

Seleukid Perspectives – Band 1

Franz Steiner Verlag

Auszug aus:

Seleukid Ideology



Franz Steiner Verlag, Stuttgart 2023

CONTENTS

| | |
|-------------------------------------|----|
| Preface of the Series Editors..... | 7 |
| Preface of the Volume Editors | 9 |
| List of Figures..... | 11 |

1. Richard Wenghofer and Altay Coşkun

| | |
|---|----|
| Introduction: The Dialectics of Seleukid Ideology | 13 |
|---|----|

SECTION I: FORMATION OF SELEUKID DYNASTIC IDEOLOGY

2. Kyle Erickson

| | |
|--|----|
| Royal Propaganda and the Creation of Royal Status for Seleukos I | 33 |
|--|----|

3. Eva Anagnostou-Laoutides

| | |
|--|----|
| The King-Ship of the Seleukids: An Alternative Paradigm for the Anchor Symbol | 61 |
|--|----|

4. Altay Coşkun

| | |
|---|----|
| The First Seleukid Benefactions in Miletos and the Creation of a Dynastic Ideology | 93 |
|---|----|

SECTION II: ENACTING SELEUKID KINGSHIP

5. Babett Edelmann-Singer

| | |
|---|-----|
| Material Culture, Ritual Performance, and Seleukid Rule: Antiochos IV and the Procession at Daphne in 166 BCE..... | 115 |
|---|-----|

6. Stephen Harrison

| | |
|--|-----|
| Antiochos at Daphne and Xerxes at Sardeis: A Comparative Perspective on the Seleukid Vision of Empire | 135 |
|--|-----|

7. Rolf Strootman

| | |
|---|-----|
| Ritual Mutilation and the Construction of Treason: The Execution of Molon and Achaïos by Antiochos III | 159 |
|---|-----|

8. Benjamin E. Scolnic

| | |
|---|-----|
| Second-Hand Propaganda: Polybios and Zeno on the Role of Antiochos IV at the Battle of Panion..... | 177 |
|---|-----|



Promotional material

For distribution and publication

For further information please visit our homepage: www.steiner-verlag.de

SECTION III: RESISTING SELEUKID ROYAL AUTHORITY

9. *Deirdre Klokow*
Connectivity and Rural Spaces in the Seleukid Empire 201
10. *Gillian Ramsey*
Rebel Poleis: The Politics of Anti-Seleukid Violence 219

SECTION IV: REFRAMING SELEUKID IDEOLOGY

11. *Germain Payen*
Le royaume artaxiade dans l'Empire séleucide: de dominé à dominant 237
12. *Benjamin E. Scolnic*
Šar Wars – How a Judaeon Author in the 160's BCE Transformed a
Ptolemaic View of Hellenistic History into a Theology for His Time 261
13. *Eran Almagor*
“To All Parts of the Kingdom”: The Book of Esther as a Seleukid Text 283

SECTION V: RE-ASSESSING SELEUKID IDEOLOGY

14. *Richard Wenghofer*
Diplomatic Resistance to Seleukid Hegemony 319
15. *Altay Coşkun*
The Efficacy of Ideological Discourse: Loyalty to the Seleukid Dynasty
in Babylonia, Judaea, and Asia Minor 343
- About the Authors 367
- Index of Names 371
- Index of Sources 381



Promotional material

For distribution and publication

For further information please visit our homepage: www.steiner-verlag.de

CHAPTER 1

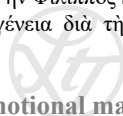
INTRODUCTION: THE DIALECTICS OF SELEUKID IDEOLOGY

Richard Wenghofer and Altay Coşkun

The Seleukid Empire (312–64 BCE) was forged in the crucible of war. Alexander III of Macedon had only just subjugated the territories of the erstwhile Achaemenid world under his yoke, when his sudden death in 323 BCE, at thirty-three years of age, unleashed a series of power struggles among his generals, hungry to succeed him as ruler over the newly-minted Macedonian hegemony. The ensuing wars lasted from 322 to 281 BCE, ending only with the death of Seleukos I, the last of the Diadochs, although the impacts of these struggles continued among their successors well beyond 281 BCE.¹ Yet, starting in 306 BCE, the most successful of Alexander’s would-be successors (Antigonos I and his son, Demetrios, as well as Lysimachos, Ptolemy I Soter, and Seleukos I Nikator) began styling themselves ‘kings’ (*basileis*), with none recognizing any territorial limits over their claims to power as such.² These kings ruled over any territory their spears could reach.³

The tenth-century Byzantine compilation, the *Suda*, thus defines monarchy (*basileia*) in this period after Alexander as one that rested neither on descent (*phusis*) nor justice (*dike*), but on the ability to competently command an army.⁴ Insatiable

- 1 Recent accounts of the Diadochs include Bennett and Roberts 2011/19; Alonso Troncoso and Anson 2013; Hauben and Meeus 2014; Wrightson 2019; Matyszak 2019; Capdetrey 2022. A bit more specific are Champion 2014 (Antigonos); Worthington 2016 (Ptolemy); Howe 2018 (Ptolemy); Grainger 2014 (Seleukos) and 2019 (Antipatros); Hannestad 2020 (Seleukos); Wheatley and Dunn 2020 as well as Romm 2022 (Demetrios).
- 2 On the Year of the Kings, see Plut. *Demetr.* 17f. On the universal claims, symbols, titles, and the courts of Hellenistic kingship, see Bikerman 1938; Ritter 1965; Virgilio 2003; Alonso Troncoso 2005; Michels 2009; Muccioli 2013; Strootman 2014; Engels 2017; Anagnostou-Laoutides and Pfeiffer 2022.
- 3 On the ideology of spear-won land and military victory as the essence of Hellenistic, and especially Seleukid, kingship, see, in addition to the references quoted in the previous note, Mehl 1980/81; Gehrke 1982; Bikerman 1938; Barbantani 2007; Koehn 2007; Coşkun 2012; Nelson 2022; for a more complete bibliography, see Coşkun 2022d, 36f.
- 4 *Suda* B 147.2f. (ed. E. Adler) = *Suda Online* ed. D. Whitehead: Βασιλεία. οὔτε φύσις οὔτε τὸ δίκαιον ἀποδίδουσι τοῖς ἀνθρώποις τὰς βασιλείας, ἀλλὰ τοῖς δυναμένοις ἡγεῖσθαι στρατοπέδου καὶ χειρίζειν πράγματα νουνεχῶς; οἷός ἦν Φίλιππος καὶ οἱ διάδοχοι Ἀλεξάνδρου. τὸν γὰρ υἱὸν κατὰ φύσιν οὐδὲν ὠφέλησεν ἢ συγγένεια διὰ τὴν τῆς ψυχῆς ἀδυναμίαν. τοὺς δὲ μηδὲν



Promotional material

For distribution and publication

For further information please visit our homepage: www.steiner-verlag.de

ambition and the spectre of all-encompassing wars thus run like a red thread throughout the history of the Hellenistic monarchies.⁵ Yet, while scholars have long recognized the significance of the role warfare played in shaping the character of Hellenistic kingship in general, and Seleukid kingship in particular, it has also long been recognized that no king could rule only on the basis of violent coercion for very long. Seleukid kings, just like their Antigonid, Ptolemaic, and Attalid counterparts, had to find ways to clothe their rule with *dike*, as the Suda would say.

To that end, Seleukid kings developed an elaborate repertoire of practices, behaviours, and propaganda aimed specifically at rendering their and their family's claims to royal authority more acceptable to those they had subjugated.

One way or another, ideological messages imply – or even state explicitly – the positive force that the rule of a king or dynasty brings to the subjects and vassals: victory, salvation and divine presence are most often enshrined in the epithets borne by or bestowed on a Seleukid king, as in Seleukos I *Nikator*, Antiochos I *Soter* and Antiochos II *Theos*. The notion of benefaction was reflected in the dynasty's titulature officially only under Ptolemaic influence in 150 BCE with Alexander (Balas) *Euergetes* Philadelphos, although it had been attested in the king's exchanges with cities inside and outside his territory from early on. The theme of noble ancestry and legitimate succession was most creatively developed under the first two kings but did not result in a royal title before Seleukos IV *Philopator*.⁶

Yet the development and dissemination of such ideological themes was an exceedingly difficult and complicated endeavour in the Seleukid context, as the polities over whom Seleukid kings claimed royal authority were incredibly diverse in terms of culture, language, ethnicity, and religion, as well as in social and political organization. Each of the polities encompassed by Seleukid domains, whether Greek city-states, temple states, nomadic tribes, or quasi-feudal polities all had their own ideas as to what constituted acceptable political authority, and these ideas no doubt shifted and changed over the long arc of Seleukid history.⁷

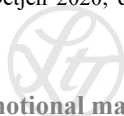
Seleukid kings thus found themselves in the position of having to be all things to all people if they were to maintain their status as kings. That the Seleukid dynasty managed to maintain royal authority for about two and a half centuries testifies to

προσήκοντας βασιλείς γενέσθαι σχεδὸν ἀπάσης τῆς οἰκουμένης. 'Neither nature nor justice gives kingdoms to men, but to those who are able to lead an army and to handle affairs intelligently; such as Philip was, and the successors of Alexander. For family relationship did not benefit the natural son at all because of the weakness of his soul. But those who had no relationship becoming kings of almost the whole inhabited world.' The provenience of this description is unknown, but it is generally regarded as pertinent for all Diadochs; cf. Austin 2006, no. 45; Wheatley and Dunn 2020, 37. And see the previous note on the military character of Hellenistic kingship.

5 Cf. Chaniotis 2005.

6 The most comprehensive treatment of royal epithets is by Muccioli 2013. For documentation, see Houghton and Lorber *SC I*; Houghton, Lorber, and Hoover *SC II*.

7 Major recent accounts or studies of the Seleukids after 281 include Mittag 2006; Ehling 2008; Taylor 2013; Feyel and Graslin-Thomé 2014; 2017; 2021; Grainger 2015a and 2015b; Erickson 2018; Coşkun and Engels 2019; Oetjen 2020; du Plessis 2022; Kosmin and Moyer 2022; Wrightson 2022.



Promotional material

For distribution and publication

For further information please visit our homepage: www.steiner-verlag.de

the fact that they were, in the main, successful in compelling local acceptance of their claims to the rightful exercise of royal power. How Seleukid kings went about trying to win over the hearts and minds of the peoples they subjugated has been the subject of a flurry of recent scholarship. These studies have proven to be a tremendous boon to Seleukid scholars, and to our grasp of the social and political histories of the Hellenistic world more generally.⁸

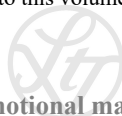
As one might expect, the approaches to the question of the reactions and responses to Seleukid hegemonic claims are highly varied, as are the conclusions that have been reached. The reasons for this should be immediately obvious. As the contributions in this volume will demonstrate, the nature of Seleukid power – how it was exercised and how it was presented to the diverse communities of the Seleukid Empire – was circumscribed to a considerable degree by local social, cultural, and political conditions and expectations. While much of Seleukid royal image and royal propaganda was fashioned at the Seleukid royal court, none of it was developed in a vacuum. Ideas and iconography rather emerged in reaction to the same efforts being made by competing kings and dynasts, and in dialogue with local conditions prevailing on the ground in subject communities. Seleukid kings thus perforce donned many different guises, depending on local contexts, even if there were certain common elements present in each one.⁹

Yet examining the construction of Seleukid royal propaganda and royal identity, and assessing its effectiveness, based solely on the self-representations coming out of the Seleukid court would be a bit like listening to only half a conversation: much would be lost. The primary aim of this volume is, therefore, to not only explore further the construction of the Seleukid dynastic ideology and image of kingship, but also to provide the voice of the Seleukid interlocutors in their myriad responses to Seleukid rule in specific local milieus. One of the great challenges inhering in the recovery of the voices of subject communities revolves around sources, which are unfortunately few, scattered, and diverse. However, many a Greek inscription can still be revealing, if read against the grain, while the Jews with their rich literary tradition and the Babylonians with their prolific epigraphic bequest allow for recovering very specific local voices from the Near East.

A detailed understanding of the required languages and material cultures is crucial for reconstructing the many local contexts and reactions relevant to the question of the reception of Seleukid royal propaganda. Some of the contributors to this volume do indeed bring such specialized skills to the table and have thus shed much-needed light on important facets of Seleukid claims to royal authority. Yet other contributors have undertaken a re-examination of various aspects of Seleukid royal propaganda and ideology emerging from the royal court itself, effectively reading

8 In addition to the references cited in the previous notes, see Brodersen 1999/2000; Capdetrey 2007; Kosmin 2014 and 2018; Chrubasik 2016; Coşkun and McAuley 2016; Ogden 2017; Erickson 2019; Fischer-Bovet and von Reden 2021; Anagnostou-Laoutides and Pfeiffer 2022; Lorber 2022. Also note the more immediate context in which this volume has been produced, the *Seleukid Study Days* (2011–2019) and the *Seleukid Lecture Series* (2021–2022), which are introduced a bit further in the *Preface* to this volume.

9 See notes 2, 3 and 7 above.



Promotional material

For distribution and publication

For further information please visit our homepage: www.steiner-verlag.de



... is that the end?

You can purchase the complete work:

... either on our eLibrary at
elibrary.steiner-verlag.de

... or in print on our homepage
www.steiner-verlag.de

Please share this PDF! Post it on Twitter or Facebook or email it – very easily done via the **eLibrary**.

Tell your friends and colleagues about your latest publication – it's quick and easy and in accordance with copyright conventions. There are no restrictions on sharing this PDF via social media.



Franz Steiner
Verlag