaign in 394 BC, he stated that he had been defeated by the Persian king's 30,000 archers – referring to the money sent by the Achaemenid king to fund rebellions in the Greek mainland.<sup>87</sup> Compared to the extensive finds of sigloi hoards in Anatolia, finds of sigloi or darics east of the Taurus mountains are limited and



**Figure 47. AR siglos, Achaemenid, Sardes mint (Numismatik Lanz München).**

Carradice's suggestion that the intended area of use of Achaemenid regal coinage was oriented towards the coin-using populations of the Greek west is probably well founded.<sup>88</sup> However, sigloi and darics did travel beyond this area with a number of published coin hoards including sigloi recorded from Egypt, the Levant, Mesopotamia and even east of the Tigris.<sup>89</sup> South of the Taurus, along the Mediterranean coast, semi-autonomous silver „satrapal“ issues were struck by the Achaemenids depicting a variety of themes, but these do not seem to have been produced in anywhere near the quantity of the sigloi, nor do they seem to have travelled as extensively. The most eastern mint of the Achaemenid empire was located at Hierapolis-Bambyke and produced a semi-autonomous series of didrachms based on the Attic standard, not the Achaemenid regal type of the archer.<sup>90</sup>

It is almost certain that the crowned archer depicted on Achaemenid sigloi and darics was intended to be understood as an image of the king – a royal portrait following in the traditions of Assyrian and Pharaonic art which emphasised continuity and stability rather than the individual's features.<sup>91</sup> Following Alexander the Great's occupation of Babylon, he established a workshop that continued the output of darics with only a more

<sup>86</sup> Carradice 1987.

<sup>87</sup> Plutarch *Artaxerxes* 20.

<sup>88</sup> Carradice 1987: 92-3.

<sup>89</sup> Egypt: *IGCH* 1654, 1656; *CH* VIII 44\*, 57. The Levant: *IGCH* 1481, 1482, 1483; *CH* I 14, 21; *CH* VI 4; *CH* VII 28\*; *CH* VIII 45, 126, 143\*, 153\*; *CH* IX 363. Mesopotamia: *IGCH* 1747\*, 1748; *CH* VIII 90\*, 188. The upper satrapies: *IGCH* 1791\*, 1792, 1822\*, 1830\*, 1831; *CH* IX 343. Note that only those entries marked with an asterisk contained more than five sigloi. Xenophon (*Anabasis* 1.5.10, 2.4.28) describes the purchase of provisions in Mesopotamia with coined metal, giving equivalents of sigloi to Attic obols (401 BC). The first recognisable word in cuneiform texts for „coin“, *istatirru*, was a Hellenistic development, based on the Greek *stater* (Powell 1996: 234). However, the establishment of the Babylonian daric mint under Alexander the Great makes it clear that darics and sigloi must have achieved a more significant level of distribution in the east than is illustrated by the published hoard evidence. On the mixed nature of the coinage (including darics) circulating in Babylonia under Alexander and Seleukos I, see Price 1991b; Nicolet-Pierre 1999 and van Alfen 2000: 36-41.

<sup>90</sup> Mildenberg 1999: 280.

<sup>91</sup> For comparative material see the upper register reliefs of the king at prayer above the tombs of Darius I and Xerxes I at Naqš-e Rostam and Artaxerxes II at Persepolis and the many Achaemenid period seals depicting the archer-hero/king in battle, see for example St Petersburg 19499, British Museum ANE129571 and ANE1932-10-8,192. Archery was such a part of Achaemenid iconography that Aeschylus was compelled to deride Darius I as the *toxarchos* or chief bowman (Aeschylus *Persians* 556).

Figure 48. AV double daric, Alexander III, Babylon mint (ACANS Westmorland coll. no.26).



naturalised style and the introduction of Greek letters or monograms to distinguish the Babylonian issues from their Sardiotic forebears (fig.48).<sup>92</sup> The Macedonian king was depicted on the darics in the guise of the royal Achaemenid archer, regardless of the fact that he did not physically conform to the image in reality. Alexander produced his own usual tetradrachms as an imperial series in parallel with the daric issues in Babylon and it may be in the eastern satrapies that we can also trace the initial misunderstanding of Alexander's favoured Herakles obverse type as a depiction of the king himself. The continuity of the Alexander type under Seleukos I and briefly under Antiochos I played into the traditions established under the Achaemenids of a constant „royal“ image as the main coin type. In this case, it was the continued usage of the Herakles head that was understood to be the „portrait“ of the king.<sup>93</sup> From the reign of Antiochos I, the reverse Apollo/archer imagery provided a continuity of royal ideology through six generations of Seleukid rule in Iran.

While the Achaemenid royal coinage does not present an exact parallel to the Apollo on the *omphalos* type, it may form a lens through which to view this image in the Seleukid East. However, a series of satrapal coins produced in Kilikia during the period of the Satrap's Revolt (369-361 BC)<sup>94</sup> provide a clear antecedent. While the obverse type



Figure 49. AR stater, Tarkumuwa, Kilikian mint (British Museum 1888.1208.6).

conformed to the Kilikian satrapal type of Ba'al'tars seated on a *diphros*, the reverse featured a bearded archer seated right on a similar *diphros* (fig.49). The figure wears typical Median/Persian dress with tiara, trousers, a sleeved-cloak and arm guards. The figure examines an arrow held in both hands. A bow stands in the lower right field while in the upper field is filled with the winged disc of Ahura Mazda.<sup>95</sup> The Aramaic reverse legend reads TRKMW or Tarkumuwa, a Luwian name of some antiquity.<sup>96</sup> The identity

<sup>92</sup> Carradice 1987: 86-8.

<sup>93</sup> Smith 1988: 1; Sheedy 2007: 15-6.

<sup>94</sup> The similarities of the obverse of these coins to those issued by Pharnabazos in the 370s BC and to those issued by Mazaïos sometime before 350 BC confirm a date within that timeframe, see Harrison 1982: 321-336.

<sup>95</sup> *SNG Levante* nos.85-8.

<sup>96</sup> Houwink Ten Cate 1965: 126-8, 166-9; Moran 1987: EA 31.

of the issuer, traditionally equated with Datames, satrap of Pontic Kappadokia, has caused some controversy. Harrison, followed by Casabonne, argued that Tarkumuwa should not be identified with Datames but should instead be seen as a local Anatolian dynast.<sup>97</sup>

The problems with identifying the issuer of the Tarkumuwa coins should not preclude their interpretation. Harrison argues that the Persian satrapal coinage types were largely generated by local mints and should not be viewed as elements of Persian propaganda.<sup>98</sup> Root, however, sees this coinage as depicting an image of the king or at least the expression of the concept of kingship.<sup>99</sup> Harrison's interpretation of this particular coinage is persuasive only if the coinage is not minted by either a Persian satrap in revolt or a local ruler attempting to win royal favour against the revolting satraps. As this coinage clearly draws on the royal elements of the winged-disc and the royal archer, it reflects and interprets royal propaganda to further the issuer's message. The presence of Ahura Mazda precludes the identification of the archer as a deity and he must, therefore, represent either the king or revolting satrap. In this instance, the latter is perhaps a more favourable conclusion owing to the accompanying legend which identifies the reverse figure just as the legend on the obverse identifies the deity. The reverse type of this coinage reflects the important martial imagery of the Persian archer. The coin should be interpreted as an expression of Persian power, regardless of whether that power symbolised revolt from or support of the king.

Moysey argues that the imagery attempts to legitimate Datames' [*sic*] revolt from the Persian King in terms of Persian iconography.<sup>100</sup> By usurping the image of the archer and associating himself with Ahura Mazda, Datames/Tarkumuwa could portray his part in the satraps' revolt (whatever it may have been) as a legitimate act of rule. The established timeframe places the coins approximately 80 years before the introduction of the Seleukid Apollo type. However, the type may have been known to Antiochos I through its continued circulation in Asia Minor or through Mazaios, successor to Datames, who issued coins under Seleukos I at Babylon.<sup>101</sup> Kilikia was a long distance from the Persian heartland and although the Tarkumuwa coins were clearly minted to demonstrate Persian royal power, it

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<sup>97</sup> Nöldeke 1884: 298; Six 1884: 114-7; Harrison 1982: 321-36; Casabonne 2001. See also Bing 1988 n.55 for a bibliography of the continued attribution of the Tarkumuwa coinage to Datames.

<sup>98</sup> Harrison 1982: 439

<sup>99</sup> Root 1979 116-118

<sup>100</sup> Moysey 1986: 20.

<sup>101</sup> SC 1: 43-4.

is difficult to determine how the iconography would have been received in Persia itself. Tarkumuwa's archer can be taken to represent a Persian king due to the accompanying Zoroastrian sub-type, the common representation of the king as archer and the adoption of a similar type by the Parthian royal house after 238 BC. It seems likely that if the Seleukid court came across this imagery it would have understood it in a similar fashion and therefore may have adapted it for their own purposes.

The similarities between the Tarkumuwa archer and the Seleukid Apollo on the *omphalos* are striking and although there are significant differences between the coin types, these are not so great as to prevent a similar interpretation for these coin types. The most distinct difference is that the Seleukid Apollo is either nude or lightly draped whereas the Tarkumuwa archer is dressed in Persian attire. The issue of dress on the two coinage types is seen as the most significant barrier to identifying the ideological message in the same way. The nudity of Apollo might be seen to detract from an Iranian identification of the image as the royal archer because of their negative views on nudity and its associations with Greece. However, if the image of the royal archer is understood as an abstract concept of kingship rather than specifically referring to an Achaemenid king, then the objection to the clothing/nudity should dissolve. If the Iranian audience of Seleukid coinage believed that the archer image was a reflection of royal power, and understood that they were ruled by a Greek king, it should have been possible to make the connection between the two image types. Even if the connection was not explicit, certainly a Greek court might believe that an association could have been evoked in the minds of the Iranian subjects. Furthermore, the Apollo on the *omphalos* coins were issued by a Seleukid administration which consistently chose a Greek manner of representation until the late second and first centuries BC. Finally, the image of Apollo on the *omphalos* minted in the eastern part of the Seleukid territory under Antiochos I and Antiochos II was usually shown as a draped figure. The gold and silver coins minted at Seleucia-on-the-Tigris, Ekbatana, and Aï Khanoum all show Apollo with a draped cloth over at least one leg.<sup>102</sup> Although the Apollo is not in Persian dress, this would not have precluded some Iranians from interpreting the message of this coinage as a Greek king ruling over Iranian lands.

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<sup>102</sup> SC 1: Seleucia-on-the-Tigris, nos.378-80; Ekbatana, nos.409-410; Aï Khanoum, nos.435-9. Note that it is not clear whether the Apollo depicted on the bronze coinage minted at Ekbatana was draped or not, see SC 1: nos.415-7, 419-20.

A second distinct difference is the object upon which the archer sits. The Seleukid Apollo generally sits on an *omphalos* while the Tarkumuwa archer sits on a *diphros*. The *omphalos* is important in reflecting Apollo's mantic qualities for the Greek audience. However, it seems to have lost this importance in the Iranian interpretation of the image. In fact the Parthian coinage which at first featured the image of an archer seated on a *diphros*, ultimately replaced the stool with the Seleukid *omphalos* (fig.50). This suggests that the two images had become interchangeable in Iran by the Parthian period.



Figure 50. AR tetradrachm, Mithridates II of Parthia, Seleukeia-on-the-Tigris (Classical Numismatic Group).

That the figure's seat was an insignificant factor in the iconography during the Parthian period and could be replaced without changing the central meaning of the type is further evidence that the Seleukid Apollo was likely the direct antecedent for the Parthian archer type. Further differences between the coin types which might interfere with our hypothesis include the lack of the Zoroastrian winged-disc sub-type and the position of the archer's bow. The winged-disc has clear significance as it identifies the figure as the Persian king (or revolting satrap) receiving divine support from Ahura Mazda. As the Seleukids did not claim their right to rule from Ahura Mazda, it is not surprising that the winged-disc does not appear on any of their coinage.<sup>103</sup> However, the lack of the winged-disc should not prevent the identification of the figure as a king. There is ample Parthian evidence that suggests that the seated archer can be identified with a king without the presence of the winged-disc. Where the bow of the Tarkumuwa archer appears to have been placed in the open space at the foot of the figure, the Seleukid Apollo rests his left hand naturally on the bow which stands upright behind him. The manner in which Apollo holds the bow is also reminiscent of Assyro-Persian iconographic traditions in which the king holds the bow by the end with the string turned towards him rather than away from him.<sup>104</sup>

The link between the Apollo on the *omphalos* coinage and the Tarkumuwa archer coinage is reinforced by the appearance of comparative iconography on Parthian coinage from the reign of Arsakes I (c.238-211 BC). The Parthian kings appear to have established

<sup>103</sup> This may also reflect a desire by the Seleukids not to encroach on the religious authority of the Zoroastrian priests. The Seleukids appear to have largely left them alone to develop their religion without interference of state sponsorship, see Hjerrild 1990: 144-147. Moreover, to their more Hellenised subjects, appending Zoroastrian iconography to the image of Apollo may have sent conflicting messages regarding cultural dominance.

<sup>104</sup> For a comparison between Persian and Assyrian bows, see Root 1979: 167-168.



their legitimacy based on their connection to the Achaemenids – one method for advertising this claim was the recreation of Achaemenid satrapal type coinage. This is an interesting choice if the Tarkumuwa coinage was minted as an act of rebellion against the Achaemenid king. However, any original intention behind the production of this coinage as an expression of rebellion appears to have been lost by the Parthian period, perhaps through Seleukid interpretations of the coinage as representations of the reigning king. Therefore, it seems highly likely that the Parthian numismatic iconography was not directly descended from the Tarkumuwa type which had been issued briefly in Kilikia more than a hundred years previously, but rather that the image was filtered through a Seleukid lens of the Apollo on the *omphalos* coinage.

As the Parthian kings began their empire at the expense of Seleukid territory, it is likely that they were acquainted with the dominant Seleukid coin types which were circulating in the late third and second centuries BC.<sup>105</sup> The most prominent Seleukid coin type during this period was the Apollo on the *omphalos* image produced under Antiochos I and II. Arsakes I, the first king of the Parthian Empire, began to issue coinage after he defeated the rebellious Seleukid satrap Andragoras around the beginning of the reign of Seleukos II.<sup>106</sup> As discussed, the coins that Arsakes I minted were similar to both the Tarkumuwa coinage and the Seleukid Apollo on the *omphalos* type.<sup>107</sup> The similarities between the Parthian and Seleukid types of coinage are more striking given that the coinage of the independent Baktrian kings departed radically from the Seleukid model, even during their periods of nominal vassalage.<sup>108</sup> Under Seleukos II, the Seleukid Apollo on the *omphalos* was replaced by a standing Apollo resting on a tripod. It is possible that the Parthians felt able to create a distinctive coinage that drew on Seleukid models and royal iconography without appearing too closely aligned to the coinage of the reigning Seleukid king. Additionally, as the Parthian kings were not rebelling directly from Seleukid authority but rather conquering territory from a rebellious satrap they could more comfortably adopt a similar image. The familiarity of the seated archer type would have aided the acceptance

<sup>105</sup> For example, see the use of the title ΘΕΟΠΙΑΤΟΡΟΣ on Parthian coinage as a deliberate echo of the coinage of the Seleukid king, Alexander I Balas, see: Gariboldi 2004.

<sup>106</sup> The dating for the independence of Parthia is unclear. Andragoras had been appointed by Antiochos II, and therefore the revolt either took place before Antiochos II's death or in the immediate aftermath. The difficult conditions faced by Seleukos II in the west at the start of his reign and his brother's subsequent revolt provide a better context for the revolt. However, by the middle of Seleukos II's reign the Parthians were independent enough that Seleukos II was obliged to undertake a campaign against them.

<sup>107</sup> Shore 1993: nos. 1-3.

<sup>108</sup> Holt 1999: 94-106; SC 1: nos. 628-37.

of the new Parthian coinage by a wider audience. Furthermore, if the coinage was understood among the Iranian populations as representative of „the king“ then a more Persian version of this king would fit more neatly with Parthian royal ideology.

The reverse of the Arsakes I coinage featured a figure seated on a *diphros* wearing a tiara with cheek flaps, a long-sleeved cloak and trouser suit. Curtis suggests that the closest parallel for the long-sleeved coat is the Tarkumuwa seated archer coinage, as the cloak is not a typical feature of Parthian dress.<sup>109</sup> She views the adoption of the trouser suit as a significant departure from Hellenistic practice specifically citing Alexander’s refusal to adopt Persian trousers in Plutarch’s *Life of Alexander* (45.1-3).<sup>110</sup> The royal tiara which is worn by both the Parthian king on the obverse and the archer on the reverse suggests that the two figures should be interpreted as the same individual. The clothing on the figure emphasises its Iranian attributes, clearly marking a difference between the Parthian and Seleukid iconography. The Seleukid figure will always appear Greek owing to his nudity, even when partially draped. The clothing on the Parthian figure marked a return to Iranian rule. The major difference between early Arsakid coinage and the Tarkumuwa issues is that the figure on the Arsakid archer holds a bow rather than an arrow.<sup>111</sup> Another interesting development of the Parthian manifestation of this type was the replacement of the *diphros* with the *omphalos* during the reign of Mithridates I (c. 171-138 BC)<sup>112</sup> which suggests an awareness of the similarities between the Parthian and Seleukid counterpart types. A further early Arsakid departure from the Tarkumuwa coinage saw the Parthian archer un-bearded. This feature may be related to the early Hellenistic preference for un-bearded royal imagery instigated by Alexander, and indeed, Arsakes I himself is clean shaven on the obverse. This represents a significant inheritance from the Seleukids rather than from an Achaemenid prototype. A further similarity between the Parthian and Seleukid types is the positioning of the feet of the seated figure. On the Tarkumuwa coinage, the archer’s feet are parallel as if seated stiffly on the stool. The Seleukid Apollo pulls his right (rear) leg back so that his

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<sup>109</sup> Curtis 1998: 66.

<sup>110</sup> Curtis 1998: 66-7.

<sup>111</sup> This difference may be best explained by the pose of Apollo on some of the coinage of Antiochos I and II. On these coins Apollo held a bow in his outstretched hand rather than the arrow. This coinage became the most common type minted at Magnesia-on-the-Meander under Antiochos II, having first been minted there under Antiochos I. Interestingly, the bow is held by both Apollo and the Parthian archer with the string facing away from him. This pose appears slightly unnatural as the figures’ wrists are twisted outward. This suggests a perceived ideological inspiration for the Arsakes coinage from a Seleukid prototype that was circulating directly before his invasion, rather than just a Parthian reproduction of the Tarkumuwa type.

<sup>112</sup> Shore 1993: nos.5-20, 24-7, 29.

foot rests against the *omphalos* in a more natural fashion. This posture is adopted by the Parthian archer even when seated on the *diphros*.

The seated archer on Parthian coinage is often interpreted as the image of the king or of royal power in the same manner as the running archer of Achaemenid sigloi and darics and the seated archer of Tarkumuwa. It is therefore plausible to interpret the Seleukid use of Apollo in the same manner. If this is the case, it further demonstrates the broad potential for the understanding of the Seleukid Apollo outside of a restrictive Greek interpretation. This suggests that under Antiochos I, the Seleukids created an image of royal authority that could be broadly recognised across the entire empire, thereby implying that the Seleukid court was aware of the various iconographic traditions of the empire's subjects. Furthermore, this shows that the Apollo on the *omphalos* image was not part of an attempt to impose an entirely Greek image on the empire, but rather it presented a message that the subjects of the kingdom were under the rule of a Greek king who was aware of local traditions and ideologies.

#### 2.1.4 THE LATE SELEUKID II PERIOD (121-64 BC)

During the late Seleukid II period, the rise in popularity of the syncretic Zeus is evident across Seleukid Syria. The Epiphaneic branch of the Seleukid family produced five kings

(including the two Alexanders) over 50 years. These kings continued to find enough popular support to make renewed efforts to grasp control of the kingdom from their cousins.<sup>113</sup> Following the extinction of the Epiphaneic line in 123 BC, Antiochos VIII Grypos and Kleopatra Thea adopted the seated Zeus Nikephoros type (and accompanying obverse radiate portrait style) of their erstwhile rivals for their co-regency coinage (**fig.51**).<sup>114</sup> Grypos' father Demetrios II had briefly used the seated Zeus reverse type on his silver coinage after his return from Parthian captivity in 129 BC although his rule was neither complete nor lasting and Zeus was not his single dominant motif.<sup>115</sup> It was only



Figure 51. AR tetradrachm, Kleopatra Thea and Antiochos VIII, Ake-Ptolemaïs (SC 2: pl.45.2271.1).

<sup>113</sup> Of course Epiphanes was installed with the aid of the Attalids (Appian *Syrian Wars* 45) and both Alexanders received initial Ptolemaic backing (Appian *Syrian Wars* 67; Josephus *Jewish Antiquities* 13.267).

<sup>114</sup> SC 2: nos.2259, 2261-3, 2267-8, 2271, 2274.

<sup>115</sup> SC 2: 412. The suggestion by Lorber and Iossif (2009: 105-7) that the aspect of Apollo shown seated on the *omphalos* was abandoned by the Seleukid dynasty because he failed to heed the prayers of Demetrios II during the Parthian campaign is not really tenable. The Seleukids had faced military reverses in the past which had not resulted in a dynasty-wide change of religious focus. The emerging dominance of Zeus-Hadad

after the taint of Epiphanaic opposition was removed in 123 BC that Zeus became a favoured theme for the legitimate branch of the Seleukidai. Grypos' independence quickly manifested itself in a new variation on the recently adopted Epiphanaic Zeus reverse type for his silver tetradrachms. During his sole reigns at Antioch, Ake-Ptolemaïs, Damascus and Sidon (he did not often control all mints simultaneously), Grypos' adaption of Zeus took the form of Zeus Ouranios. The god was shown as a standing bearded male holding a sceptre in his left hand in the manner of the seated Zeus, but holding an eight-pointed star – the symbol of Astarte and her associate goddesses – in his right hand. He was crowned by a horizontal crescent moon (**figs.52-3**).<sup>116</sup> Just as the Epiphanaic Zeus was associated on an individual basis with regional Ba'als, Zeus Ouranios has been seen as the direct Hellenisation of Hadad, the Semitic „master of the heavens“, often referred to simply by his vocational epithet, Ba'al Šamīn.<sup>117</sup> The astrological attributes distinguish the figure from the earlier representations of Zeus and represent him as a truly enlightened and universal figure.<sup>118</sup> The popularity of Zeus across the Levant during the late Hellenistic period is accentuated by the fact that he was utilised and remained the dominant reverse type by both branches of the Seleukid family throughout the three generations of the next civil war.

Following the assassination of Grypos, the Syrian goddess Atargatis may again have been represented in Hellenised guise on a limited series of bronze coins produced at Uncertain mint 121 by Antiochos IX Kyzikenos.<sup>119</sup> The obverse type uniquely shows the



**Figure 52.** AR tetradrachm, Antiochos VIII, Antioch-on-the-Orontes (SC 2: pl.47.2302.1g).



**Figure 53.** AR tetradrachm, Antiochos VIII, Ake-Ptolemaïs (SC 2: pl.49.2335.2a).

as a supreme and omnipotent god after 175 BC is a more likely reason for the replacement of Apollo than a loss of faith brought on by a single failed campaign. Kings could not afford to bear grudges against their divine cousins. As Lorber and Iossif are right to point out, Apollo did not retire in disgrace in the late Seleukid II period, but was relegated to a few small silver denominations and bronzes.

<sup>116</sup> SC 2: nos.2280-3, 2292-8, 2302, 2321-4, 2329-30, 2335-6. Although the star and crescent moon are here believed to be directly linked to the syncretism between Zeus Ouranios and his eastern counterpart Ba'al Šamīn, it is acknowledged that celestial attributes do occur as subsidiary decoration in strictly western depictions of Zeus, see for example the gem in the Cabinet des Médailles, Paris (no.1421a) discussed by Richter 1966: 168-70, pl.54.

<sup>117</sup> Dussaud 1936a; Rostovzeff *et al.* 1939: 301; Cook 1940: 945; Niehr 2003: 49. For a recent survey of the syncretic nature of Zeus-Ba'al-Bel, see Downey 2004a. The Luwian incarnation of Ba'al Šamīn was rendered „Celestial Tarhunza“ on a bilingual inscription from Karatepe, see Bunnens 2006: 81-2.

<sup>118</sup> Seyrig 1939c: 300.

<sup>119</sup> SC 2: no.2376.

king's head radiate, a divinising attribute otherwise unknown for Antiochos IX. The reverse type depicts a standing goddess holding an ear of grain and a poppy in her right hand and cradling a cornucopia in her left arm. The goddess has conventionally been identified as Demeter, but the novelty of that goddess on a Seleukid issue is readily acknowledged.<sup>120</sup> The cornucopiae carried by other deities on Seleukid coinage have not led to a similar attribution; instead they are seen as symbols of Tyche, Astarte or, as stated above, Atargatis. The other attributes of Kyzikenos' goddess – the ear of grain and the poppy flower – were symbols associated with Atargatis, depicted unambiguously on the silver coinage of Demetrios III discussed below. The interpretation of Kyzikenos' goddess as a Hellenised Atargatis would mark a partial return to the iconographic program of Demetrios I and a continuation of that of Antiochos VIII which saw Semitic deities depicted in a Greek form on royal Seleukid coinage. The choice of reverse type and its association with the radiate portrait would suggest that Uncertain mint 121 should be located at one of the major sanctuaries of the Syrian gods of which only Damascus remained under Seleukid control after 96 BC.

One last development that would demonstrate beyond all doubt the continuing strength of the pre-Greek cults in Seleukid Syria occurred in the following generation. Throughout the reigns of the two sons of Grypos, Demetrios III Eukairos (96-87 BC) and Antiochos XII Dionysos (87-84 BC), the wholly indigenous cult statues of Atargatis and Hadad respectively were employed as the reverse type on the primary series of the kings' silver tetradrachms.<sup>121</sup> The two brothers successively ruled a Seleukid principality based on Damascus, an ancient centre with enduring indigenous religious traditions. The contemporary bronze coinage employed a radiate (for Demetrios) or diademed (for both Demetrios and Antiochos) portrait on the obverse combined with classical Greek styled deities – Zeus, Tyche, Apollo, Hermes and Nike – taking up the reverse.

Although the silver coinage of Demetrios III still carried the king's diademed head on the obverse, the reverse depicted Atargatis in her most eastern guise (**figs.54-5**).<sup>122</sup> The frontal cult statue stands rigidly with the upper arms close against the body and forearms extended to either side in the same pose as the statue of Athena Magarsia. Although the statue's basis is not shown, she stands on a short ground line which indicates its existence.

<sup>120</sup> CSE 2: no.772; SC 2: 524.

<sup>121</sup> Fleischer 1973: 263-9. For further discussion on late Seleukid Damascus and its coinage, see Chapter 5.2 below.

<sup>122</sup> SC 2: nos.2450-1.

Atargatis" head emanates rays such as those suggested by Demetrios" radiate crown on his bronze coinage<sup>123</sup> and long tails of a fillet tie or, more rarely, a veil, extend down either side of her torso. Her body and legs are covered in small circular or semi-circular objects reminiscent of the cult statue of Artemis of Ephesos but in this case perhaps representing the snake scales of an *aegis*. A facing head adorns her chest which should be understood as either a *gorgonion* or the personification of one of the celestial bodies. In her left hand she holds a poppy flower and an ear of grain appears to sprout from behind each shoulder. The overall composition presents Atargatis as an all powerful goddess with control over the earth and the stars. The prevailing link between Ištar, Anat, Atargatis and Athena is perhaps indicated by the statue"s *aegis* and *gorgonion*.<sup>124</sup>

Likewise, the tetradrachms of Antiochos XII bore the king"s diademed head on the obverse while the reverse carried the eastern cult statue of Ba"al Hadad with none of the familiar Hellenising that had been present in the reigns of his father and predecessors (**fig.56**).<sup>125</sup> The god stands in the same stiff manner as his consort Atargatis, with his arms projecting away from the body at the elbows. He is bearded and cloaked and wears a conical hat similar to that worn by Sandan at Tarsos, by the sacrificing priest, Abdhadad, on the pre-Seleukid coinage of Hierapolis-Bambyke and shown on later Hatrene priestly statues.<sup>126</sup> It should be remembered at this stage that along with Hierapolis-Bambyke, Damascus and Heliopolis-Ba"albek were the most holy sanctuaries of Hadad and Atargatis.<sup>127</sup> The Damascene cult statue holds a large ear of grain in his left hand symbolising his original role as a fertility deity. In the case of Hadad, the two-tiered basis is clearly



Figure 54. AR tetradrachm, Demetrios III, Damascus (SC 2: pl.55.2450.3).



Figure 55. AR tetradrachm, Demetrios III, Damascus (SC 2: pl.55.2451.6).



Figure 56. AR tetradrachm, Antiochos XII, Damascus (SC 2: pl.57.2471.3).

<sup>123</sup> Atargatis had already assumed certain celestial attributes in the years before the Macedonian conquest. She was depicted on the coinage of Hierapolis with her head surmounted (or otherwise accompanied) by a star, see Mildenberg 1999: 279, nos.7-8, 10-11

<sup>124</sup> Lucian *The Syrian Goddess* 32.

<sup>125</sup> SC 2: nos. 2471-2A.

<sup>126</sup> Mildenberg 1999: nos.20-5; Dirven 2008: 223-6.

<sup>127</sup> Lucian *The Syrian Goddess*; Joseph. *Jewish Antiquities* 9.93; Justin *Epitome* 36.2.2; Macrobius *Saturnalia* 1.23.10-20; Avi-Yonah 1959: 8.

represented and here it supports both the god and the two bulls who flank him. The conical headdress, bull, and vegetal attributes formed key features in the iconography of Baʿal Hadad from the earliest depictions in the second millennium BC.<sup>128</sup> Any *interpretatio graeca*, dominant in earlier Seleukid depictions of the Zeus-Baʿal figure, is a mere memory on the tetradrachms of Antiochos XII.

The Damascene Seleukidai produced silver coinage that emphasised the importance of local religious traditions. Indeed if size matters, there were few Seleukid kings whose territories were as small or so localised as the Damascene principality of Demetrios III and Antiochos XII. The kings clearly accepted that the importance of the local indigenous cult heightened in inverse proportion with the reduced state of the principality. When, in the last years of the reign of Demetrios III the king occupied Antioch, he began producing tetradrachms there that reverted to the Epiphanaic type of the seated Zeus Nikephoros. While Atargatis continued to appear at Damascus, Zeus was the dominant and traditional type of Antioch by this date and so he continued on the Antiochene coins of Demetrios III. Antiochos XII was preoccupied with maintaining his hold on Damascus and so Hadad remained unchallenged on his silver coinage.

Following the death of Antiochos XII, the Nabataean king Aretas III occupied Damascus. He did not produce any silver denominations but produced a bronze coinage which replaced all Seleukid types with a simple seated or standing Tyche. When Tigranes II of Armenia annexed Syria and Kilikia in the mid-70s BC he also replaced the numerous Seleukid/indigenous types with various Hellenised statues of Tyche. Zeus returned briefly to Antioch as a reverse type during the troubled reign of the restored Antiochos XIII Asiatikos (69-64 BC) and was continued during the Roman Republican era at Antioch.<sup>129</sup> By the Julio-Claudian period, a ubiquitous Tyche dominated the Levant as the most common type. In the centres that had seceded from the Seleukid kingdom before the Roman annexation, certain indigenous figures such as Athena Magarsia and Sandan still appeared in the company of Tyche, but the cult statues of Atargatis and Hadad were never reproduced on the coinage of Damascus.

Other indicators of religious patronage in this period involved the process of granting of *asylia* – inviolability and semi-autonomy including exemption from taxes and billeting – to temples or even whole cities. The city of Nysa received letters from at least

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<sup>128</sup> Green 2003: 154-7.

<sup>129</sup> SC 2: nos.2487-91.



two Seleukid kings confirming a grant of inviolability and tax exemption for the temple of Pluto and Kore “because I wish to increase the friendship felt towards us.”<sup>130</sup> Concessions tended to be made to cities that were consecrated to divinities with major local significance and were the manifestation of the administration’s acceptance of the sanctity of the site.<sup>131</sup> A late second or first century memorandum from an Antiochos (perhaps Grypos?) granted property as well as inviolability and freedom from billeting to the village and temple of Zeus of Baitokaike in the Apameian satrapy.<sup>132</sup> Concessions to settlements such as Baitokaike were in effect grants of semi-autonomy to regions at the very heart of the empire – an indication of the fragility of Seleukid control by the second century BC.<sup>133</sup>

## 2.2 THE IMPACT OF NUMISMATIC ICONOGRAPHY

Any analysis of an iconographic program approached through the medium of coinage must take into account the minting authority and the intended audience – that is to say, the principal recipients of coined currency and the population among whom such currency circulated. The identity of the minting authority of Seleukid regal coins is in no doubt. The kings’ title, names and epithets constitute the reverse legend while, more often than not, the royal portrait adorns the obverse. However, the individual or group responsible for the choice of the types, especially on the reverse, is much harder to establish with any certainty. The appearance of the goat-horned helmet on the coinage of the child-king Antiochos VI may suggest that the king and his immediate circle were ultimately responsible for the choice of types. The goat-horned helmet<sup>134</sup> was the badge of Diodotos Tryphon, the king’s guardian, and its appearance as a royal type under Antiochos VI suggests a directive from the royal court. Houghton, Lorber and Hoover posit that the appearance of the helmet in the final year of Antiochos’ reign may have been an intentional step taken by Tryphon in his own seizure of power.<sup>135</sup>

Alternative views might see the choice of coin types as the responsibility of the satrapal *dioiketai* (financial administrators) or left to the initiative of individual mint

<sup>130</sup> Welles 1934: nos.9, 64.

<sup>131</sup> Seyrig 1939a: 37-8; Teixidor 1989: 89.

<sup>132</sup> Austin 2006: no.172 = Welles 1934: no.70. See also Chapter 4.3 below.

<sup>133</sup> Zahle 1990: 128-34 stresses the direct link between religious and political freedom.

<sup>134</sup> Discussed in detail in Chapter 3.3.2 below.

<sup>135</sup> SC 2: 337. Sutherland (1951: 184) proposes a similar situation at Imperial Rome where the *princeps* directly determined and authorised the mint’s iconographic program.



magistrates. The kings directly corresponded with their *dioiketai* in parallel with the *strategoi* (military governors) and would no doubt have been consulted on any matters of importance.<sup>136</sup> However, the evidence would suggest that the *dioiketos* was more involved with the collection of taxation than the minting of money. Mint magistracies could be held for extended periods of time in the cities of Seleukid Syria, even through violent changes of regime. Voulgaridis views this as evidence that, for the most part, mint magistrates were neither “high-ranking officials, nor highly placed socially”.<sup>137</sup> Entrusting the royal iconographic program to the judgement of minor public servants hardly seems likely – it is almost certain that even if the king did not directly decide his own iconographic policy, he must have been consulted and retained the final word on any imagery produced in his name.<sup>138</sup>

The primary purposes for ancient coinage have long been accepted as the expression of „national“ pride and the payment of government expenses. The largest single government expense and the embodiment of national pride (especially in periods of heightened political tension) was the payment of soldiers, sailors and mercenaries to protect the state and maintain the position of the governing body. In Seleukid terms this meant that throughout the kingdom’s existence and increasingly as the territory deteriorated, the kings both maintained and expressed their authority through the production of coinage bearing badges of specific relevance to the state’s position and safety. The audience for any messages borne through numismatic imagery was, in the first instance, the Seleukid military establishment. The provision of coinage to facilitate trade, either foreign or local, was at best a secondary concern to the coins’ producers.<sup>139</sup>

If it is accepted that the primary recipients for the coin imagery were military personnel, some of the explicit type changes can be explained through a systematic examination of the changing composition of the army over time. As has been noted in Chapter 1.3.2, the extant historical sources leave much to be desired when it comes to

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<sup>136</sup> Aperghis 2004: 269-76.

<sup>137</sup> Voulgaridis 2008: 69. Note the contrast between the position of mint magistrate in the monarchic system as opposed to Republican Rome where membership of the *tresviri monetales* (board of moneyers) was a first step towards important public office. However, even in Rome, the mint magistrate was a very junior role.

<sup>138</sup> Butcher (2005: 144-5), adapting the work of Levick (1982) and Wallace-Harill (1984) has suggested that while the ruler and his aides were influential in the choice of coin iconography, the images were produced as much to legitimate the rulers in their own eyes as it was to pass on a message to the wider population; “Symbols are more meaningful to those that wield them than those who passively accept them.”

<sup>139</sup> Cook 1958: 26; Kraay 1964: 88-90; Howgego 1990: 8-11; Martin 1996: 258-9, 282-3; Aperghis 2004: 189; Houghton 2004: 52-4; Melville-Jones 2006: 27-30.

understanding the composition of the Seleukid armed forces. Although we are given good accounts of Raphia (217 BC), Magnesia (190 BC) and Daphne (167 BC), the source of military manpower outside of this confined period must be made through extrapolation. Broadly speaking, the army can be broken down into the Hellenised phalanx (equipped and trained as Macedonians but not necessarily of Greco-Macedonian ancestry), Iranian dominated cavalry and auxiliary „national“ contingents of non-Hellenised extraction; while the fleet can be presumed to have been raised primarily from among the Phoenician and Kilikian maritime cities. At Raphia, 54.35% of the royal army was sourced from Hellenised populations from both within (urban centres of Seleukis and military colonies) and without (mercenaries) the kingdom. The remaining 45.65% were non-Greeks. Twenty seven years later at Magnesia, we see the relative proportions (Hellenised, 31.19%: non-Greek, 68.81%) inversed dramatically. At Daphne we see the return of similar proportions to Raphia with 62.5% Hellenised and 37.5% non-Greek forces. The rough proportions of the Seleukid standing army both before and after Apameia seems to have hovered between 50:50 and 60:40 in favour of the Hellenised elements of the kingdom. In times of crisis, additional national contingents could swell the army until they reached 70% or more of the total number of soldiers.

Regardless of the distinctions between the regular army, national auxiliaries or mercenaries – with the possible exception of Ariarathes“ Kappadokians at Magnesia and Hyrkanos“ Jews with Antiochos VII in Babylonia – the Seleukid king must have been expected to fund all these forces in terms of both provisions and regular pay. In 220 BC, the army being prepared for the third campaign against Molon, mutinied on account of arrears with their pay. The crisis was averted by Hermeias, the king“s *epi ton pragmaton* (chief minister), who paid them what was owed – and used it to his political advantage.<sup>140</sup> Evidence for the rate of military pay in the Hellenistic period is sparse but it has been estimated that at the end of the fourth century BC, a mercenary hoplite might expect four obols a day, cavalry perhaps double. Alexander the Great“s elite *hypaspists* received one drachm, the equivalent of six obols. The inflation resulting from long-hoarded Persian silver and gold flooding the market following Alexander“s conquests probably meant that by the early third century, rates of pay had begun to increase dramatically.<sup>141</sup> Under the Seleukids, it has been suggested that the daily rate of pay for a *phalangite* or mercenary

<sup>140</sup> Polybius *Histories* 5.50.1-9.

<sup>141</sup> Parke 1933: 233; Griffith 1935: 294-307.

might have been as high as a drachm, plus two to three obols in ration allowance giving an approximate total of 45 drachms per man per month (more for officers). As in the fourth century BC, the wage of a cavalryman must have been around double that.<sup>142</sup> The cost of paying the army (infantry and cavalry) during the reign of Antiochos III thus (conservatively) comes to between 7,000 and 10,000 talents of coined silver per year.<sup>143</sup>

Large as the Seleukid military was, it must always be remembered that it was only ever a tiny fraction of the total population living under Seleukid rule. Demographic estimates are difficult to ascertain and vary wildly, from Green's 30,000,000 during the height of the empire, to Aperghis's much more conservative 14-18,000,000.<sup>144</sup> The largest mobilisation of Seleukid military forces reported in the ancient sources were the 80-100,000 strong armies raised by Antiochos III (212-205 BC) and Antiochos VII Sidetes (130 BC) for their respective *anabaseis* to recover Mesopotamia and the Upper Satrapies.<sup>145</sup> Placing even these immense forces in the context of Aperghis's low demographic estimates for the years in question, the military accounted for between one and 1.6 percent of the total population.<sup>146</sup> The royal messages carried by the coins was primarily targeted at a small but very powerful component of the wider community.

Of course coined money could be and was used to make large non-military (and even non-governmental) payments where it was deemed convenient. In Ptolemaic Egypt we find state payments being made to Demetrios the physician who received a salary of 80 drachms a month,<sup>147</sup> while at the opposite end of the spectrum, unskilled labourers could receive a daily rate of a mere three-quarters of an obol.<sup>148</sup> Although such payments would rarely have come anywhere close to the amounts expended on the military, the examples do illustrate the range of non-military, principal recipients of coinage. In some cases of coin-based exchanges, the type of coin could even be specified. The archive of Nanâ-iddin, a Babylonian notable, itemised the payment for the private sale of a plot of land in the early

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<sup>142</sup> Aperghis 2004: 202-3.

<sup>143</sup> Aperghis 2004: 204-5. The quantity of coined silver may have been reduced by the production of special military bronze issues intended to function as *sitarchia* (the regular ration allowance) with highly inflated face values, see Wright 2009: 49-50.

<sup>144</sup> Green 1990: 371; Aperghis 2004: 57.

<sup>145</sup> Justin *Epitome* 38.10.1, 41.5.7; Bar-Kochva 1979: 10-1.

<sup>146</sup> Aperghis 2004: 57 fig.41.

<sup>147</sup> *P. Hamburg* no.171; Lewis 2001: 50.

<sup>148</sup> Lewis 2001: 52.

third century as “silver, 6 minas 6 shekels, staters of Alexander in good condition.”<sup>149</sup> Naturally, any coin supply regardless of its origins could be expected to diffuse into all sectors of the community through merchants, wine sellers and brothels, bearing its iconographic message to the wider population – provided the population maintained some sort of moneyed economy. Here the excavation of numerous small sites with Hellenistic occupation from across Syria indicate that coins did not necessarily penetrate too deeply into the hinterland of the urban centres except where we see potential military garrisons such as Jebel Khalid.<sup>150</sup> We thus return full circle to the principle that the royal military were the primary recipients of coinage and thus the intended audience of the state message conveyed within.

Given that 40-70% of the royal military (the principal recipients of coinage) can be classed as non-Greek, it is surprising that for so long it was the Greco-Macedonian aspect of the empire (Apollo – naked and youthful) that was given expression through coin types while any reference to non-Greek cult was distinctly absent. Seleukos I may have been following Alexander the Great by intentionally using an ambiguous image identifiable by both his Greco-Macedonian colonists and soldiers, and his new Semitic subjects. However, his abundant colony foundations would seem to indicate that he felt uneasy about the amount of support he could call upon from the majority of his Asian subjects.<sup>151</sup> Seleukos I, alone among the successors, did not repudiate his Baktrian wife Apame following Alexander’s death. It may be that the couple had found an actual love match but the marriage could not but have helped Seleukos’ occupation and control of the Upper Satrapies.<sup>152</sup> By the time his (half-Baktrian) son succeeded to the throne, a Hellenic population had been established in Syria and the surrounding territories for a generation and it would seem that Antiochos felt secure employing the very Greek Apollo on his coins. The utilisation of a naked uncircumcised youthful god may have estranged his Semitic subjects, but the strength of the kingdom and support of the Greco-Macedonian cities and colonies (certainly following the Galatian war if not before) could have reduced

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<sup>149</sup> Doty 1978: 69. Grainger (1999: 305) notes the regularity of Babylonian civil contracts that specify monetary amounts in terms of coined currency; see also Powell (1996) who cites the example dated to 218 BC: “two-thirds mina of silver, purified, worked, good, staters of Antiochus.”

<sup>150</sup> *JK* 1:297, 299; Nixon 2006: 93.

<sup>151</sup> Seleukos had expected and received a vast amount of support from his Babylonian subjects who were a key to the successful establishment of Babylonia as his territorial powerbase in the war against the Antigonids (312-308 BC), see Diodorus Siculus *Library of History* 19.91; Sherwin-White and Kuhrt 1993: 10, 124.

<sup>152</sup> Arrian *Anabasis* 7.4.6; Sherwin-White and Kuhrt 1993: 24-6, 124-6.

the significance of this effect.<sup>153</sup> To the king's Greek (or at least Hellenised) subjects, Apollo was an image which advertised Antiochos' role as protector of Greek cities, but perhaps more importantly, alluded to his divine descent.<sup>154</sup>

## 2.3 CULT AND THE SELEUKID ADMINISTRATION

A further avenue through which to discuss the official Seleukid patronage of cult may be seen in the manner by which the Seleukid court administered religious activity. Limited information regarding the Seleukid administration of cultic activity may be gathered from religious features in administrative buildings, and through evidence from ancient texts and inscriptions outlining royal subsidies provided for public sacrifices.

A large structure occupying the centre of the fortified acropolis at Jebel Khalid has been confidently identified as the palace (residence and entertaining space) of the local *epistates*, the royally appointed administrator (**fig.57**).<sup>155</sup> The building was constructed around a colonnaded central courtyard built in the Doric order and equipped with typically Greek lion-headed waterspouts of carved limestone. Reception and dining areas took up the bulk of the north and south wings and most of the structure appears to have originally been roofed with ceramic tiles. Room 22 in the south-west yielded two official Seleukid bitumen bullae on the level of its earliest floor surface and a third (of unbaked clay) was recovered from the adjacent doorway of room 24, further cementing the official nature of the building.<sup>156</sup> The palace was constructed sometime during the third century BC and occupied until the general abandonment of the settlement in the first quarter of the first century BC – it was therefore part of the first building phase of Jebel Khalid and must have formed part of the original settlement plan.

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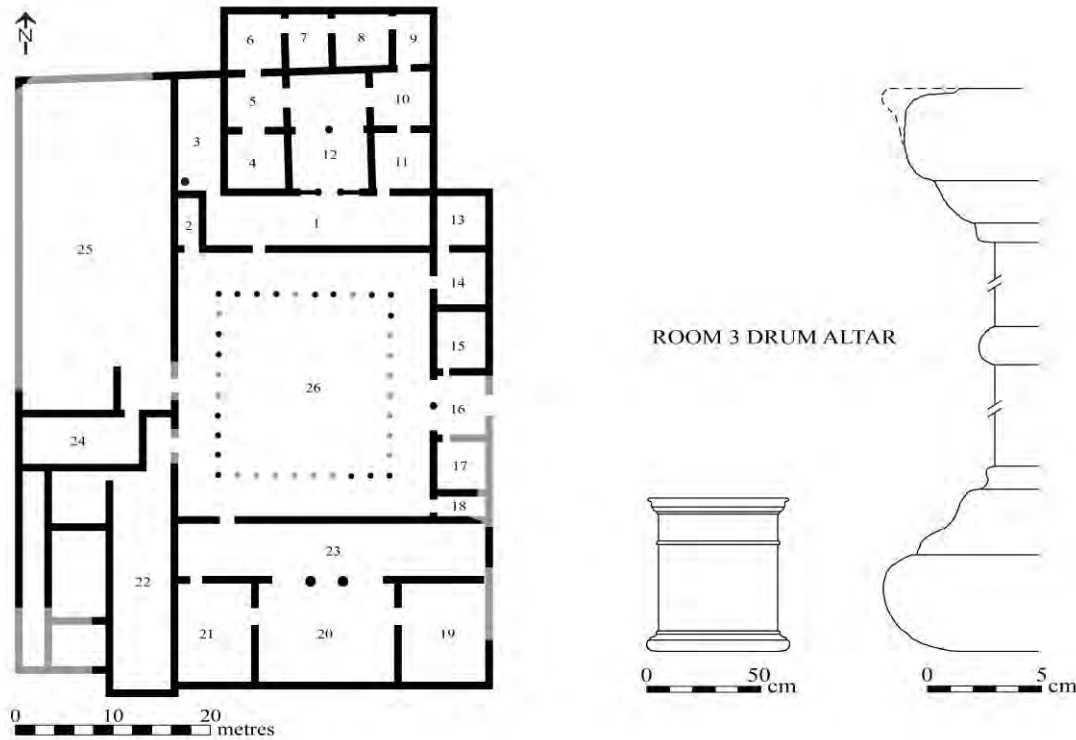
<sup>153</sup> This was not of course the only, nor even necessarily need it be the primary, reason for Seleukid colonisation (see Aperghis 2005) but it was undeniably a factor.

<sup>154</sup> The miniature scale of the images on individual coins make the assumption that Apollo was depicted uncircumcised, impossible to prove. However, the iconography of the coin type conforms to the Greek ideal which traditionally showed Apollo as a naked, uncircumcised, clean-faced, youthful god. Where Apollo appeared in a Semitic context – as at Hierapolis-Bambyke and Dura-Europos – he was depicted as a mature, bearded god and arrayed fully clothed, see Lucian *The Syrian Goddess* 35; Macrobius *Saturnalia* 1.17.66-7; Rostovtzeff *et al.* 1939: 266, 281, pl.36.1; Drijvers 1980: 72; Lightfoot 2003: 456-69; Haider 2008: 202 on the assimilation of Apollo and Nabû. On the divine descent of the king see Chapters 2.1.1 and 3.1.

<sup>155</sup> Clarke 1994; Clarke and Connor 1995: 119-121; Clarke and Connor 1996/7: 243-6; Clarke *et al.* 1999: 157-9; *JK* 1: 25-48; Clarke 2003.

<sup>156</sup> *JK* 1: 44, 201-3; Clarke 2003: 24-5.

# JEBEL KHALID ACROPOLIS BUILDING



**Figure 57. Jebel Khalid acropolis palace and altar (N.L. Wright after JK 1: 26 fig.1, 33 fig.11).**

A smaller secondary courtyard (dubbed room 3) occupied the western side of the building's north wing. It could not be entered directly from the main courtyard, but only through the north antechamber (room 1). The space was undecorated and littered with an assemblage of food preparation equipment (basalt grinders etc) although there was no evidence of actual cooking activity. The principal feature of room 3 was an uninscribed drum altar, standing 67cm and measuring 63cm diameter at the base, found *in situ* on its original pedestal in the south-west corner of the courtyard. Unfortunately the altar disappeared following the 1993 excavation season. The surrounding fill had a high ashy content and included much charcoal along with "an unusually heavy deposit of bone". Along with approximately 3,000 indistinguishable burnt fragments, there were 92 diagnostic bones showing evidence of butchering. The breakdown of the identifiable remains are as follows: ovid-caprid, 55.43%; equid, 5.43%; galliforms (land-fowl), 11.96%; pig, 13.04%; bos (genus of the bovinæ including wild cattle and oxen), 14.13%. The excavators posit that the altar may have been the focus of the worship of dynastic and/or household gods.<sup>157</sup>

<sup>157</sup> Clarke 1994:72-3; JK 1: 33; Clarke 2003: 10-1; see also Appendix E.

The incorporation of ritual or cultic areas within what was effectively an administrative structure is not unexpected, although other certified examples are few. In Macedonia, sacrifices were apparently held within the Argead palaces at Aigai and Pella for the ancestral patron of the royal house, Herakles Patroüs.<sup>158</sup> In the Hellenistic period, Herakles certainly seems to have continued to be worshipped within the Aigai palace and the royal palace at Pella appears to have included a sanctuary dedicated to the dynastic cult housed in apsidal rooms opening off one of the peristyle courtyards.<sup>159</sup> At Pergamon, a small sanctuary of Dionysos as the progenitor of the Attalid dynasty was likewise attached to the peristyle of the principal building, Palace V, and a second sanctuary may have occupied a similar position in Palace IV.<sup>160</sup> Within the Seleukid kingdom itself, the palaces at Seleukeia-on-the-Tigris and Antioch-on-the-Orontes probably included some manner of religious area although so little is known about their exact location and layout that their cultic function may only be conjectured.<sup>161</sup>

The provincial Seleukid „Redoubt“ palace at Dura-Europos was built in line with a Mesopotamian ground plan. There is no clear evidence for religious activity taking place within the structure itself although, sometime after the first half of the second century BC, a temple to Zeus Megistos was constructed adjacent the palace, on the far side of a peristyle court.<sup>162</sup> The Seleukid period palace at Nippur again combined a Mesopotamian ground plan with Greco-Macedonian decorative elements.<sup>163</sup> There may have been a large circular altar along the south-east wall of the peristyle court (room IV) by the presumed portico of the *andron*. Fisher describes the feature as “certainly the altar which we find in every Greek house, situated somewhere in the main court near its principal axis.”<sup>164</sup> As such, the Nippur palace provides the closest direct analogy for the altar area of the Jebel Khalid governor’s palace although there are still two significant discrepancies. At Jebel Khalid, room 3 could not be accessed directly from the central peristyle but had to be entered via an antechamber. Room 3 was also un-roofed, allowing the vapours from the burnt sacrifice to rise directly to

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<sup>158</sup> Hammond 1989: 31, although Hammond does not cite any reference for his statement and “no palaces of the pre-Hellenistic period have been preserved in Macedonia”, Nielsen 1999: 81. Perhaps Hammond was extrapolating from the Hellenistic palace at Aigai, see Andronicos 1984: 34, 42.

<sup>159</sup> Nielsen 1999: 82-3, 91-2.

<sup>160</sup> Nielsen 1999: 105-6.

<sup>161</sup> Nielsen 1999: 111-5; Held 2002: 233-5, fig. 8.

<sup>162</sup> Downey 1988: 83; Nielsen 1999: 116-9. Downey 2004b: 54-5 has recently down-dated the earliest phase of the Zeus Megistos temple to the Parthian period.

<sup>163</sup> Marquand 1905; Nielsen 1999: 112-3, 278-9.

<sup>164</sup> Fisher 1904: 425.

the gods. At Nippur, the presumed altar is within the main courtyard, but more importantly, underneath the roofed colonnade, away from the area that was open to the sky. On a practical level this would have resulted in smoke gathering within the nearby portico, forced away from the opening of the peristyle by the angle of the roof. The context of the altar is badly recorded and there is no report of any associated signs of burning or ashy deposits. While there is no alternative explanation as to the purpose of the feature, reservations must be expressed as to its use as a sacrificial Greek-style altar in its current position.

It appears that the royal bureaucracy subsidised the cost of public sacrifices at some, if not all, sanctuaries. Nikanor, *archieros* (high-priest) of all the Anatolian possessions of Antiochos III was responsible for the provision of subsidies to the shrines within his jurisdiction.<sup>165</sup> In perhaps a similar manner, annual funds were provided via the *strategos* of Koile-Syria to Onias III, the royally appointed Jewish high-priest of the Temple in Jerusalem under Antiochos III and Seleukos IV Philopator.<sup>166</sup> That the order was given via the provincial governor and not a separate religious administrator is linked to the unique situation of the southern Levant following the Seleukid conquest. When Ptolemaios son of Thraseas, the Ptolemaic governor of „Syria and Phoenicia“ defected to Antiochos III during the Fifth Syrian War he was confirmed in his previous position as *strategos* and *archieros* of the newly formed Seleukid satrapy of Koile-Syria and Phoenicia. This combination of secular and religious authority held by a single official is otherwise unheard of within the Seleukid administration (with the exception of the king) and did not survive its creation. With the succession of Apollonios (Ptolemaios“ brother) as the *strategos* of the region, the role of high-priest was detached from the job description and granted to one Olympiodoros, thereby bringing the administration of Koile-Syria in line with the rest of the empire.<sup>167</sup> Demetrios I continued to be a benefactor of the Jerusalem Temple<sup>168</sup> and Antiochos VII Sidetes continued to perform his religious obligation to his „subjects“ by providing sacrificial victims to Jerusalem for the *Sukkot* festival, even as he besieged the city (135 BC). For these actions he was dubbed Eusebes or „Pious“ by the Jews who soon capitulated on account of his forbearance and benefactions.<sup>169</sup>

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<sup>165</sup> Ma 2002: no.4.30-40

<sup>166</sup> II Maccabees 3.2-3; Josephus *Jewish Antiquities* 12.140.

<sup>167</sup> Cotton and Wörrle 2007: 198.

<sup>168</sup> Josephus *Jewish Antiquities* 13.55.

<sup>169</sup> Josephus *Jewish Antiquities* 13.243.



At Baitokaike in the Apameian satrapy, the Seleukid kings are not recorded to have provided subsidies for festivals personally. However, one Seleukid (probably Antiochos VIII Grypos<sup>170</sup>) wrote a letter to the governor Euphemos which granted the temple possession of the synonymous village. The settlement was exempted from royal taxes “so that the revenue from this village may be spent for the celebration of the monthly sacrifices.” In addition, the temple and settlement were made inviolate and exempt from billeting obligations.<sup>171</sup> The decree made clear that anyone who would challenge the royal authority on the matter was to be considered impious – the inherent threat was presumably angled towards some competitive civic body, perhaps Arados which was later jealous of the sanctuary’s fiscal prosperity.<sup>172</sup> It is interesting to note that the king here holds the religious authority to brand a third party impious should they contravene the royal will. Dignas rightly questions how much of the benevolent royal policy towards sanctuaries was really directed towards the sanctuaries themselves rather than to the populations who worshipped there, particularly the indigenous elements.<sup>173</sup> Likewise, there is little evidence for regular subsidies towards sanctuaries in Babylonia<sup>174</sup> although there are multiple references to royal building and maintenance projects, as there are for Hierapolis-Bambyke, and Kilikian Olba.<sup>175</sup>

A regular or continuing royal benefaction of cult sites brought with it a certain royal omnipresence over even the most localised of sacred activities. The priest of Apollo at Pleura (modern Marmara Gölü, north of Sardes), in Lydia found it necessary to make deferential overtures to his royally appointed superiors (Nikanor under Antiochos III and later Euthydemos under Eumenes II) just to erect a stele within the sacred space which listed the shrine’s initiates.<sup>176</sup> One must wonder at the impact that royal control may have had over construction work or alterations within other shrines and whether this varied between civic and rural sanctuaries? For instance, did the priests or community at a relatively small settlement like Jebel Khalid have to seek permission to perform the alteration to their temenos area (discussed in Chapter 4.4.2 below)?

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<sup>170</sup> See Chapter 4.3.1.1 below.

<sup>171</sup> Austin 2006: no.172 = Welles 1934: no.70.

<sup>172</sup> Dignas 2002: 79, 82-3, 156-65.

<sup>173</sup> Dignas 2002: 83.

<sup>174</sup> Sherwin-White 1983b; Kuhrt and Sherwin-White 1991; Aperghis 2004: 208.

<sup>175</sup> Lucian *The Syrian Goddess* 19-26; Cook 1940: 642 n.1; MacKay 1968: 82-3; Teixidor 1989: 88.

<sup>176</sup> Ma 2002: 146-147, no.49.

Of course a counterpoint to royal control could be sought through royal protection. At Laodikeia-by-the-Sea, three priests who not only ran a private shrine dedicated to Sarapis and Isis but also owned the insula in which it was housed, sought the assistance of Asklepiades, Laodikeia's *epistates* against a civic decree. A loophole in the decree threatened to encroach upon the property of their religious association by allowing uninvited dedicatory statues to be erected on their private sanctuary free of charge, thus altering, crowding or otherwise devaluing their religious space.<sup>177</sup> In this instance Asklepiades, together with the city *archons* and *peliganes* (ruling oligarchs) found in favour of the shrine – much to the satisfaction of its priests – while imposing a new tax on the unwelcome dedications, to the satisfaction of the city. The fact remains that the priests appealed in the first instance to the *epistates* and not to the *peliganes*. From the epigraphic record it would appear that the state (Seleukid and later, Roman) tended to support religious bodies in their disputes with civic polities.<sup>178</sup> Of course the evidence must necessarily present a biased picture – the prestige of a sanctuary could only be damaged by advertising its subservience to a civic body and a successful polity was less likely to stress any previous conflict with religious institutions and the associated stigma of impiety.

## 2.4 REFLECTIONS ON DIVINE PATRONAGE

By partially turning their backs on a purely Greek Apollo and associating themselves specifically with the syncretisable Zeus, the later Seleukid kings could hope to count on an ethnically wider support base (within the Levant) than was considered necessary by their predecessors, a hope that reflected the true geographic and political realities of the kingdom after the treaty of Apameia. Under the late Seleukids, increasing localised autonomy was mirrored by the increasing visibility of Semitic and Luwian (and even Egyptian) cults as coin types. The dominance of Kleopatra Thea added further Egyptian imagery into the already varied pool of influences. Antiochos VIII Grypos issued silver coinage emblazoned with pre-Greek Luwian (Athena Magarsia and Sandan) deities in Kilikia, a Hellenised Semitic (or naturalised Hellenic – Baʿal Šamīn/Zeus Ouranios) deity in Syria and Phoenicia, while his bronze coinage continued to display traditional Greek gods such as

<sup>177</sup> Austin 2006: no. 210 = *IGLS* 4.1261; Dignas 2002: 80 n.162; Sosin 2005.

<sup>178</sup> Aside from the example at Laodikeia-by-the-Sea, see also Seleukos II's support of the sanctuary of Zeus Labraundos against Mylasa (Austin 2006: no.179).

Apollo and Artemis. It would appear that such regionalism of type choices illustrates the kings' awareness of specific target audiences. In Damascus, Demetrios III and Antiochos XII combined Semitic cult statues on their silver issues, with more Hellenised figures on their bronzes.

Within the larger heterogeneous Seleukid kingdom, the religious traditions of the colonists met, vied and merged with those of the colonised and there does not appear to have been any one overriding tradition. As the territory under royal control gradually shrank the relative importance of each of the component parts increased; with that importance, the local gods rose to a new prominence and the numismatic iconography became ever more localised. Although detailed accounts of the composition of Seleukid armies in their last century are lacking, it is clear that with the loss of the western and eastern parts of the empire, Seleukid forces must have been increasingly sourced from the local Luwian and Semitic areas under direct control. It must have helped that the coin types produced to pay these forces bore the images of deities that the individuals could identify and relate to.

With the absorption of the former Seleukid territories into the Roman empire, some of the indigenous types such as Athena Magarsia flourished while others such as Atargatis and Ba'al Hadad were once more omitted from the repertoire of coin types. It is difficult to satisfactorily explain why select non-Greek deities were retained while others were discarded. It may very well be that there was enough recognisably Greek about Athena Magarsia to facilitate her retention, while the abandoned types were just too foreign for the new rulers and their Mediterranean empire. Eastern deities would not appear in strength again until the period of the Severan emperors in the early third century AD where, in a reverse of fortune, Semitic gods actively went west.

## CHAPTER 3 THE ROYAL CULT

### 3.1 ROYAL CULT AND HELLENISTIC KINGSHIP THEORY

The Seleukidai ruled over such a disparate population that the adoption of a single concept of what it was to be a monarch would hardly have been in the king's interest. The lack of any legislative body for the kingdom perpetuated the personal and charismatic nature of the kingship – *l'état c'est moi*. However, the monarchic traditions of both the Greco-Macedonians and the various non-Greek peoples of the kingdom imposed precedents that the Seleukids obviously saw fit to follow.<sup>1</sup> In the fifth century BC, Herodotus had written sympathetically on the Achaemenid notion that, provided the king was the most virtuous of beings, the institution of kingship afforded the ideal political structure.<sup>2</sup> At the turn of the century, Xenophon, perhaps inspired by Socrates' ideal „philosopher-king“ as much as his admiration for Cyrus the Younger and Agesilaos of Sparta, pursued a similar outlook.<sup>3</sup> By the start of the Hellenistic period, the earlier Pythagorean, Platonic and Stoic theorising had consolidated into a philosophic school (following Diotogenes and Ekphantos) that advocated the sole rule of an individual endowed with supreme power on earth that corresponded with the rule of Zeus over the heavens. The basic tenets of the Diotogenes-Ekphantos philosophic school explicitly stated that in return for omnipotence, three duties were expected of kings: successful military leadership, the provision of just laws, and pious observance of the gods. Goodenough surmises that such a threefold premise of kingship was adopted as universal Hellenistic royal policy and formed the basis of official behaviour.<sup>4</sup>

Euhemeros of Messene, an ambassador of Kassandros of Macedon (306/5-297 BC), told the apocryphal story of travelling to an island beyond Arabia called Panachaia. Here he was informed that the first gods were men who were deified on account of their conquests and benefactions.<sup>5</sup> The same rationalisation of the gods found echoes in Diodorus Siculus

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<sup>1</sup> Mooren 1983: 208.

<sup>2</sup> Herodotus *The Histories* 3.82.

<sup>3</sup> Xenophon *Cyropaedia*; id. *Hiero*.

<sup>4</sup> Goodenough 1928: 64-6, 99-100. The role of the king as supreme priest of the kingdom is aptly demonstrated by a series of inscriptions dating to the reign of Antiochos III the Great where we repeatedly see the king autocratically distributing priesthoods to individuals whom he wished to see honoured, see Welles 1934: nos.36-7, 44; Mørkholm 1966: 144; Malay 1987.

<sup>5</sup> Diodorus Siculus *Library of History* 6.1.4-10.

who stated that the gods and many heroes had all achieved apotheosis, transcending their human form to become gods after the completion of great deeds.<sup>6</sup> From the Archaic period, Greeks regarded certain individuals as imbued with characteristics greater than other humans. Such individuals could be recognised in intentionally ambiguous language as *theoi*, gods, either unreservedly or with reference to another individual or specific moment.<sup>7</sup> Broadly speaking, this ideology together with Euhemerism – at least on a practical level – found favour across the Hellenic world during the late Classical and Hellenistic periods.<sup>8</sup> As mentioned in Chapter 2.1.1, Philip II of Macedon was honoured by the *demos* of Eresos as Zeus Philippeios and Alexander the Great was depicted by Apelles bearing Zeus’ thunderbolt as his own weapon.<sup>9</sup> Appian has Anaxarchos state that it was more reasonable for the Macedonians to honour Alexander as a god than to worship Herakles or Dionysos.<sup>10</sup> Within this context it is not always easy to draw a distinction between comparison and identification.<sup>11</sup> By the mid-first century BC, Cicero could cynically note that several mortals had been admitted to the celestial citizenship in recent times.<sup>12</sup>

In Mesopotamia, a vaguely parallel belief existed that all things belonged to the god of the city and the king was, at the least, his earthly deputy. From the reign of Sargon of Akkade (c. 2333-2279 BC) the kings were begotten by gods if not gods themselves.<sup>13</sup> A funerary ritual performed for Niqmaddu III of Ugarit (c. 1225-1215 BC) known as the *Document of the sacrifices for the shades* included sacrifices for the king’s father, grandfather and the “assembly of Didānu”, where Didānu was seen as the dynastic progenitor. Royal ancestors thus received sacrifices after the fashion of deities, by name for two or three generations and thereafter as part of the assembly.<sup>14</sup> Such traditions continued to flourish under the Assyrians and Neo-Babylonians.<sup>15</sup> During the reign of Antiochos III,

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<sup>6</sup> Diodorus Siculus *Library of History* 6.2, 6.6.1.

<sup>7</sup> Nock 1928: 31.

<sup>8</sup> Even if part of the intellectual elite saw little theological value in Euhemerism (see for example Plutarch *Moralia* 359e-360), the basic tenets were still in circulation during the late first century BC and made an impact on the writing of Diodorus Siculus, see also Price 1984: 29.

<sup>9</sup> Pliny *Natural History* 35.92; Plutarch *Alexander* 4.3; le Bohec-Bouhet 2002: 43. Alexander was, of course, also believed to have been recognised as the son of Zeus-Ammon at Siwa, see Arrian *Annabasis* 3.3-4; Diodorus Siculus *Library of History* 17.51; Justin *Epitome* 11.11.2-12; Plutarch *Alexander* 26; Quintus Curtius *History of Alexander* 4.7.5-28.

<sup>10</sup> Appian *Anabasis* 4.10.5

<sup>11</sup> Nock 1928: 32.

<sup>12</sup> Cicero, *Nature of the Gods* 3.15.

<sup>13</sup> See for example Goodnick Westenholz 1997: 34-5. See also the cuneiform determinatives on the Borsippa cylinder where both the deity Marduk and Antiochos I might be viewed as man-gods (Kosim forthcoming).

<sup>14</sup> van der Toorn 1996: 163.

<sup>15</sup> McEwan 1934: 8-17; Goodnick Westenholz 1997: 1-2; Green 2003: 285-8.

four texts are known from Uruk which describe offerings made before the statues of the „kings“ in the Rēš sanctuary. It is unclear whether the kings were Seleukids or from one of the previous dynasties; however, living Seleukid kings were likely included among them.<sup>16</sup> According to Aramaic ideology, the king belonged to the race of the gods and was their earthly representative.<sup>17</sup> Eusebius (quoting Philo Judaeus) wrote that to the Phoenicians, the notion of a living god was in no way an abstract concept – for the Phoenicians, some gods were immortal while others were not.<sup>18</sup> Further east, the Achaemenids were viewed (perhaps wrongly) by the Greeks as recipients of divine honours although Arrian does describe what appear to be regular offerings presented at the tomb of Cyrus the Great.<sup>19</sup> After establishing himself in Babylonia, Seleukos I Nikator (followed by his successors) made a concerted effort to conform to the Achaemenid and Babylonian royal models. This was a requirement in order to fully access the enormous resource potential of the satrapy and included the adoption of traditional roles and titulature.<sup>20</sup>

In the second century AD, Plutarch derided royal apotheosis with the statement that any king may be applauded as Apollo if he hums, Dionysos if he drinks or Herakles if he wrestles.<sup>21</sup> However, it must be remembered that Plutarch was both a scholar and a priest of the sanctuary of Delphi who grew up in a world governed by some rather extravagant and excessive Roman *principes* among whom were the later Julio-Claudians and the likes of Domitian. His cynicism regarding royal cult is understandable from a modern perspective but does not necessarily reflect the opinions of the mainstream populace of the Hellenistic East. Hellenistic disillusionment with the traditional gods and a growing religious scepticism allowed for the admission of the king into an already crowded pantheon.<sup>22</sup> The paradigm is presented clearly by McEwan: “one might believe vaguely in the power and the glory of the Olympians, but he could see and feel the glory and the power of the *Diadochoi*. The local god fed nobody in time of famine, but the king could and did.”<sup>23</sup> Apollo was said

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<sup>16</sup> Kuhrt 1996: 50-1; Linssen 2004: 126.

<sup>17</sup> van der Toorn 1996: 170.

<sup>18</sup> Eusebius *Preparation for the Gospel* 1.9.29.

<sup>19</sup> Aeschylus *Persians* 155-9; Arrian *Anabasis* 4.11, 6.29.7; McEwan 1934: 19-23; Mooren 1983: 222-4; Tuplin 2004: 161, n.22.

<sup>20</sup> Kuhrt and Sherwin-White 1991: 77-8, 83; Kuhrt 1996: 42-3; Davies 2002: 3; Austin 2006: no.166

<sup>21</sup> Plutarch *Moralia* 360d.

<sup>22</sup> The Spartan *strategos* Lysander was worshipped as a living god in the last years of the fifth century BC by the Greeks of Asia Minor. Plutarch (*Lysander* 18) states that he was the first living being to be honoured in such a way by the Greeks, see also Price 1984: 27.

<sup>23</sup> McEwan 1934: 26. van Straten 1993: 255-6, 263-4 has also noticed a growing physical distance and a developing “verticality” between deities and devotees in votive reliefs between the Classical and Hellenistic

to have turned away the Galatians at Delphi, but Antiochos I had heroically defeated them in Phrygia and their settlement and pacification was physical proof.<sup>24</sup> The establishment of cities was also seen as a typical act of the “culture-hero” of the Hellenistic period and city foundation (and refoundation) was certainly a favoured pastime of the Seleukid kings.<sup>25</sup> Further, deification enabled the Seleukid king legitimately to expect the subservience of all his subjects regardless of race; while to the Hellenised cities which so longed for autonomy, the ideological transition from king and subject to deity and devotee enabled them to reconcile their theoretic status (free) with their actual position (subject).<sup>26</sup> It is ambiguous but it appears that the first steps towards the deification of Hellenistic kings were taken by the subject Hellenic cities rather than by the kings themselves.<sup>27</sup> Athens had been among the first cities to recognise the divinity of Alexander the Great, Antigonos Monophthalmos and Demetrios Poliorketes. In all three instances, the city acted as a free agent, conferring divine status on its own initiative (although it is doubtful that a Hellenistic king would have ever denied his godhead).<sup>28</sup> Whatever the sincerity, it is clear that different cities found various reasons to worship the Hellenistic kings. New foundations such as Seleukeia-Pieria and Dura-Europos could worship the *oikist* or city-founder as hero or god<sup>29</sup> while older cities such as Miletos might honour a king as benefactor or saviour.<sup>30</sup>

There was also a flourishing Hellenistic tradition of *synnaoi theoi* which saw the new royal cult appended onto an existing religious structure or sanctuary where the king and/or queen would share the divine honours paid to the traditional god. Although there are few confirmed accounts of *synnaoi theoi* within the Seleukid kingdom, such activities were widespread in Ptolemaic Egypt, Attalid Pergamon and Kommagene.<sup>31</sup> The gymnasium at Soli in Kilikia provides one certain instance of Seleukid *synnaoi theoi* where there was a dedication made to Hermes, Herakles and the “Great King” Antiochos [III].<sup>32</sup> Another

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periods. The same process is perhaps illustrated by the perceived distancing of the gods during sacrificial rituals, see Gill 1974: 127-33, 137.

<sup>24</sup> Appian *Syrian Wars* 65; Lucian *Zeuxis* 8-11; Bar-Kochva 1973. For the importance of the Galatian wars to Hellenistic royal propaganda in general see Strootman 2005.

<sup>25</sup> Nock 1928: 27. For an example of royal settlements, see Appian *Syrian Wars* 57.

<sup>26</sup> Bevan 1901: 631-2; Downey, 1941: 165; Price 1984: 29-30; Shipley 2000: 65-6.

<sup>27</sup> Bevan 1901; Downey 1941: 168-9.

<sup>28</sup> Arrian *Anabasis* 7.23.2; Diodorus Siculus *Library of History* 20.46; Plutarch *Demetrius* 10; Bevan 1901: 626.

<sup>29</sup> Appian *Syrian Wars* 63; CIG 4458 = Austin 2006: no.207; *P.Dura* 25.3-4; Rostovtzeff 1935: 58.

<sup>30</sup> Appian *Syrian Wars* 63.

<sup>31</sup> Nock 1930: 42-3. Sokolowski (1972: 174) understands all instances of royal syncretism – Seleukos Zeus Nikator, Aphrodite Stratonikis etc – as *synnaoi theoi*.

<sup>32</sup> Radet and Paris 1890; *OGIS* 230; Nock 1930: 51-2.

instance is known from Teos where statues of both Antiochos III and Laodike III were erected within the sanctuary of Dionysos.<sup>33</sup> Cuneiform texts confirm that a moderated process of *synnaoi theoi* was adopted in Babylon (at least from the reign of Seleukos III) which saw the king and often members of his family honoured in rituals in conjunction with the “great gods” but without being provided with the *dingir*, the cuneiform prefix for divinities. Although closer to receiving overt worship than their precursors, the Seleukid kings assumed a superhuman status rather than an incorporation into the Babylonian pantheon. Linssen views this arrangement as an *interpretatio Babylonica* of contemporary Greek practice.<sup>34</sup> All this together suggests that the scarcity of Seleukid *synnaoi theoi* from Syria can be accounted for not so much by a lack of action, as a lack of extant sources.

Although it is often hard to distinguish one from the other, there was obviously a perceived distinction between the official or state-organised dynastic cult and divine honours granted to individual kings and queens by specific cities as a civic cult. Presumably where there was dynastic worship as opposed to individual worship, the cult was official, although this is purely conjectural. Certainly where individual monarchs received *synnaos theos* status, the impetus came from within the city rather than the court. Antiochos III appointed the courtier Nikanor as chief priest of all sanctuaries north-west of the Taurus, a role which is known to have incorporated the high-priesthood of the official dynastic cult. At Xanthos, however, a distinction was made between the role of Nikanor, priest of the royal cult and the „urban“ priest of the kings, Garison.<sup>35</sup> Presumably Nikanor administered the state-organised dynastic cult while Garison oversaw a polis-sponsored cult developed as a response to benefaction. The geographic extent of Nikanor’s religious „command“, the Seleukid Anatolian possessions, mirrored the civil and military command of the viceroy Zeuxis.<sup>36</sup> In 178 BC Seleukos IV appointed Olympiodoros to administer the “whole variety of local cults” in the satrapy of Koile-Syria and Phoenicia thereby granting him similar authority over the high-priests of the various civic shrines and sanctuaries in that region. In the same dossier appointing Olympiodoros it was made clear that each division of the empire likewise received regional high-priests.<sup>37</sup> No real indication is given of Olympiodoros receiving a geographically far-reaching authority (such as Nikanor’s

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<sup>33</sup> Herrmann 1965; Sokolowski 1972: 171; Price 1984: 29-30; Austin 2006: no.191.

<sup>34</sup> Linssen 2004: 127-8.

<sup>35</sup> Malay 1987: 7-15.

<sup>36</sup> Grainger 1997: 122-3; Dignas 2002: 45-52.

<sup>37</sup> Cotton and Wörle 2007: 197.



across all Anatolia) nor of any superior religious figure overseeing Olympiodoros and it is possible that the Trans-Tauric satrapies were treated differently from the geographically central provinces.<sup>38</sup>

A civic cult of Seleukos I was installed at Ilion during the king's lifetime which included an altar, games and the renaming of a month in the king's honour. Similar games were held at Erythrai<sup>39</sup> while at Lemnos, Seleukos was honoured posthumously with the construction of a naiskos and had his name substituted for that of Zeus in festive libations.<sup>40</sup> Seleukos was buried below the Nikatoreion, a temple-*heroön* or hero shrine, constructed to honour Seleukos Zeus Nikator at Seleukeia-Pieria by Antiochos I.<sup>41</sup> This can perhaps be viewed as the first official institution of the state-sponsored dynastic cult. Ma considers that the drive to worship Seleukid ancestors received a renewed impetus under Antiochos III who aspired to the restoration of his ancestral empire.<sup>42</sup> An inscription from Seleukeia-Pieria dated to the reign of Seleukos IV shows that each subsequent Seleukid king was posthumously honoured with divine titles in a cult organised under a single dynastic priest.<sup>43</sup> During the Roman Imperial period, a cult dedicated to Zeus Seleukeios is attested in Lydia, at Delphi and at Egyptian Alexandria. The origin of the cult epithet is obscure but may refer to the deified Seleukos I, or perhaps the Zeus of Seleukeia-Pieria who was both part of the pre-Greek religious landscape and intimately entwined with the cult of the first Seleukid.<sup>44</sup> A papyrus fragment found at Dura-Europos records the existence of a priesthood of Seleukos Nikator operating in AD 180 which was presumably a continuation of a Seleukid period cult.<sup>45</sup> Here he was probably worshipped in the guise of the city's *oikist* and was thus an integral part of the civic identity regardless of the wider political situation which saw the city under Parthian occupation by the early first century BC and incorporated within the Roman province of Syria from AD 165. Unfortunately, the priesthood is not attested before the second century AD and it may have been an archaising

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<sup>38</sup> The suggestion posited by Cotton and Wörle (2007: 201) that the Dorymenes mentioned in the Heliodoros dossier functioned as a „divisional“ high-priest with authority over Olympiodoros is of course possible, but unfortunately unsupportable and thus must remain hypothetical.

<sup>39</sup> Bevan 1901: 627; *OGIS* 212.

<sup>40</sup> Bevan 1901: 627.

<sup>41</sup> Appian *Syrian Wars* 63; *CIG* 4458 = Austin 2006: no.207; see also Chapter 4.2 below.

<sup>42</sup> Ma 2002: 32, 64; see also Schmitt 1964: 85.

<sup>43</sup> *CIG* 4458.10-20 = Austin 2006: no.207.

<sup>44</sup> Seyrig 1939c; Fraser 1949.

<sup>45</sup> *P.Dura* 25.3-4.

Seleukid revival as part of the Second Sophistic rather than a perpetual cult of the city's founder.

Civic priests of Antiochos I are known at Ilion from c.277 BC.<sup>46</sup> Cults dedicated to Antiochos as *Soter* (saviour) in the face of the Galatian threat were active at Bargylia, Teos and Smyrna.<sup>47</sup> A *temenos*, altar, statue, regular sacrifices, games and a *Stephanephoria* festival were conferred upon Antiochos I, Stratonike and Antiochos [II] their son by the Ionian league.<sup>48</sup> Like his father, Antiochos I also received a *naos* posthumously at Lemnos.<sup>49</sup> Bevan suggests that Antiochos I and Stratonike were honoured at Didyma posthumously as the *theoi soter*es, the Saviour Gods, although Welles denies that the Seleukids were ever worshipped as divine couples after the fashion of the Ptolemies and indeed, there are no other Seleukid examples of such a practice.<sup>50</sup> However, at Smyrna, further cults were established by the reign of Seleukos II dedicated to "Antiochos [II] Theos" and "Stratonike Thea" (his mother), the latter of whom was additionally honoured as Aphrodite Stratonikis.<sup>51</sup> The honour was probably posthumous but, as with Zeus Seleukeios, continued into the Roman period. Tacitus records that the driving force behind the cult of Aphrodite Stratonikis was an oracle given by Apollo.<sup>52</sup> This was probably the oracle at Didyma with whom the Seleukids continued to have close relations but the story brings to mind Arrian's statement that even Herakles only received divine honours on the request of the Pythia of Delphi.<sup>53</sup> The old gods could still wield influence over which mortals were admitted among their number.

At Antioch-in-Persis the dynastic priesthood honoured "Seleukos [I] Nikator and Antiochos [I] Soter and Antiochos [II] Theos and Seleukos [II] Kallinikos and King Seleukos [III]" posthumously along with the cult of the living Antiochos III and Antiochos the prince-regent.<sup>54</sup> In the late nineteenth century, an inscription from Susa was published in which it appeared that Antiochos II had established a state cult for his first queen, Laodike I.<sup>55</sup> However, the dating of the inscription has since proved to be erroneous and it

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<sup>46</sup> *OGIS* 219 = Austin 2006: nos. 162.

<sup>47</sup> Bargylia: *SIG* 426; Teos: *CIG* 3075; Smyrna: *OGIS* 229 = Austin 2006: no.174.100.

<sup>48</sup> *OGIS* 222 = Austin 2006: nos. 169.

<sup>49</sup> Bevan 1901: 627.

<sup>50</sup> Welles 1934: 36.

<sup>51</sup> *OGIS* 229 = Austin 2006: no.174.10.

<sup>52</sup> Tacitus *Annals* 3.63; Bevan 1901: 628.

<sup>53</sup> Arrian *Anabasis* 4.11.7; Parke 1986: 126.

<sup>54</sup> Bevan 1901: 636; Austin 2006: no.190.

<sup>55</sup> Holleaux 1889.

is clear that the dynastic cult only included the queen from the reign of Antiochos III the Great.<sup>56</sup> Antiochos III appointed Berenike (a descendant of the *Diadoch* Lysimachos) as chief priestess of a cult of the living queen, Laodike III, which was to be established across the empire in conjunction with the king's own cult. As well as receiving *synnaoi theoi* honours in the sanctuary of Dionysos at Teos, Antiochos III and Laodike III received further altars throughout the city and a statue with associated honours established in the *bouleuterion* (council building). The first fruits of the season were offered to the royal gods, and a fountain with certain rites erected in honour of Laodike.<sup>57</sup> Laodike III was also the focus of a civic cult from Iasos where she was syncretised with Aphrodite as a patroness of girls who wanted to marry.<sup>58</sup> It is unclear exactly how the dynastic cult of the queens was to be organised although it is certain that the cult established at Susa was not applied retrospectively to previous queens. However, by the reign of Seleukos IV, it did include Laodike IV, wife of the king and even Laodike, their daughter.<sup>59</sup>

Archaeological and epigraphic evidence for royal cults, either civic or dynastic is distinctly absent for the late Seleukid period. To a great degree this lacuna must be understood as a modern construction – in the late period the kingdom was reduced in geographic terms and comparatively little excavation and survey has been conducted in Seleukid Syria. At Shami in Elymais are the remains of a structure generally acknowledged as a shrine. Among a collection of sculptural fragments found across the site were two parts of a larger than life-size bronze head of a youthful, diademed male executed in fine Hellenistic style which may represent a late Seleukid king. Other sculptural fragments were suggestive of Zeus, Aphrodite, Dionysos, various figures in Parthian or Iranian dress and a miniature limestone altar. The excavator considered the shrine to have combined the worship of local gods with regional royalty – *synnaoi theoi* – dated from the second century BC to the first or second century AD.<sup>60</sup> Most recently, the youthful head has been identified as Antiochos VII, the last of the Seleukids to control the region. The hypothesis is that his

<sup>56</sup> Welles 1934: nos.36-7; Austin 2006: no.200.

<sup>57</sup> Sokolowski 1972: 171-2; Austin 2006: no.191.

<sup>58</sup> Sokolowski 1972: 174.

<sup>59</sup> Haussoullier 1923.

<sup>60</sup> Stein 1940: 150-6. Sherwin-White (1984: 161) questions the assumption that the presence of a statue of a royal Seleukid in a sanctuary necessarily means that the king was worshipped there and states that no Seleukid kings were known to be worshipped in Babylonian or Iranian native temples. As we have already seen, the Rēš sanctuary at Uruk included statues of kings and Antiochos Epiphanes introduced “unsuitable” Hellenised statues into the Esagila in Babylon – both of which *may* be examples of Seleukid royal cult appended to existing Babylonian centres. While caution must always be used, the possibility should not be discounted; see also Linssen 2004: 127-8.

statue may have been erected (and cult established) during the king's anabasis (130-129 BC) as a show of renewed loyalty by the local population.<sup>61</sup> At the Hierothesion of Antiochos I of Kommagene on Nemrud Dağ, 17 ancestors were honoured in the dynastic cult.<sup>62</sup> Among the broken remains of these ancestors, Antiochos VIII Grypos has been identified along with fragments of other Seleukid kings. The „Hellenic“ branch of the Kommagene family ran through the Seleukids to Alexander the Great who is mythically shown as the line's ultimate progenitor. From the remains of the male Seleukids, it appears that they were depicted in Greek armour adorned with medallions decorated with thunderbolts or the bust of Apollo (**figs.58-62**).<sup>63</sup> Beyond being references to the two principal patrons of the dynasty, one can only wonder if the application of the different divine symbols bore any specific reference to the various kings in question. Unfortunately, scant fragments of the Hellenic ancestor stelae remain at the site and a reconciliation of divine symbolism and recognisable monarchs remains elusive. Where the associations have been proposed however, it is curiously Antiochos I and Seleukos IV who wear the thunderbolt design (Seleukos IV also wears a brooch with the bust of Herakles), while Antiochos IV, the patron of Zeus, is depicted with the bust of Apollo.



**Figure 58. Nemrud Dağ east terrace (N.L. Wright).**

<sup>61</sup> Smith 1988: 102.

<sup>62</sup> See Appendic C.

<sup>63</sup> *OGIS* 388-401; Tarn 1929: 141; Goell 1957: 14; Sanders 1996: 306-55, 430-5.

**Figure 59.**  
Nemrud Dağ  
west terrace  
(N.L. Wright).



**Figure 60.** Nemrud Dağ ancestor  
stele identified as Antiochos I  
(Sanders 1996: fig.497).



**Figure 61.**  
Nemrud Dağ ancestor stele  
identified as Seleukos IV  
(Sanders 1996: fig.511).



**Figure 62.**  
Nemrud Dağ ancestor stele  
identified as Antiochos IV  
(Sanders 1996: fig.515).



### 3.2 OFFICIAL TITULATURE

The Seleukids presented themselves as the heirs to both the Greco-Macedonian and the Babylo-Iranian traditions of their subjects. Although in the Babylonian cuneiform texts neither Alexander the Great nor the Seleukids received divine epithets or cultic titles,<sup>64</sup> both traditions provided precedents for royal apotheosis and it is no wonder that by the mid-second century BC the kings could be numismatically portrayed as living manifestations of the divine.<sup>65</sup>

The coin legends of the early Seleukid period bear witness to the official stance of the Greco-Macedonian administration. Although granted honorary titles by various cities, the early Seleukids, like their Ptolemaic counterparts, never presumed to publish such divine honours on their coinage.<sup>66</sup> Antiochos II was surnamed Theos (the God) by the citizens of Miletos<sup>67</sup> for example, and Seleukos III was named Keraunos (the Thunderbolt) by his soldiers.<sup>68</sup> At Seleukeia-Pieria and Antioch-in-Persis, inscriptions naming the priest of the royal cult provide the cultic epithets employed for the deified (dead) kings, although none had yet been used as legends on their life-time coin issues, nor does the reigning king appear to receive an epithet in the cult lists.<sup>69</sup> Interestingly at Seleukeia-Pieria, while Seleukos I and Antiochos I include the names Zeus and Apollo respectively as part of their divine titles, the succeeding kings are merely deified mortals. With one exception, all coin legends on royal Seleukid issues before 175 BC list only the royal title, ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ, and the king's name. Of note however is a series known as the „Soter coinage“ on account of the legend ΣΩΤΗΡΟΣ ΑΝΤΙΟΧΟΥ, which appears on the reverse of gold, silver and bronze issues. The series does not use the royal title and is generally believed to have been issued in northern Syria (Antioch or Apameia) during the short interregnum between the death of Antiochos II (246) and the reconquest of the region by Seleukos II (244).<sup>70</sup> The types recall the iconography of the reign of Antiochos I Soter and utilise that king's portrait for the obverse type. The legend makes no claim that the coins were minted by any „king“ as such

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<sup>64</sup> „Sehr wichtig ist es, daß die babylonischen Priester die Göttlichkeit Alexanders und der Seleukiden niemals anerkannt haben, wie das fehlen des Gottesdeterminatius vor den Namen dieser Könige in den Keilschrifttexten beweist“, Schnabel 1926: 411.

<sup>65</sup> I strongly disagree here with Bevan (1901) who denies any Oriental precedents for royal apotheosis.

<sup>66</sup> Johnson 1999: 54-5.

<sup>67</sup> Appian *Syrian Wars* 63

<sup>68</sup> Eusebius *Chronicle* Schoene-Petermann edition p.253.

<sup>69</sup> *CIG* 4458.10-20 = Austin 2006: no.207; Austin 2006: no.190.

<sup>70</sup> *SC* 1: 225-8.

– they were issues of Antiochos the Saviour. Although long dead, Antiochos I was recognised as a god.<sup>71</sup>

Antiochos IV received the epithet Epiphanes (the Divine Manifestation) after his arrival in Syria<sup>72</sup> and from some time during his reign until the dissolution of the dynasty, the ruling monarch chose to emblazon the reverse of his (or her) coinage with what became, in some cases, an impressive combination of distinguishing epithets. Under Epiphanes, the king was no longer merely *Basileus* Antiochos; he was ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΑΝΤΙΟΧΟΥ ΘΕΟΥ ΕΠΙΦΑΝΟΥΣ ΝΙΚΑΤΟΡΟΣ – King Antiochos the manifestation of the conquering God. Epiphanes and his successors shared none of their forebears’ qualms about promoting their own status as a god incarnate on royal coin issues. The title Epiphanes itself was used initially in Ptolemaic Egypt where it was matched by an exact Egyptian counterpart (“he who comes forth”) in the multilingual Rosetta stone. Whether there was any vernacular Aramaic or Babylonian title used in parallel by the Seleukid kings is uncertain but they certainly made use of customary Babylonian titlature in cuneiform texts.<sup>73</sup> Although Epiphanes itself does not intrinsically imply divinity, Antiochos IV qualified the meaning when he used the title in combination with his other epithets.<sup>74</sup> Demetrios I was called Soter (the Saviour) following his relief of Babylonia from Timarchos<sup>75</sup> and promptly employed the title on his coin reverses as part of his standard legend, first at Seleukeia-on-the-Tigris, and later across the kingdom. Antiochos VII Sidetes was called Eusebes (the Pious) by the Jews but tactfully chose to leave anything approaching an epithet or cult title off his Jerusalemite coin issues.<sup>76</sup> On his more common issues from across the kingdom, Antiochos Sidetes employed perhaps the most modest of the late Seleukid epithets, calling himself merely Euergetes (the Benefactor). Sidetes is usually considered the last successful Seleukid and following his death his successors seem to have adopted epithets in inverse proportion to the size of their holdings. Antiochos XII, who controlled only Damascus, produced coins on which he was titled ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΑΝΤΙΟΧΟΥ ΔΙΟΝΥΣΟΥ ΕΠΙΦΑΝΟΥΣ

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<sup>71</sup> The epithet “Soter” was often employed in the worship of gods, see Weinreich 1912: 11, 15, 18, 24, 51; Bilde 1990: 161-2; Teixidor 1989: 82-5.

<sup>72</sup> Appian *Syrian Wars* 45.

<sup>73</sup> Nock 1928: 39. For examples of Babylonian titlature employed for Antiochos I, see Glassner 1993: no.32; Austin 2006: no.166. Whether Antiochos was personally aware that he was being awarded such titles cannot be confirmed but it must be considered probable.

<sup>74</sup> Nock 1928: 40-1.

<sup>75</sup> Appian *Syrian Wars* 47.

<sup>76</sup> Josephus *Jewish Antiquities* 13.244; see also Chapter 2.1.2.3 above.

ΦΙΛΟΠΑΤΟΡΟΣ ΚΑΛΛΙΝΙΚΟΥ – King Antiochos, Dionysos made manifest, father-loving and beautiful in victory.

The following lists are a compilation of the official titles employed for the king on state documents including coin legends based upon accumulated numismatic evidence from *SC* 1, *SC* 2, Kritt (2002), Hoover (2005) and the Seleukeia-Pieria cult list (*CIG* 4458). Unless otherwise stated, the coin legends were produced on life-time coin issues. The Seleukeia-Pieria inscription lists cult titles in use during the reign of Seleukos IV (187-175 BC):

#### EARLY SELEUKID PERIOD (312-175 BC)

| <b>Popular name:</b>              | <b>Coin legends:</b>                  | <b>Seleukeia-Pieria cult list:</b> |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Seleukos I Nikator                | ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΣΕΛΕΥΚΟΥ                     | ΣΕΛΕΥΚΟΥ ΔΙΟΣ ΝΙΚΑΤΟΡΟΣ            |
| Antiochos I Soter<br>(posthumous) | ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΑΝΤΙΟΧΟΥ<br>ΣΩΤΗΡΟΣ ΑΝΤΙΟΧΟΥ | ΑΝΤΙΟΧΟΥ ΑΠΟΛΛΩΝΟΣ ΣΩΤΗΡΟΣ         |
| Antiochos II Theos                | ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΑΝΤΙΟΧΟΥ                     | ΑΝΤΙΟΧΟΥ ΘΕΟΥ                      |
| Seleukos II Kallinikos            | ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΣΕΛΕΥΚΟΥ                     | ΣΕΛΕΥΚΟΥ ΚΑΛΛΙΝΙΚΟΥ                |
| Antiochos Hierax                  | ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΑΝΤΙΟΧΟΥ                     | (not listed)                       |
| Seleukos III Soter                | ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΣΕΛΕΥΚΟΥ                     | ΣΕΛΕΥΚΟΥ ΣΩΤΗΡΟΣ                   |
| Antiochos III the Great           | ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΑΝΤΙΟΧΟΥ                     | ΑΝΤΙΟΧΟΥ ΜΕΓΑΛΟΥ                   |
| Seleukos IV Philopator            | ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΣΕΛΕΥΚΟΥ                     | ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΣΕΛΕΥΚΟΥ (reigning)       |

#### LATE SELEUKID PERIOD (175-64 BC)

| <b>Popular name:</b>                         | <b>Coin legends:</b>                                                                                                                                                                  |
|----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Antiochos the son of Seleukos IV             | ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΑΝΤΙΟΧΟΥ                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Antiochos IV Epiphanes                       | ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΑΝΤΙΟΧΟΥ<br>ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΑΝΤΙΟΧΟΥ ΕΠΙΦΑΝΟΥΣ<br>ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΑΝΤΙΟΧΟΥ ΘΕΟΥ ΕΠΙΦΑΝΟΥΣ<br>ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΑΝΤΙΟΧΟΥ ΘΕΟΥ ΕΠΙΦΑΝΟΥΣ ΝΙΚΑΤΟΡΟΣ                                                    |
| Antiochos V Eupator                          | ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΑΝΤΙΟΧΟΥ ΕΥΠΑΤΟΡΟΣ                                                                                                                                                           |
| Demetrios I Soter                            | ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΔΗΜΗΤΡΙΟΥ<br>ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΔΗΜΗΤΡΙΟΥ ΣΩΤΕΡΟΣ                                                                                                                                      |
| Alexander I Balas                            | ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΟΥ<br>ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΟΥ ΘΕΟΠΑΤΩΡΟΣ ΕΥΕΡΓΕΤΟΥ<br>ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΟΥ ΕΥΠΑΤΡΕΩΝ                                                                                      |
| Demetrios II Nikator (1 <sup>st</sup> reign) | ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΔΗΜΗΤΡΙΟΥ<br>ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΔΗΜΗΤΡΙΟΥ ΝΙΚΑΤΟΡΟΣ<br>ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΔΗΜΗΤΡΙΟΥ ΘΕΟΥ ΝΙΚΑΤΟΡΟΣ<br>ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΔΗΜΗΤΡΙΟΥ ΦΙΛΑΔΕΛΦΟΥ ΝΙΚΑΤΟΡΟΣ<br>ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΔΗΜΗΤΡΙΟΥ ΘΕΟΥ ΦΙΛΑΔΕΛΦΟΥ<br>ΝΙΚΑΤΟΡΟΣ |
| Antiochos VI Dionysos                        | ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΑΝΤΙΟΧΟΥ<br>ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΑΝΤΙΟΧΟΥ ΕΠΙΦΑΝΟΥΣ ΔΙΟΝΥΣΟΥ                                                                                                                             |
| Antiochos VII Sidetes                        | ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΑΝΤΙΟΧΟΥ<br>ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΑΝΤΙΟΧΟΥ ΕΥΕΡΓΕΤΟΥ                                                                                                                                      |



|                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                     |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Popular name:</b><br>Demetrios II Nikator (2 <sup>nd</sup> reign) | <b>Coin legends:</b><br>ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΔΗΜΗΤΡΙΟΥ<br>ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΔΗΜΗΤΡΙΟΥ ΘΕΟΥ ΝΙΚΑΤΟΡΟΣ<br>ΔΗΜΗΤΡΙΟΥ ΝΙΚΑΤΟΡΟΣ<br>ΔΗΜΗΤΡΙΟΥ ΘΕΟΥ ΝΙΚΑΤΟΡΟΣ                  |
| Alexander II Zabinas                                                 | ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΟΥ                                                                                                                                 |
| Seleukos V                                                           | (no known issues)                                                                                                                                   |
| Kleopatra Thea                                                       | ΒΑΣΙΛΙΣΣΗΣ ΚΛΕΟΠΑΤΡΑΣ<br>ΒΑΣΙΛΙΣΣΗΣ ΚΛΕΟΠΑΤΡΑΣ ΘΕΑΣ<br>ΒΑΣΙΛΙΣΣΗΣ ΚΛΕΟΠΑΤΡΑΣ ΘΕΑΣ ΕΥΕΤΗΡΙΑΣ                                                         |
| Antiochos VIII Grypos                                                | ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΑΝΤΙΟΧΟΥ<br>ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΑΝΤΙΟΧΟΥ ΕΠΙΦΑΝΟΥΣ                                                                                                    |
| Antiochos IX Kyzikenos                                               | ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΑΝΤΙΟΧΟΥ<br>ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΑΝΤΙΟΧΟΥ ΦΙΛΟΠΑΤΟΡΟΣ                                                                                                  |
| Demetrios III Eukairos                                               | ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΔΗΜΗΤΡΙΟΥ ΦΙΛΟΠΑΤΟΡΟΣ ΣΩΤΗΡΟΣ<br>ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΔΗΜΗΤΡΙΟΥ ΘΕΟΥ ΦΙΛΟΠΑΤΟΡΟΣ<br>ΣΩΤΗΡΟΣ<br>ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΔΗΜΗΤΡΙΟΥ ΦΙΛΟΠΑΤΟΡΟΣ ΕΥΕΡΓΕΤΟΥΣ<br>ΚΑΛΛΙΝΙΚΟΥ |
| Seleukos VI Epiphanes                                                | ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΣΕΛΕΥΚΟΥ ΝΙΚΑΤΟΡΟΣ                                                                                                                         |
| Antiochos X Eusebes                                                  | ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΑΝΤΙΟΧΟΥ ΕΥΣΕΒΟΥΣ ΦΙΛΟΠΑΤΟΡΟΣ                                                                                                              |
| Antiochos XI Philadelphos                                            | ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΑΝΤΙΟΧΟΥ<br>ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΑΝΤΙΟΧΟΥ ΕΠΙΦΑΝΟΥΣ ΦΙΛΑΔΕΛΦΟΥ                                                                                         |
| Philip I Philadelphos                                                | ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΦΙΛΙΠΠΟΥ<br>ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΦΙΛΙΠΠΟΥ ΕΠΙΦΑΝΟΥΣ ΦΙΛΑΔΕΛΦΟΥ                                                                                         |
| Antiochos XII Dionysos                                               | ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΑΝΤΙΟΧΟΥ ΕΠΙΦΑΝΟΥΣ ΦΙΛΟΠΑΤΟΡΟΣ<br>ΚΑΛΛΙΝΙΚΟΥ<br>ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΑΝΤΙΟΧΟΥ ΔΙΟΝΥΣΟΥ ΕΠΙΦΑΝΟΥΣ<br>ΦΙΛΟΠΑΤΟΡΟΣ ΚΑΛΛΙΝΙΚΟΥ                             |
| Kleopatra Selene                                                     | ΒΑΣΙΛΙΣΣΗΣ ΚΛΕΟΠΑΤΡΑΣ ΣΕΛΗΝΗΣ                                                                                                                       |
| Antiochos XIII Asiatikos                                             | ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΑΝΤΙΟΧΟΥ ΦΙΛΟΜΗΤΟΡΟΣ<br>ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΑΝΤΙΟΧΟΥ ΦΙΛΑΔΕΛΦΟΥ                                                                                       |
| Seleukos VII Philometor                                              | ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΣΕΛΕΥΚΟΥ ΦΙΛΟΜΗΤΟΡΟΣ (of uncertain reliability)                                                                                            |
| Philip II Philorhomaioi                                              | ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΦΙΛΙΠΠΟΥ (probable although coin production uncertain)                                                                                     |

### 3.3 THE TRAPPINGS OF DIVINITY

As well as being declared gods through popular acclamation, state-issued documents in the form of official letters and the coins (from the late Seleukid I period) and establishing their own dynastic cult, Seleukid kings (and the occasional queen) found other, visual, ways to express their divinity. Again, the evidence is primarily numismatic and the message presumably explicit to the target audience.

### 3.3.1 BULL'S HORNS

The identification of a horned warrior bust on the obverse of Seleukos I's victory coinage from Susa has long been questioned.<sup>77</sup> The figure is iconographically linked with a mounted warrior on the reverse of the small issue of silver coins issued by Seleukos I at Ekbatana (**figs.63-4**).<sup>78</sup> The Susa bust depicts the warrior wearing an Attic helmet rendered to represent the skin of a panther or leopard while two legs of a similar animal wrap around the figure's shoulders to be tied in the front recalling the lion skin cowl of Herakles on the Alexander type silver coinage. The Ekbatana warrior likewise wears an Attic helmet. The figure is too small to make out any animal skin rendering (although the saddlecloth appears to be lion, panther or bull skin), but both helmets are adorned with bull's horns and ears. The horse on the Ekbatana issue sports an identical set of bull's horns.

Hadley's hypothesis – that the warrior represents Alexander the Great – has caused several modern scholars to reconsider the iconography. The original assertion of Babelon (also found in Newell and to a lesser extent still current in Houghton and Lorber's work) identifies the hero as none other than the first Seleukid king.<sup>79</sup> Hadley rightly points out that the image is loaded with divinising attributes. However, he claims that the figure cannot be the living king as there is no evidence to suggest Seleukos received divine honours from his Greco-Macedonian subjects before his death and his eastern subjects “were not accustomed to worshipping their rulers”.<sup>80</sup> As has been demonstrated above, both of these arguments carry inherent flaws. Seleukos I received divine honours in his lifetime from the Greek centres of Ilion and Erythrai and there were certainly Babylo-Iranian traditions of veneration if not direct worship of kings, both living and dead.<sup>81</sup> Further, a distinction may be drawn



**Figure 63.** AR tetradrachm, Seleukos I, Susa (SC 1: pl.10.173.14).



**Figure 64.** AR tetradrachm, Seleukos I, Ekbatana (SC 1: pl.11.203).

<sup>77</sup> For example, Imhoof-Blumer 1883: 424-5 (Seleukos I or Alexander); Babelon 1890: xv-xvi (Seleukos I); Newell 1938: 156 (Seleukos I); Hadley 1974a (Alexander); 1974b: 55-7 (Alexander); Houghton 1986: 57-8 (Alexander); Kritt 1997: 11 („Hero”); SC 1: no.173-5 (Hero “assimilating Seleucus, Alexander, and Dionysus”).

<sup>78</sup> Newell 1938: nos.481-2 (Seleukos I); Houghton and Stewart 1999 (Alexander on Boukephalos); SC 1: no.203 (Hero “with Dionysiac attributes”); Hoover 2002b (Seleukos I).

<sup>79</sup> Babelon 1890: xv-xvi; Newell 1938: 156; SC 1: no.173-5.

<sup>80</sup> Hadley 1974a: 12.

<sup>81</sup> Aeschylus *Persians* 155-9; Arrian *Anabasis* ;4.11, 6.29.7; Bevan 1901: 627; McEwan 1934: 8-17, 19-23; Eddy 1961; Mooren 1983: 222-4.



Figure 65. AR tetradrachm, Antiochos I, Sardes (SC 1: pl.18.322).



Figure 66. AR tetradrachm, Antiochos I, Sardes (SC 1: pl.18.323.2b).



Figure 67. AV stater, Antiochos I, Baktrian mint (SC 1: pl.21.469.1).



between actual divine attributes and attributes worn as attire. In the case of the Susa and Ekbatana coins, the attributes form part of the warrior's armour rather than part of his own body. The reference to divine status is here a clear allusion rather than a direct statement.<sup>82</sup>

Appian recalls that Seleukos once secured a wild bull with his bare hands and was henceforth depicted in statuary adorned with bull's horns.<sup>83</sup> Libanius states that a horned statue of Seleukos was erected by the population of Antigoneia-on-the-Orontes whom he had resettled in Antioch.<sup>84</sup> According to Libanius, the horns were added as the mark of Io, the mythical heroine who caused the first legendary Greek settlement to be founded on the slopes of Mount Silpios above Antioch. While Appian's aetiological, and Libanius' mythical explanations may well refer to an actual event or popular belief, bulls and bulls' horns enjoyed a long history as symbols of strength and fertility in both Greek and Near Eastern traditions and the underlying message of the horned statue must be one of divinity and strength.<sup>85</sup> Both the Susa and the Ekbatana coin types were among the first regal issues of Seleukos I to replace Alexander's name in the legend with Seleukos' own at their respective mints and it is likely that the types showing the horned king were illustrative of the change of coin legend.

A number of other horned busts were utilised on Seleukid coinage. Seleukos I was posthumously depicted with bull's horns in the same position as those on the Susa and Ekbatana types, but sprouting from his temples rather than worn as a helmet. These were produced during the reign of Antiochos I on silver issues at Sardes and at an uncertain mint in Baktria

<sup>82</sup> Smith 1988: 39. The bull-horned helmet reappears (minus the warrior) on the reverse of a number of bronze coins from Ai Khanoum during the reign of Antiochos I (SC 1: nos.448-51). It seems that the horned helmet imagery was restricted to eastern (Iranian) mints. There may be a direct correlation between the use of divinising apparel rather than outright divine imagery and vernacular Zoroastrian traditions which considered Ahura Mazda the highest object of worship and only true god.

<sup>83</sup> Appian *Syrian Wars* 57.

<sup>84</sup> Libanius *Oration* 11.93.

<sup>85</sup> Euripides *Bacchae* 610-20; Cook 1914: 576-82; 1940: 628-34; Goodenough 1958: 3-23; Smith 1988: 40-1. One need only look at the famous victory stele of Naram-Sin (2254-2218 BC) now housed in the Louvre, Paris, to understand the ancestry and impact of such imagery in Mesopotamia, see Bartz and König 2005: 64-5.

(figs.65-7).<sup>86</sup> The similarity in composition between the bare-headed variety from Baktria and the horned helmet variety from Susa makes Babelon's identification of the horned warrior as Seleukos I almost certain although the helmeted head is more idealised than the posthumous portraits. Hadley's attribution is further challenged by the horned horse on the Ekbatana tetradrachms. The identification of the rider as Alexander enforces an identification of the horse with Boukephalos.<sup>87</sup> However, the horned horse head appeared repeatedly as a type or sub-type on bronze, silver and gold coins produced across the kingdom from the reign of Seleukos I to Seleukos II. There can be no reason for the memory of Boukephalos to be perpetuated in such a way under the Seleukids.<sup>88</sup> A slightly more plausible suggestion might be to view the horned horse as the animal that carried Seleukos away from Antigonos' agents during the former's flight from Babylon in 316/5 BC. This is perhaps supported by John Malalas who states that Seleukos later erected an inscribed monument in Antioch honouring the animal's service.<sup>89</sup>



Figure 68. AE denomination, Seleukos II, Seleukeia-on-the-Tigris (SC 1: pl.82.767).



Figure 69. AE denomination, Demetrios I, Seleukeia-on-the-Tigris (SC 2: pl.72.1694).

Seleukos II, Antiochos III and Demetrios I all employed a three-quarter facing, draped, bust adorned with bull's horns on their bronze issues from Seleukeia-on-the-Tigris and Susa (figs.68-9).<sup>90</sup> The foreshortened aspect of the bust makes exact identification of the figure difficult but it is plausible to suggest that the horned figure is again Seleukos I Nikator being shown as the founder of the dynasty – perhaps even specifically as founder of the settlements in question.<sup>91</sup> However, a bronze series from Susa presents a number of right facing heads showing the features of a youthful Antiochos III the Great which also sport horns, albeit proportionately much smaller than those of the three-quarter busts

<sup>86</sup> SC 1: no.322-3, 469, 471-2.

<sup>87</sup> Houghton and Stewart 1999: 29.

<sup>88</sup> SC 1: nos.1-2 (Pergamon), 322 (Sardes), 35 (Apameia-on-the-Orontes), 363, 367-8 (Dura-Europos), 47 (Karrhai), 756-8 (Nisibis), 145-6, 775 (Seleukeia-on-the-Tigris), 88.9, 101-4 (Babylon), 112, 376-7 (Mesopotamian mint?), 160, 164.3-4, 168, 170-1, 183 190, 407 (Susa), 203, 208.3, 219-23, 813 (Ekbatana), 426-34, 440 (Ai Khanoum), Ad21, 254, 256, 267-8, 461-72 (Baktrian or Sogdian mint?); see also Millar and Walters 2004.

<sup>89</sup> Malalas *Chronicle* 8.17; Babelon 1890: xx; SC 1: 7. Presumably the monument was erected in the Antiochene suburb, Hippokephalos, mentioned in Ammianus Marcellinus *Roman History* 21.15.2.

<sup>90</sup> SC 1: nos.767, 768 combined with a reverse of a horseman similar to the Ekbatana silvers of Seleukos I (Seleukeia-on-the-Tigris), 800-1, 1220-3 (Susa); SC 2: nos.1694-5 (Seleukeia-on-the-Tigris).

<sup>91</sup> Hellenistic Susa had been refounded by Seleukos I as Seleukeia-on-the-Eulaios.

Figure 70. Æ denomination, Antiochos III, Susa (SC 1: pl.93.1218).



(fig.70).<sup>92</sup> We are left with the feeling that perhaps Seleukos II, Antiochos III and Demetrios I all showed themselves with bull's horns which then raises the question of the significance of the three-quarter aspect of the bust. It is more likely that Seleukos II, Antiochos III and Demetrios I produced coins showing a horned Seleukos I (reminiscent of strength and legitimacy, perhaps based on a statue prototype) but that Antiochos III produced a series showing his own horned head in addition, thereby declaring himself as the physical and spiritual heir of Seleukos I.<sup>93</sup>

Houghton and Lorber identify a "hornlike lock" of hair above the ear on some of Antiochos III's issues of gold and silver from Antioch but these are decidedly subtle and not overly convincing.<sup>94</sup>

Horned heads and busts were only employed by rulers stemming from the senior (legitimate) branch of the family. However, Antiochos Epiphanes, while never employing bull's horn attributes on his own portraiture may have been somehow incorporated into a similar „divine bull“ theme. Like Seleukos I who was said to have restrained a wild bull being sacrificed by Alexander,<sup>95</sup> Epiphanes was commemorated in a bronze statue in Antioch performing the same action. Libanius states that the statue group was erected by the cities of Kilikia in honour of the king who suppressed a group of bandits in the Taurus mountains, thereby metaphorically „taming the bull“.<sup>96</sup> It is likely that here too, the Libanius account, written 500 years after the event, relates a distorted version of history. In ritualistic terms, the taming or controlling of the bull may have interplayed with the ancient notions of sacrifice and worship where the god and his chosen sacrificial victim were identical.<sup>97</sup> Zeus transformed himself into a bull in pursuit of Europa, while the bull was also a favoured sacrificial victim. In the complementary west Semitic traditions the bull was seen as both the avatar and companion of Ba'al Hadad and was later ever present in the company of the much syncretised gods of Heliopolis and Doliche.<sup>98</sup> The bull taming *topos* may very well

<sup>92</sup> SC 1: nos.1216-9.

<sup>93</sup> Houghton 1986: 56.

<sup>94</sup> SC 1: nos.1038, 1043-5.

<sup>95</sup> Appian *Syrian Wars* 57. This story is also the presumed logic behind Seleukos I's „charging bull“ reverse type used on bronze coinage across the kingdom, see SC 1: nos.6, 21-4, 47, 125-7, 148-53, 191-3, 224-5, 283A (this bull has a bearded male head suggestive of a river-god), 284-87, 290, along with numerous other standing bulls or parts of bulls used as types.

<sup>96</sup> Libanius *Oration* 11.123.

<sup>97</sup> Cook 1940: 563; Burkert 1983: 76-8.

<sup>98</sup> Cook 1914: 567-70; Green 2003: 154-8.



have illustrated the overpowering of, and at the same time assimilation with and rebirth of, the great god.<sup>99</sup> The latter act may have been behind Seleukos I's adoption of the bull-horned attribute while as we shall see, Antiochos IV more commonly manifested his divinity through solar attributes.

It seems probable that most depictions of a Seleukid king sporting bull's horns were thus intended to represent Seleukos I, the founder of the dynasty and the only Seleukid ruler for whom we have non-numismatic evidence for the use of the bull horn attribute. Houghton has identified a colossal marble head with the remnants of bull's horns, discovered at Alexandreia-Issos, as a late Hellenistic representation of Seleukos I (**fig.71**).<sup>100</sup> Along with the written accounts of Appian and Libanius, this presents a long running tradition of the cultic depiction of the first Seleukid king.<sup>101</sup> The fragmentary statue was found together with a marble portrait of Antiochos IX Kyzikenos and both appear to have been made in the same workshop.

Only two late Seleukid rulers actually employed the bull horn attributes on their coin portraits and these were of very different form from those of their Seleukid forbears. Whereas the earlier representations had all depicted the large, curving horns of a mature bull, the Antiochene coin portraits of Demetrios II (second reign 129-125 BC) and Seleukos VI (95-94 BC) show the respective kings with the small, stubby horns of a juvenile bull (**figs.72-3**).<sup>102</sup> Dürr associates the type with the goddess Io who was worshipped as the moon at Iopolis, an Argive settlement on Mount Silpios although surely the pre-Greek tradition of horned gods and kings followed by the early



**Figure 71.** Marble head from Alexandreia-by-Issos, Antakya Archaeological Museum (N.L. Wright).



**Figure 72.** AR tetradrachm, Demetrios II, Damascus (SC 2: pl.41.2180).



**Figure 73.** AR tetradrachm, Seleukos VI, Antioch-on-the-Orontes (SC 2: pl.53.2415e).

<sup>99</sup> Cook 1940 605-6.

<sup>100</sup> Houghton 1986: 53, 61.

<sup>101</sup> Appian *Syrian Wars* 57; Libanius *Oration* 11.93.

<sup>102</sup> SC 2: 411-2, 552.

Seleukids was a far stronger source of inspiration.<sup>103</sup> As Smith has identified, the small horns of these late Seleukids bear a certain resemblance to the horned portraits produced by Demetrios Poliorketes at his western mints following 292 BC.<sup>104</sup> More interesting is Mittag's suggestion that the long beard sported by Demetrios II on his horned portraits was worn in imitation of the supreme god, Zeus.<sup>105</sup> The short horns combined with a full beard present an iconographic assemblage which was directly descended from the Alexander coinage produced at Damascus, in Phoenicia, Egypt and Babylon where the recently adopted enthroned Zeus image was still shown with the bull's horns inherent in his Semitic prototype.<sup>106</sup> The allusion drawn by the Seleukid use of such imagery may be to highlight any one of a number of points – or perhaps all of them: the direct, legitimate, succession of these kings from Seleukos I; to remind their audience that they were in addition, descendants of the Antigonid kings of Macedonia; and almost certainly to further incorporate the kings within the increasingly important cult of Ba'al as a god of fertility, rebirth and salvation.<sup>107</sup>

### 3.3.2 GOAT-HORNED HELMET

A further variation of the „horned“ type occurred on the coins of Antiochos VI Dionysos and his (perhaps murderous) regent and successor Diodotos Tryphon. The type occurred initially on the reverse of an undated series of silver drachms, produced in the name of Antiochos VI, probably in the last year of his reign (142/1 BC).<sup>108</sup> The iconography consisted of an unusual variant of a Boiotian helmet with a broad brim, cheek pieces and a tall spike emerging from the crown. A single large wild goat's horn emerges from the brow of the helmet and the ends of a diadem are shown dangling from the back (**figs.74-5**).<sup>109</sup> On

<sup>103</sup> Dürr 1973: 91-2; 1979: 8.

<sup>104</sup> Babelon (1890: cxlvi) proposed that Demetrios may have depicted himself in imitation of Dionysos Pagon, the bearded Dionysos, but this is unsupported by any other iconographic evidence.

<sup>105</sup> Mittag 2002: 389-98.

<sup>106</sup> Zervos 1979: 302.

<sup>107</sup> Smith 1988: 45 n.133; see also Newell 1927. If the statue of Seleukos I erected by the Antigoneians at Antioch (Libanius *Oratio* 11.93) used the bull horn iconography current in Antigonid propaganda (depicted after 292 BC on Demetrios Poliorketes' coin portraits), perhaps the late Seleukid portraits were taking this Antigonid-Antiochene statue as a prototype for their own portrait types.

<sup>108</sup> Newell 1918: 70; *SC* 2: no.2003.

<sup>109</sup> Alexander Balas had earlier shown himself wearing a broad brimmed crested helmet on his Antiochene bronzes and the enlarged brim can be seen as an eastern innovation on traditional Greek forms, appropriate for the bright Levantine environment. In describing the horn as that of a goat I follow the argument presented in *CSE* 2: 100 which varies from the traditional suggestion identifying the horn as that of an ibex, see for example Newell 1918: 70; *SNG Spaer* nos.1816-9, 1822-40. However, as the wild goat (*Capra aegagrus*) is one of six sub-species of the ibex, there seems little need to stress the differentiation.

the issues produced under Antiochos VI, the letters TPY are present between the horn and spike thereby confirming the importance of Tryphon in the royal court, and his direct association with the type. Following Hoover, it is possible to draw a connection between the goat-horned helmet and Macedonian traditions.<sup>110</sup> The goat had been the iconic symbol of the old Macedonian capital Aigai since the early fifth century BC.<sup>111</sup> Pyrrhos of Epeiros wore a helmet with towering crest and goat's horns during his campaign of 287 BC after which he was proclaimed king of Macedonia<sup>112</sup> and the Antigonid king, Philip V was depicted on a Roman denarius dated to 113/2 BC wearing a diademed helmet with two small goat's horns.<sup>113</sup> Again, a distinction must be drawn between actual divine attributes and attributes worn as attire. As in the case of the bull-horned helmets mentioned above, the goat horn(s) of Tryphon, Pyrrhos and Philip V form part of the warriors' armour rather than part of their body. Any reference to divine status is an allusion, not a direct statement, although the inference drawn from the diadem is that the allusion is to be applied directly to the king and thus elevates him above contemporary mortals.

Diodotos Tryphon was a Macedonian colonist of the officer class from Apameia in the Seleukis. He was thus a member of the colonial elite and in his rebellion against Demetrios II, first under the figure-head of Antiochos VI and later alone, appears to have been championing rights of the Greco-Macedonian derived citizenry and soldiery against the tyranny imposed by Demetrios' Kretan and Jewish auxiliaries.<sup>114</sup> His use of a diademed, goat-horned helmet may have been an illustration of his ancestry and his new policies. The legend on Tryphon's coin issues defined a clear break with the Seleukid dynasty. He made no claim of dynastic legitimacy but simply called himself ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΤΡΥΦΩΝΟΣ ΑΥΤΟΚΡΑΤΟΡΟΣ – King Tryphon (the Magnificent One) who made himself powerful. Nor did Tryphon employ any deifying epithets after the manner of his Seleukid



**Figure 74. AR drachm, Antiochos VI, Antioch-on-the-Orontes (SC 2: pl.30.2003d).**



**Figure 75. AR tetradrachm, Tryphon, uncertain Syrian mint (SC 2: pl.31.2037).**

<sup>110</sup> CSE 2: 100; SC 2: 337-8. Ehling (1997) prefers to see the goat horn as a symbol of Crete and links its use to the presence of Cretan mercenaries in Syria in the late 140s BC.

<sup>111</sup> *Macedonia I* nos.58-66; *Macedonia II* nos.12-5, 24-6, 64

<sup>112</sup> Plutarch *Pyrrhus* 11.5-6.

<sup>113</sup> *RRC*: no.293.1

<sup>114</sup> I *Maccabees* 11.38-51; Appian *Syrian Wars* 68; Diodorus Siculus *Library of History* 33.4; Josephus *Jewish Antiquities* 13.131-44.



rivals. He may have been presenting himself as a monarch along the more restrained lines of the kings of Macedonia and an advocate of pro-„Macedonian“ policies rather than the more integrative programs of the „Orientalising“ Seleukids. Whatever his strategy, Tryphon was decisively defeated by Antiochos VII Sidetes (who likewise used minimal deifying epithets and no attributes) in 138/7 BC and the use of the goat horn-helmet died with him.

### 3.3.3 THE WINGED DIADEM

The only other divine attribute associated with early Seleukid kings dates from the reigns of Antiochos II Theos (261–246 BC) and Antiochos Hierax (246–227 BC), and was minted exclusively from the city of Alexandria-Troas in north-western Asia Minor. The obverses of several drachms and tetradrachms from Alexandria-Troas in these reigns have wings emerging from the diadem just above the ear of a royal portrait (**figs.76-7**).<sup>115</sup> Wings stemming from the brow or headdress are commonly found as attributes of Hermes, Perseus, Medusa, Tethys and in the Roman Republic, Mutinus Titinus (Priapos). However, none of these known deities impacted directly upon Seleukid mythology and it is difficult to see why such an attribute was utilised under the kings.<sup>116</sup> The fact that the production of the winged diadem imagery was so specifically localised suggests that perhaps the attribute carried purely local significance although its use as the obverse type on tetradrachms shows that the imagery would still have travelled beyond the area of production.

Though the identity of the Seleukid monarch portrayed with the winged diadem is difficult to confirm, he is often taken to be Antiochos I Soter – the portrait and associated attributes being therefore posthumous. Antiochos II Theos is probably also depicted although it is doubtful that his deified portrait was produced before the reign of his usurping younger son, Antiochos Hierax.<sup>117</sup> Hierax displayed multiple royal portraits upon his coins from Alexandria-Troas, each shown with the winged diadem. The



**Figure 76. AR tetradrachm, Antiochos II, Alexandria-Troas (SC 1: pl.23.492).**



**Figure 77. AR tetradrachm, Antiochos Hierax, Alexandria-Troas (SC 1: pl.42.881).**



<sup>115</sup> MacDonald 1903: 101; SC 1: nos.490-2, 874-83.

<sup>116</sup> Babelon 1890: lv proposed that the wings may have been intended to draw the king within a local Perseus cult although this is debated by MacDonald 1903: 102.

<sup>117</sup> MacDonald 1903: 107, 113-4; Golenko 1993: 129-30; SC 1:176-7.

majority of portraits on Hierax's issues are believed to be Antiochos I and Antiochos II, while a few are uncertainly ascribed to Hierax himself. The suggestion that Hierax chose to depict himself with the attributes of a god and thus imply that he should be seen as the deity incarnate is unlikely (though still possible) considering the lack of precedent. Nevertheless, in depicting his deified father and grandfather, Hierax was clearly making a dynastic claim for the legitimacy of his own usurpation.<sup>118</sup> Non-Seleukid use of a winged diadem was restricted to the obverse (lifetime) portraits on the coinage of the Bithynian king, Prusias II (182-149 BC) whose grandmother was the daughter of Antiochos I, the sister of Antiochos II and whose aunt had married Antiochos Hierax. Prusias's realm was also localised in north-western Anatolia and offers further evidence for the assimilation of the royal person into the cult of some, as yet, unknown divine being.

The winged head motif returned briefly, late in the first reign of Demetrios II (144-138 BC). Produced at an uncertain Phoenician or Koile-Syrian mint, the small series of bronzes employed a youthful head bearing no resemblance to the king, adorned with a winged *tainia* or fillet.<sup>119</sup> There is no knot behind the head to suggest a diadem and the figure must be viewed as divine. The reverse type of a filleted *kerykeion* cements the identity of the obverse head as Hermes. The head of Hermes wearing a winged *petasos* had previously been employed by Antiochos Epiphanes as a small issue from Ekbatana<sup>120</sup> and together with the Demetrios II issue should probably be seen as unrelated to the royal image with winged diadem from Alexandreia-Troas.

### 3.3.4 RADIATE CROWNS AND THE *HIERÒS GÁMOS*<sup>121</sup>

The major development of the late Seleukid period in terms of divine attributes was use of the radiate crown. The first Seleukid monarch to make use of such an attribute was Antiochos IV Epiphanes. On his obverse coin portraits, the king continued to show himself wearing the diadem to denote his role as monarch. In addition, on some issues he also introduced the new radiate crown. The crown took the form of a series of rays extending away from the king's head in the region between his brow and the nape of the neck (**figs.78-9**). The attribute is commonly said to associate the being of the king with the

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<sup>118</sup> SC 1: 293.

<sup>119</sup> SC 2: no.1973.

<sup>120</sup> SC 2: nos.1151-2.

<sup>121</sup> The basis of this subsection (3.3.4) was first outlined in Wright 2005.

**Figure 78.** AR drachm, Antiochos IV, uncertain eastern mint (SC 2: pl.7.1520.4).



**Figure 79.** Æ denomination, Antiochos IV, Antioch-on-the-Orontes (SC 2: pl.63.1415).



dynastic patron Apollo as a god of the sun.<sup>122</sup> The crown was certainly an attribute meant to associate the monarch with some deity imbued with solar or astrological meaning. However, in the copious images of Apollo (whether shown as a head or as a full figure) across the corpus of Seleukid coinage, there is not a single instance where the god is shown with any device akin to the radiate crown. The contemporary coinage of the island of Rhodes did indeed use the radiate motif to crown the image of a sun god on the obverse, but the Rhodian god was Helios rather than Apollo.<sup>123</sup>

That it is indeed the king as a god, and not the god himself who is portrayed, is indicated by the continued depiction of the royal diadem on all such images. To date, however, there has been little evidence to suggest that Helios may have been considered a dynastic god so important to the Seleukids that the ruling scion of that house should adopt the deity's attributes. Bunge has suggested that Helios' position as unconditional ruler of the heavens was implied to be comparable with Epiphanes' position as unconditional ruler of the kingdom. This is quite a reasonable assumption given Helios' incorporation within the syncretistic religious environment of Hellenistic Syria.<sup>124</sup> However, through the process of assimilation, the deity represented by the radiate crown need not be specifically 'Helios' as he existed in the old Greek religious system. In his description of Zeus-Hadad, Macrobius describes the deity as radiate and it is apparent that in Syria, Hadad was not only a storm-god but also the god of the sun, the antecedent of the later Jupiter Heliopolitanus.<sup>125</sup> A celestial Zeus, bearing the epithet Ouranios, could also be seen to manipulate the power of the sun and the Semitic deity directly equated with Zeus Ouranios was Ba'al Šamīn, a god whose cult was related to that of Hadad well before the Seleukid period.<sup>126</sup> The name Ba'al Šamīn was perhaps related to Šamaš, Shem or Shemsh, the Semitic word for the sun or sun-god which may have assisted in the absorption of the cult in the Hellenistic period.<sup>127</sup> Exactly when Epiphanes started to employ the radiate crown is uncertain, although there

<sup>122</sup> See for example Casey 1986: 26.

<sup>123</sup> Fleischer 1996: 38.

<sup>124</sup> Bunge 1975: 174. Fauth 1995: 189-222. However, Smith (1988: 42) denies any explicit link between the attribute and a specific deity, preferring to see the radiate crown as a manifestation of the king's "godlike brilliance".

<sup>125</sup> Macrobius *Saturnalia* 1.23.19; Dussaud 1930.

<sup>126</sup> Ba'al was initially little more than one of the titles of Hadad but the term subsequently evolved into a pseudonym, see Cook 1940: 945; Teixidor 1989: 84; van der Toorn 1996: 174; Green 2003: 173-5.

<sup>127</sup> Jones 1937: 249.

are no definite occurrences of the imagery until after 169/8 BC. Bunge suggests a date of 170 (following Epiphanes' removal of his co-regent Antiochos, son of Seleukos IV) for the introduction of the new iconography. Le Rider, following Mørkholm, allows a date as early as 173/2 for both the radiate crown and the more extensive reverse legend which were both employed on one of a series of Egyptianising bronzes produced either just before or during Antiochos IV's Egyptian campaigns.<sup>128</sup> The radiate crown was first used on posthumous coin portraits of Ptolemy III (produced 221-204 BC) and divine epithets were employed from the reign of Ptolemy V (204-180 BC). Antiochos IV Epiphanes may have adopted the deifying formulae in preparation for the conquest of Egypt. However, the radiate crown attribute was combined together with the aegis and trident by the Ptolemies and may, as suggested by Smith, have been used as a generic display of divinity in Egypt rather than as an allusion to a specific deity.<sup>129</sup> Furthermore, Epiphanes' Egyptianising series has now been down-dated to 169/8 BC,<sup>130</sup> in line with Bunge's more logical chronology and the Seleukid radiate crown appears to have had a more explicit meaning than its Ptolemaic counterpart.

A parallel series of events in the reign of Antiochos Epiphanes saw the king ritually marry a number of indigenous goddesses. Granius Licinianus tells us that "at Hierapolis he [Antiochos IV] pretended to take the goddess Diana to wife."<sup>131</sup> Epiphanes *may* also be implicated in a similar holy marriage to Ištar in Babylon<sup>132</sup> and an analogous event is recorded during the king's campaigns in Persia where he is said to have attempted to marry the goddess Nanâ at Susa. Nanâ, like Atargatis at Hierapolis-Bambyke, appears to have been locally identified as a vernacular (Elamite) equivalent to Aphrodite and Artemis/Diana.<sup>133</sup> Festivals surrounding more traditional *hieròi gámoi* (holy marriages) between deities had a long history in the Mediterranean basin, especially along the Levant. Avagianou removes any union of a deity and mortal from the sphere of Greek *hieròi gámoi* and restricts the use of the term to the marriages between Zeus and Hera and Hades and Persephone which were modelled on human rituals.<sup>134</sup> However, in the sense that

<sup>128</sup> Newell 1918: 26-7; Bunge 1975: 171; Mørkholm 1963: 36-7; Le Rider 1994: 17-34.

<sup>129</sup> Smith 1988: 44; Johnson 1999.

<sup>130</sup> SC 2: no.1415.

<sup>131</sup> Granius Licinianus *History of Rome* 28.6.

<sup>132</sup> Eddy 1961: 141-5, although Eddy's interpretation goes some way towards proverbially fitting a square peg into a round hole.

<sup>133</sup> II *Maccabees* 1.13-5; Polybius *Histories* 31.9; Azarpay 1976: 537; Lightfoot 2003: 42 n.93, 438 n.8.

<sup>134</sup> Avagianou 2008: 148.

Antiochos Epiphanes was clearly deified during his reign, the ritual at Hierapolis cast the king as a living Zeus, fulfilling his divine role as the husband of Hera-Atargatis. The marriage between mortal king and goddess finds direct Babylonian precedents and appears to cement the Seleukid king firmly within a Semitic religious context.<sup>135</sup>

Sargon of Akkade (c. 2333-2279 BC), the founder of the Akkadian empire, was said to have ruled as king only after Ištar had loved him.<sup>136</sup> Isin-Dagan, king of Isin (c. 2250 BC), ritually married the great mother-goddess Inanna and through the process became identified with the god Tammuz.<sup>137</sup> The Babylonian ceremonies initially took place between the king – the earthly manifestation of the god – and a priestess as the representative of the goddess, although over time the mortal participants were normally replaced by cult statues of the deities. The *hieròs gámos* symbolically marked the resurrection of the god/king which coincided with the return of spring and renewed prosperity for the kingdom.<sup>138</sup> Early Israelite tradition saw their own version of sacred marriage<sup>139</sup> and similar traditions undoubtedly existed among their textually deficient neighbours. By the Hellenistic period, there is good evidence for *hieròi gámoi* held annually for Ištar at Uruk and for both Marduk (to Zarpanītu?) and Nabû (to Ningal) at Babylon.<sup>140</sup> In later Persian tradition, it would seem that Alexander the Great was believed to have married the Iranian goddess, Anāhitā.<sup>141</sup> It is worth noting that the deities associated with mortal husbands, Ištar, Nanā, Anāhitā and Atargatis were all powerful goddesses of fertility and can all be seen to fulfil the same ritualised role. The Seleukid monarch's marriage to Atargatis-Ištar-Nanā would confirm the groom's pre-eminent position within the Semitic religious complex – certainly a useful device for a king such as Epiphanes who was technically a usurper from a junior line of the Seleukid house.<sup>142</sup>

Epiphanes' coinage reforms (illustrated by his radiate crown and elaborate epithets) remain the primary illustration of his process of living apotheosis. Whether the transformation was begun immediately following the death of Antiochos the son of Seleukos IV or following Epiphanes' marriage at Hierapolis (which may have happened

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<sup>135</sup> Pongratz-Leisten 2008.

<sup>136</sup> King 1907: 3, 90-1; Goodnick Westenholz 1997: 34-5.

<sup>137</sup> Langdon 1914: 27; McEwan 1934: 10.

<sup>138</sup> Langdon 1914: 27-8; Linssen 2004: 70.

<sup>139</sup> May 1932: 85-94; Brooks 1941: 228.

<sup>140</sup> Linssen 2004: 71.

<sup>141</sup> Hanaway 1982.

<sup>142</sup> Bahrani 2002: 19; although this notion is questioned by Pongratz-Leisten 2008: 53.

any time during his reign) is impossible to test. It would seem unlikely that Epiphanes would have broken with the traditional Seleukid coin types while the legitimate king (Antiochos, the son of Seleukos IV) still lived and employed the dynastic iconography.

It is possible (though by no means provable with the available evidence) that kings with radiate portraits were ritually married to Atargatis or her local equivalent at one of the major sanctuaries. If the king participated in the marriage in order to illuminate his role as part of a Semitic divine couple (or triad), then the radiate crown was the perfect outward expression of the king's divinity. Initiates of the Isiac mysteries were said to adorn their heads with palm leaves in imitation of the rays of the sun in order to be identified with Osiris.<sup>143</sup> Of the reverse types of Seleukid coinage, only the Kronos-El (supreme sky-god) of Byblos under Epiphanes and the Atargatis of Damascus (mother goddess) of Demetrios III were depicted with a similar headdress (**figs.34, 54**). The hypothesis offered here suggests that the radiate obverse attribute was only shown on the coins of kings who had participated in a *hieròs gámos* with the supreme mother goddess. Among the many titles of Anat (the principal pre-Hellenistic forerunner of Atargatis) were "Queen of Kingship" and "Queen of Dominion".<sup>144</sup> It is likely that these roles, as with Anat's other responsibilities, were carried forward and brought within the Hellenistic cult. In like manner, the name Nanâ equates to the title "Princess of Heaven".<sup>145</sup> The small group of Seleukid monarchs who followed Epiphanes in the use of the radiate crown on their coin

portraits during the late Seleukid I period consisted solely of those kings who traced their legitimacy back to Antiochos IV – Alexander I, Antiochos VI, Alexander II (**figs.80-2**). This would seem to imply that during the late Seleukid I period the native priesthood was patronised, and in return supported, the Epiphanaic line. It is only with the extinction of that branch of the Seleukidai that Antiochos Grypos began to use the imagery (late Seleukid II



**Figure 80.** Æ denomination, Alexander I, Seleukeia-Pieria (SC 2: pl.75.1799).



**Figure 81.** AR tetradrachm, Antiochos VI, Antioch-on-the-Orontes (SC 2: pl.29.2000.3e).



**Figure 82.** Æ denomination, Alexander II, Antioch-on-the-Orontes (SC 2: pl.87.2233.1b).

<sup>143</sup> Tinh 1982: 113.

<sup>144</sup> Kaiser 1973: 156.

<sup>145</sup> Langdon 1914: 27; McEwan 1934: 10.



Figure 83. Æ denomination, Antiochos VIII, Antioch-on-the-Orontes (SC 2: pl.88.2307.2).



Figure 84. Æ denomination, Antiochos IX, uncertain Syrian mint (SC 2: pl.90.2377).pl.42.881).



Figure 85. Æ denomination, Demetrios III, Damascus (SC 2: pl.93.2456.2).



period). Grypos' adoption of the radiate portraiture was followed by Antiochos IX Kyzikenos and finally Demetrios III but only in the period after the death of Grypos (**figs.83-5**). No two Seleukid kings made simultaneous use of the radiate iconography. It should be reiterated at this point that in the late Seleukid I period it was the Epiphanaic line who predominantly utilised the Zeus and veiled goddess reverse types – images accessible to Hellenes and Orientals alike. The Zeus type, like the radiate crown, was taken over by the legitimate branch of the Seleukidai only in the late Seleukid II period, after the disappearance of the Epiphanaic branch of the Seleukidai.

Mints producing coins with the radiate portrait of Antiochos Epiphanes as an obverse type were geographically widespread, comprising thirteen cities stretching between Antioch-on-the-Orontes and Antioch-in-Persis. However, with the exception of Antioch-on-the-Orontes in the west and Susa in the east, the image appeared exclusively on bronze issues. At Antioch and Susa the radiate image was used on silver coinage, but never on denominations larger than a drachm, and the pattern of not using the imagery on higher silver denominations seemed to continue

under his successors with the exception of the boy-king Antiochos VI. It appears probable that the image was intended only for distribution within the kingdom and not in international exchanges. It was propaganda targeted at the population of the Seleukid kingdom where it would be understood within the context of the established religious environment.

Of the late Seleukid II kings, only Grypos, Kyzikenos and Demetrios III Eukairos utilised radiate crowns on their coin portraits. If the link between the radiate crown and rituals undergone at one of the major sanctuaries of Atargatis (and Ba'al Hadad) had existed as I surmise, then an explanation as to the crown's disappearance presents itself. The three major sanctuaries of the cult were found at Hierapolis-Bambyke, Heliopolis-Ba'albek, and Damascus.<sup>146</sup> Granius Licinianus' marriage ceremony took place at Hierapolis, but all three centres lay within the Seleukid kingdom in the Late Seleukid I

<sup>146</sup> Lucian *The Syrian Goddess* 10; Josephus *Jewish War* 9.93; Justin *Epitome* 36.2.2; Macrobius *Saturnalia* 1.23.10-20; see also Dussaud 1922: 219-21; Rostovtzeff 1932: 100, 178; Avi-Yonah 1959: 8; Teixidor 1989: 71.

period. In the late second century, Heliopolis-Ba'albek became the religious centre for the Ituraean tetrarchy centred around Chalkis, whose dynasts titled themselves tetrarchs and high-priests on the reverse of their coins.<sup>147</sup> The Ituraean tetrarchy was probably created around 115 BC by Antiochos IX Kyzikenos to be an aid in the fight against Antiochos VIII Grypos and the tetrarchs appear to have carried the conflict into the next generation against the sons of Grypos, Demetrios III and Antiochos XII. Between 96 and 69 BC, Hierapolis-Bambyke formed the religious centre of the breakaway principality of Beroia and was no longer available to the Seleukid kings.<sup>148</sup> Of the principal seats of Atargatis and Hadad in the first century BC, only Damascus remained in Seleukid hands. There were smaller centres of worship of course such as at Karnaim in Gaulanitis, but the holiest cities were lost.<sup>149</sup> The only king after Grypos to employ the radiate crown, Demetrios III, was based almost exclusively out of Damascus and minted silver tetradrachms in the city which displayed the cult statue of Atargatis on the reverse. If marriage to Atargatis was the active expression of royal deification, the only Seleukid king of the first century in a position to so marry was indeed Demetrios III. His younger brother Antiochos XII Dionysos also reigned in Damascus, though his reign was short and troubled and he produced no radiate portraiture. In addition, for as long as Demetrios III lived on in Parthian captivity (and Josephus provides no date for his death),<sup>150</sup> it could be argued that Atargatis already had a husband. As no two kings had previously employed the radiate crown simultaneously, presumably whatever ritual lay behind its adoption would have to wait the death of the present incumbent even if he was presently a spent force in Parthian captivity.

### 3.3.5 QUEENS AS GODDESSES

The first numismatic evidence we have depicting a queen with divinising attributes comes from the cusp of the early Seleukid – late Seleukid I periods. Seleukos IV issued a series of bronze coins that used a veiled female bust wearing a *stephane* as the obverse type, matched with an elephant head reverse from Antioch-on-the-Orontes and Ake-Ptolemaïs (**fig.86**).<sup>151</sup> The type combination was continued during the short co-reign of Antiochos the son of Seleukos IV and Antiochos IV Epiphanes (175-170 BC) (**figs.87-8**). During the

<sup>147</sup> Herman 2006.

<sup>148</sup> Strabo *Geography* 16.2.7; see also Goossens 1943: 100.

<sup>149</sup> I *Maccabees* 5.43-4; II *Maccabees* 12.26; Cohen 1990: 217.

<sup>150</sup> Josephus *Jewish Antiquities* 13.386.

<sup>151</sup> SC 2: nos.1318, 1332, 1371, 1421-2, 1477.



**Figure 86.** Æ denomination, Seleukos IV, Antioch-on-the-Orontes (SC 2: pl.59.1318.1c).



**Figure 87.** Æ denomination, Antiochos son of Seleukos IV, Antioch-on-the-Orontes (SC 2: pl.61.1371).



**Figure 88.** Æ denomination, Antiochos IV, Ake-Ptolemaïs (SC 2: pl.66.1477.2c).



**Figure 89.** Æ denomination, Antiochos IV, Ake-Ptolemaïs (SC 2: pl.66.1479).



**Figure 90.** Æ denomination, Antiochos IV, Samareia (SC 2: pl.67.1489.2i).



latter period, the series is known to have been issued at Antioch, Seleukeia-Pieria and Ake-Ptolemaïs. The veiled bust follows the pattern of Hellenistic royal portraiture and it is believed to be a representation of a Seleukid queen. One particularly clear example of the series in the name of Antiochos (whether this is to be understood as the son or Epiphanes is unclear) shows what may be the tip of a sceptre emerging from behind the figure's shoulder, a common attribute used on Ptolemaic coinage to assimilate the queen with Aphrodite-Isis.<sup>152</sup> The identity of the divine queen has been comfortably assigned to Laodike IV, the wife of Seleukos IV and Antiochos Epiphanes respectively and mother of Antiochos, son of Seleukos IV.<sup>153</sup> She is also present on an issue of Epiphanes from Tripolis which uses two jugate portraits as the obverse type. Although the queen does not wear any overtly divine attributes on the Tripolis issue, the king is adorned with the radiate crown which surely makes Laodike a goddess by association. The appearance of the divinised queen in the reigns of Seleukos IV and Antiochos IV ties in well with the epigraphic evidence cited above<sup>154</sup> which showed that the state-cult of the queen was only instigated in the reign of Antiochos the Great and was seen to flourish under his sons.

Links have also been drawn between the veiled Laodike-Aphrodite and the mysterious standing, sceptre-bearing, veiled goddess who appears as the reverse type (paired with the radiate head of the king on the obverse) on a large series of bronzes from Ake-Ptolemaïs under Epiphanes (**fig.89**).<sup>155</sup> The size of the bronzes makes a secure identification of the figure prohibitive but in all likelihood she represents a Hellenised Atargatis, employing attributes of both Aphrodite and Hera, perhaps even taking in elements of the cult of Laodike IV.<sup>156</sup> Epiphanes introduced one further coin type which depicted the divine Laodike IV. At Seleukeia-on-the-Tigris, Susa and Samareia, Antiochos IV issued bronze coinage utilising a seated female figure holding Nike in her

<sup>152</sup> Hoover 2002a: 82 although Iossif and Lorber 2007: 70 state that Hoover's sceptre tip is nothing more than a fragmentary monogram. Note also the earlier assimilation of Stratonike and Laodike III with Aphrodite in the civic cults of Asia Minor, see Sokolowski 1972: 174; Austin 2006: no.174.

<sup>153</sup> Hoover 2002a: 82-3.

<sup>154</sup> Welles 1934: nos.36-7; Austin 2006: no.200.

<sup>155</sup> SC 2: no.1479.

<sup>156</sup> Lucian *The Syrian Goddess* 31-2; Hoover 2002a: 84-5.

outstretched right hand, often accompanied by a swan or goose (**fig.90**). The type has received an in-depth study by Iossif and Lorber of which only the most significant points are repeated below.<sup>157</sup> The figure is intimately linked with the appearance of Epiphanes' own deifying attributes and epithets on his coins. She looks to be a composite manifestation of Aphrodite, indicative of the goddess' triple role of victory bringer, patron of marriage and ruler of the heavens. It is principally through the second of these roles that the figure embraces the cult of the living queen Laodike IV, just as it was specifically Aphrodite-Laodike (II) who was patroness of marriage at Iasos. Through Laodike IV's second marriage to Antiochos Epiphanes (her brother-in-law), the queen ensured a smooth succession and helped maintain the solidarity of the Seleukid house. As has been noted above, the divine Laodike was probably incorporated into the syncretic worship of Atargatis. In Babylonia and Elymais, the imagery likely brought to mind Nanâ, the consort of Nabû who was sometimes syncretised with Ištar.<sup>158</sup> It may be of significance that we have good evidence to suggest that Epiphanes celebrated *hieròi gámoi* with the very deities who were assimilated with Laodike IV.<sup>159</sup>

Within the west-Semitic religious complex, as within the wider Mediterranean world, the concept of the dying god was an almost universal tradition. For Burkert, the principal figure in the ritual was not the god himself, but the goddess, "the permanence of the throne" who represents continuity and rebirth.<sup>160</sup> We see such a notion expressed in the divine titles held by goddesses such as Atargatis and Nanâ: „Queen of Kingship“, „Queen of Dominion“, „Princess of Heaven“ and so on. One of the more noticeable features of the late Seleukid dynastic system was that queens tended to enjoy much longer reigns than their husbands and thus provided a comparative sense of continuity and stability as a bridge between old and new regimes. On several significant occasions, in-coming royal claimants married themselves to incumbent queens, the widows of their predecessors. This form of pseudo-levirate marriage appears to have developed out of three complementary phenomena: the centrally recognised divinity of the queen; the ultimate descent of the

<sup>157</sup> Iossif and Lorber 2007: 63-88.

<sup>158</sup> Iossif and Lorber 2007: 85-7.

<sup>159</sup> Granius Licinianus *History of Rome* 28.6; II *Maccabees* 1.13-5. In a not altogether unrelated note, a number of coins produced in Karia dated to AD 202 celebrate the marriage of the emperor Caracalla to Plautilla who was portrayed as the new Hera, so that "the imperial marriage became a symbolic re-enactment of the celestial one", see Harl 1987: 41; Laumonier 1958: 714-5.

<sup>160</sup> Burkert 1983: 81.

queen from Antiochos III the Great – the last of the incontestably legitimate Seleukids – and the foreign backing which may have been manifested in the queen’s person.

The state cult established for the queens ran parallel to, but was otherwise distinct from, the worship of the reigning king and once established, the worship of the reigning queen continued into the succeeding generations.<sup>161</sup> Although this may not have posed any conceptual flaws while the Seleukid family remained united, it did constitute an ideological conundrum to potential usurpers. If the king was a god and his queen was a goddess, the removal of the king, whether malignly or accidentally could not negate the state-sanctioned divinity of his queen. Unless the would-be successor was the son of the previous king, he was faced with a potential rival in the dowager queen, her court and her offspring. Among all of the contention, bloodshed and murders that engulfed the later Seleukids, there is only one known instance of a queen being murdered by a competing court (Kleopatra IV) and on that occasion, the perpetrator (Kleopatra Tryphaina) was another Seleukid queen who happened to be the victim’s full sister.<sup>162</sup>

A far more pragmatic approach for both parties saw a new marriage between the succeeding king and the divine wife of his predecessor. As we have seen, the first king to take this step, Antiochos IV Epiphanes, married his brother’s widow Laodike IV as soon as he reached Syria. To reduce the threat of further internal divisions within the family he also adopted his nephew Antiochos, son of Laodike and Seleukos IV.<sup>163</sup> With the divine Laodike safely on side, Epiphanes was able to perpetuate a traditional Seleukid diarchic kingship, retaining his adopted son Antiochos in the position of junior king. The younger Antiochos retained this position in safety until Epiphanes and Laodike produced an heir of their own (Antiochos V) at which time the son of Seleukos IV became spurious and was removed.<sup>164</sup> Through marriage to his brother’s widow and the adoption of his brother’s son, Epiphanes was uniting the available Seleukidai into a single branch, thereby negating his own role as a usurper.<sup>165</sup> From the second century BC the situation in the Hellenistic East reproduced, albeit unintentionally, the prevailing trend of Homeric Greece which saw the

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<sup>161</sup> Haussoullier 1923.

<sup>162</sup> Both were daughters of Ptolemy VIII and Kleopatra III of Egypt and considered the war between their respective Seleukid husbands as a very personal matter, see Justin *Epitome* 39.3.5-12.

<sup>163</sup> Mørkholm 1964: 74-6.

<sup>164</sup> Diodorus Siculus *Library of History* 30.7.2; Austin 2006: no.158.10-5.

<sup>165</sup> A program with similar aims and results was pursued by Leonidas II and Kleomenes in Hellenistic Sparta, see Plutarch *Agesilaus* 16.2; Pausanias *Description of Greece* 2.9.1; McQueen 1990: 178.

queen as the earthly representative of the mother-goddess who, through her marriage to the king assured his authority.<sup>166</sup>

Despite her clear importance in the Seleukid court, the paternity and origin of the divine queen, Laodike IV remains a mystery. Ogden insists that Laodike was the daughter of Antiochos III the Great and therefore the full sister of both Seleukos IV and Epiphanes. Such a succession of incestuous marriages within this generation of Seleukidai – a homonymous daughter of Antiochos III is known to have married another full brother, Antiochos the Son – is hard to accept in a dynasty that did not usually practice such unions. Grainger rejected the theory completely, abandoning Laodike's origin as a mystery, while Helliesen had earlier proposed that Laodike may have been an Antigonid by birth.<sup>167</sup> Whether the queen was a daughter of Antiochos III or an Antigonid princess – in light of the prevalence of Antigonid names among her descendants, the latter suggestion is more likely – the benefits she brought Antiochos IV Epiphanes, be it royal blood or foreign backing, were perhaps less critical than the divinity and the dynastic continuity she manifested.<sup>168</sup>

The growing influence of both the Ptolemaic court and the vernacular Semitic cults' incorporation of the living monarchs steadily gained expression in the numismatic record during the late Seleukid I period. In the generation after Epiphanes, a second divine queen married a succession of Seleukid princes and their inspiration may not have been very different from that of Antiochos IV Epiphanes. Shortly after his invasion of Syria, Alexander I Balas was offered the hand of Kleopatra Thea, daughter of Ptolemy VI of Egypt. His acceptance is no surprise considering the prevailing political situation. Balas was the illegitimate son of Antiochos IV Epiphanes who was himself a usurper. Although his claim to the throne had been supported by a number of neighbouring states hostile to the incumbent king, Demetrios I, it was, perhaps, legally tenuous.<sup>169</sup> However, the marriage between Alexander and Kleopatra did more than just display Alexander's acceptance in a wider political sense, nor was Kleopatra merely the embodiment of specifically Ptolemaic military support. Kleopatra Thea's paternal and maternal grandmother was Kleopatra the daughter of Antiochos III the great. The dubious legitimacy of Alexander I Balas was

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<sup>166</sup> Finkelberg 1991: 315.

<sup>167</sup> Ogden 1999: 135-6; Grainger 1997: 50; Helliesen 1981: 227-8.

<sup>168</sup> Finkelberg 1991: 307.

<sup>169</sup> Diodorus Siculus *Library of History* 31.32a; Josephus *Jewish Antiquities* 13.43-6; Justin *Epitome* 35.1.5-6; I *Maccabees* 10.51-8; Polybius *Histories* 33.18.

significantly enhanced by marriage to a direct descendant of the greatest Seleukid king. That Kleopatra Thea attained immediate prominence within the kingdom is illustrated by the production of a gold stater produced in her own name and a series of impressive tetradrachms in the name of Alexander I but depicting the couple's jugate heads with Kleopatra Thea occupying the dominant, more visible, position in front of her husband (**fig.36**).<sup>170</sup> Both issues were minted at Alexander's capital, Ake-Ptolemais. On the jugate portrait, Kleopatra was adorned with the deifying *kalathos* and cornucopia indicating that her apotheosis was undertaken immediately upon her marriage and coronation. United with Alexander Balas (who utilised the radiate crown on his bronze coinage) as Zeus-Baal Hadad, the king and queen were depicted as the divine couple incarnate. As the contemporary religio-political situation in Ptolemaic Egypt saw the queen as the living embodiment of Aphrodite-Tyche-Isis,<sup>171</sup> Kleopatra Thea would have faced no inherent problems in assimilating herself into the role of Tyche-Atargatis. Indeed both the author of the Oxyrhynchus papyrus 11 and Apuleius were able to view Atargatis and Isis as different facets of the same universal mother goddess.<sup>172</sup>

In due course, Balas and his father-in-law, Ptolemy VI, fell out and in a brilliant political coup, Kleopatra's marriage was annulled and she was given to Balas' rival, Demetrios II. Ptolemaic backing helped to guarantee Demetrios' establishment in Antioch where he was joined by the divine Kleopatra. Five years later, with the Parthian capture of Demetrios II, Antiochos VII Sidetes took up the family cause and assumed the diadem. Although the relationship between Demetrios II and Sidetes appears to have been collegial, Demetrios' ten year detention in Parthia allowed for the establishment of Sidetes who proved to be a most successful and popular monarch. However, Demetrios II's absence left a great many dynastic loose ends to potentially complicate his brother's reign. Demetrios left two sons (the future Seleukos V and Antiochos VIII) and a daughter (Laodike) of his own, together with Zabinas, the second son of Alexander I Balas and last of the line of Antiochos Epiphanes. In a pragmatic show of fraternal solidarity, Sidetes married Kleopatra Thea and adopted the ever-increasing brood of future kings.<sup>173</sup> Trouble in the

<sup>170</sup> SC 2: nos. 1840-1; Whitehorne 1994: 149-63.

<sup>171</sup> Tinh 1982: 103-4; Kee 1983: 117; Smith 1994: 88-9, 92-3; Gersht 1996: 311-3. Houghton (1988: 93) prefers to identify Kleopatra with Tyche who, being a Hellenised manifestation of Atargatis, ultimately amounts to the same thing.

<sup>172</sup> P. Oxyrhynchus 11.1380; Apuleius *Metamorphosis* 8.25, 9.5.

<sup>173</sup> Vatin 1970: 98.

Ptolemaic court meant that by the time of her third marriage, Kleopatra was no longer a symbol of Ptolemaic support. However, her importance as divine queen and status as descendant of Antiochos III the Great had certainly not diminished and meant that she commanded a great deal of support among the Greco-Syrian ruling class.

The continuity provided by Kleopatra Thea from 150-121 BC was soon matched by her niece Kleopatra Selene who, like Thea before her, combined Ptolemaic military support, descent from Antiochos III the Great and even before her Syrian coronation, divine status. Initially married to her brother Ptolemy IX of Egypt, Selene was forcibly divorced and transferred by her mother to replace Antiochos VIII Grypos' deceased first wife (Tryphaina, a sister of Selene).<sup>174</sup> Kleopatra appears to have arrived in Syria already bearing the divinising epithet Selene – an earthly embodiment of the moon, queen of the heavens – which she presumably assumed in the Alexandrian court.<sup>175</sup> The epithet was equally applicable in Seleukid Syria and as noted in Chapter 1.2.4, Selene went on to enjoy a lengthy, if turbulent career.<sup>176</sup> Following Grypos' death, Selene offered herself to his rival Kyzikenos and on his death shortly afterwards, to her stepson and nephew, Antiochos X Eusebes, son of Kyzikenos and another of her sisters, Kleopatra IV.<sup>177</sup> Eusebes could claim legitimacy through his own ancestry, but he was also married to a woman who could boast having been the queen of Egypt, queen of two previous Seleukid kings and a goddess in her own right. Eusebes' death is a mystery but Selene later co-ruled with at least one of her sons by Eusebes, Antiochos XIII, and was active in the defence of Syria against the invasion of Tigranes of Armenia.<sup>178</sup> The deified Kleopatra Selene excelled as an emblem of regime continuity despite inveterate dynastic haemorrhaging.

### 3.3.6 THE KING AS GODDESS?

A small series of bronze coins minted during Antiochos VIII Grypos' first (sole) reign at Antioch (121-113 B.C.) utilised a curious bust of Artemis as the obverse type (**fig.91**).<sup>179</sup>

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<sup>174</sup> Justin *Epitome* 39.42.

<sup>175</sup> Kleopatra Selene's namesake, the daughter of Kleopatra VII and Mark Antony may have borne the epithet from birth (40 BC) and certainly had it bestowed before Octavian's dissolution of the Ptolemaic court in 30 BC.

<sup>176</sup> Nonnus (*Dionysiaca* 38.149) assimilates Selene with Eileithyia who was worshipped as an aspect of Atargatis at Hierapolis-Bambyke, see Chapter 4.5.1.2 below.

<sup>177</sup> Appian *Syrian Wars* 69.

<sup>178</sup> Josephus *Jewish Antiquities* 13.419-20; Strabo *Geography* 16.2.3; *SC* 2: nos.2484-6.

<sup>179</sup> Newell 1918: 95; *SC* 2: no.2301.

Figure 91. Æ denomination, Antiochos VIII, Antioch-on-the-Orontes (SC 2: pl.88.2301.2).



The type presents a unique development in Grypos' iconographic program in that it alone employed a deity rather than the king for the obverse image. However, on closer examination, the actual identity of the obverse portrait is a little ambiguous. When compared with Antiochos Grypos' other bronzes, the face of Artemis is shown to be reminiscent of the face of the king. The similarity in the execution of the eyes could be put down to contemporary trends in the die workshops, but the likeness is all-encompassing. Sometimes the goddess even bears the king's prominent nose after which he was called Grypos. Artemis is also shown with Grypos' recessed mouth and a protruding chin which juts forward out of a fleshy jowl. Although she had often been utilised on the coins of previous Seleukid kings, Artemis had never been manifested in such a manly fashion. If it were not for her combined attributes of bow and quiver (along with an extremely elaborate hairstyle), Grypos' obverse type could perhaps be ascribed as a portrait of Antiochos Grypos himself. It almost appears as if Grypos was depicting his own bust with the attributes of the goddess.

Whether we see here the king's actual penchant for the adoption of female dress is of course doubtful but perhaps not completely ridiculous. Grypos was one of a handful of Seleukid kings who had themselves depicted with physical attributes explicitly spelling out his divine nature (the radiate crown). To a struggling Hellenistic king, true divine power might be viewed as sexless. After all, a precedent in divine cross-dressing had been set by the paragon of Hellenistic kingship, Alexander the Great (or at least by his contemporary biographer Ephippus of Olynthos). In Ephippus' sensationalised account of the death of Alexander, he recounts how the king was wont to dress in imitation of various gods at *symposia*, "and sometimes he would imitate Artemis, whose dress he often wore while driving in his chariot; having on also a Persian robe, but displaying above his shoulders the bow and javelin of the goddess".<sup>180</sup> While Alexander's imitation of Ammon, Herakles and Hermes has been accepted by some modern scholars, tales of divine transvestism have been dismissed as slander.<sup>181</sup> This is perhaps not the ideal place to open a debate on the matter but the numismatic evidence under Antiochos Grypos clearly shows the bust of Artemis with the king's own distinctive features. Whether Grypos is shown as Artemis or the goddess' divine nature is shown by the similarity it bears to the royal portrait, the two figures are intentionally confused on the royal iconography from Antioch. Fleischer has

<sup>180</sup> Ephippus of Olynthos *FGrH* 126 F 5, trans. C.D. Young, cited in Robinson 1953: 87.

<sup>181</sup> Pearson 1960: 63-4; Lane Fox 1986: 446-7; Smith 1988: 39.

recognised a similar intentional resemblance between Grypos and the bust of the Tyche of Seleukeia-Peria on the city's autonomous coinage which again stresses the divine nature of the Seleukid king.<sup>182</sup>

### 3.3.7 WREATHS

Houghton and Lorber identify several heads on Antiochene bronze issues of Antiochos III as portraits of the king depicted as Apollo, wearing a laurel wreath.<sup>183</sup> The attribution of the heads as such is not unreasonable given the king's adoption of bull's horns on eastern issues. However, the likeness between the wreathed head and the diademed king from other coin portraits is variable and the intention may have been to show the god in the likeness of the king in order to stress the latter's own inherent divinity.

However, two late Seleukid monarchs (Antiochos VI and Antiochos XII) adopted, or were presented, with the epithet „Dionysos“ which may perhaps have something to do with both the royal cult and the proposed ritual involving the *hieròs gámos*. Both of these kings' fathers (Alexander I Balas and Antiochos VIII Grypos respectively) had shown themselves with radiate portraits on their coins and thus, following the argument, had married into divinity. Further, the obverse coin portraits of Antiochos VI, son of Alexander I, showed the king's head wreathed with ivy in conjunction with the radiate crown (**fig.92**). If the reigning king saw himself as the supreme god and was married to Atargatis, then for his son to be proclaimed Dionysos (the saviour-son god) would make the child not only the political but also the spiritual heir to the kingdom and the land itself. Within the religio-political context of Hellenistic Syria such a suggestion is far from unreasonable although, due to the sporadic nature of the sources, much must necessarily be left as conjecture.



**Figure 92. Æ denomination, Antiochos VI, Antioch-on-the-Orontes (SC 2: pl.82.2006a).**

<sup>182</sup> Fleischer 1996: 36, 38; see also Mørkholm 1987: 60. It will be remembered that Antiochos VIII Grypos granted Seleukeia-Peria its freedom in 109 BC, (see *OGIS* 257 = Austin 2006: no.222) and must have been viewed with great support and sympathy by the population.

<sup>183</sup> SC 1: nos.1048-9, 1051-5.



Figure 93. Æ denomination, Alexander I, Antioch-on-the-Orontes (SC 2: pl.75.1795.2).



Figure 94. Æ denomination, Alexander II, Antioch-on-the-Orontes (SC 2: pl.87.2231.1b).



### 3.3.8 LION- AND ELEPHANT-SCALP HEADDRESSES

The iconographic program of two Seleukid rulers, Alexander I and Alexander II, included heads of the king wearing the scalp of a lion (figs.93-4)<sup>184</sup> or elephant<sup>185</sup> as a headdress. Under Alexander I the type was produced at both Antioch and Apameia, while Alexander II produced his at the central mint of Antioch alone. The types are traditionally seen as alluding to the kings' successful namesake, Alexander the Great, and there can be little doubt that a rather hope-filled parallel was being drawn.<sup>186</sup> As we have seen, the famous Alexander coin type employed a youthful Herakles head on the obverse, and the Macedonian king was often depicted wearing a lion-scalp helmet.<sup>187</sup> However, as Smith rightly posits, there was also the secondary evocation of the mortal-cum-god Herakles, ancestor of the Macedonian royal house and prototype of the process of apotheosis through benefaction.<sup>188</sup>

The elephant-scalp headdress is perhaps more specifically oriented towards Alexander the Great, echoing images of the king's conquest of the East (specifically India) produced first by Ptolemy I at Alexandria<sup>189</sup> and later by Seleukos I at Babylon, Susa and Ekbatana.<sup>190</sup> However, the earliest models of this type clearly drew their inspiration from Alexander's own Herakles obverse and although not central, the god should not be left completely out of our understanding of the imagery. Specifically, the elephant-scalp headdress could be seen as an allusion to the Bacchic conquest of the East and it may be significant that it is only Alexander II Zabinas, who utilised extensive Dionysiac imagery elsewhere who also made use of the elephant-scalp headdress.<sup>191</sup>

One final hypothesis might be offered for Alexander I Balas' initial resumption of the lion-scalp headdress iconography. The king drew his legitimacy from his father, Antiochos IV Epiphanes, although he was certainly subject to negative propaganda which cast doubt upon his parentage. At best, Alexander Balas was accepted as a Seleukid king

<sup>184</sup> SC 2: nos.1795 and 1805 (Alexander I), 2231 (Alexander II).

<sup>185</sup> SC 2: no.2234 (Alexander II).

<sup>186</sup> Newell 1918: 54-5; SC 2: 212, 443.

<sup>187</sup> See for example the famous sarcophagus of Abdalonymos from Sidon now in the Istanbul Museum, Smith 1988: 63-4.

<sup>188</sup> Smith 1988: 40.

<sup>189</sup> Zervos 1967: series B-D; Lorber 2005.

<sup>190</sup> SC 1: nos.101, 188-90, 222-3; SC 2: no.1696.

<sup>191</sup> Smith 1988: 41.

without comment,<sup>192</sup> at worst he was derided as a young man of the lowest station who falsely claimed royal paternity.<sup>193</sup> He was accepted in Rome as the legitimate successor of Antiochos Epiphanes although in Appian he is three times referred to as Alexandros *Nothos* – Alexander the Bastard.<sup>194</sup> It is within this claim of bastardy that we may find the original reason behind Balas’ accusation of illegitimacy. Besides his wife Laodike IV, Antiochos Epiphanes was known to have bestowed great honours upon his concubine Antiochis and it seems likely that this woman was the mother of Epiphanes’ second son, Alexander I Balas.<sup>195</sup> All previous Seleukid rulers had been the legitimate children of a Seleukid king and his queen – in Alexander Balas we may have the first example of a son of a concubine to assume the Seleukid diadem. His mother’s lack of royal status could cast him as both low born and a bastard although as the eldest surviving son of the popular Epiphanes he was able to make a successful bid for the royal title.<sup>196</sup>

Regardless of his actual paternity, Alexander Balas issued coins as the true successor of Antiochos Epiphanes and the latter’s eldest son, Antiochos V. Aside from a more general application of the radiate crown and Zeus imagery, Balas allowed emissions of quasi-municipal coinage at numerous mints across the Levant, a privilege previously allowed by Antiochos IV Epiphanes and Antiochos V.<sup>197</sup> He also produced regal coinage employing the epithet Theopator in reference to his descent from the divine Antiochos Epiphanes; as well as issuing posthumous issues in honour of both Epiphanes and Antiochos V, thereby cementing his filial and fraternal relationships with his predecessors.<sup>198</sup> The eldest son of Alexander I Balas, Antiochos VI, was also designated *Nothos* by Appian although his parentage was indisputably legitimate and royal on both sides. The term *nothos* may here imply that his father’s illegitimacy was carried over, or perhaps merely infers that as a member of the cadet line of the Seleukidai, he was therefore spurious rather than a bastard.<sup>199</sup>

<sup>192</sup> Diodorus Siculus *Library of History* 31.32a; Josephus *Jewish Antiquities* 13.35.

<sup>193</sup> Athenaeus *Banquet of the Learned* 5.211a; Appian *Syrian Wars* 67; Justin *Epitome* 35.1.6-8; 2.4; Livy *History of Rome* 52.

<sup>194</sup> Polybius *Histories* 33.18; Appian *Syrian Wars* 67-9.

<sup>195</sup> II Maccabees 4.30; Odgen 1999: 145-6; Wright 2007-08: 536-7.

<sup>196</sup> In apparently similar circumstances, the non-royal maternity of Ptolemy XII of Egypt would cause him to be defined *Nothos*, either specifically or by implication by opponents of his reign, see Trogus *Prologue* 39; Cicero *In Verrem* 2.4.27-30; id. *De lege agraria* 2.42; Pausanias *Description of Greece* 1.9.3.

<sup>197</sup> SC 2: nos. 1799, 1800, 1803, 1806-10, 1820, 1822-3, 1825-8, 1833-4, 1838, 1847-53.

<sup>198</sup> Mørkholm 1960: 29; 1983: 59-60; Le Rider 1995: 394; Garaboldi 2004: 370; SC 2: nos. 1883-7.

<sup>199</sup> Appian *Syrian Wars* 69; Odgen 1999: 144.

Both Herakles and Alexander the Great were beings of unconventional paternity. It was widely put about that Alexander's father was not Philip II but Zeus-Ammon<sup>200</sup> and Plutarch states that the Athenians went so far as to acknowledge Herakles as the patron of *nothoi* because, as the son of a divine father and mortal mother, he was himself a *nothos* among the gods.<sup>201</sup> One of the official epithets used by Alexander Balas, Theopator, stressed the king's divine paternity but said nothing of the nature of the king's mother. Her status was irrelevant next to the illustrious bearing of his divine father, Antiochos Epiphanes. It could be said that this type of iconographic manipulation was a potentially dangerous line for Balas to take but if his illegitimacy was a commonly accepted fact, the Herakles imagery suggested that it was enough that the king was the son of a god. Beyond merely associating Alexander Balas with the Macedonian conqueror, his employment of Heraklean imagery annulled the negative connotations of the monarch's bastardy by bringing to mind the illegitimacy inherent in two of the Hellenistic world's greatest culture heroes.

### 3.4 REFLECTIONS ON THE ROYAL CULT

It is clear that in the early Seleukid period, when the royal house acted largely with internal, cohesive integrity and the empire ranged over a vast area, the dynasty followed a policy of ethnic and religious neutrality, verging towards active Hellenisation. The early Seleukids enthusiastically patronised both Greek and non-Greek religious centres, although despite the obvious royal interest in indigenous centres, native deities were completely absent from the state ideology expressed through the numismatic record and it was only Greek divinities that were illustrated as the dynastic patrons on the coins. The kings accepted divine honours bestowed by their subjects during their lifetime, but did not adopt such cultic titles on an official, empire-wide level. The dynastic cult was in existence but where their ancestors were granted cultic epithets, the reigning king used only his title (*Basileus*) and personal name in inscriptions and on his coin legends. Seleukos I Nikator probably depicted himself wearing a divinising horned helmet, but it was only after his death that bull's horns were shown sprouting from the king's divine brow. Thereafter, bull's horns seem to have been associated specifically with the posthumously deified Seleukos I with the exception of the

<sup>200</sup> See for example Quintus Curtius *History of Alexander* 4.7.25-30; Plutarch *Alexander* 27.

<sup>201</sup> Plutarch *Themistocles* 1. See also Aristophanes *Birds* 1640-70; Ogden 1996: 199-203; Belfiore 2000: 80.

small bronze issues of Antiochos III which may show the reigning king in the manner of the dynastic founder. Otherwise, it is only the (probably) posthumous portraits produced in north-west Anatolia which use deifying attributes such as winged diadems in this early period.

In the late Seleukid I period, the technical illegitimacy of Antiochos IV Epiphanes saw the king adopt a multi-faceted approach to ensure support: a reorientation of dynastic favour from Apollo back to Zeus, the concession of certain regional rights to provincial centres and an emphasis on the king's godhead. Moreover, the apotheosis of the king took in much more of the vernacular Semitic traditions than had previously been openly expressed by the ruling house. Through marrying numerous local goddesses, especially Atargatis, the late Seleukid kings were showing themselves to be the successors of the Babylonian kings and the divinely-sanctioned rulers of the Semitic heartland of Mesopotamia and the Levant. The radiate crowns, perhaps a physical representation of this sacred marriage, left no doubt for their intended audience as to the godhead of the king and those who were literate in Greek could read the accompanying statement on the coins' reverses. As the senior and Epiphanaic branches of the Seleukidai fought for supremacy, the civic centres obtained successive favours and graces until they stood on the brink of full autonomy. It was largely through maintaining their new, vigorous religious position that the kings could maintain control over the populations which provided support to the ruling house.

The principal recipients of this advertised state position to cult and divine kingship – the armed forces – were comprised of approximately 30-60% Hellenised personnel during the early period and this does not seem to have changed too dramatically following the Peace of Apameia. However, in the late Seleukid II period when the kingdom was reduced to northern Syria and Kilikia, it must be assumed that the non-Greek Levantine proportion of each king's army increased dramatically. This must have been especially felt by kings who did not hold the great metropolis of Antioch. The growing visibility of Luwian and Semitic cult figures used as coin types throughout this period appears to reflect this demographic shift within the military towards the increasing reliance on indigenous auxiliaries.

By the late Seleukid II period, Zeus had achieved total dominance at Antioch and as a dynastic god. Around the wider empire, a renewed sense of civic autonomy and pride saw

various cities utilise local badges (such as the Atargatis or Hadad of Damascus) as reverse types on their regal coin issues. At Antioch, the bull horned portraits returned but took a different form from the original images of Seleukos I. The late kings stressed their own divinity but they were not larger-than-life, all conquering generals like Seleukos I and Antiochos III. The late period horned portraits reminded their audience of the Seleukid and Antigonid heritage embodied by the kings, but also incorporated the cult of Zeus-Ba'al and, perhaps, a growing Levantine emphasis on Dionysos as a saviour god who could bring redemption and enlightenment after the chaos of life in the first century BC.