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Beyond Alexandria:

Literature and Empire in the Seleucid World

Margrete Sija Visscher

Thesis submitted to the Department of Classics and Ancient History at Durham University
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

1st April 2016

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Abstract

This thesis aims to provide a better understanding of Seleucid literature, covering the period from Seleucus I to Antiochus III. Despite the historical importance of the Seleucid Empire during this period, little attention has been devoted to its literature. The works of authors affiliated with the Seleucid court have tended to be overshadowed by works coming out of Alexandria, emerging from the court of the Ptolemies, the main rivals of the Seleucids. This thesis makes two key points, both of which challenge the idea that "Alexandrian" literature is coterminous with Hellenistic literature as a whole.

First, the thesis sets out to demonstrate that a distinctly Seleucid strand of writing emerged from the Seleucid court, characterised by shared perspectives and thematic concerns. Second, the thesis argues that Seleucid literature was significant on the wider Hellenistic stage. Specifically, it aims to show that the works of Seleucid authors influenced and provided counterpoints to writers based in Alexandria, including key figures such as Eratosthenes and Callimachus. For this reason, the literature of the Seleucids is not only interesting in its own right; it also provides an important entry point for furthering our understanding of Hellenistic literature in general.

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A special thanks to my family in the Netherlands, my parents and my brothers and sister, for supporting and challenging me and occasionally reminding me that there is more to the world than Seleucid literature.

Finally, I would like to thank Sjur Dyrkolbotn, whose never faltering support and love continue to inspire me and with whom I hope to embark on even greater adventures.

To the future…

To Spruitje…

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Abbreviations

ABC Grayson, A.K. (1975) *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles*, Eisenbrauns, Winona Lake, IN.

AB Austin, C. and G. Bastianini (eds.) (2002) *Posidippi Pellaei quae supersunt omnia*, Edizioni Universitarie di Lettere Economica Diritto, Milan.

AD Sachs, A.J. and H. Hunger (1989-1996) *Astronomical Diaries and Related Texts from Babylonia*, Austrian Academy of Sciences, Vienna.

BCHP Finkel, I and R.J van der Spek (forthcoming) *Babylonian Chronicles from the Hellenistic Period*.
see: http://www.livius.org/cg-cm/chronicles/chron00.html#een

BNJ Worthington, I. (ed.) *Brill's New Jacoby* – published on the online platform of Brill Online Reference Works.

FGrHist Jacoby, F. (1923-1958) *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker*, Weidmann and Brill Publishers, Berlin and Leiden.

GP Gow, A.S.F. and D.L. Page (eds.) (1965) *The Greek Anthology: Hellenistic Epigrams*, 2 vols., Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

I. Didyma Wiegand, T., R. Harder and A. Rehm (1958) *Didyma: Die Inschriften von Albert Rehm.* Vol. II, Gebr. Mann, Berlin.

I. Ephesus Börker, C. (1980) *Die Inschriften von Ephesos*, Vol. V: Nr. 1446–2000, Rudolph Habelt Verlag, Bonn.

I. Erythrai Engelmann, H. and R. Merkelbach (1972-1973) *Die Inschriften von Erythrai und Klazomenai*, Vol. I: Nr. 1–200 and Vol. II: Nr. 201–536, Rudolph Habelt Verlag, Bonn.

I.Ilion Frisch, P. (1975) *Die Inschriften von Ilion*, Rudolph Habelt Verlag, Bonn.

IG *Inscriptiones Graecae* (1860-), Brandenburg Academy, Berlin.

MW Merkelbach, R. and M. L. West (eds.) (1967) *Fragmenta Hesiodea*, Clarendon Press, Oxford.

OGIS Dittenberger, W. (1903-1905) *Orientis Graeci Inscriptiones Selectae*, S. Hirzel, Leipzig.

RC Bradford Welles, C. (1934) *Royal Correspondence in the Hellenistic Period*, Yale University Press, New Haven, CT.

SEG — Chaniotis, A., T. Corsten, N. Papazarkadas, and R.A. Tybout (1923-) *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum*, Brill Publishers, Leiden.

SH — Lloyd-Jones H., H.-G. Nesselrath (eds.) (1983) *Supplementum Hellenisticum*, Walter de Gruyter, Berlin.

Syll^{2} — Dittenberger, W. (1915-1924) *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*, S. Hirzel, Leipzig.

VAB 3 — Weissbach, F.H. (1911) *Die Keilinschriften der Achämeniden*, J.C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, Leipzig.

VAB 4 — Langdon, S. (1912) *Die neubabylonischen Königsinschriften,* J.C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, Leipzig.

Introduction

Η ΔΟΞΑ ΤΩΝ ΠΤΟΛΕΜΑΙΩΝ

Είμ' ὁ Λαγίδης, βασιλεύς. Ὁ κάτοχος τελείως
(μὲ τὴν ἰσχύ μου καὶ τον πλοῦτο μου) τῆς ἡδονῆς.
Ἢ Μακεδών, ἢ βάρβαρος δὲν βρίσκεται κανεὶς
ἴσος μου, ἢ νὰ μὲ πλησιάζει κάν. Εἶναι γελοῖος
ὁ Σελευκίδης μὲ τὴν ἀγοραία του τρυφή.
Ἂν ὅμως σεῖς ἄλλα ζητεῖτε, ἰδοὺ κι αὐτὰ σαφῆ.
Ἡ πόλις ἡ διδάσκαλος, ἡ πανελλήνια κορυφή,
εἰς κάθε λόγο, εἰς κάθε τέχνη ἡ πιὸ σοφή.

The fame of the Ptolemies
I am Lagides, king. I am a complete master
(because of my power and wealth) of the art of pleasure.
No Macedonian or barbarian is equal to me
or even approaching me. The son of Seleucus
is really a joke with his cheap lechery.
But if you are looking for other things, note this too:
my city is the greatest praeceptor, summit of the Greek world,
genius of all knowledge, of every art, and all wisdom.
Κωνσταντίνος Π. Καβάφης[1]

The fame of the Ptolemies, by Constantine Cavafy (1863-1933), celebrates the power of the Ptolemaic kings. In the first stanza the king claims to have mastered the art of pleasure, because of his power and wealth. What pleasure the king has in mind remains elusive but in the lines that follow, the 'son of Seleucus' is condemned for his τρυφή (lechery), which indicates that there is also such a thing as the wrong kind of pleasure. Among all the Macedonian and barbarian kings that fail to become true rivals for the Ptolemies, he alone is mentioned by name. This creates a tension: on the one hand the Seleucid king is mocked more than the others, but on the other hand, this is exactly what marks him out as the only real rival of the Ptolemies. I open my dissertation with this poem, because in it Cavafy points at two issues that will run through my thesis like a red thread. The first is the rivalry between

[1] Text: Cavafy (1952), 41. Translation is adapted from Keeley and Sherrard (Cavafy (1992), 35 (trans.)).

the Seleucids and the Ptolemies, which manifested itself in a political and cultural struggle that shaped the Hellenistic world until the demise of both empires. The second point has to do with the way in which Cavafy himself resolves the issue: the son of Seleucus is nothing but a cheap lecher, a foil for the Ptolemies' achievement in cultural refinement. We are left with an image of Alexandria (Cavafy's own home city) as the pinnacle of the Greek world and a focal point of Greek culture.

In my thesis, I want to look beyond the Ptolemies and Alexandria, and bring into focus the literary output of the Seleucid Empire. To achieve this I pay special attention to the ways in which writers attached to the Seleucid court presented the Seleucid Empire and its kings, as well as how the Seleucid kings presented themselves. However, in doing so I accept Cavafy's point that, certainly from a modern perspective, and as we shall see, from an ancient perspective too, the Seleucids cannot be studied in isolation from their great rivals in Alexandria. Hence my emphasis, throughout this thesis, is on the interaction between the literatures of the Seleucid and Ptolemaic courts, and the mutual entanglements that shaped them. My aim, in other words, is not to eclipse or sideline Alexandria but to re-contextualise its achievements by studying those of the Ptolemies' greatest rivals.

*   *   *

In the study of Hellenistic literature, Ptolemaic or 'Alexandrian' literature has often taken pride of place.[2] Names like Apollonius, Theocritus and especially Callimachus have dominated the field, to the point of embodying the new direction that Greek literature took in the wake of Alexander's conquests. To this day, 'Alexandrian literature' often serves as shorthand for Hellenistic literature *tout court*.[3]

My thesis challenges this state of affairs. There can be no doubt that Alexandria was widely perceived as a centre of literary activity already in the Hellenistic period. Moreover, it is also clear that Alexandrian authors, partly through their enthusiastic reception in Rome, later became canonical in a way that few other Hellenistic authors did.[4] Still, other literary

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[2] For an up-to-date bibliography, divided by poet, see https://sites.google.com/site/hellenisticbibliography/; cf. Clayman (2010); see further Gutzwiller (2007); Gutzwiller (2005); Lloyd-Jones (2005); Fantuzzi and Hunter (2004); Zanker (2004); Harder, Regtuit and Wakker (eds.) (1998); Burton (1995); Cameron (1995); Fowler (1990); Fowler (1989); Bing (1988); Hutchinson (1988); Hopkinson (1988); Bulloch (1985), 541-621; Lloyd-Jones and Parsons (1983); Clayman (1980); Griffiths (1979); Fraser (1972); Edmonds (1928); Powell (1925).

[3] E.g. Gutzwiller (2007), 16: see also the publications of the Groningen workshop on Hellenistic literature.

[4] The Roman reception of Hellenistic poetry has been much studied in the past decades. Some key publications are: Clauss (2010), 463-478; Hutchinson (2008); Hunter (2006); Fantuzzi and Papangelis (eds.) (2006); Fantuzzi

traditions of the Hellenistic world deserve more attention than they have received in the past. This thesis will argue specifically that the literature of the Seleucid Empire, the main competitor of Ptolemaic Egypt in military and cultural terms, is crucial not only for our understanding of Hellenistic literature in general but also, specifically, of Ptolemaic or 'Alexandrian' literature itself.

In my thesis, I make two main points: I argue, first, that there was indeed such a thing as a distinctive Seleucid literature, with its own preferred genres and thematic concerns. My second point is that this literature can be understood only in the wider Hellenistic context in which it flourished, and especially in relation to the Ptolemies as the Seleucids' main rivals in cultural and literary terms. I investigate these themes by focussing on four literary moments in the formative early history of the Seleucid Empire, from the reign of Seleucus I to that of Antiochus III.[5] Here I build on the ground-breaking work of Seleucid scholars such as Andrea Primo, Amelie Kuhrt and especially Paul Kosmin.[6] The recent revival in Seleucid studies, heralded by the landmark publication *From Samarkhand to Sardis* by Kuhrt and Sherwin-White,[7] has yielded important new insights, especially into Seleucid history[8] and kingship ideology.[9] Interest in Seleucid literature has been slower to develop. Although we have important studies of individual Seleucid writers, the possible existence of a distinct Seleucid literature was not discussed until the publication of Primo's monograph entitled *La storiografia sui seleucidi: da Megastene a Eusebio di Cesarea*.[10] In it, Primo collected the work of authors writing about, or for, the Seleucid kings, and on that basis sketched a broad overview of the history of Seleucid historiography and of major developments in Seleucid literature more generally. However, Primo's work is more a historical than a literary study of

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and Hunter (2004), esp. 444-485; Barchiesi (2001); Nelis (2001); Gee (2000); Thomas (1999); Hinds (1998); Cameron (1995), 454-483; Thomas (1993); Conte (1986); Barchiesi (1984); Cairns (1979); Wimmel (1960).

[5] For overview studies of Hellenistic history, see: Hauben and Meeus (eds.) (2014); Bosworth (2002); Huss (2001), focusses specifically on Egypt; Shipley (2000); Green (ed.) (1993); Green (1991); Green (1990); Gehrke (1990); Gruen (1984); Will (1982); Walbank (1981); Will (1979); Préaux (1978); Rostovtzeff (1969), 109-196; Bevan (1927); Bevan (1902).

[6] Kosmin (2014)a; Primo (2009); Sherwin-White and Kuhrt (1993); Kuhrt and Sherwin-White (1987).

[7] Sherwin-White and Kuhrt (1993).

[8] Chrubasik (2013); Landucci Gattinoni (2013); Erickson (2009); van der Spek (2008); Capdetrey (2007); Landucci Gattinoni (2007); Landucci Gattinoni (2005); Aperghis (2004); Austin (2003), 121-133; Grainger (2002); Austin (2001), 90-109; Ma (1999); Austin (1999), 129-165; Brodersen (ed.) (1999); Lerner (1999); Grainger (1990)a; Kuhrt and Sherwin-White (eds.) (1987); van der Spek (1986); Mehl (1986); Mastrocinque (1983); Sherwin-White (1983).

[9] Stevens (2014); Strootman (2013); Erickson (2013); Erickson (2011); Ogden (2011); Strootman (2011); Eckstein (2009); Strootman (2007); Ogden (1999); Bilde, Engberg-Pedersen, Hannestad, and Zahle (eds.) (1996); Gruen (1996); Kuhrt and Sherwin-White (1991).

[10] Primo (2009).

Seleucid authors, as is Kosmin's recent work *The Land of the Elephant Kings*.[11] More than Primo, Kosmin does bridge the gap between literary and historical considerations, providing penetrating analyses of Seleucid literature especially in view of Seleucid spatial ideology. However, the main focus of his work is still on the history of the empire, with literature playing an important *supporting* role. My thesis shifts the emphasis to literary study, aiming to provide an analysis of Seleucid literature from Seleucus I to Antiochus III.

My chosen scope and approach deserve some further comment. In terms of scope, it seems to me that the hundred years or so between Seleucus I and Antiochus III, provide a natural framework for my thesis. This was a time when the Seleucid Empire arguably was – and certainly aspired to be – a world empire, a fact that, as I show in this thesis, decisively shaped its literary production. It might have been possible to consider literature emerging in the reign of Antiochus IV, who continued pursuing military expansion even after the catastrophic treaty of Apamea; but it seems incontrovertible that, from the mid-second century onward, the dynamics of Seleucid politics and culture changed decisively. Perhaps there is another thesis waiting to be written about Seleucid literature in the period from ca. 150 BC to 64 BC – but to try and cover it here was beyond the scope of my project.[12]

In terms of approach, I have opted to focus on four key moments in the history of Seleucid literature, and the Seleucid state: the initial establishment of a Seleucid realm under Seleucus I; its consolidation under Antiochus I; the crisis of the Third Syrian War under Seleucus II; and the restauration and defeat against Rome under Antiochus III. This selective approach is to some extent dictated by practical necessity: Seleucid literature survives in a parlous state of fragmentation, and although it might have been desirable in theory to write a more continuous history of its development, such an endeavour would be difficult to undertake in practice, given the current state of our evidence. There is, however, more than just practical necessity that suggests a focus on individual moments in Seleucid literary history. The political history of the Seleucid Empire, with its often sudden and dramatic developments, seems to me to be – to some extent at least – reflected in the development of its literature. The state of our evidence may *exaggerate* the extent to which major developments in Seleucid literature happened in discrete spurts, but it does not, in my view, radically distort the picture. The four literary moments which I have singled out for study – moments of

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[11] Kosmin (2014)a.

[12] For later Seleucid kings and literature, see: Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistai* 4.38, 6.48 (cf. Ceccarelli (2011), 161-179); and especially Antiochus VIII Grypus who wrote a treatise on snakes (Galen, *De Antidotis* 2.14, cf. Pliny, *Historia Naturalis* 20.100).

expansion under Seleucus I, consolidation under Antiochus I, crisis at the time of the Third Syrian War, and restoration and renewed expansion under Antiochus III – do capture something important about the development of early Seleucid literature. I argue that, by focussing on these moments rather than trying to fill the gaps between them, we get a sense of the ebb and flow of early Seleucid literary production that might otherwise be lost.

The fragmentary state of the Seleucid texts also raises issues of a more general nature.[13] Most of the fragments of Seleucid literature consist of summaries or excerpts that have been integrated into the work of another author. This means that they have undergone changes during the process of transmission that need to be taken into account if one is not to mistake the later reception of a source text for the source text itself. Because of the scope of this thesis, I do not attempt to provide an in-depth analysis of the transmission history of every fragment I discuss. Instead, I make critical use of the established fragment collections: most importantly Felix Jacoby's *Fragmente der griechischen Historiker*, and its recent online successor published by Brill (*Brill's New Jacoby*).[14] In cases where deeper engagement with textual or transmission issues is called for, I provide a more detailed analysis.

By contrasting literary developments at the Seleucid and Ptolemaic courts, I aim to come to a closer understanding of Hellenistic literature as a whole. These two Hellenistic kingdoms were both founded by Macedonian generals after the death of Alexander the Great, and they continued to be closely connected, through marriage, diplomacy and warfare over possession of Syria-Palestine. In light of these connections, it is striking that recent treatments of Ptolemaic literature make little or no reference to Seleucid literature.[15] Although it has been recognised that the works of individual writers, for example Berossus and Manetho, reflect some of the military and ideological tensions between the two successor states, this has not so far been considered a core issue in the study of Hellenistic literature and culture.

This thesis aims to redress the balance. I argue that tensions between the Seleucids and Ptolemies inform not only the production and early reception of such relatively marginal texts as Berossus' *Babyloniaca* and Manetho's *Aegyptiaca,* but also the works of core Alexandrian authors such as Eratosthenes and Callimachus. I argue that Callimachus in particular

[13] For some of the problems of working with fragments, see: Berti (forthcoming); Berti (2012), 439-458; Most (ed.) (1997); Dionisotti (1997), 1-33; Schepens (1997), 144-172; Thompson (1985), 119-139; Préaux (1975/1976); Bloch (1971), 112-113.

[14] *FGrHist*: Jacoby (1923-1958), Vol. I-III; *BNJ*: http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/browse/brill-s-new-jacoby. For Euphorion's poetry I have consulted all recent editions, but have used Acosta-Hughes and Cusset (2012) and Lightfoot (2009) as my main guides.

[15] See: e.g. Fantuzzi and Hunter (2004); Stephens (2003).

developed an entire poetic programme in contrast with the perceived bombast of Seleucid Asia. For example, when he cast the 'Assyrian river' as the exact opposite of his own art in the *Hymn to Apollo*, he must have had the Seleucid Empire in mind.[16] Likewise, his famous *Lock of Berenice* develops the central Callimachean values of lightness, refinement and learning out of a celebration of Ptolemaic victory over the Seleucids in the Third Syrian War, and the shared literary theme of royal love. My research aims to reunite these fragments of a larger discourse, with the aim of understanding better both the nature of Seleucid literature itself, and its role in the making of Alexandrian poetics.

*   *   *

Chapter 1 focusses on the earliest phases of Seleucid kingship: the expansion and consolidation of the empire in the east. The first three Seleucid writers I consider wrote geographical and ethnographic works on the eastern reaches of the Seleucid realm: I shall consider the well-known treatise on India written by Megasthenes but also two works that are less well known today, a treatise on the geography of Bactria by Demodamas; and Patrocles' *Periplus of the Caspian Sea*. The authors of these early Seleucid texts were important public figures, who contributed to the consolidation of the empire as generals or diplomatic envoys. Previous scholarship on them has generally focussed on reconstructing their view of Asian geography and in this connection has often questioned the historical accuracy of their reports. However, Paul Kosmin has recently shown that more was at stake for these writers than producing a correct map of inner Asia. Kosmin reads their works in the context of the Seleucid court and its efforts to take possession – conceptually as well as politically – of a vast geographical space.[17] In this chapter, I take up his argument and develop it further, showing that these writers used the fluid geography of the region to mould it to their own, specifically Seleucid, purposes. I contend that reading early Seleucid geographical and ethnographic texts through the lens of modern geographical theory enables us to see how these writers created a mental map of the Seleucid Empire which had a prescriptive as well as a descriptive function. Thus, what is often criticised as their 'inaccuracy' in modern scholarship might more accurately be called constructive thinking; or rather, a programme for the creation of a world empire which was understood to be in important ways a work in progress. To round off the chapter, I consider the influence these writers had on later

[16] Callimachus, *Hymn to Apollo*, 108-9.
[17] Kosmin (2014)a, 31-76.

Hellenistic and especially Ptolemaic authors. Specifically, I compare the works of Eratosthenes to those of early Seleucid geographers and argue that his *Geographica* was profoundly influenced by them. Indeed, I argue that Eratosthenes' *Geographica* should be read as articulating a specifically Ptolemaic world view that was designed to overwrite and subvert the Seleucid geographical literature studied in this chapter.

Chapter 2 focusses on the consolidation of Seleucid rule around the region's most ancient, and most important, indigenous centre of cultural and political power: the city of Babylon. In the history of the Near East Babylon had long been considered a privileged source of royal power and legitimacy. Modern scholars have sometimes argued that the Seleucids took little interest in this fact, even to the point of marginalising Babylon by founding their own Mesopotamian capital, Seleucia on the Tigris. I argue, by contrast, that interaction between Babylon and the Seleucids was close and fruitful. As I discuss in detail, the Seleucids framed this interaction in terms of the Hellenistic discourse of royal benefaction, a discourse that relied heavily on reciprocity and mutual trust: the king expressed his goodwill towards the city through gifts and privileges, and the city acknowledged the power of the king by honouring him as benefactor and saviour. While the terms of Seleucid euergetism were broadly Greek in origin, they crossed linguistic and cultural boundaries and are also attested in various Babylonian texts from the third century BC. One reason, I suggest, why the shared themes and concerns of Seleucid euergetism have so far remained largely invisible is that scholars have broadly focussed on Greek texts as the source of Seleucid literary discourse. More generally, there has been a tendency to fragment Seleucid literature along cultural and linguistic lines. While I accept that Seleucid Greek and Babylonian literature do have their own specific context, conventions and thematic concerns, I nonetheless argue that there was significant overlap and interaction between them. For example, Nebuchadnezzar is revived as a model king in Greek *and* Babylonian Seleucid texts at roughly the same time. In addition, the importance of the royal couple is expressed in Greek Romance traditions, for example the story about Antiochus I's love for Stratonice, *and* Babylonian literature, as Kuhrt and Sherwin-White, among others, have pointed out. By considering both Greek and Akkadian literature under Antiochus I, I aim to overcome the current divide between Seleucid Greek and non-Greek literature.

I start by looking at Seleucid Greek and Babylonian literature that depicts the Seleucid king as a benefactor (*euergetes*). I then consider what the Babylonian elite could do to reciprocate. Finally, I discuss the relationship between local priests and the Hellenistic kings, in the Seleucid as well as the Ptolemaic spheres. In particular, I compare Berossus and

Manetho, two local priests writing in Greek for their respective courts. I argue that both the Seleucids and the Ptolemies sought to appropriate the voice of local priests and actively enlisted these men to write local history in Greek. Although the relative chronology of the two writers is not securely established, the similarity between their works suggests that in this respect too there was competition between the two courts.

Chapter 3 deals with a moment of crisis in the mid-third century: the breakdown of a dynastic marriage and the Third Syrian War that resulted from it. Although no Seleucid literature deals directly with the murder of Berenice Syra and the war it triggered, it is addressed in Callimachus' *Lock of Berenice*. In one of the most iconic pieces of Alexandrian literary composition, the poet turns an important Ptolemaic victory over the Seleucids into a model piece of Alexandrian poetics: small-scale, refined and poetically sophisticated. I focus on two major themes that are expressed in this poem: the power of royal love and the Seleucids as heirs of Near Eastern empires. The importance of the royal couple as a binding force for Hellenistic empires is exemplified both in Ptolemaic and Seleucid ideology. I argue that Callimachus' exaltation of Ptolemy III and Berenice does not only celebrate the successful Ptolemaic couple but also contrasts it, obliquely, with the break-down of the Seleucid royal marriage between Antiochus II and Berenice Phernophorus. My case from allusions and hints acquires more weight if we consider that this marriage was the first Seleucid-Ptolemaic union, and was conceived to bring lasting peace to the two kingdoms. Its break-down, however, plunged the rivals into a new war, in which Ptolemy conquered vast stretches of the Seleucid Empire, before he had to retreat back to Egypt. The second theme that Callimachus highlights in his poem is even more subtle. I argue that, in the Lock of Berenice, he sets up known Near Eastern empires (the Assyrians, Medes and Persians) as a historical backdrop for the Seleucid Empire. In this way Callimachus undercuts the Seleucids' own view of themselves as Greek rulers and heirs of Alexander the Great. The Ptolemaic Adulis inscription and the recently discovered Babylonian *Chronicle of Ptolemy III* show that Callimachus was not working in a vacuum when casting the Seleucids as the heirs of an essentially barbarian imperial tradition.

In the fourth and final chapter, I look at the reign of Antiochus III and the flourishing of literary activity at his court. After three decades of crisis, Antiochus dedicated his reign to re-appropriating lost regions in the East, restoring Seleucid power in the centre and expanding westward into Asia Minor and mainland Greece. His political and military ambitions were reflected in the literature of his reign. In this chapter, I focus on three themes that were important for the self-image of the Seleucid Empire at the time: the battles with the Galatians,

the idea of a literary court, and the Roman-Seleucid war. These themes attracted literary attention from writers at the Seleucid court and positioned the Seleucid Empire *vis-à-vis* its neighbours. Since the Galatian invasions of the 270s, defeating the Celts had become an important way of encoding kingship throughout the Hellenistic world. Antiochus III used this idea to assert his authority over Asia Minor, building on Antiochus I's victory that liberated the Greek cities from the Galatians in 270's BC. His appropriation of that victory in literature, I argue, was directed specifically against the Attalids, who had become serious rivals of the Seleucids in Asia Minor since Attalus I's battle against the Galatians in 241 BC. The rivalry between the two states was not only political but was also reflected in cultural and literary terms.

I subsequently turn my attention to Euphorion of Chalcis, a poet of international standing who was renowned for his Alexandrian aesthetics. He became attached to the Seleucid court, allegedly as head librarian in the Seleucid library. Both Euphorion's position, and the vibrant literary scene at Antiochus' court, indicate that King Antiochus III was aiming to create a cultural centre to rival Alexandria. In contrast to many other Hellenistic poets, Euphorion had never moved to Alexandria, and I argue that this was reflected in his poetry. By reading one of the main heirs of Callimachean aesthetics in a Seleucid context, new aspects of Seleucid literature become apparent.

The chapter ends with the arrival of a new player on the Hellenistic stage: the Romans. I first consider the historical work of Hegesianax of Alexandria Troas, his *History of Troy* (*Troica*). Hegesianax, I argue, writes a Seleucid version of Rome's origins, at a time when Rome itself was seeking to gain cultural and political capital from its ancient past. Finally, I turn to the actions of the king himself in the run-up to, and during, the Roman-Seleucid War. In this section, I explore some of the ways in which Antiochus III engaged with history, myth and poetry in major political gestures such as his refoundation of Lysimacheia, his sacrifice at Troy, and the notorious wedding at Chalcis in Euboea.

Royal Ideology and Court Literature

Before embarking on my argument, I address two concepts in more detail that are of central importance to my thesis: royal ideology and court literature. Both these concepts are linked to literary activity surrounding the king and the royal house, but there are important differences between them. Importantly, the former suggests some degree of active self-representation on the part of the monarchical regime, not necessarily present in the latter. There certainly was a

sense in which Seleucid values and ideas emanated outward from the court, but as argued in this thesis, it would be wrong to conclude that Seleucid literature was nothing more than propaganda, a vehicle for the promotion of royal ideology. Rather, the evidence suggests that the Seleucid court served as a focal point for an ongoing dialogue between literary production and political action. The literature emerging from the Seleucid court, it seems, helped *shape* royal ideology as much as it would at times also be a reflection of it.

Royal Ideology

Ideology is a theoretically complicated concept that can be, and has been, defined in many different ways.[18] The traditional definition, emerging from Marxist theory, emphasises its directedness as an attempt to convey a specific worldview for a specific purpose.[19] The Marxist scholar Althusser has attempted to provide a more nuanced definition by asserting that ideology does not necessarily provide a distorted picture of the world, but that it is the reality of humans, and the expression of their place in this world.[20] The strong Marxist view of ideology has been also criticised strongly by scholars such as Michel Foucault, who rejects any conception of ideology as a façade put up by political and economic elites to keep reality out of sight.[21] Foucault also rejects psychological ideas according to which ideology is an illusion produced by individuals to make sense of their lives. Indeed, he critiques the very concept of ideology, on the basis that it is too often seen as secondary to reality and that it presupposes a truth with which it stands in opposition.

Although there are ongoing theoretical debates about the definition of ideology, I would emphasise the fact that ideology is understood relative to actors who engage in self-representation. This means that ideology, in a social setting, can *become* a façade, in as much as some expressions of perceived reality gain authority with an audience that does not fully

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[18] There exists a vast body of literature on the concept of ideology. For some key theoretical discussions, see: Eagleton (ed.) (2013, first edition 1994); van Dijk (1998); Vincent (1992); Ricoeur (1986), 1-18; Minogue (1985); Ricoeur (1981); Cranston and Mair (eds.) (1980); Larrain (1979); Baechler (1976); Seliger (1976); Geertz (1973), 193-233; Gramsci (1971); Cox (ed.) (1969); Lukács (1963), 17-46; Marx and Engels (1932); Mannheim (1929); Lukács (1923, Eng trans. 1971); Destutt de Tracy (1800-1815).

[19] Marx and Engels (1932), see Bluhm (ed.) (2010) for a recent introduction to this work.

[20] Althusser (2014, first edition 1971).

[21] Foucault (2000, first edition 1994); Foucault, in Schmidt (ed.) (1996), 393; Foucault (1980)a, 109-133; Foucault (1980)b, 78-108. Cf. Eagleton (ed.) (2013), 10-12.

share those perceptions. Indeed, this is how the concept of ideology is often understood in the study of the ancient world, where it tends to be linked inextricably to the exercise of power.[22]

In my thesis, I will often invoke the concept of ideology as something that is indeed linked to power, specifically in the form of *royal* power. Royal ideology, in the ancient world, has been defined by Olivier Hekster and Richard Fowler as "the entire scheme or structure of public images, utterance and manifestations by which a monarchical regime depicts itself and asserts and justifies its right to rule".[23] Hekster and Fowler insist that any expression of ideology is always part of a dialogue, or rather a multi-directional conversation. They point out that ideology serves both as "the display and articulation, and also […] on occasion the creator of power."[24] Here they touch upon a point that is important for my thesis, which is the connection between royal ideology, the literature that shapes and is shaped by this concept, and the *effects* it has in a given historical and literary context. In the Hellenistic empires these concepts came together primarily in relation to the royal court.

The Importance of the Court

The Hellenistic dynasties relied on a range of different sources of power to assert their authority.[25] The army was, of course, of central importance, but diplomacy also played an essential role: the Greek cities, non-Greek cities and vassal kingdoms as well as neighbouring states all needed to be integrated into a coherent narrative of empire.[26] Moreover, royal ideology, and the presence of the king (in actuality, or in the imagination of his subjects) was a way of binding kingdoms together. Some scholars have described the Hellenistic kingdoms as personal monarchies, in which all power lay with the king and a small group of personal friends.[27] To some extent this view is confirmed by the ancient sources, as Hellenistic monarchies are indeed often described as the sum total of τὰ τοῦ βασιλέως πράγματα.[28] At the same time it is clear that the person of the king alone could not keep the empire working.

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[22] Ando (2000), 19-48; cf. Wolf (1999), 1-20; DeRose Evans (1992).
[23] Hekster and Fowler (ed.) (2005), 16.
[24] Hekster and Fowler (ed.) (2005), 16.
[25] The issue of monarchic power in the Hellenistic age is well-studied: cf. Strootman (2007); Habicht and Stevenson (ed.) (2006); Ma (2003), 177–195; Samuel (2003), 168-191; Ma (1999); Herman (1997), 199-224; Bilde, Hannestad, and Zahle (eds.) (1996); Gruen (1996), 116-125.
[26] Ma (2003), 177–195.
[27] Strootman (2014)b, 38-61; Roy (1998), 111-135; Dihle (1993); Sherwin-White and Kuhrt (1993), 114-140; Walbank (1992), 74-77; Gruen (1985), 253-271; Walbank (1984), 62-84.
[28] Strootman (2014)a, 12, cf. *I. Ephesus* 1452, l.2 (*OGIS* 9; *I. Erythrai* 505); *IG* IV 1 ll.31-32.

Indeed, a distinct strand of scholarship stresses the importance of the lower tiers of bureaucracy and local administration in the day-to-day running of the state.[29] Because of the vastness of the Hellenistic kingdoms, especially the Seleucid Empire, the king was unable to visit most parts of his realm more than once or twice during his reign, and therefore had to rely on satraps, local administrators and local elites to maintain order and raise taxes.

One of the most important power structures that supported the king was the royal court, which provided a framework for cultural and political activity in the Hellenistic period. Hellenistic courts have received much scholarly attention in the wake of Elias' *The Court Society*.[30] Elias, writing mainly about the French *ancien regime*, approached the court as a specific political entity. This inspired a new wave of scholarly work on the court in the ancient world and specifically in the Hellenistic period.[31] It seems clear that different traditions influenced the emergence of Hellenistic court culture, including the Macedonian royal court, Achaemenid court culture and precedents within the Greek world.[32] Herman argues that the society in the Hellenistic period can be formally described as a "court society", analogous to societies from the medieval and early modern periods.[33] He singles out three features that define a court society, first the emergence of rules and codes of conduct; secondly, the existence of a term for *court*; and thirdly, the appearance of the "quintessential representative of court society, the courtier".[34] Herman suggests that the courtier acted as an intermediary, a nexus in the network of patronage relationships, by which the king's power reached to the edges of his kingdom, influencing the life of his subjects.[35] In my thesis, however, I follow Ma and Strootman who challenge this interpretation by emphasizing not only the power of the king over his subjects, but also the influence that other social entities such as cities and elite families had over the king. Ma claims that "Hellenistic kings exist merely as a bundle of local commitments, a series of roles assigned by the subjects, an

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[29] See for example: Capdetrey (2007); Strootman (2007); Aperghis (2004); Mooren (2000); McKenzie (1994).

[30] Elias (1976); translated by Jephcott (1983).

[31] Strootman (2014)a; Duindam, Artan, and Kunt (eds.) (2011); Strootman (2011); Strootman (2007); Savalli-Lestrade (1998); Herman (1997), 199-224; Weber (1997), 27-71; Weber (1993); Herman (1980), 103-109.

[32] Savalli-Lestrade (1998), 290; cf. Strootman (2007), 19, 93-101. Strootman, in his dissertation on Hellenistic court culture, argues that the Macedonian element was the most important of these three, but that Philip and Alexander brought about profound changes in traditional Macedonian court culture. "Philippos and Alexander endeavoured to create a court in which not ancestry but the favour of the king determined who would rise to prominence. Apparently, Alexander was exceptionally successful at this, owing to the enormous scale of his conquests. His successors inherited both the scale and the flexibility of Alexander's court." (Strootman (2007), 101).

[33] Herman (1997), 203.

[34] Herman (1997), 203-205.

[35] Herman (1997), 200.

endless and ubiquitous process of exchange and negotiation to achieve acceptance by different constituencies."[36] Ma rightly insists that the network of relationships that came together at the court worked both ways and that the king did not have all power in practice, even if he did in theory.

Yet, Herman is right to stress that the courtiers of the king were essential for tying these networks of patronage relationships together. At the Hellenistic courts, they were called 'friends' (*philoi*) of the king. The *philoi* of the king were either inherited from his predecessor or appointed by him. They held important advisory, administrative and military positions and supported the king in controlling his empire.[37] Documents from the Seleucid Empire show the recurring phrase "the king, his friends and his military forces" as three groups supporting the kingdom.[38] The formula shows the powerful position the friends of the kings were thought to hold within the empire.[39] Although now we call them courtiers, the friends did not need to be physically present at the court at all times.[40] This is especially true in the Seleucid Empire, which had several capital cities, where royal palaces were built and Seleucid courtiers must have lived. The *philoi* of the king, or other people connected with the Seleucid court, might very well have been separated from the king for long periods of time. I therefore consider court literature not just literature written at court but also the work of authors who were connected to the court as generals, diplomats or ambassadors, even if they were not physically in the presence of the king.

However, the king, and the royal court, did provide a powerful rallying point. As well as being an active agent in the ruling of the kingdom, the king was also a figure onto whom the idea of power was projected, by means of attributes of kingship and mythologizing glosses. Together, these components formed a network of mutually supporting images and narratives at whose centre stood the image that the king presented of himself. In practice, this means that any assessment of Hellenistic kingdoms and their sources of authority needs to take into

[36] Ma (2003), 183.

[37] Strootman (2005), 184-197; Savalli-Lestrade (1998); Herman (1997), 199-224; Weber (1997), 27-71; le Bohec (1985), 93-124; Herman (1980/81) 103-109. Herman further distinguishes the extended family of the king, the bodyguards, the *philoi*, the specialist assistants and other people who stay at court, e.g. intellectuals, politicians, exiles, as courtiers (Herman (1997), 213). Cf. Strootman (2007), 5.

[38] See: e.g. a city decree from Ilion bestowing honours on Antiochus I (*Ilion* 32 (*OGIS* 219)) and (Attalid) Kern (1900), 68 (no. 86 l. 15), cf. Polybius 5.50.9; I *Maccabees* 6,28.57-62; 23,43. For discussion of this see: Austin (2003), 124-126; Musti (1984), 175-220, esp. 179; Habicht (1958), 4.

[39] For the literature on *philoi*, Strootman's recent work is a good starting point: Strootman (2007). See also: Duindam, Artan and Kunt (2011), 63-91; Strootman (2011), 63-89; Habicht and Stevenson (2006), 26-41; Meißner (2000), 1-36; Herman (1997), 199-224; Herman (1987); Habicht (1958), 3-4.

[40] Duindam, Artan and Kunt (2011), 70; Habicht and Stevenson (2006) 28.

account not only the actual but also the *symbolic* importance of the court. According to Strootman, "the Seleucids and Ptolemies conceived, styled and propagated their court as the heart of empire and thus the heart of the entire *oikoumenē*. The court was a kind of microcosm where the empire was exhibited".[41] This symbolic value also made Hellenistic courts important centres for ideology and the creation of literature, as I will discuss now.

Seleucid Literature

Although specific expressions of royal ideology are often lost in time or only reflected in much later sources, contemporary sources such as coins and inscriptions can provide some insight into the self-representation of the Seleucid kings. In fact, the political importance of Hellenistic courts meant that they tended to become cultural centres, not narrowly invested merely in the dissemination of royal ideology but also engaged in the production of more self-contained and/or aesthetically inflected forms of discourse. Indeed, emanating from, and circling around, the core of royal propaganda are narratives constructed by court literature, both friendly narratives emerging from the king's own court, and hostile counter-narratives emerging from internal and external rivals. We must also allow for narratives which display other literary preoccupations, and are only loosely, or very indirectly, connected to royal self-representation. It is with these types of literature that the focus and approach adopted in this thesis comes properly into its own.

The sophisticated readings we have of Hellenistic Ptolemaic literature have not yet been matched by any comparable study of writers from the Seleucid Empire. Indeed, the very notion of Seleucid court literature remains largely unexplored. By contrast, the links (often complex and even contradictory) between the Alexandrian poets and the Ptolemaic court have been the subject of many excellent studies.[42] From these studies a refined reading of the Alexandrian poets has emerged, that understands their works neither as sycophantic propaganda nor as *art-pour-l'art* detached from the historical circumstances in which it was

[41] Strootman (2007), 12: "As the self-declared summit of civilisation, the court was contrasted to the barbaric, even chaotic periphery at the edge of the earth". Strootman touches here upon the important relationship between the power of the king and the *oikoumenē*, whereby the realm that the king controlled was automatically seen as the entire inhabited world. See also Ma's discussion of kings in the Hellenistic world: "The effect of language and of concrete processes of administration was to create imagined empire, as space of unity and efficacy filled with the royal presence (whereas the kingdoms could be quite ragged on the ground, with enclaves, difficult lines of communications and the constant proximity of rival kingdoms.)" Ma (2003), 185.

[42] See, among many others, Moyer (2011); Gutzwiller (2007); Fantuzzi and Hunter (2004); Stephens (2003); Gutzwiller (1992).

written. Rather, it considers these texts as interaction between the court and relevant groups, such as the empire's cities and its intellectual elites. In this thesis, I will look at the writers from the early Seleucid kingdom in a similar way, to investigate how their works interact with the court; with one another; and with the politics of the empire as a whole.

All authors and works included in my thesis were part of, and helped define, the royal Seleucid court and administration. This connection with the court could be concrete, when the authors were *philoi* of the king, friends and officials who advised and supported the administration of the empire. It could also be more abstract, for example when a work was part of ongoing literary negotiations between the king and his local elites. One aim of this thesis is to show that reading court literature alongside literature that is more distant from, or even hostile to, the Seleucid court generates new and interesting readings of all texts involved.

* * *

I will conclude my introduction by explaining in a little more detail what I understand literature to be. The question *What is literature?* has been discussed extensively in the past decades. After the deconstruction of the concept of literature by feminist and post-colonial scholars, and especially Derrida's post-structuralist readings from the 1960 onwards,[43] there is now a broad consensus that it is impossible to provide an all-encompassing definition.[44] Terry Eagleton stresses that literature is a non-essentialist label and that "[s]ome texts are born literary, some achieve literariness, and some have literariness thrust upon them."[45] In his attempt to define literature, Eagleton focusses on the reader, rather than the author of a text. He distinguishes literary texts from pragmatic texts (such as "biology textbooks and notes to the milkman") but leaves it to the reader to decide how to read them.[46] Jonathan Culler resolves the problem in a slightly different way; "It is not that all texts are somehow equal: some texts are taken to be richer, more powerful, more exemplary, more contestatory, more central, for one reason or another. But both literary and non-literary works can be studied

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[43] For key texts, see: Derrida (1967); Barthes (1967).

[44] A small selection of relevant discussions is: Eagleton (2008); Gibson (2007); Widdowson (1999); Culler (1997); Sartre (1988); Eagleton (1983); Sartre (1948); cf. Whitmarsh (2004), 3-17, for a discussion of literature as understood within classical scholarship.

[45] Eagleton (2008), 7.

[46] Eagleton (2008), 7.

together and in similar ways."[47] Like Eagleton, Culler notes that there are different types of texts but argues that they share some characteristics and can be studied with the same critical methods. Culler's observation that literary and non-literary texts can be read with the same critical apparatus is particularly relevant for my research.

I do not here aim to engage with all problems raised in recent discussions of literature or to provide a coherent theory of the concept. Rather, it seems useful to outline my own approach for the purposes of this thesis. I define literature not by appealing to formal markers such as genre, fictionality, rhythm or language, but take a much broader approach. This means that I do not consider poetry and historiography, or Greek and non-Greek texts to be incompatible with each other. By approaching all these texts as literature connected to the Seleucid kings I hope to offer a richer, more fruitful way of reading them than might otherwise be possible.

In order to elucidate how I use the concept of literature throughout this thesis, it may be helpful to provide some examples of texts that I include, and consider the implications that this has for the argument. I start with historiography as the main focus of Chapter 1 and an important body of evidence throughout. Classical scholars usually include historiography (in the broad sense: encompassing both geography and ethnography), in broader definitions of ancient literature.[48] A tension, however, between 'literary' and 'non-literary' readings of historiography still pervades classical scholarship; this can be seen by the marginal place historiography retains in recent overviews of Hellenistic literature. Gutzwiller, for example, dedicates about seventy pages to poetry in contrast with the ten pages for historiography, which all deal with Polybius. In Blackwell's *Companion to Hellenistic Literature*, fifteen chapters are dedicated to Hellenistic poetry and only two to historiography.[49] Martine Cuypers raises this issue in *A Companion of Hellenistic Literature* addressing in particular the relative neglect of historiography within the subgroup of prose literature:

> "As was noted in Chapter 1, Hellenistic prose typically fills little space in surveys of Greek literature. […] The choices made reflect the surviving evidence only to some extent: scientific texts are by far the best-preserved Hellenistic prose genre, the evidence for Hellenistic historiography beyond Polybius is sizeable and the output of the Hellenistic philosophers is no better preserved than that of historians, rhetors and literary critics. Clearly, then, we are also dealing with assumptions about the purpose of a literary history and, more importantly, about the significance of the Hellenistic period for

[47] Culler (1997), 19.
[48] Clauss and Cuypers (eds.) (2010); Dewald and Marincola (eds.) (2006), 4-5; Easterling and Knox (1989); Flacelière (1962); Moses (1950).
[49] Clauss and Cuypers (eds.) (2010).

> the history of ancient literature at large. Bluntly put, many surveys of Hellenistic literature create the impression that poetry, philosophy and Polybius made a difference and that other genres and texts did not."[50]

Cuypers rightly argues that the relative neglect of historiography in literary overviews suggests that it is perceived to be marginal to the literary culture of the Hellenistic age. In this thesis, I place historiography at the forefront of my literary analysis, alongside poetry. By reading these texts with the same level of attention and commitment as poetry, I aim to get beyond questions of historical fact and investigate the meaning they had for their ancient audiences.

Another group of texts, closely related to historiography, but hardly ever considered worthy of literary analysis is that of chronicles and inscriptions. I follow scholars like John Ma and Caroline Waerzeggers, who have shown that chronicles, as well as inscriptions, present us with a carefully edited version of history, that are worth close-reading as literature.[51] Building on their work, I show in the second and third chapters of my thesis that these texts do indeed have a place in a study of Seleucid literature. By reading the Babylonian chronicles and Astronomical Diaries as part of Seleucid literature, we see that their authors and editors, the Babylonian local elites, grappled with some of the same issues as other Seleucid authors. Indeed, as my discussion of the Adulis inscription shows, Seleucid literature, Ptolemaic poetry and Ptolemaic inscriptions were all used to address similar concerns in different media.

Poetry, of course, is central to most analyses of Hellenistic literature and no explanation is required for including it in this thesis. However, the fact that it is often isolated from other types of text means that its implications are not always fully appreciated. There has been much important work on the political and cultural context of Ptolemaic poetry, and my discussion in Chapter 3 and 4, where I consider the works of Callimachus as well as those of Seleucid poets like Simonides of Magnesia and Euphorion of Chalcis, takes full advantage of it. Yet, as I hope to show, there is still scope for adducing new texts with which to set Hellenistic poetry in meaningful dialogue. Indeed, I argue that studying other kinds of texts alongside poetry can lead to a better understanding of some of the core works of Hellenistic poetic culture, including those of Callimachus and one of his most important successors, Euphorion of Chalcis.

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[50] Cuypers (2010), 317.

[51] Waerzeggers (2015)a, 95-124; Ma (1999); Nevling Porter (1993).

One final medium I discuss in my thesis is expressed not in texts but in the actions of the king. Of course, displays of royal ideology are not literature in any conventional sense. However, such performances in many ways interacted with literary motifs and indeed can themselves be read as a form of text.[52] This touches on a much broader issue, which is the interaction between literature and other forms of cultural expression, such as art, architecture, and performance. All these media were important vehicles to express, and reflect on, royal ideology and they all interacted with literary themes to a greater or lesser extent. For this thesis, I have limited myself to providing some brief examples of these other forms of cultural expression. However, in Chapter 4 I do explore in greater detail some of the public acts of kingship which Antiochus III performed on his Western campaign. I have chosen this as a case study because it exemplifies how closely literature and the royal court remained connected throughout Seleucid history.

[52] Dougherty and Kurke (ed.) (2003); Ma (2003), 177–195; Ma (1999); Chaniotis (1997); Dougherty and Kurke ed. (1993); Dougherty (1993), cf. Haubold (2013)a, 128-135.

Chapter 1: Mapping the Realm

Introduction

The first moment of Seleucid literature that I discuss is the conception and birth of the Seleucid Empire as a geographical entity. We can recognise this moment in the writings of Megasthenes, Demodamas, and Patrocles, men of action as well as letters, who contributed to the expansion of the realm and to the consolidation of the dynasty in their political and military lives as well as in their writings. The goal of this chapter is to investigate those writings, and consider both their role in the context of the nascent empire and their influence on later writers.

In the course of the successors' wars, Seleucus Nicator acquired large parts of Alexander's conquests through war and diplomacy.[53] At the treaty of Triparadeisus (320 BC), Seleucus was appointed satrap of Babylonia.[54] Having defeated Antigonus Monophtalmus at Ipsus in 301 BC,[55] he became the unchallenged *hegemon* of Asia and held sway as king over an empire that stretched from the Mediterranean coast to the steppes of central Asia. In the early phases of the Seleucid Empire, the kings were especially concerned with the expansion and consolidation of their eastern lands. The importance of this is reflected not only in their actions but also in the rise of a Seleucid literature dedicated specifically to the geography of the eastern reaches of the empire.

It has been said that the Seleucid Empire was an empire that consisted of a loose amalgam of peoples, cities and local dynasts.[56] According to this view, Seleucid rule was superimposed

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[53] The successors' wars were a turbulent time which saw the rise and fall of several key figures in quick succession. Much scholarship has been dedicated to the historical and political intricacies of this period. See Troncoso and Anson (ed.) (2015), Anson (2014) and (2006), 226-235; Braund (2003); Bosworth (2002), esp. 210-245; Chamoux (2002), 39-65; Shipley (2000); Walbank (1992) for further reading. For the different chronologies of this period see: Boiy (2011), 9-22; Boiy (2007); cf. Bosworth (2002); Wheatley (1998), 257-281; Bosworth (1992), 55-81 (arguing for a high chronology) and Braund (2003), 19-34; Billows (1990), 86-105; Errington (1977), 478-504; Errington (1970), 49-77 (with low chronology). For dating problems in the Hellenistic period in general, see Grzybek (1990).

[54] Braund (2003), 23; Bosworth (2002), 15-18; Billows (1990), 68-74; Anson (1986), 208-217; Errington (1970), 67-77. For discussions of the dating of Triparadeisus, see: Anson (2002), 373-390; Bosworth (1992), 55-81; Hauben (1977), 85-120.

[55] Braund (2003), 30-33; Bosworth (2002), 247-248, 259-261; Billows (1990), 175-186; Grainger (1990)a, 111, 114-123; Bar-Kochva (1976), 105-111; Briant (1973); Wehrli (1968).

[56] Austin (2003), 122-124.

upon a patchwork of different ethnicities and cultures.[57] Indeed, some scholars deny the existence of Seleucid space altogether, arguing that the Hellenistic empires, and that of the Seleucids most of all, were defined first and foremost by the king that ruled them.[58] However, in his recent book *The Land of the Elephant Kings*, Paul Kosmin has convincingly shown that the Seleucid kings did consider their empire in geographical terms.[59] Indeed, he argues that constructing and delimiting a specifically Seleucid space played an important part in Seleucid royal ideology.

The present chapter develops this point further. I argue that early Seleucid writers played a vital role in framing and articulating Seleucid spatial ideology and practices. My reading of Demodamas, Megasthenes and Patrocles argues that each of these authors was engaged in doing just that. Much of the groundwork here has again been laid by Kosmin's recent work. However, I argue that Kosmin does not go far enough. Specifically, he seems to me to be too quick to dismiss some of the ways in which these authors established a sense of imperial space, the syntax, as it were, of their geographical thought. That syntax is precisely what interests me here. I will pay particular attention to the longstanding idea of an empire stretching to the ends of the world[60] and the related idea of the Seleucids following in the footsteps of previous world conquering heroes and kings.

The chapter as a whole is in three parts. I start by outlining some of the recent work on geography and empire that underpins the more specific points I wish to make in this chapter. I then argue that Megasthenes, Patrocles and Demodamas used existing ideas of world rule to mould the fluid geography of inner Asia to their own, Seleucid, purposes. Finally, I investigate the impact their works had on the development of Ptolemaic geographical literature and science. I argue that the interest in the East professed in early Seleucid literature was far from peripheral to that development. Throughout the third century, India and the northern steppes presented real opportunities for skirmishing between Seleucids and Ptolemies over knowledge of 'the world' as an important source of authority and power.

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[57] Austin (2003), 121-124; Walbank (1992), 123-124; Rostovtzeff (1969), 155-156; Tarn (1938). For a refutation of this 'loose patchwork' interpretation of the Seleucid Empire, see Kosmin (2014)a and Kuhrt and Sherwin-White (1993).

[58] Edson (1958), 153-170; Tarn (1951), 4; Bikerman (1938), 11.

[59] Kosmin (2014)a.

[60] Kosmin argues that Seleucid space was bordered, to the west and the east, by peer kingdoms, and accordingly defined itself as part of a peer-kingdom system. It is true, of course, that to the west lay the successor kingdoms of the Ptolemies and the Antigonids and to the east the Mauryan kingdom in India. However, to the north the realm was potentially more open-ended, and it is here that the early Seleucid geographers focussed much of their attention.

The Literature of the Generals

The literary moment singled out in this chapter revolves around three men who contributed to the consolidation of the Seleucid Empire both in their writings and as generals or envoys. The first is Patrocles, the author of a *Periplus* which describes the regions around the Caspian Sea. The second is Demodamas, a general in Seleucus' army and author of a description of the geography of Bactria. Finally, there is Megasthenes, a Seleucid ambassador at the court of the Indian king Chandragupta, who wrote a treatise on India. All these men were concerned with geographical space, and with a specific phase in Seleucid history, when the empire expanded and was consolidated in central Asia. In order to understand them in their historical context, I briefly introduce them here.

Patrocles is firmly connected to the Seleucid royal house.[61] We can follow his career for some thirty years, from 311 when he was charged with the defence of Babylon against Demetrius Poliorcetes to 280 when Antiochus I sent him to Asia Minor to restore order in the Greek cities after the death of Seleucus.[62] At some uncertain point in time Patrocles was also appointed satrap of Bactria-Sogdiana, or possibly Hyrcania-Parthia.[63] His military record demonstrates that he was one of Seleucus' most trusted generals and advisors. One of our sources explicitly states that he was among his *philoi*:

> ἐπελθὼν Πατροκλῆς, ἀνὴρ συνετὸς εἶναι δοκῶν καὶ Σελεύκωι φίλος πιστός.
> Patrocles came to him, a man considered to be intelligent and a trusted friend of Seleucus.
> Plutarch, *Life of Demetrius* 47.4[64]

Plutarch records that Patrocles advised King Seleucus on how to deal with Demetrius, when the latter, after a failed invasion of Seleucus' realm, sent the king a letter outlining his misfortunes and begging for clemency. According to Plutarch, it was Patrocles who convinced the king not to be lenient toward Demetrius, but to take up arms against him. In this context, when the fortunes of the empire as a whole were at stake, Plutarch uses the term

[61] Relevant testimonies are collected in *BNJ* 712 (also *FGrHist* 712): Diodorus Siculus, 19.100.5-6; Plutarch, *Life of Demetrius* 47.4; Pliny, *Historia Naturalis* 6.58; Photius, *Bibliotheca* 224; Strabo, 2.1.6.
[62] Diodorus Siculus, 19.100.5-6 (*BNJ* 712 T1); Photius, *Bibliotheca* 224 (*BNJ* 712 T4). For discussion see Bosworth (2002), 218; Billows (1990), 142; Grainger (1990)a, 82-84; Bevan (1902), 55-56.
[63] Strabo, 2.1.17 (*BNJ* 712 T3a).
[64] Text from *BNJ* 712 T2.

‘trusted friend’ (φίλος πιστός) which refers to the institutionalised friendship between high-level administrators and the Seleucid king.[65]

The fact that Patrocles was a general in Babylon at the time of Demetrius’ attack gives a further indication of his importance to Seleucus, as Babylonia had been Seleucus’ original power base after the death of Alexander the Great and the meeting of Triparadeisus in 320 BC.[66] Seleucus used the time from 319 to 315 BC to cement his position in Babylonia and secure support from the Babylonian populace.[67] There followed a five year struggle over the region between Seleucus on the one hand and Antigonus and his son Demetrius on the other, illustrating the importance of the Babylonian satrapy not just to Seleucus personally but indeed to anyone with ambitions to hold the upper satrapies.[68] In 311 BC, with Patrocles as general, Seleucus managed to re-establish his hold on Babylonia. He marked the importance of this moment by taking it as the starting date of the Seleucid Era.[69] Patrocles’ further career as satrap and general suggests his continued importance as *philos* of Seleucus I. In 285/4 BC, he was sent out as *nauarchus* to explore the Caspian Sea region.[70] Patrocles became best known to posterity for his report of this expedition, which describes the north-eastern regions of the Seleucid Empire. In fact, he may have written two separate works: one on the geography of the Caspian Sea and the rivers flowing into it, and one on the geography of India – though the few fragments on India may also be part of the *Periplus*.[71] As with other early Seleucid authors, Patrocles’ works are only transmitted as fragments in other writers.

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[65] See above, pp. 22-24. It is unclear whether the adjective πιστός should in this instance be translated as ‘trusted’, or if it marks a formal distinction from an unranked φίλος. If the latter, Plutarch’s remark would most likely be anachronistic since the court structures of the early Seleucid kings were not yet as highly developed and hierarchical as they would become later, cf. Savalli-Lestrade (1998), 252, and contrast Strootman (2007), 151. Neither Strootman nor Savalli-Lestrade include φίλος πιστός in their discussion of hierarchical titles, which includes titles like πρῶτοι ϕίλοι and τιμώμενοι ϕίλοι (Strootman (2007), 181; Savalli-Lestrade (1998), 267).

[66] Landucci Gattinoni (2013), 33-36; Boiy (2010), 1-13; Landucci Gattinoni (2007), 29-54; Grainger (1990)a, 83-85; Bevan (1902), 54-5.

[67] Sherwin-White and Kuhrt (1993), 10.

[68] For discussion of the history and chronology of the successor wars in the eastern satrapies see: Boiy (2010), 1-13.

[69] For more in depth discussion of the significance of this action, and the importance of Babylon for Seleucus I more generally, see Chapter 2, p. 87.

[70] *Nauarchus*, or admiral, was an important, if not necessarily permanent, position in the Hellenistic military hierarchy (Hauben (1970), 1-15, presents an overview of the term in the Hellenistic period; Tarn (1911), 251-259); see for other examples of the close connection between admirals and the kings Diognetus, the admiral of Antiochus III (Chapter 3, p. 141), and the Ptolemaic admiral Callicrates of Samos (Chapter 3, p. 137-138, n. 547). Patrocles’ position, and the fact that the idea for the expedition was first conceived by Alexander, indicates the importance of the enterprise.

[71] See pp. 45-51, 69-71.

Demodamas was another high-ranking military man who contributed to the development of early Seleucid literature. As an army general, Demodamas too must have been a *philos* of King Seleucus I, though this is not explicitly stated in the sources.[72] According to Pliny, Demodamas at one point led the armies of Seleucus and Antiochus in Bactria and Sogdiana, and wrote a treastise on those lands.[73] Although the exact date of this campaign is unknown, Pliny's description of Demodamas as *Seleuci et Antiochi regum dux*, points to the years that Antiochus was viceroy in the East (292 to 281 BC).[74] From two honorific inscriptions set up by the city of Miletus we learn that Demodamas was a Milesian citizen. One of the two inscriptions is dedicated to Antiochus, Seleucus' son, the other honours Apama, Seleucus' first wife and Antiochus' mother.[75] The inscriptions date to 300/299 BC (the inscription for Antiochus) and 299/8 BC (the inscription for Apama) respectively and thus probably predate the campaign which Pliny describes.[76] The inscription in honour of Apama may suggest that Demodamas was also involved in an earlier Seleucid campaign, in 307 to 305 BC.[77] Here is what it says:

Ἔδοξε τῆι βουλῆι καὶ τῶι δήμωι · Λύκος Ἀπολλοδότ[ου εἶπεν ·]
περὶ ὧν προεγράψατο εἰς τὴν βουλὴν Δημοδάμας Ἀρ[ιστείδου]
ὅπως Ἀπάμη ἡ Σελεύκου τοῦ βασιλέως γυνὴ τ[ιμηθῆι]
δεδόχθαι τῆι βουλῆι καὶ τῶι δήμωι · ἐπειδὴ Ἀπά[μη ἡ βα]-
5 σίλισσα πρότερόν τε πολλὴν εὔνοιαν καὶ προ[θυμίαν]
παρείχετο περὶ Μιλησίων τοὺς στρατευομένου[ς σὺν]
[τ]ῶι βασιλεῖ Σελεύκωι καὶ νῦν παραγενομέν[ων τῶμ]
[π]ρεσβευτῶν, οὓς μετεπέμψατο Σέλευκος [διαλεξόμενος]
[π]ερὶ τῆς οἰκοδομίας τοῦ ναοῦ τοῦ ἐν Διδύμ[οις, οὐ τὴν]
10 τυχοῦσαν σπουδὴν ἐποε[ῖ]το, …

It was resolved by the council and people; Lycus, son of Apollodotus, put the motion: about the things Demodamas, son of Aristeides, had submitted to the council, that Apame the wife of King Seleucus be honoured; be it decreed by the council and people: since Queen Apame has

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[72] Gilley (2009), in *Brill's New Jacoby Online* (*BNJ* 428); Strootman (2007), 120; Savalli-Lestrade (1998), 4-5.

[73] Pliny, *Historia Naturalis* 6.49 (*BNJ* 428 T2).

[74] Tarn (1940); though Robert (1984) argues that the passage in Pliny does not necessarily settle the question of dating. On the ambiguity of the word *dux* (general and/or satrap), see Robert (1984), 468; Tarn (1940), 83.

[75] *I. Didyma* 479 (*OGIS* 213); *I. Didyma* 480 (*SEG* 4.442).

[76] Kosmin (2013)a, 200-201; also Robert (1984), 467-472.

[77] *I. Didyma* 480; Sherwin-White and Kuhrt (1993), 26. Some scholars have suggested that the Apama inscription refers to an earlier *Bactrian* campaign, in which Demodamas led a Milesian contingent in the 300's (Sherwin-White and Kuhrt (1993), 25-27; Robert (1984), 470-472, cf. Kawerau, Rehm, Wiegand (ed.) (1914), 262 (138), n. 1. This hypothesis ties together Demodamas, the Milesian soldiers and Queen Apama, but there is no further evidence to support it.

previously shown much goodwill and zeal to the Milesians campaigning with King Seleucus, and has been especially zealous upon the arrival of the ambassadors whom Seleucus had called up to discuss the building of the temple at Didyma…

I. Didyma 480[78]

In the opening lines of this inscription we see that the *boule* and *demos* of the Milesians decide to honour Apama for help with (re-)building the temple of Apollo in Didyma, and for her past deeds of goodwill toward the Milesians on campaign with Seleucus.[79] The inscription attests to the importance of Demodamas as an intermediary between the city and the king,[80] a typical role of Seleucid *philoi* who acted as part of an extensive network of patronage linking the kings and their subjects. Demodamas evidently was such a broker. He was a member of the city elite of Miletus, a general of the Seleucid army, and *philos* at the Seleucid court. Although not much is known about his life, the facts we do have encourage us to read his work in a specifically Seleucid context.

The last of our triad of writers is Megasthenes, an ambassador to the Indian king, who wrote a work on the geography, history and culture of India.[81] Although his *Indica* was eventually lost, it became the authoritative account of India throughout the Hellenistic and, often through intermediaries, the Roman period. This explains the many fragments of the work that are preserved by later authors such as Diodorus, Strabo, and Arrian,[82] and that, in conjunction with numerous extant testimonies, enable us to reconstruct the general outline of the *Indica*, and identify key themes, with somewhat greater certainty than is the case with the other two authors.[83] Most transmitted fragments of the *Indica* concern the rivers of India,[84] indigenous plants and animals[85] and the customs of the various peoples of India;[86] but we

[78] Text from Wiegand, Harder, and Rehm (1958).

[79] It seems likely that the Milesians were led by their fellow citizen Demodamas on a campaign to the upper satrapies with King Seleucus around 306 BC, cf. Robert (1984), 472.

[80] Strootman (2007), 11, cf. Introduction, p. 22-24.

[81] For scholarship on Megasthenes, see: Kosmin (2014)a, 31-58; Kosmin (2013)a, 203-206; Primo (2009), 53-62; Roller (2008) in *Brill's New Jacoby Online* (*BNJ* 715); Savalli-Lestrade (1998), 8-9; Karttunen (1997), 69-92; Bosworth (1996)a, 113-127; Brown (1995), 18-33; Zambrini (1983), 1105-1118; Brown (1957), 12-24; Timmer (1930); Schwanbeck, McCrindle and Sedgefield (1877).

[82] *BNJ* 715 (also *FGrHist* 715).

[83] Murray argues that Megasthenes modelled his *Indica* on the *Aegyptiaca* by Hecataeus of Abdera, covering "geography, flora, fauna, and the people (book I), the system of government and *nomoi* (book 2), society and philosophy (book 3), archaeology, mythology, and history (book 4)." Murray (1972), 208. As it is largely unclear to which books we should assign individual fragments, Murray's theory remains speculative in the detail. For a recent discussion of the *Indica*, see Kosmin (2014)a, 31-53.

[84] *BNJ* 715 F6-7, F9-10.

[85] *BNJ* 715 F20-26.

know that Megasthenes also covered India's geography, history and mythology and the laws of the country.

Although it is clear that Megasthenes wrote in the late 4th and early 3rd centuries BC, the details of his life are uncertain and contested. One point of contention, his precise dates, is particularly important here because it has a bearing on his connection (or otherwise) with the Seleucid court, and hence his status as a Seleucid author. I therefore review the main points of the debate and suggest a likely solution.

The issue of Megasthenes' date and relationship with the Seleucid court hinges on his role as an envoy to Chandragupta (Sandrakottos in Greek), the king of the Mauryan Empire in the late 4th century BC.[87] As Arrian tells us:

> Μεγασθένης, ὃς ξυνῆν μὲν Σιβυρτίωι τῶι σατράπηι τῆς ᾿Αραχωσίας, πολλάκις δὲ λέγει ἀφικέσθαι παρὰ Σανδράκοττον τὸν ᾿Ινδῶν βασιλέα.
> Megasthenes, who was associated with Sibyrtius the satrap of Arachosia, said he often went to Sandracottus the king of the Indians.
> Arrian, *Anabasis* 5.6.2[88]

Arrian describes here the credentials of Megasthenes as a geographer in a discussion of the size of the continent of Asia and the position of India within it.[89] In this context, he tells us that Megasthenes was connected with the ruler of Arachosia, an important satrapy in the east of the Seleucid kingdom. On the basis of Arrian's testimony, some scholars, most notably Bosworth in an influential article, have argued that Megasthenes was actually connected with Sibyrtius, before Seleucus' ascension to kingship, rather than with King Seleucus. In support of this thesis, they stress that the sources do not specifically claim that he was an envoy of Seleucus.[90] Furthermore, another testimony by Arrian seems to indicate that Megasthenes

[86] *BNJ* 715 F15-19, F27-34.

[87] Strabo, 2.1.9 (*BNJ* 715 T2c); Arrian, *Anabasis* 5.6.2/5.3 (*BNJ* 715 T2a/b); Pliny, *Historia Naturalis* 6.58 (*BNJ* 715 T8).

[88] Text from *BNJ* 715 T2a.

[89] See also Strabo, 2.1.9 (*BNJ* 715 T2c).

[90] Bosworth (1996)a argues that Megasthenes visited India in 320-318 BC, before Seleucus assumed power in the region, and that he was a local satrapal envoy rather than a Seleucid one: Bosworth (1996)a, 114. It is indeed likely that Megasthenes stayed at the satrapal court of Sibyrtius in between his travels to Chandragupta, but that alone need not preclude his acting on behalf of King Seleucus (and hence a later date). Bosworth also discusses the use of πολλάκις in Arrian's text and deems it likely that it refers to λέγει rather than to ἀφικέσθαι, i.e. that Megasthenes went to India only once but mentioned it often: Bosworth (1996)a, 117. His argument fails to convince. Bosworth's conclusions are adopted by Roller in his discussion of Megasthenes in *Brill's New Jacoby* (*BNJ* 715, Commentary on T2a). For a convincing refutation see Kosmin (2014)a, 261-271; Kosmin (2013)a, 204, 207.

visited King Porus at the height of his power.[91] Since Porus died in 318 BC, Megasthenes could not have met him if he had been sent as envoy by Seleucus I, who assumed control over the eastern satrapies only in 311 BC. [92]

However, there are several reasons for rejecting this conclusion. The most important point concerns Megasthenes' focus on the Gangetic kingdom of the Mauryans, and their capital of Palimbothra, rather than on Porus' Indus-based kingdom. This suggests a connection between Megasthenes and the Mauryan king Chandragupta, and supports a date of Megasthenes' travels during the reign of Seleucus I rather than at some earlier stage.[93]

Secondly, Clement of Alexandria explicitly connects Megasthenes with Seleucus:

> Μεγασθένης ὁ συγγραφεὺς ὁ Σελεύκωι τῶι Νικάτορι συμβεβιωκώς.
> Megasthenes the historian who lived together with Seleucus Nicator.
> Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis* 1.72.5[94]

Clement explicitly describes Megasthenes as a historian (συγγραφεύς) who lived with (συμβεβιωκώς) Seleucus. Bosworth proposes to interpret Clement's use of συμβεβιωκώς to mean 'living at the same time as' or 'being contemporary';[95] but this does not cover the meaning of συμβιόω: Clement's description clearly indicates that Megasthenes belonged to Seleucus' entourage.[96]

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[91] Arrian, *Indica* 5.3 (*BNJ* 715 T 2b): συγγενέσθαι γὰρ Σανδροκόττωι λέγει, τῶι μεγίστωι βασιλεῖ Ἰνδῶν, καὶ Πώρῳ ἔτι τούτου μείζονι. Schwanbeck emended this to Πώρου ἔτι τούτωι μείζονι "who was even greater than Porus", because he could not understand how Megasthenes could claim Porus was greater than Chandragupta or that Megasthenes met with Porus (Schwanback, McCrindle, and Sedgefield, (1877), 15). However, Brown argued already in 1955 that the emendation creates an inferior text (Brown (1957), 12-13). An explanation is offered by the figure of Porus in the Greek mind. Porus, the Indian king who opposed the army of Alexander and in the end made a treaty with him, became an exemplary figure in the Alexander tradition (Brown (1957), 13). Comparing Porus with Chandragupta in this way, Megasthenes stresses the similarities of Alexander and Seleucus and their Indian conquests. Arrian could even use the parallel to model the treaty between Seleucus and Chandragupta on that between Alexander and Porus, thus projecting a treaty after winning a battle onto a treaty after losing one. Bosworth interprets the original text as an argument to support his early dating of Megasthenes (see previous note)

[92] Bosworth (1996)a, 114.

[93] For this argument, see: Kosmin (2014)a, 263-265.

[94] *BNJ* 715 T1.

[95] Bosworth (1996)a, 114.

[96] συμβιόω suggests a close association as companion of the king. *LSJ* s.v. συμβιόω and s.v. συμβιωτής. Bosworth concedes that συμβεβιωκώς in Clement probably denotes a close relationship between Megasthenes and Seleucus, but he stresses that this does not imply that Megasthenes was Seleucus' ambassador in 305/304 BC. Bosworth (1996)a, 114.

Finally, Strabo mentions Megasthenes' Indian embassy alongside that of one Deimachus, another Seleucid writer of somewhat later date.[97] According to him, both men were sent to the Indian kings of their own time, Chandragupta and Bindusara respectively. And since the Indian king Bindusara reigned from 281 to 261 BC and Sibyrtius was already satrap of Arachosia in 325 BC, the latter is unlikely to have sent Deimachus to the Indian king Bindusara. In any case, the most likely power by far to have dispatched ambassadors to the Indian court in the 270's or 260's BC is the Seleucids.[98] If that much is granted, the close association in Strabo between the embassies of Megasthenes and Deimachus suggests that not only Deimachus but also Megasthenes was sent by the Seleucid king.

There is more. Deimachus of Plaitaia's embassy to Chandragupta's son King Bindusara attests to long-term Seleucid commitment to diplomatic relations with the Mauryan Empire.[99] According to Strabo, Deimachus was based in Palimbothra, as was Megasthenes during his embassy. References in Strabo and Athenaeus indicate that Deimachus also wrote an *Indica*, which provides further evidence for the literature of the Seleucid *philoi* on Eastern geography.[100] Very little of Deimachus' work has been transmitted, which might indicate that it did not have the same impact as that of Megasthenes. Yet even the little we know of Deimachus' life and works confirms that Seleucid interest in the East was considerable and sustained. I therefore maintain the traditional view that Megasthenes was an envoy of Seleucus I Nicator to King Chandragupta. As envoy of the Seleucid king Megasthenes would certainly have been among his *philoi*, and he probably spent the latter years of his life at the Seleucid court, writing the *Indica*.

Even from the sparse biographical facts that are known it seems clear that all three authors studied in this chapter not only had some connection with the Seleucid court but were in fact high-ranking *philoi* of the king. As such, they held a special position in the political economy of the early Seleucid Empire, which they helped to consolidate as generals, ambassadors and writers. It is their role as court authors that interests me here: their close connection with the Seleucid king, I argue, suggests that the works of these men should be read as examples of a

[97] ἐπέμφθησαν μὲν γὰρ εἰς τὰ Παλίμβοθρα ὁ μὲν Μεγασθένης πρὸς Σανδρόκοττον, ὁ δὲ Δηίμαχος πρὸς Ἀμιτροχάτην τὸν ἐκείνου υἱὸν κατὰ πρεσβείαν (Strabo, 2.1.9 (*BNJ* 715 T2c)). Not much is known about the biography of Deimachus of Plataia, besides the fact that he was an envoy to the Indian king Bindusara Amitraghata, so his role and impact as a Seleucid writer is hard to determine. For the testimonies and fragments that we have, see *BNJ* 716 (also *FGrHist* 716). See also, Kosmin (2014)a, 265-266.

[98] Primo (2009), 82.

[99] Kosmin (2014)a, 34-35.

[100] Strabo, 15.1.12; Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistai* 9.51.

specifically Seleucid (as opposed to merely Hellenistic) literature: that is to say, that it was written from a Seleucid perspective and with a specifically Seleucid political agenda in mind.

Mental Maps and the Mapping of Empire

I have argued that the works of Megasthenes, Demodamas and Patrocles should not be understood as the 'objective' geographical discourse of neutral observers but rather as part of an ongoing effort to extend, define and defend Seleucid imperial space. Recent work in social geography enables us to understand better what that means in practice. It is now well understood that cartography and geographic (or ethnographic) writing must always be read within the context of the discourses of power and knowledge that generate them.[101] Much of this understanding we owe to the discipline of social geography,[102] which aims to describe and explain how people perceive, shape and interact with the landscapes around them. Two concepts from social geography are particularly important in the present context. The first is the concept of mental maps and the idea that perceptions of space shape personal and collective geography. As Gould and White have argued,[103] people do not see the world 'as it is', but as they perceive it, and their perceptions influence their actions and decisions on a day-to-day basis. Indeed, mental maps of the world can influence us more than objective facts, even if those facts are incontrovertible and easily accessible.[104] Gould and White note a range of different ways in which perceptions of the world can be altered and manipulated, through familiarity with a region, education or the media.[105] Ethnographic literature provides one way of manipulating geographical space.[106]

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[101] Both these terms, power and knowledge, are Foucauldian concepts, and Foucault himself was interested in, though also sceptical about, applying them to the field of geography. For Foucault on geography: Crampton and Elden (ed.) (2007); Foucault (1986), 239-256; Gordon (ed.) (1980), 63-77; Foucault (1974)a; Foucault (1974)b.

[102] Social geography is a subdivision of geography strongly associated with the social sciences. For an overview of recent work in social (or human) geography see: Minca (2001); Agnew, Livingstone and Rogers (1996); Jackson (1995); Gregory, Martin and Smith (1994). On the specific issue of cartography and power see especially: Wood (2010); Akerman (2009); Wood (1993), 50-60; Anderson (1991) (revised edition from 1983); Harley (1989); Harley (1988).

[103] Gould and White (1986), 25; cf. Lynch (1960).

[104] In modern times access to 'objective geography' is much more readily available than ever before due to technological advances such as satellite imaging and Google maps. Before that, home atlases were a great improvement in terms of making geographical knowledge accessible. Until the developments of 'formal' cartography in the 16th and 17th century there was no objective standard with which to compare mental maps. Interestingly, however, Gould and White's study shows that increased access to objective geography does not diminish the importance of mental maps based on prejudices and assumptions.

[105] Gould and White (1986), 117-118, 151.

[106] Gould and White (1986), 151.

The second set of ideas from social geography that is important to my argument concerns the relationship between maps and empire. The relevant research here is again based on the concept of the mental map but adopts a more institutional viewpoint, focussing specifically upon the manipulation of space in the interest of establishing and sustaining imperial rule.[107] At the most general level, such manipulations are based on the fluidity of geographical perceptions and the fact that they can be altered to serve a vested interest. As Harley comments in an influential article on maps and imperialism: “maps are never value-free images; except in the narrowest Euclidean sense they are not in themselves true or false.”[108] Harley argues that we should read maps as a socially constructed form of knowledge within the wider framework of a sociology of power. An important corollary of this argument is that maps, as a tool of political control, are commonly used to justify imperial conquest,[109] a point that has been elaborated in a series of case studies. Much work, for example, has been done on the mapping of British India,[110] which shows in impressive detail that mapping an empire in important ways *creates* an empire. As Edney argues, “the empire exists because it can be mapped; the meaning of empire is inscribed into each map.”[111] The British, in other words, did not map the reality of India, “but what they did map, what they did create, was a *British* India.”[112] Edney points here to an important issue in mapmaking: the tension between ‘real’ geography and the perceived geography that emerges from a specific act of appropriation.[113]

Recent scholarship on the ancient world has taken inspiration from these developments in geographical studies.[114] Thus, Klaus Geus uses social geography to read ancient geographical texts more generally.[115] Nicolet in his study *L'Inventaire du Monde: Géographie et Politique aux Origines de L'Empire Romain* discusses geographical knowledge in the early Roman

[107] Wood (2010); Akerman (2009); Edney (1997); Thongchai (1994); Wood (1993), 50-60; Pickles (1992); Harley (1989); Harley (1988); Cosgrove and Daniels (1988). For further bibliography see Akerman (2009) or Edney (1997).
[108] Harley (1988), 278.
[109] Anderson (1991), 170-178; Harley (1988), 282.
[110] Barrow (2003); Edney (1997); Edney (1993), 61-67.
[111] Edney (1997), 2. See also Wood (2010), 27-38.
[112] Edney (1997), 3; [original italics].
[113] Edney (1997), 31; Broodbank (1993), 315, 326-327. For an analysis of the Herodotean king as explorer and Herodotus as an analogous figure who collects knowledge to unify the world, see Munson (ed.) (2013), 22; Ward (2008), 168-171; Christ (1994), 167-202.
[114] The growing importance of the spatial turn in classics is reflected in recent work on geopoetics: e.g. Asper (2011); and more general studies on space in literature: e.g. Geus and Thiering (ed.) (2013); de Jong (2012); Thalmann (2011); Purves (2010); Dueck (2000); Algra (1995). However, this trend has not so far extended to the writings of the early Hellenistic geographers.
[115] Geus and Thiering (ed.) (2013); Geus (2003), 232-245; Geus (2002); Geus (2000), 55-90.

Principate and its use in the fashioning of specifically Roman notions of space.[116] Nicolet stresses that in studies of space and politics "geography should not be understood as a reality but as a representation of reality."[117] His study marks an important step forward in our understanding of geographical writing in the ancient world,[118] and provides important pointers for my reading of the Seleucid geographers in the present chapter.

Mapping the Realm: the Spectre of World Empire

In the following section I consider manipulations of imperial space in the three earliest Seleucid writers. Edney's point that imperial officials actively create imperial space through a combination of actions and discourse provides an important starting point for my reading of their texts. As we shall see, the prescriptive, rather than merely descriptive, power of geographical works and surveys is essential to understanding the work of Patrocles, Demodamas and Megasthenes.

The prescriptive power of geographical survey can be seen most clearly in cases where the "desire for a line"[119] clashes with the ideal of a world empire. Paul Kosmin has argued that the Seleucid Empire marked a significant break with the Near Eastern tradition of world empire, first conceived by the Assyrians.[120] Assyrian rulers, and especially their Achaemenid successors, claimed to rule the four quarters of the world and proclaimed themselves 'king of kings'.[121] Kosmin argues that the Seleucids considered their empire to be part of a balance of

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[116] Nicolet (1991). Cf. Edney (1997), 31; Broodbank (1993), 315, 326-327.

[117] Nicolet (1991), 3. This is quite different from scholarship on the history of cartography and geography in the ancient world. For the latter, see Talbert and Unger (2008); Talbert (2008), 1-8; Brodersen (2004); Harley and Woodward (1987), Vol. I, 103-279; Dilke (1985); Tozer (1935); Bunbury and Stahl (1883); Bunbury (1879). Wood (1992), 22-27 argues passionately that there were no maps in the ancient world and that speaking about maps before the 14th century is anachronistic.

[118] An interesting case study, adopting these insights, is Dueck's work on Strabo of Amasia. In her study, Dueck shows that, throughout his *Geographica*, Strabo celebrates Roman power by setting the boundaries of the empire at the boundaries of the *oikoumene*, thus showing that the whole known world was conquered by the Romans (Dueck (2000), 111). For a similar point see Whittaker (2002), 106-110, who argues that beyond Roman administration there was the unknown, 'deserted and nameless'. For an extensive discussion of the use of geographical rhetoric in the Augustan period, see Nicolet (1991), 15-25.

[119] Kosmin (2014)a, 59.

[120] Kosmin (2014)a, 50-58. On Assyrian universalism, see notably Haubold (2013)a, 102-106; Liverani (1981), 43-66; Liverani (1979), 297-317. The Assyrians set an example for later empires: Beaulieu (2004), 49; Postgate (1992), 247; cf. Larsen (1979), 14.

[121] Strootman (2014)b, 39-43; Haubold (2013)a, 102. For the title 'king of kings', see Darius' inscriptions from Behistun (*DB*), Persepolis (*DP*) or Susa (*DS*), cf. Haubold (2007), 50, n. 16. For Achaemenid royal ideology and the ways in which the Achaemenids asserted their claims to world empire, see: Haubold (2012), 5-24; Kuhrt (2007), 469-487; Briant (2002), 165-254; Cool Root (1979).

power in a multi-kingdom world, rather than pursuing claims to world rule.[122] However, the idea of an empire reaching to the ends of the earth was certainly available to the Seleucids and, I shall argue, coexisted with the more realistic view that they competed with other powers. Indeed, this seemingly paradoxical situation had a long pedigree of its own. Already during the second millennium BC – when political power in the East was divided up among several competing empires – individual states combined inherited claims to world rule on the one hand with a recognition of the existence of other powers on the other. They did not attempt to reconcile these two conflicting modes, for they were, at one level, quite incompatible. At another level, however, they could happily coexist as two separate cognitive realities that were each accurate in their own right.[123]

A similar situation existed for much of the first millennium BC, when Assyrian, Neo-Babylonian and Achaemenid rulers were certainly aware of political realities far more complex than the sweeping claims to universal rule which they articulated in their inscriptions and royal ideology. These complications carried over into the Hellenistic period. In practice, the successors' wars had resulted in the division of Alexander's conquests and created a system of peer kingdoms. However, the early Hellenistic kings all emphasised the universality of their reign.[124] As Strootman argues: "although there existed a balance of power between the Hellenistic kingdoms, and Hellenistic kings themselves acceded to this principle (up to a certain point), political ideology does not always accord with political reality."[125] Seleucus I and his immediate successors certainly acknowledged that their world consisted of multiple centres of power and therefore required the establishment of clear boundaries. However, this did not preclude the ambition, on their part, of establishing an empire that in time-honoured fashion could be said to reach to the ends of the earth. Early Seleucid literature helped them consolidate the borders which had been created by conquest and diplomacy while at the same time evoking the ideal of a true world empire, both in geographical and historical terms.

[122] Kosmin (2014)a, 31-32, 50-52, see also Will (1984), 23-61, at 29: "[The period of] the Diadoch Wars, … is [the period] which sees the elimination of the unitary idea in favour of the particularist tendency." For a (cautious) re-evaluation of the concept of world rule in the Hellenistic period see Ager (2003), 35-50, esp. 38 and 49. Kosmin specifically dismisses the notion that the Seleucids considered their neighbouring kings as either vassals or rebels rather than equals.

[123] Haubold (2013)a, 102-103; Liverani (2001); Liverani (1990), esp. 47-48, 66-78.

[124] For the universal claims of Hellenistic kings see most recently: Strootman (2014)b, 38-61 and Strootman (2007), 23. The universal pretensions of Hellenistic kings are also discussed by Lehmann (1998), 81-101, who provides a comparative overview of universal imperialism, cf. Lehmann (1988), 1-17.

[125] Strootman (2007), 23-24.

Patrocles' description of the Caspian Sea region exemplifies the tension between delimiting the Seleucid realm and establishing it as a true world empire. As discussed above, Patrocles was sent on a mission by Seleucus I to explore the coastline of the Caspian Sea. Although the work he subsequently wrote about his trip is not transmitted in full, several fragments in later geographers refers back to the *Periplus*. It is thus possible to extract some of Patrocles' main points about this region.[126] For example, we know that, in the *Periplus*, Patrocles described the various tribes along the Caspian shoreline and the rivers that flow into it, notably the Jaxartes, the Oxus and the Araxes.[127] In addition, Patrocles seems to have given measurements for the Caspian Sea and, significantly, to have claimed that it was open to the outer Ocean.[128] Since the Caspian is in fact an inland sea, and only one of the above rivers, the Araxes, issues into it, this outcome of Patrocles' fact-finding mission comes as a surprise to modern readers, who have often wondered how Patrocles could have been so wrong if indeed he sailed the Caspian Sea as a Seleucid admiral.[129] However, the puzzle can be solved if we read Patrocles' descriptions of the Caspian Sea region as the creation of a mental map of the Seleucid Empire.

From a Greek perspective, the geography of Inner Asia was notoriously vague. By the early Seleucid period the geography of the Caspian in particular had been debated for some time. In the 6th century BC, Hecataeus of Miletus, one of the first geographers to create a comprehensive description of the world, cast the Caspian Sea as a gulf of the Ocean.[130] Herodotus, by contrast, described it as a land-locked sea and was followed in this by Aristotle.[131] Herodotus may have altered Hecataeus' geography because he had acquired

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[126] See also above, pp. 31-33. Some fragments seem to indicate that Patrocles also wrote about India, especially about its geographical features and size (*BNJ* 712 F2-3). Since Patrocles claims to have sailed from India to Bactria on the Oxus River, the discussion of the size and mountain ranges of India might be part of the work on the Caspian Sea rather than a separate work. See for a recent discussion Kosmin (2014)a, 67-76.

[127] Arrian, *Anabasis* 7.16.3-4 (*BNJ* 712 F4d); Strabo, 11.7.3 (*BNJ* 712 F5a); Strabo, 2.1.15 (*BNJ* 712 F5b); Strabo, 11.4.2-4 (*BNJ* 712 F5e); Strabo, 11.11.5 (*BNJ* 712 F6a); Strabo, 11.7.4 (*BNJ* 712 F6b), etc. For the Roman reception see Pliny, *Historia Naturalis* 6.17.52 (*BNJ* 712 F5c); Solinus, *Polyhistor* 19.4-5 (*BNJ* 712 F5d).

[128] Strabo 2.1.17 (*BNJ* 712 4a); Arrian, *Anabasis* 7.16.3-4 (*BNJ* 712 F4d)

[129] Williams (2009), in *Brill's New Jacoby Online* (*BNJ* 712); Holt (1999), 28; Thomson (1965), 127-130, 293-294; Jacoby (1958), *FGrHist* 712, Vol. III; Cary and Warmington (1929); Tarn (1901); Bunbury (1879). These discussions mainly revolve around the question of truth.

[130] *Scholia ad Apollonii Rhodii Argonauticam* 4.259 (*BNJ* 1 F18a); see also Herodotus who refutes earlier authorities who claim that the Caspian Sea was a gulf (Herodotus, 1.202.4-203.1), this critique was most likely directed against Hecataeus; cf. Harley and Woodward (1987) 132-135; Bunbury (1897) 148-149, Map II.

[131] Herodotus, 1.203-204 and 3.117; Aristotle, *Meteorologica* 354A3-4.

more reliable information about the Caspian, for example from Persian sources.[132] However, it is just as likely that he was working on an analogy with the Black Sea, and had no fresh knowledge at his disposal.[133] In any case, Hecataeus of Abdera who flourished in the 4th century BC, reverted to the older view that the Caspian Sea was a gulf.[134] That this debate was not only academic is seen in Arrian's and Plutarch's description of Alexander's campaigns in the East. According to these two writers Alexander took a particular interest in the Caspian Sea. After personal investigation he decided that it had to be a fresh-water lake, because it was less salty than the Mediterranean. He could, however, not be certain and determined to send out an expedition to resolve the controversy.[135] Before this plan could be put into action Alexander died. However, Seleucus inherited Alexander's interest in the Caspian Sea, and dispatched Patrocles to explore it in 285/4 BC.[136] Patrocles 'empirically' confirmed Hecataeus' view that the Caspian Sea was a gulf of the Ocean, and his testimony stood in such high regard that until Ptolemy in the 2nd century AD all geographers seem to have accepted it. Indeed, the idea remained widespread until the 14th century AD.[137]

Patrocles' description of the Caspian Sea, then, stood in a long tradition of geographical debate. Before his expedition, the region around the Caspian Sea had an essentially fluid geography for the Greeks. Ostensibly, Patrocles put an end to this fluidity in his description of the north eastern regions of the Seleucid realm, maintaining on empirical grounds that the Caspian Sea was a gulf of the outer Ocean. His status as an eye-witness gave him greater

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[132] It is debated to what extent, if any, Herodotus made use of Persian information (see Munson (2009), 457-470 and Lateiner (1989), 101-102 for further discussion). Moreover, it is unclear what the Persians knew about the Caspian Sea region. Many commentators on Herodotus, such as How and Wells, praise Herodotus for his knowledge of the Caspian Sea, without discussing the precise provenance of his information (How and Wells (1928), Vol. I, 153).

[133] Analogy was an important factor for Herodotus, as it may have been for Hecataeus of Miletus (who considered the Caspian Sea a mirror of the Persian Gulf). For geographical analogy in Herodotus, see: Corcella (2013), 44-77; Bichler (2001), esp. 15-24; Thomas (2000), 78-79; Lloyd (1975), Vol. I, 164-165; Immerwahr (1966), 315-317; Myres (1953), 32-43, cf. Hartog (1988), 14-16, 225-230.

[134] Perhaps again inspired by analogy, with the Persian Gulf for example, or as a tribute to his namesake Hecataeus of Miletus.

[135] Plutarch, *Life of Alexander* 44.1-2; Curtius Rufus, 6.4.18-19, see also: Hamilton (1969), 116-17. On plans for the expedition see Arrian, *Anabasis* 7.16.2.

[136] The fact that Patrocles considered himself to be following Alexander's plans is supported by a fragment from Strabo in which Patrocles claims that he received Alexander's reports of the Eastern regions from his treasurer (Strabo, 2.1.6). For discussion of these reports and the last plans of Alexander, see Pearson (1960), 260-264; Pearson (1954-5), 429-455; Hammond (1988), 137-140; Badian (1967), 173-204.

[137] Hamilton (1969), 116-17; Tozer (1935), 367; Herrmann (1919), *RE* 10.2 cols. 2275-90. Macrobius (early 5th cent.), though he was familiar with both theories, gave preference in his *De Somnio Scipionis* (Commentary on Cicero's *Somnium Scipionis* 2.9) to the notion of the Caspian as an oceanic gulf. This tradition continued in European science throughout the Middle Ages.

credibility than anybody who had gone before, including Alexander himself. Patrocles, it would seem, had settled an ancient question by providing fresh data.

In truth, he did nothing of the sort: we have already seen that all his major geographical claims were wrong: the Caspian was not in fact an oceanic gulf, and the rivers which he claimed issued into it did not in fact do so. If we assume that Patrocles wished to clarify the geography of the Caspian Sea, this outcome is startling indeed. However, if we concede that what was at stake for him was not geographical truth so much as geo-political interest, it becomes entirely transparent. Two separate, but interrelated, issues seem relevant here.[138]

First, by opening the Caspian to the Ocean, Patrocles 'closes' the northernmost part of the Seleucid realm. If the ocean begins north of the Caspian, then there is no more land to conquer in the north and the Seleucid Empire reaches the end of the world.[139] Geo-politically, the king who held the shores of the Caspian Sea held the northern edge of the world (at least on the Asian side).

Secondly, Patrocles' account enabled the Seleucids to claim control over a vast network of inner-Asiatic trade. Trade featured prominently in Patrocles' work and in this he was clearly guided by Seleucid imperial interest.[140] What becomes clear from the extant fragments is that he conceived the geography of the Caspian Sea, and especially of its rivers, in economic terms: if he was correct, this would enable the Seleucids to conduct maritime trade all the way from India to the Black Sea, and from there to Greece. The focus on trade routes in almost all sources that transmit or summarise Patrocles' work corroborates the importance of this feature in Patrocles' *Periplus*.[141] A world map according to Eratosthenes, who based himself on Patrocles for the north eastern fringes of the world, shows three potential trade routes.[142] Here is Eratosthenes' map:

[138] Cf. Kosmin (2014)a, 67-74.

[139] This resonates with many Near Eastern traditions of Empire. On the Achaemenids' use of the sea as a criterion for world rule, see Haubold (2012), 5-24.

[140] Patrocles' fragments focus on rivers as trade routes, tradeable goods and the mercantile disposition of local populations. See below, pp. 45-49, for a more extensive discussion of trade in Patrocles' fragments. For Seleucid interest in trade, and the revenue from tolls, see Aperghis (2004), 76-78, 157-163.

[141] Strabo 11.11.6 (*BNJ* 712 F4b); Strabo 11.7.3 (*BNJ* 712 F5a); Pliny, *Historia Naturalis* 6.17.52 (*BNJ* 712 F5c); Solinus, *Polyhistor* 19.4-5 (*BNJ* 712 F5d).

[142] This map is an adaptation of Geus (2000), 89. Eratosthenes was head librarian under king Ptolemy III Euergetes and acted as a tutor of Ptolemy's son and successor. His role in the reception of Seleucid geography will be explored in more depth toward the end of this chapter.

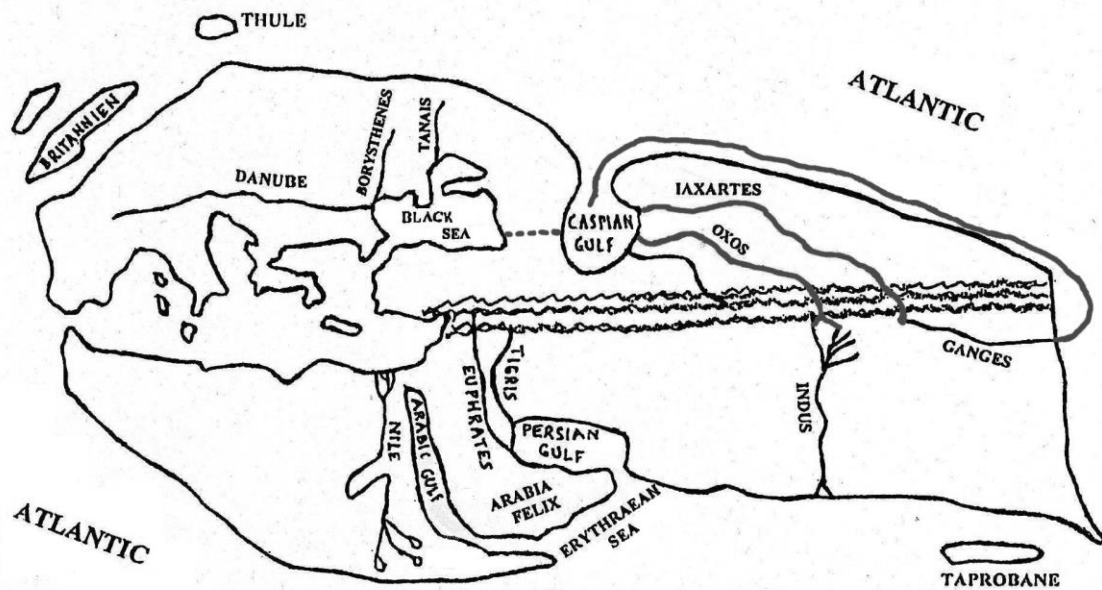

Figure 1 - Patrocles' Indian trade routes

Let us now consider how Patrocles' inventive geography of inner Asia helps him establish these trade routes in the Seleucid imagination, and cash out the idea of a world empire in terms of (imagined) material benefits. As can be seen, Eratosthenes, drawing on Patrocles, suggests the existence of two major trade routes across Asia. The first route runs via the great rivers that flowed from the Indian mountains to the Caspian Sea. They are described by Strabo, who quotes Patrocles:

> ᾿Αριστόβουλος δὲ καὶ μέγιστον ἀποφαίνει τὸν Ὦξον τῶν ἑωραμένων ὑφ᾽ ἑαυτοῦ κατὰ τὴν ᾿Ασίαν πλὴν τῶν ᾿Ινδικῶν. φησὶ δὲ καὶ εὔπλουν εἶναι καὶ οὗτος καὶ ᾿Ερατοσθένης παρὰ Πατροκλέους λαβών, καὶ πολλὰ τῶν ᾿Ινδικῶν φορτίων κατάγειν εἰς τὴν ῾Υρκανίαν θάλατταν, ἐντεῦθεν δ᾽ εἰς τὴν ᾿Αλβανίαν περαιοῦσθαι, καὶ διὰ τοῦ Κύρου καὶ τῶν ἑξῆς τόπων εἰς τὸν Εὔξεινον καταφέρεσθαι.
> Aristoboulos says that the Oxus is the greatest [river] of those he saw in Asia, except the Indian rivers. Both he and Eratosthenes, who had his information from Patrocles, say that it is navigable (lit. good for sailing) and that it transports many Indian goods down to the Hyrcanian Sea [i.e. the Caspian Sea], from where they are transported to Albania and brought to the Euxine by way of the Cyrus River and the regions beyond.
> Strabo 11.7.3[143]

[143] Text from *BNJ* 712 F5a, translation adapted from Williams (2009). See also Strabo 2.1.15.

Strabo first describes the river Oxus (modern Amu-Darya) as a navigable river, and then describes how goods from India come down via the Oxus to the Caspian Sea, whence they can be transported further west.[144] The focus is clearly on long-distance trade from East to West, i.e. from the Asiatic fringes of the Seleucid Empire to traditionally Greek lands. Indeed, Patrocles takes pains to emphasise not just the feasibility of the route itself but also the exploitability of the spaces which it traverses. In the following passage he discusses details of navigation such as the silting of rivers and opportunities for mooring places but quickly veers off into advertising the exploitability of the surrounding regions:

> καὶ δὴ καὶ εἰς στόματα δώδεκά φασι μεμερίσθαι τὰς ἐκβολάς, τὰ μὲν τυφλά, τὰ δὲ παντελῶς ἐπίπεδα ὄντα καὶ μηδὲ ὕφορμον ἀπολείποντα· […] τάχα μὲν οὖν τῶι τοιούτωι γένει τῶν ἀνθρώπων οὐδὲν δεῖ θαλάττης· οὐδὲ γὰρ τῆι γῆι χρῶνται κατ' ἀξίαν, πάντα μὲν ἐκφερούσηι καρπόν, καὶ τὸν ἡμερώτατον, πᾶν δὲ φυτόν· καὶ γὰρ τὰ ἀειθαλῆ φέρει· τυγχάνει δ' ἐπιμελείας οὐδὲ μικρᾶς, ἀλλὰ τἀγαθὰ ἄσπαρτα καὶ ἀνήροτα ἅπαντα φύονται, καθάπερ οἱ στρατεύσαντες φασι, Κυκλώπειόν τινα διηγούμενοι βίον ... καὶ οἱ ἄνθρωποι κάλλει καὶ μεγέθει διαφέροντες, ἁπλοῖ δὲ καὶ οὐ καπηλικοί· οὐδὲ γὰρ νομίσματι τὰ πολλὰ χρῶνται, οὐδὲ ἀριθμὸν ἴσασι μείζω τῶν ἑκατόν, ἀλλὰ φορτίοις τὰς ἀμοιβὰς ποιοῦνται, καὶ πρὸς τἆλλα δὲ τὰ τοῦ βίου ῥαθύμως ἔχουσιν. ἄπειροι δ' εἰσὶ καὶ μέτρων τῶν ἐπ' ἀκριβὲς καὶ σταθμῶν, καὶ πολέμου δὲ καὶ πολιτείας καὶ γεωργίας ἀπρονοήτως ἔχουσιν·
> Moreover, they say that the outlet of the river is divided into twelve mouths, of which some are choked with silt, while the others are completely shallow without even a mooring place. […] Perhaps such a people have no need of a sea since they do not make appropriate use of their land either, which produces every kind of fruit, even the most highly cultivated kind, and also every plant, for it bears even the evergreens. The land does not receive even the least attention, yet 'all things spring up for them without sowing and ploughing', according to those who have made expeditions there, who describe the mode of life there as 'Cyclopeian'…The inhabitants of this country are unusually handsome and large. They are open in their dealings, and not mercenary; for they do not in general use coined money, nor do they know any number greater than one hundred, but carry on business by means of barter and otherwise live an easy-going life. They are also unacquainted with accurate measures and weights, and they have no forethought for war or government or farming.
> Strabo 11.4.2-4[145]

In this passage, which is almost certainly taken from Patrocles, Strabo focusses on three different aspects of the fluvial environment of the Caspian Sea coast. He first discusses

[144] Although Strabo displays his reliance on other geographers such as Aristoboulos and Eratosthenes/Patrocles, he invokes autopsy to enhance the reliability of his (or rather Aristoboulos') data. Aristoboulos was a geographer/historian in the army of Alexander (*BNJ* 139; *FGrHist* 139). His work comprised a history from the birth of Alexander until his death. Together with Ptolemy he was the principal source of Arrian's account of Alexander.

[145] Text from *BNJ* 712 F5e.

challenges to navigation, such as the silting of rivers and the lack of mooring places; but he then digresses on the almost mythical fertility of the land itself, presenting the reader with an ethnography of the inhabitants of this region which focusses mostly, though not exclusively, on trading habits. For instance, Patrocles reports on the inhabitants' non-mercantile nature, their unfamiliarity with money and with accurate measures and weight.[146] In the Hellenistic world, where international trade was conducted with a variety of different standards for weights, coins and measures, local currencies and standards of weights and measures were of great interest to traders.[147] The people that Patrocles' describes, however, do not know money at all and, in conjunction with their fabulously fertile land, appear rather like inhabitants of the Golden Age. Indeed, Patrocles seems to have described their way of living as 'Cyclopeian' and to have quoted from the *Odyssey* to illustrate the point.[148] Comparison with the Odyssean Cyclopes evokes the colonial gaze of the settler: like Odysseus approaching the island of the Cyclopes, Patrocles describes the steppes of inner Asia not as a barren wasteland but as an Eldorado where crops grow without human labour and await exploitation at the hands of Seleucid (Greek) colonists and traders.

Patrocles' geography of Inner Asia, then, was a Seleucid fantasy of exotic fringes waiting to be exploited by Greek merchants and settlers. Yet, fantasy though it may seem to us, it appears to have been treated as real in important ways. Seleucus I, we are told, 'planned' to dig a canal from the Caspian Sea to the Black Sea to facilitate trade between the eastern and western parts of his empire.[149] In purely practical terms, Seleucus' canal was an absurdity, as it would have had to cut from the Cyrus River through the passes of the Caucasus and the plains of Georgia to the Black Sea.[150] Yet, this utterly unrealistic 'plan', which was even more blatantly the product of wishful thinking than Patrocles' vision of a central Asia populated by Golden Age societies, did have a serious function. For it advertised to Seleucid subjects that the geography of central Asia had important economic implications. These had little to do with 'real' economics as we might conceive it today but everything with Hellenistic ideologies of kingly power.

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[146] We may compare Alexander's orders to his admiral Nearchus prior to his expedition from the Indus to the Persian Gulf: to reconnoitre the coast, its bays, islands, the coastal inhabitants, anchorages, water supplies, manners and customs of the people, and fertility of the land (Arrian, *Anabasis* 7.20.9-10; Arrian, *Indica* 32.10-11).

[147] See Capdetrey (2007), 395-428; Aperghis (2004), esp. 213-245.

[148] Homer, *Odyssey* 9.109.

[149] Pliny, *Historia Naturalis* 6.11.4-5, 6.31. For a historical discussion see Cary (1929), 289; Bevan, (1902), 283; Tarn (1901), 15-19.

[150] Strabo 11.7.3 (*BNJ* 712 F5a); Strabo 11.6.1 (*BNJ* 712 F8a).

Among the king's most important tasks in Hellenistic times, as already in the ancient Near East, was to exploit the wealth of the empire and channel it toward the imperial centre for redistribution and conspicuous consumption. In practical terms, not much could be done to enhance the infrastructure of vast states like the Seleucid Empire without the help of modern technology. More often than not, rulers therefore resorted to powerful symbolic gestures such as opening up new mountain passes (we may think already of Gilgamesh in the eponymous epic) or ocean crossings (Gilgamesh again).[151] The building of canals, a gesture that combined the opening of new waterways with the crossing of difficult terrain, had acquired particular prominence under the Achaemenid kings. Both Darius and Xerxes displayed their power and control over resources by connecting different parts of their empire by digging canals.[152] Darius' canal from the Red Sea to the Nile is particularly instructive. In the Chalouf inscription, Darius proclaims his decision to build a canal enabling ships to travel from Egypt to Persia, from the empire's western periphery to its heartland.[153] The direction of travel is significant: for Darius, the Red Sea canal was not just a way of asserting his power over the elements but also, specifically, a way of casting himself in the role of creator of Persian wealth. Significantly, the same canal was later reopened by Ptolemy III Euergetes, who, in an act of imperial appropriation, renamed it 'Ptolemy'.[154]

Patrocles' world view also supported a second route from India to the Caspian Sea, the Northeast Passage, as we might call it.[155] There are several indications that he actively stressed the possibility of this second route:

> καὶ δοκεῖ τῆς αὐτῆς παραλίας μέχρι τῆς Ἰνδικῆς ἀρκτικώτερον εἶναι σημεῖον καὶ περίπλουν ἔχειν ἀπὸ τῆς Ἰνδικῆς δυνατόν, ὥς φησιν ὁ τῶν τόπων ἡγησάμενος τούτων Πατροκλῆς ...

[151] *Gilgamesh Epic* (SBV), Tablet I.i.38-40; cf. Tablet IX.ii-v, X.iii-iv (George (2003), 95-105; Dalley (1989)).

[152] Darius dug a canal from the Red Sea to the Nile (*Chalouf stela*; Herodotus, 2.158-159; cf. Briant (2002), 384, 479; Schörner (2000), 31, 40; Redmount (1995), 127-135). Xerxes cut a canal through Mount Athos (Herodotus, 7.23-24), see Chapter 3, p. 157 for a Callimachean rendering of Xerxes' canal. Cf. Kosmin (2014)a, 73-75.

[153] Darius' inscription at Suez (*DZc* 2.5-6): "Therefore, when this canal had been dug as I had ordered, ships went from Egypt through this canal to Persia, as I had intended".

[154] Diodorus Siculus, 1.33.11-12, cf. Tuplin (1991), 238. The importance of this canal can be seen in the Adulis Inscription in which it is used to return the 'statues of the gods' to Egypt (see Chapter 3, pp. 151-152).

[155] The idea of a northern passage to the East continued to enthral Western traders and explorers well into the 16th century. Cf. the Dutch sailor and explorer Willem Barentsz (1550-1597), who attempted to reach India by sailing along the northern coast of Russia. He never succeeded. The journey of Portuguese captain Melgueiro (1660-1662) may conceivably be the first successful crossing of the Northeast Passage, but the first secure attestation is Bering's exploration in 1728, as part of the Great Northern Expedition scheme of Czar Peter the Great.

[The mouth of the Caspian] seems to be a more northerly point than the coastline itself that runs from there to India; and it seems to be possible to sail around from India, according to Patrocles, who was once governor of these regions.
Strabo, 2.1.17[156]

In the broader context of this passage Strabo describes the position of the mouth of the Caspian relative to the Armenian mountains. He follows up this description with the claim that, according to Patrocles, it was possible to sail from the mouth of the Caspian to India. Strabo does not seem to have specified whether Patrocles claimed to have done this himself or merely postulated that it could be done.[157] Pliny, however, clearly asserts that Macedonian ships indeed sailed from the Indian Ocean to the Caspian Sea:

iuxta vero ab ortu ex Indico mari sub eodem sidere pars tota vergens in Caspium mare pernavigata est Macedonum armis Seleuco atque Antiocho regnantibus, qui et Seleucida et Antiochida ab ipsis appellari voluere. et circa Caspium multa oceani litora explorata parvoque brevius quam totus hinc aut illinc septentrio eremigatus.
Similarly in the east the whole part (of the Ocean) under the same star from the Indian Ocean to the Caspian Sea was navigated by Macedonian forces in the reign of Seleucus and Antiochus, who determined it to be named both Seleucis and Antiochis after themselves. Around the Caspian many coasts of Ocean have been explored, and almost the whole of the north has been sailed from one side to the other.
Pliny, *Historia Naturalis* 2.67.167-168[158]

This passage contains several interesting claims: first, it confirms that there was a route from the Indian Ocean to the Caspian Sea, via the outer Ocean. Secondly, Pliny claims that Macedonian forces had made this journey and in so doing explored the intervening coastline. Patrocles' name is not mentioned here, but it seems likely that Pliny's remarks refer to his explorations.[159] Even if we do not take the passage as a direct reflection of Patrocles' text, it does indicate the ideological weight that his report carried: what he offered was not just

[156] Text from *BNJ* 712 F4a.
[157] Cf. Strabo 11.11.6, where Strabo declares his doubt over the Inner Asia river trade route, but writes that Patrocles claimed that it existed.
[158] Text from *BNJ* 712 F4c.
[159] In another fragment, Pliny suggests that this expedition was led by the kings themselves, thus highlighting the part played by royal power in the exploration and exploitation of Seleucid space. See Pliny, *Historia Naturalis* 6.58: "Seleucus, Antiochus, and the commander of the fleet, Patrocles, actually sailed around into the Hyrcanian and Caspian Sea". For the relation between kings (and kingship), exploration and an analysis of the Herodotean king as king explorer and Herodotus as an analogous figure who collects knowledge to unify the work, see Munson (ed.) (2013), 22; Ward (2008), 168-171; Christ (1994), 167-202.

geographical exploration like any other but rather possession of half the world and its resources, "very nearly the whole of the north has been sailed from one side to the other". The suspicion that this really is about world rule, and the riches that come with it, is confirmed when Pliny tells us that the Seleucid kings renamed part of the outer Ocean Seleucis and Antiochis after themselves. This last claim neatly encapsulates the geopolitical issues that were at stake for the Seleucids. Appropriating regions by (re-)naming them is common practice with cities in the Hellenistic world. It is also used in connection with larger regions, but not, normally, entire oceans or oceanic tracts. To rename the Eastern Ocean Seleucis and Antiochis is to appropriate the very end of the world, claim its potential for economic benefit, and link both to the royal family, as the ideological centre of the empire.[160]

Fantastic as they were, Patrocles' ideas of trade routes across Asia turned out to be highly influential. Pompey the Great, for one, seems to have exploited their potential to the full:

> *non omiserim quod per idem tempus eidem Magno licuit ex India diebus octo ad Bactros usque ad Alierum flumen, quod influit Oxum amnem, pervenire, deinde mare Caspium, inde per Caspium ad Cyri amnis penetrare fluentum, qui Armeniae et Hiberiae fines interluit. Itaque a Cyro diebus non amplius quinque itinere terreno subvectis navibus ad alveum Phasidis pertendit: per cuius excursus in Pontum usque Indos advehi liquido probatum est.*
>
> I will not omit that at the same time for that same Pompey the Great it was possible to arrive at Bactria from India in eight days, as far as the Alierus River, which flows into the Oxus River, and thence to the Caspian Sea, and from there to pass through the Caspian to the Cyrus River, which flows between the regions of Armenia and Iberia. Then, in a journey of no more than five days, with ships are carried overland, he travelled from the Cyrus River to the Phasis River: this proves that, via this route, Indians reach the Euxine Sea by water.
>
> Solinus, *Polyhistor* 19.4-5[161]

Solinus, basing himself on Pliny, claims that Pompey the Great could travel from India to the Black Sea, via the rivers of Bactria and the Caspian; and that 'the Indians' did too.[162] Pompey

[160] Other examples of appropriation through (re-)naming are the numerous cities in the Seleucid Empire which were founded, or refounded, bearing names of the royal family, e.g. Seleucia on the Tigris, Seleucia on the Orontes, Antioch, Laodiceia, Seleucia in Pieria. See further Appian, *Syriaca* 57; and Cohen (1978). In addition, the entire region of the Tetrapolis in northern Syria was called the Seleucis. In the Ptolemaic realm, the canal from the Red Sea to the Nile was named after Ptolemy II; see above p. 48. Other examples include the city of Berenice on the Red Sea and the Arsinoite *nome*.

[161] Text from *BNJ* 712 F5d.

[162] For a historical analysis see Dreher (1996), 188-207; Wissemann (1984), 166-173; Greenhalgh (1980), 101-146, esp. 129-135; Seager (1979), 53-62; Leagh (1978), 85-88; Van Ooteghem (1953), 222, 228; Anderson (1922), 99-105; Bunbury and Stahl (1883), 88-90.

of course did nothing of the sort, but we know that he did toy with the idea of a passage to India, presumably to bolster his own credentials as conqueror of the East: according to Varro (recorded in Pliny) Pompey claimed that Indian goods were transported to the Black Sea in seven days.[163] Neither of these fragments mentions the names of previous geographers, but a comparison with Patrocles' description of inner-Asian trade shows that he was the likely source behind Pompey's ideas, either directly or via the texts of Eratosthenes.[164] Remarkably, the Romans did not only accept the idea of an Asian trade network, they actively confirmed and perpetuated it. In so doing, they also confirmed the high reputation of Patrocles' Caspian Sea report and the power of his geopolitical vision: the fact that none of it was true mattered less than the fact that much of it was immensely suggestive. Furthermore, these Roman texts show that early Seleucid geographies had an impact far beyond the moment of their creation. I shall return to this point towards the end of my chapter.

In conclusion, I have argued that Patrocles' text can be understood better if we do not read it as an attempt to represent 'objective' geographical facts (although it presents itself as such an attempt) but instead concentrate on what his claims meant for the imperial geography of the Seleucid Empire. What was at stake, for Patrocles and for the Seleucid kings (and indeed for Roman conquerors after them), was appropriating the vast spaces of central Asia in a way that made them good to think with. Patrocles' expedition, and his subsequent report deployed the idiom of Greek historiography (autopsy) in the interest of imperial map-making, but his was not an isolated enterprise, nor was he dismissed as a dreamer: the 'plan' to build a canal from the Caspian Sea to the Black Sea, and the re-naming of the Indian Ocean and the Caspian Sea after Seleucid kings and queens illustrate the centrality of his vision to Seleucid notions of space, and ultimately the power of Seleucid imperial geography itself.

Demodamas: in the Footsteps of Kings

In the previous section I argued that Patrocles used the fluidity of Caspian Sea geography to create an image of a world empire in command of vast resources. Traditions of world empire became more explicit in the work of my second author, Demodamas, and his account of his

[163] Pliny, *Historia Naturalis* 6.17.52: "Varro says that it was discovered under Pompey that in seven days goods could come from India into Bactria to the river Bactra, which flows into the Oxus; and that from the Oxus these goods, if carried across the Caspian to the Cyrus River, could be brought to the Phasis and from there to the Euxine Sea with a land porterage of only five days."

[164] Bosworth and Tozer think that Pliny's version is distinct from Eratosthenes' and Patrocles' reports since he quotes Varro (Bosworth (1980), 373; Tozer (1897), 134 & n.4), but given the evident similarities with Patrocles that seems to me to be unlikely.

actions along the banks of the Jaxartes River. Like Patrocles' *Periplus of the Caspian Sea*, Demodamas' work on Bactria-Sogdiana considers the north eastern frontier of the Seleucid Empire, though it focusses on the land regions instead of the Caspian Sea. More specifically, Demodamas was interested in the Jaxartes River as a border of the Seleucid realm. In Pliny's account, we read that he crossed the river, as a Seleucid general, and set up altars to Apollo of Didyma:

> *ultra Sogdiani, oppidum Panda et in ultimis eorum finibus Alexandria, ab Alexandro Magno conditum. arae ibi sunt ab Hercule ac Libero Patre constitutae, item Cyro et Samiramide atque Alexandro, finis omnium eorum ductus ab illa parte terrarum, includente flumine Iaxarte, quod Scythae Silim vocant, Alexander militesque eius Tanain putavere esse. transcendit eum amnem Demodamas, Seleuci et Antiochi regum dux, quem maxime sequimur in his, arasque Apollini Didymaeo statuit*.
>
> Beyond [the Bactrians] are the Sogdians, with the city of Panda, and in their remotest regions Alexandria, founded by Alexander the Great. There are altars there erected by Hercules and Liber Pater, and also by Cyrus, Semiramis and Alexander, the border of all their command in this part of the lands, confined by the river Jaxartes, which the Scythes call the Sili, and Alexander and his soldiers thought to be the Tanais. Demodamas, a general of kings Seleucus and Antiochus, whom we have been following mostly in these matters, crossed this stream and erected altars to Apollo of Didyma.
>
> Pliny, *Historia Naturalis* 6.49[165]

According to Demodamas, on whom Pliny is drawing here, the Jaxartes River formed the boundary of the empires of Heracles, Dionysus, Cyrus, Semiramis and Alexander. The border is marked by altars erected by these world conquerors, in whose tradition Demodamas places himself as a general of Seleucus.[166] Several points are at stake here for the creation of a Seleucid space.

First, I would like to focus upon the act of dedicating altars as a way of creating a Seleucid *lieu de memoire*.[167] In his recent discussion of Demodamas Kosmin writes that: "Demodamas' erection of altars on the Jaxartes River is clearly a spatializing gesture,

[165] The Latin text comes from Ian and Mayhoff (1967).
[166] Pliny's text reveals a tension between the agency of Seleucus and Demodamas himself. Does Demodamas' style himself as a world conqueror or is he only a proxy for the Seleucid king? On the one hand, it is clear that, as a general of the Seleucid army, Demodamas represents the Seleucid king. On the other hand, ambitious generals and satraps also used high-profile successes to enhance their own career. In short, both the dedication of the altars and the written record of this act can be seen to enhance the status of the king *and* the general.
[167] For the concept of *lieux de memoire*, see Nora (1996-1998); Nora (1984-1992); For studies that apply this concept to the ancient world see e.g. Jung (2006), 13-27.

delimiting the edge of Seleucid sovereignty in this region and echoing Alexander's altars at the Hyphasis in India."[168] Alexander set up altars to the twelve Olympian gods on the Indian river Hyphasis before turning back to Babylon.[169] In this passage Demodamas claims that Alexander also erected similar altars at the Jaxartes. The Alexander historians however do not mention altars at the banks of the Jaxartes, and the story of Alexander building such altars is not known before Demodamas and may be a Seleucid invention.[170] Whatever its ultimate source, the depiction of the two altars of Alexander on the Peutinger table close to the Araxes/Jaxartes indicates the lasting force of this idea.[171]

Besides serving as a spatializing feature, Demodamas' altars carried additional significance in that they were dedicated to Apollo of Didyma. Some scholars have explained this choice by pointing to the fact that Miletus was the hometown of Demodamas.[172] Beyond that, Tarn connects the dedication of the altars to the fact that Apollo of Didyma was the dynastic patron deity of the Seleucids since Seleucus I Nicator.[173] According to Herodotus, the oracle of Didyma had been deserted since the Persian Wars when the statue of Apollo was taken to Susa.[174] Callisthenes reports that the sacred spring, which had ceased flowing since the time of Xerxes, miraculously sprang forth again when Alexander entered the temple.[175] It was Seleucus, however, who restored Apollo's cult statue to Didyma and provided money for the restoration of the temple.[176] A body of stories, similar to those told about Alexander and Zeus-Ammon, sprung up about Apollo of Didyma and his relationship with Seleucus I,[177]

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[168] Kosmin (2013)a, 200.

[169] Kosmin (2014)a, 62, cf. Strabo 3.5.5.

[170] Bosworth (1995), 17.

[171] Pritchett (1980), 197-288; Miller (1916), at cols. 639-642. For a facsimile see: http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/5/50/TabulaPeutingeriana.jpg

[172] Robert (1984), 468.

[173] Erickson (2011), 51-53; Grainger (1990)a, 5, and 164; Hadley (1974), 57-59; Tarn (1940), 93. For a discussion of these issues with a focus on the numismatic evidence, see: Iossif (2011), 234-262.

[174] Herodotus, 1.157.3, 6.19.3. Parke (1985) 60-62; Tarn (1922), 63-64.

[175] Callisthenes, *FGrHist* 124 F14 (Strabo 17.1.43)

[176] Parke (1985), 64, cf. Pausanias, 1.16.3 and 8.46; *I. Didyma* 479 (*OGIS* 213); *I. Didyma* 480 (*SEG* 4.442). Sherwin-White and Kuhrt (1993), 27; Grainger (1990)a. With this action Seleucus distanced himself from the Persians, who had stolen the statue and placed it in their capital Susa. In Chapter 3 the significance of stolen statues is discussed at length as an indicator of imperial power and good kingship, pp. 151-152.

[177] It has often been argued that these and other stories, that are part of the so-called 'Seleucus Romance' (Fraser (1996), 35-39), where developed at a later stage to legitimise Seleucid power retrospectively. The term Seleucus Romance was coined by Fraser in his book *The Cities of Alexander the Great* (Fraser (1996), 36). Fraser proposed that in order to counter Ptolemaic appropriations of Alexander, the Seleucids emphasised the achievements of Seleucus Nicator. Fraser also argued that Appian's *Syrian War* reflected Seleucid propaganda, and compared the list of city foundations of the Seleucus Romance to the a-recension of the Alexander Romance. Since Fraser, the term Seleucus Romance has been used by various scholars to refer to a variety of different texts and stories, but the meaning or impact of the Romance has never been fully explored. Fraser

including an anecdote according to which the oracle at Didyma predicted Seleucus' kingship of Asia when he was still a general.[178] The strong link between Apollo of Didyma and Seleucus I imbues Demodamas' altar with a special significance: as with Patrocles' *Periplus*, Demodamas' work too creates a specifically Seleucid space by associating remote regions of inner Asia with the imperial centre. He does not explicitly evoke end-of the-world imagery: the Jaxartes is not the Ocean, though according to Patrocles it issues into it. Still, by noting that a string of previous world conquerors had turned back at the Jaxartes, Demodamas effectively casts the Seleucid kingdom as a world empire by association: although for him the ideological borders of Seleucid rule do not coincide with the physical borders of the world, the overall effect is similar.

Indeed, Demodamas suggests that the Seleucids outdid their predecessors, for he crosses the Jaxartes and deliberately sets the Seleucid altars apart from the other altars, that are, according to Pliny, all at Alexandria Eschate, on the southern bank of the river.[179] Demodamas' crossing of the river suggests that Seleucid conquest could neither be contained by natural boundaries nor by the borders set up by previous conquerors. In this he followed Achaemenid ideas of a transcendental empire, according to which borders such as 'the Ocean' or 'the Desert' were established only to be defied.[180] By crossing the Jaxartes and setting up altars on its banks, Demodamas advertised the Seleucid's ambition to rule beyond all borders. Indeed, he did not only physically *perform* this action when he was a general for Seleucus, he also put it into writing, thus commemorating and perpetuating it as part of an unbroken history of world empire. Imperial space, for Demodamas, was historically conditioned, and in this he resembles other early Seleucid writers. I now consider in more detail how they derived a specifically Seleucid notion of space from their awareness of previous world conquerors.

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argued that the Seleucus Romance had an early Seleucid source (Fraser (1996), 36-39) but many scholars are sceptical because of the late attestation of the story (Primo (2009)). Kosmin has argued for an early date and links various parts of the Romance with epigraphical evidence, for example the story of the anchor and Seleucus' divine parentage, without discussing the tradition as a whole (Kosmin (2014)a, 98; Kosmin (2014)b, 179-180).

[178] Appian, *Syriaca* 56. Hadley (1974), 53, 58.

[179] Tarn and Kosmin both link the erection of the altars to the re-foundation of Alexandria Eschate as Antioch. Kosmin points out the narrative pattern that emerges from the accounts of Pliny and Strabo, which probably are based on Demodamas' account, of foundation by Alexander, destruction by nomads, and re-foundation by Antiochus. Kosmin (2013)a, 201; Tarn (1940), 90-94. However, this interpretation fails to take into account the significance of the crossing of the river.

[180] Haubold (2013)c, 102-114; Rollinger (2013)a, 95-116; Haubold (2012), 6-7, 11; Rollinger (2012), 95-116. For the Near Eastern tradition of kings crossing seas, mountains and deserts see *Gilgamesh Epic*, Tablet IX-X; Nebukadnezzar *VAB* 4.14 col. i.24 (Langdon); *VAB* 4.15 col. ii.22–3 (Langdon); *VAB* 4.19 col. iii.14 (Langdon).

We have seen that Demodamas employs a list of world conquerors as a template for Seleucid space. A similar list also appears in the work of Demodamas' colleague and near contemporary Megasthenes. Most previous scholarship has disregarded these lists because of their historical inaccuracy,[181] but I would argue that they play an important role in these geographical texts and fulfil a number of functions. Most notably, they help us compare and contrast the Seleucid Empire with previous world empires. In order to understand better how this works in practice, let me first return to Demodamas' king list, before considering the more complex list of Megasthenes.

We have seen that Demodamas enumerates a string of world conquering gods and kings whose realm ended at the banks of the Jaxartes: the list is headed by the gods Heracles and Dionysus, followed by two Near Eastern rulers, Cyrus and Semiramis, and ends with Alexander the Great. Alexander was a role model for all Hellenistic successor kings, so his presence here is not unexpected.[182] The other names may seem *prima facie* more surprising, but on closer inspection confirm the specifically Seleucid nature of this list: what was at stake for Demodamas at the Jaxartes was not only the succession of world empires in general but also, more specifically, the Seleucid Empire's claim to inherit Alexander's realm.

This is perhaps most obvious when it comes to Dionysus and Heracles, who are closely linked to Alexander in several ways. Alexander revered both deities as divine ancestors and as exemplary conquerors, as can be seen in many episodes from his life.[183] Heracles was considered to be a direct ancestor of Alexander via his father Philip and was honoured by Alexander as one of his most important patron deities.[184] More importantly, both Dionysus and Heracles were explicitly adopted by Alexander as role models and precursors, especially in the Far East.[185] He recognised their traces at the banks of the Jaxartes and the Hyphasis, the town of Nysa where Dionysus was born, and the rock fortress Aornus that Heracles failed

[181] *BNJ* 715 F 11a-b, commentary Roller (2008) in *Brill's New Jacoby Online* (*BNJ* 715); Bosworth (1996)a, 122-123; Brown (1955), 26-29; but see Kosmin (2014)a, 51-52, 62-63 who does discuss the purpose of these lists.
[182] Hadley (1974), 52-53.
[183] Fredricksmeyer (2003), 262-264.
[184] Fredricksmeyer (2003), 254.
[185] For Alexander emulating Dionysus and Heracles see Diodorus Siculus 17.72.4, 17.106.1; Arrian, *Indica* 6.28-1-2; Curtius Rufus 3.12.18; 9.10.24-30, Plutarch, *Life of Alexander* 67; Pliny, *Historia Naturalis* 16.144; cf. Fredricksmeyer (2003), 262-265; Bosworth (1993), 201. During his eastern campaigns Alexander organised various *komoi* in honour of Dionysus, e.g. after the burning of Persepolis or after the march through the Gedrosian desert. Especially regarding his conquests in the far east, Bactria, Sogdiana and India, all sources report that he presented himself as following in the footsteps of Dionysus.

to take.[186] In telling these stories, the sources do not only reflect the fact that Alexander followed existing traditions of Eastern conquest by demi-gods, but also Alexander's own active creation and promotion of such tradition. Although Dionysus had been associated with Asia as far as Bactria since Euripides' *Bacchae*, his strong link with India, which would become so productive in later times, seems to stem from Alexander's own propaganda.[187] Likewise, there seems to be no tradition of Heracles in the Far East before Alexander.[188] Alexander's imitation of, and rivalry with, Dionysus and Heracles were well known in antiquity and "soon became a rhetorical commonplace in which fact and fiction were inextricably fused."[189] One suspects that Demodamas adopted Heracles and Dionysus in his list of world conquering kings for that very reason: they helped him emphasise the legacy of Alexander and the continuity between the Seleucids and Alexander by evoking the glorious, semi-mythical predecessors of Alexander, and thereby placing himself and his king in this tradition too.

The list can also be read as an allusion to the so-called 'succession of empires', a powerful historical template attested both in Greek and Near Eastern tradition. In Greek tradition the succession of empires was attested for the first time in Herodotus,[190] and later adopted by various other Greek historians, e.g. Ctesias, Polybius and Diodorus.[191] In the Herodotean succession of empires, the world empire of the Assyrians was succeeded by that of the Medes, which was in turn overtaken by Persian rule.[192] In his list of conquerors Demodamas places the Seleucid Empire within a modified version of this template that is headed by the mythical conquerors Heracles and Dionysus but also encompasses the Assyrian Empire of Queen Semiramis, the Persian Empire founded by Cyrus and the conquests of Alexander.

It follows that, for Demodamas, Alexander and by implication his own master Seleucus are part of the same tradition of world conquest that in Herodotus is associated primarily with the Assyrians and Persians. Yet, that tradition is given a typically Hellenistic inflection. Looking first at Semiramis, Herodotus introduces her as a queen of Babylon who was

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[186] Nysa: Arrian, *Anabasis*, 5.1.1-2.2; Pliny, *Historia Naturalis* 6.78; Philostratus, *Life of Apollonius of Tyana* 2.2, 2.6-10. Aornus: Arrian, *Anabasis*, 4.28-30, Diodorus Siculus, 17.85.

[187] Bosworth (1999), 1-2.

[188] Fredricksmeyer (2003), 265; Bosworth (1993), 181. Although the tradition of Heracles in Scythia, the undefined northern steppes that bordered both Asia and Europe, can be found in Herodotus, tales about his exploits in India and Bactria seem to originate from the Alexander historians and the early Seleucid writers.

[189] Fredricksmeyer (2003), 265. See also Fredricksmeyer (2003) for a collection of the ancient sources.

[190] See Haubold (2013)a, 78-98 (esp. 78-80) for possible Near Eastern versions of a succession of empires.

[191] Momigliano (1994), 29-31.

[192] Herodotus, 1.95-130.

responsible for extensive irrigation works and the constructions of dikes.[193] The life and exploits of Semiramis are described more fully in Ctesias' *Persian History*.[194] Ctesias narrates how Semiramis was the daughter of a goddess and a mortal and, after being raised by doves, first married the governor of Syria and subsequently Ninus, king of the Assyrians.[195] After the death of Ninus, Semiramis became queen in her own right. Ctesias ascribes the founding of Babylon to Semiramis, together with the construction of roads and monuments throughout Asia.[196] He describes Semiramis' campaign into India extensively as well as the story of how Semiramis helped Ninus take Bactra by trickery. The fact that Semiramis returns to Bactria with her own army after the conquest of Egypt strengthens her association with the region.[197] Although neither Herodotus nor Ctesias seem to have connected Semiramis specifically with the Jaxartes,[198] she is clearly depicted by Ctesias as a world conqueror, campaigning against Armenia, Egypt, Ethiopia and India, while holding the whole of Asia under her sway. According to Arrian, Alexander meant to imitate and surpass Semiramis' feat of crossing the Gedrosian desert, and Demodamas evokes a similar sentiment of emulation at the banks of the Jaxartes.[199]

Moving on to Cyrus, he was at the same time a formidable conqueror and an example of a good king in Greek tradition.[200] Like Semiramis, Cyrus was also associated with conquests in the Far East. His campaigns to Bactria are given short shrift by Herodotus, who mentions them but focusses on Cyrus' siege of Babylon.[201] Ctesias goes into a little more detail about Cyrus' dealings with the Bactrians and the Sacae.[202] But it is once again the Hellenistic context that matters here: according to Arrian, Cyrus founded a city on the banks of the

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[193] Herodotus, 1.183. A passing remark about Semiramis' lack of wisdom shows that more stories about her were known to Herodotus; see Herodotus, 1.184-185. For Semiramis in Greek literature: Dalley (2013), 117-127; Lane Fox (2008); Braun (1938), 6-12.

[194] Stronk (2010) for the most recent edition of Ctesias' works.

[195] Ctesias, F1b (Diodorus Siculus, 2.5.1-6.10).

[196] Ctesias, F1b (Diodorus Siculus, 2.7.1-14.2).

[197] Ctesias, F1b (Diodorus Siculus, 2.6.1-10, 2.16.1).

[198] However, Ctesias does relate how Semiramis crossed the Indus River (Ctesias, F1b (Diodorus Siculus 2.16.4-10)) with fake elephants. Demodamas seems to have relocated her riverside exploits from India to the Jaxartes.

[199] Both Nearchus and Onesicritus write that Alexander's crossing of the Gedrosian desert was inspired by the examples of Queen Semiramis and King Cyrus; see Arrian, *Anabasis* 6.24.1-26.5.

[200] Xenophon, *Cyropaedia*. Haubold (2013)a, 103-106; Mitchell (2013), 93-95; Briant (2002), 13-18, 31-48; Gera (1993), 280-285.

[201] Herodotus, 1.154, 1.178.

[202] He describes how the Bactrians surrendered to Cyrus upon learning that he had married the daughter of the Median king. Cyrus then continues waging war on the Sacae, who repel his attack.

Jaxartes, Cyropolis, for the defence and demarcation of this important border.[203] Strabo claims that he was the first king to unite the countries 'from the Mediterranean to the Indus and from the Jaxartes to the Persian Gulf', thus singling out the Jaxartes as a defining border of his realm.[204] Like Semiramis, Cyrus became a role model for Alexander whose admiration for Cyrus is shown in several episodes of his campaigns: rebuilding Cyropolis at the Jaxartes, crossing the Gedrosian desert and, especially, restoring Cyrus' tomb in Pasargadae.[205] Strabo even calls Alexander φιλόκυρος 'friend of Cyrus', when describing his campaign in Bactria.[206]

These examples show that Demodamas created a historical framework for the Seleucid Empire that was based upon a specifically Hellenistic view of Alexander and his predecessors. This view of imperial history is not wholly new, and in particular shows affinities with that of the Alexander historians, as we have seen – but Demodamas does add novel features, such as the role of Apollo of Didyma. In that way, he not only gave his own spatializing gesture a historical context but also placed the borders of the Seleucid Empire in a tradition that was particularly meaningful in the generation after Alexander.

I now turn to Megasthenes' similar list of kings. It is transmitted through two sources, Strabo and Arrian, with some differences between them. The following passage is from Strabo:

> συναποφαίνεται δέ πως καὶ Μεγασθένης τῶι λόγωι τούτωι, κελεύων ἀπιστεῖν ταῖς ἀρχαίαις περὶ Ἰνδῶν ἱστορίαις· οὔτε γὰρ παρ᾽ Ἰνδῶν ἔξω σταλῆναί ποτε στρατιὰν οὔτ᾽ ἐπελθεῖν ἔξωθεν καὶ κρατῆσαι, πλὴν τῆς μεθ᾽ Ἡρακλέους καὶ Διονύσου καὶ τῆς νῦν μετὰ Μακεδόνων. καίτοι Σέσωστριν μὲν τὸν Αἰγύπτιον καὶ Τεάρκωνα τὸν Αἰθίοπα ἕως Εὐρώπης προελθεῖν, Ναβοκοδρόσορον δὲ τὸν παρὰ Χαλδαίοις εὐδοκιμήσαντα Ἡρακλέους μᾶλλον καὶ ἕως Στηλῶν ἐλάσαι· μέχρι μὲν δὴ δεῦρο καὶ Τεάρκωνα ἀφικέσθαι, ἐκεῖνον δὲ καὶ ἐκ τῆς Ἰβηρίας εἰς τὴν Θράικην καὶ τὸν Πόντον ἀγαγεῖν τὴν στρατιάν· Ἰδάνθυρσον δὲ τὸν Σκύθην ἐπιδραμεῖν τῆς Ἀσίας μέχρι Αἰγύπτου. τῆς δὲ Ἰνδικῆς μηδένα τούτων ἅψασθαι· καὶ Σεμίραμιν δ᾽ ἀποθανεῖν πρὸ τῆς ἐπιχειρήσεως. Πέρσας δὲ μισθοφόρους μὲν ἐκ τῆς Ινδικῆς μεταπέμψασθαι Ὕδρακας, ἐκεῖ δὲ μὴ στρατεῦσαι, ἀλλ᾽ ἐγγὺς ἐλθεῖν μόνον, ἡνίκα Κῦρος ἤλαυνεν ἐπὶ Μασσαγέτας.

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[203] Arrian, *Anabasis* 4.2.2; 4.3.1-4; Curtius Rufus, 7.6.16; Pliny, *Historia Naturalis* 6.18, cf. Briant (2002), 39-40; Francfort (1988), 170-171.

[204] Strabo, 15.1.5. The importance of the Jaxartes in Strabo's description can be seen as a continuation of Demodamas' tradition.

[205] Arrian, *Anabasis* 6.29.4–11, cf. Nawotka (2010), 331-333; Bosworth (1988), 153-154.

[206] Strabo, 11.11.4, cf. Olbrycht (2010), 357; Romm (2010), 380–387; Fowler and Hekster (2005), 22; Brosius (2003), 174; Briant (2002), 86.

> Megasthenes, moreover, agrees with this reasoning, urging disbelief in the ancient histories about the Indians; for no army was ever sent abroad by them, nor did any army from abroad invade and conquer them, except those with Heracles and Dionysus and now that with the Macedonians. But Sesostris the Egyptian and Tearkon the Ethiopian advanced as far as Europe, and Nabokodrosoros, who was more esteemed among the Chaldaeans than Heracles, marched as far as the Pillars (of Heracles). Tearkon too had reached them, but Nabokodrosoros also led an army from Iberia into Thrace and to Pontos. Idanthyrsus the Skythian overran Asia as far as Egypt. None of these, however, conquered India. Semiramis, furthermore, died before her attempt. Although the Persians brought in the Hydracae from India as mercenaries, they did not make an expedition there, but came near to it only when Cyrus attacked the Massagetes.
> Strabo 15.1.6[207]

Strabo's fragment is part of the introduction to his description of India, in which he discusses the unreliability of available sources on the country, especially on Indian history before the conquests of Alexander. He subsequently enumerates kings and queens who conquered many parts of the world, but not India. This list includes the Egyptian Sesostris, the Ethiopian Tearkon, Nabokodrosoros (Nebuchadnezzar) of Babylon, The Scythian king Idanthyrsus, and Semiramis, who died before she could execute her plans for an Indian conquest. The list also mentions the Persians, and specifically Cyrus.[208]

Why is Megasthenes so anxious to distinguish between former rulers who did conquer India and others who did not? First, as Kosmin rightly notes, his list seems to serve as an apology for the Seleucids' failure to incorporate India into their empire.[209] Other scholars concur, with Bosworth going so far as arguing that Megasthenes could not have been writing under the patronage of the Seleucid kings, because he extols Alexander's deeds at their expense.[210] However, this reading does not seem to me to do justice to the nuances of Megasthenes' narrative. First of all, if we compare Megasthenes' list of conquering kings

[207] Text from *BNJ* 715 F11a.
[208] Arrian tells essentially the same story but his list is shorter, containing only Sesostris, Idanthyrsus, Semiramis and Alexander, Heracles and Dionysus.
οὗτος ὦν ὁ Μεγασθένης λέγει, οὔτε ᾿Ινδοὺς ἐπιστρατεῦσαι οὐδαμοῖσιν ἀνθρώποισιν οὔτε ᾿Ινδοῖσιν ἄλλους ἀνθρώπους, (5) ἀλλὰ Σέσωστριν μὲν τὸν Αἰγύπτιον τῆς ᾿Ασίης καταστρεψάμενον τὴν πολλήν, ἔστε ἐπὶ τὴν Εὐρώπην σὺν στρατιῆι ἐλάσαντα, ὀπίσω ἀπονοστῆσαι, ᾿Ιδάνθυρσον δὲ τὸν Σκύθεα ἐκ Σκυθίης ὁρμηθέντα πολλὰ μὲν τῆς ᾿Ασίης ἔθνεα καταστρέψασθαι, ἐπελθεῖν δὲ καὶ τὴν Αἰγυπτίων γῆν κρατέοντα. (7) Σεμίραμιν δὲ τὴν ᾿Ασσυρίην ἐπιχειρέειν μὲν στέλλεσθαι εἰς ᾿Ινδούς, ἀποθανεῖν δὲ πρὶν τέλος ἐπιθεῖναι τοῖς βουλεύμασιν. ἀλλὰ ᾿Αλέξανδρον γὰρ στρατεῦσαι ἐπ᾽ ᾿Ινδοὺς μοῦνον. [[(8) καὶ πρὸ ᾿Αλεξάνδρου Διονύσου μὲν πέρι πολλὸς λόγος κατέχει ὡς καὶ τούτου στρατεύσαντος ἐς ᾿Ινδοὺς καὶ καταστρεψαμένου [᾿Ινδούς], ῾Ηρακλέος δὲ πέρι οὐ πολλὸς κτλ.]] (Arrian, *Indica* 5.4-8).
[209] Kosmin (2014)a, 37-53, esp. 49-50; Kosmin (2013)b, 97-116.
[210] Bosworth (1996)a 121-124, cf. Roller (2008) in *Brill's New Jacoby Online* (*BNJ* 715).

with that of Demodamas it becomes apparent that Bosworth glosses over the word choice of Megasthenes, who writes *Macedonians*, rather than Alexander.[211] Since all other kings are named this must be a deliberate deviation from the norm. I would argue that Megasthenes uses this deviation to create a useful ambiguity: Macedonians, after all, might refer to both Alexander and to Seleucus, and in any case suggests several conquerors, not just one.[212] By employing the term Macedonians, rather than naming Alexander, Megasthenes at least potentially includes the Seleucids in the triad of conquerors of India, alongside Dionysus and Heracles.

To put it more strongly: the passage does not belittle Seleucus but assimilates him to past rulers. The Seleucids are placed in a tradition of Greek conquerors and civilisers that reach the end of the world, and, in Megasthenes, contrasted with powerful barbarian kings, whom they surpass. That this image is not historically accurate is unimportant; what does matter is that it chimes with early Seleucid imperial discourse.

How carefully Megasthenes has shaped his text becomes apparent when we look in more detail at what he says about the positive achievements of those rulers who, according to him, had failed to conquer India. Megasthenes describes Tearkon and Nebuchadnezzar as having reached the pillars of Heracles[213] and also associates Sesostris and Idanthyrsus with European

[211] Arrian's version contains Alexander, but the principle of *lectio difficilior* suggests that Strabo's text is closer to Megasthenes. The following table shows the main differences between the two accounts of Megasthenes' list:

Megasthenes (Strabo)	**Megasthenes (Arrian)**
Heracles	Heracles
Dionysus	Dionysus
Cyrus (/Persians)	
Semiramis	Semiramis
Macedonians	Alexander
Sesostris	Sesostris
Tearkon	
Nebuchadnezzar	
Idanthyrsus	Idanthyrsus

Strabo seems to provide the more faithful account of Megasthenes for a number of reasons: most notably he includes Nebuchadnezzar, who, as is apparent from other fragments of Megasthenes (in Josephus and Eusebius), did play a role in the *Indica*. See *BNJ* 715 F1a, F1b, F11a, F11b.

[212] For Seleucus as one of several Macedonian conquerors see Pliny, *Historia Naturalis*, 2.67.167-8, discussed above at pp. 49-50.

[213] Nebuchadnezzar in particular is an interesting choice. Like Tearkon, he makes his first appearance in Greek historiography in Megasthenes' *Indica*, but unlike Tearkon he becomes a prominent figure in Seleucid literature from Babylon. In Megasthenes' king list, Nebuchadnezzar conquers Europe from the Pillars to the Black Sea, through Spain and Thrace. With these conquests, he surpasses Heracles, who conquered less. Megasthenes also compares Nebuchadnezzar directly with Heracles (Ναβοκοδρόσορον δὲ τὸν παρὰ Χαλδαίοις εὐδοκιμήσαντα Ἡρακλέους μᾶλλον καὶ ἕως Στηλῶν ἐλάσαι) introducing Babylonian priests as possessing an alternative but

conquests. In Megasthenes, the kings who failed to conquer India seem to share sweeping conquests in the western hemisphere. This may be thought of as a model for the Seleucids, whose ambitions of westward expansions manifested themselves specifically in Seleucus' attempt to reclaim Macedonia. In this context, the enumeration of western conquerors can be seen as sketching a mental map of the Seleucid Empire which surpasses the barbarian kings in the east and Alexander in the west.

Megasthenes' account of past rulers thus sketches a Seleucid map of the world as suspended between the far east and far west. Yet, it also has important implications for his own role as a geographer of India. As Strabo reports: "Megasthenes, moreover, agrees with this point of view when he urges disbelief in the ancient accounts of India, for no army was ever sent abroad by the Indians, nor did any from abroad invade and conquer them."[214] Megasthenes, in other words, implied that the lack of reliable geographical knowledge about India was caused by the fact that India was never conquered. The equation of no conquest with no knowledge puts Megasthenes' own display of knowledge about India in an interesting light.

Megasthenes: Measuring the Immeasurable

So far we have seen that early Seleucid writers used their geographical works to create mental maps of the Seleucid Empire that showed it to be a true world empire. Against this background, Megasthenes' *Indica* comes as something of a surprise, as it draws attention to the fact that India lay outside the Seleucid Empire. Megasthenes was easily the most influential of the early Seleucid writers, and yet, in his *Indica*, he composed an entire work, three or four books, to describe a country that the Seleucids had failed to master: how are we to explain this seeming paradox?

In their assessment of the *Indica*, previous scholars have often followed Strabo who criticised the many 'mistakes' Megasthenes makes in his representation of India and tried to determine the historical reality behind Megasthenes' text.[215] Although this approach has yielded valuable insights, more recent work suggests that readers of Megasthenes should move beyond the question of 'truth' and 'trustworthiness' that has been imposed upon his

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equal valid set of historical records. In Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar II was seen as a model king, and Megasthenes' king list suggests that the Seleucids valued this perspective; see Chapter 2, p. 93-98, and esp. 99.

[214] Strabo, 15.1.6.

[215] Strabo, 2.1.9. Some even remark that he 'should have known better' because he had actually visited the country (Brown (1955), 31-32). This disregards any agenda Megasthenes might have had besides describing India as faithfully as possible.

work. Thus, Kosmin reads the *Indica* as an attempt to explain, and excuse, the Seleucids' failure to control the region: although the Indus treaty with Chandragupta provided Seleucus with the 500 elephants that won him his wars with Antigonus in the west, he had to yield several eastern provinces and acknowledge Chandragupta as an equal. Kosmin shows that Megasthenes tries to negotiate this difficulty in his *Indica* by setting up India as part of a Hellenistic system of peer kingdoms. His reading explains one striking feature of the *Indica*, which is that for the first time ever in Greek literature India is depicted as a (more or less) 'normal' Hellenistic kingdom, rather than a peripheral land full of exotic wonders.[216] However, Megasthenes' work is more than merely an apology for the Seleucids' failure to expand into India. In this section, I argue that Megasthenes uses his geographical knowledge to appropriate the country by other means than conquest.

For Greek writers before the Hellenistic period, writing about India was in many ways writing about the unknown. Because of its peripheral position *vis-à-vis* the Mediterranean and because of its legendary riches, India had always been a mysterious country that served as a canvas for projections of various kinds. Despite, or because of, its reputation as a land of wonders, it was also a country that mythical and historical rulers attempted to claim as part of their realm. The two best-known examples of this are Semiramis' failed attempt to conquer India, as narrated by Ctesias, and Darius' conquest of India in 515 BC.

Darius' conquest was accompanied by a reconnaissance mission sent out to explore the lower Indus. Herodotus reports that the mission included the Carian Greek Scylax of Caryanda,[217] whose exploration and subsequent report are the first attested Greek encounter with India. The work itself is lost, but from fragments that have been transmitted in other authors it seems clear that Scylax focussed on bizarre ethnography, supplemented by some more sober descriptions of the customs of the land.[218] Indeed, Scylax' account supplies some of the most pervasive ethnographic myths about India, including that of people without mouths, with the head of a dog, ears so large they can sleep in them, or large feet that provide shadow during the hottest part of the day.[219]

[216] Kosmin (2014)a, 37-38. Kosmin shows that the *Indica* focusses on the institution of kingship throughout the history of India. According to Zambrini, the portrayal of India as a strong, centrally led state can be seen as a *specchio ideale* for the Seleucids (Zambrini (1983), 1109).
[217] Herodotus, 5.12. See further: Shipley (2011); Karttunen (1989), 65-69; Sedlar (1980), 11-12; Bevan (1922), 393-396. Panchenko ((2003), 274-294; (1998), 211–242) argues that Scylax sailed not the Indus but the Ganges, but this is dismissed by Karttunen ((2014), 334) and has not gained general acceptance.
[218] Karttunen (1989), 65-69. For the fragments see *BNJ* (709) Skylax of Caryanda.
[219] Depictions and descriptions of these mythical people remained popular throughout the ancient world and the Middle Ages.

The same tendency toward the outlandish and bizarre can be seen in *Indica* of the classical period: Herodotus' own account of India is probably partly based on Scylax' report, but also presents new information.[220] Instead of Scylax' list of strange people, whom Herodotus does not mention, he introduces a new stock myth into the Greek reception of India: the gold-digging ants.[221] The power of Herodotus' story is shown by the fact that subsequent reports of India engaged with it.[222] Besides these strange and wondrous creatures, Herodotus stresses the vastness of India and its fertility, asserting that India is richer and more populous than any other part of the Persian Empire.[223] Ctesias even reports that India contains as big a population as the entire rest of the world taken together.[224] He also adds further *mirabilia* of his own, especially when dealing with the wondrous fauna of the land.[225] By the beginning of the Hellenistic period, India was thus associated in the Greek mind with two persistent themes: its large size and its wonders.[226] I argue that, in the *Indica*, Megasthenes gives these two tropes a specifically Seleucid inflection: he presents India's wonders as exploitable, and he tames its vastness by precise measuring.

Although Megasthenes depicts India as a utopian land, fertile and rich, he places it not outside the *oikoumene* but firmly within the Hellenistic world of long-range commerce.[227] Like earlier writers, he incorporates exotic *mirabilia* into his description, but mostly focusses on opportunities for trade and exploitation, thus echoing the colonial emphasis on resources and trade routes that we saw earlier in Patrocles' work.[228] In Megasthenes' description of India's nature and culture, both the country's vastness and its miraculous fertility are brought to the fore:

[220] Herodotus, 1.192, 3.98, 3.106, 4.40, 4.85, 7.153, 7.187; Karttunen (1989), 73-79. It is probable that Herodotus acquired some of his information via intermediaries in the Achaemenid Empire.

[221] Herodotus, 3.102-105. Herodotus' myth has piqued the interest of many scholars from antiquity onwards: see Asheri, Lloyd and Corcella (2007), 398-399 [translation of Asheri, *et al.* (1988)] for literature. Peissel (1984) argues that the ants are in fact Himalayan marmots; Bevan (1922), 396, claims that 'ant-gold' (*pipīlika*) was a tribute to the king by the tribes of Dardistān in Kashmīr (attested in the *Mahabarata* II. 54.4)

[222] Arrian, *Indica* 15.4-7: Nearchus reports he has seen the skins of these ants and Megasthenes also confirms their existence. For the interaction between Hellenistic authors and Herodotus see Priestley (2014); Murray (1972).

[223] Herodotus, 3.94.2.

[224] Ctesias, *Indica* F45, 1-2 (Photius, *Bibliotheca* 72 p.45a 21-50a 4), cf. Nichols (2011), 47, 94.

[225] *BNJ* 715 F45 (Photius, *Bibliotheca* 72 p. 45a 21 – 50a 4), cf. Nichols (2008), 111-125; Karttunen (1989), 80-85; Brown (1955), 18-33; McCrindle (1882).

[226] Karttunen (1997).

[227] Kosmin (2014)a, 31-58.

[228] See p. 45-51.

ἡ δ᾽ οὖν ᾽Ινδικὴ πολλὰ μὲν ὄρη καὶ μεγάλα ἔχει δένδρεσι παντοδαποῖς καρπίμοις πλήθοντα, πολλὰ δὲ πεδία καὶ μεγάλα καρποφόρα, τῶι μὲν κάλλει διάφορα, ποταμῶν δὲ πλήθεσι διαρρεόμενα. τὰ πολλὰ δὲ τῆς χώρας ἀρδεύεται, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο διττοὺς ἔχει τοὺς κατ᾽ ἔτος καρπούς, ζώιων τε παντοδαπῶν γέμει διαφόρων τοῖς μεγέθεσι καὶ ταῖς ἀλκαῖς, τῶν μὲν χερσαίων τῶν δὲ καὶ πτηνῶν. καὶ πλείστους δὲ καὶ μεγίστους ἐλέφαντας ἐκτρέφει, χορηγοῦσα τὰς τροφὰς ἀφθόνους, δι᾽ ἃς ταῖς ῥώμαις τὰ θηρία ταῦτα πολὺ προέχει τῶν κατὰ τὴν Λιβύην γεννωμένων.

India has many large mountain ranges with a large number of fruit trees of every type, and many large fruit-bearing plains, distinctive in their beauty, with many rivers flowing through them. Most of the country is irrigated, and threfore has two harvests every year. It is full of every type of animal, distinctive in their size and strength, both land animals and birds. It sustains the most and the largest elephants, supplying them abundantly with bounteous nourishment; wherefore these animals greatly surpass in strength those born in Libya.

Diodorus Siculus, 2.35-42[229]

The fragment, from Diodorus' epitome of Megasthenes' *Indica*, describes Indian nature and wildlife in terms that focus on abundance and size. Throughout the description, words like πολλά, μεγάλα, πλήθοντα, πλείστους and πολύ convey the image of a land where everything grows readily and to an abnormal size.

We have already seen that India as a land of exotic marvels and fecundity had existed in the mind of the Greeks since at least Herodotus. Megasthenes takes up these clichés, but with an important difference: by contrast with earlier authors who focus on the otherness of Indian nature and culture, Megasthenes maintains a 'realistic' focus on agricultural production and the potential for trade that accrues as a result: Indian trees bear all sorts of fruit, and there are harvests twice a year. This is in many ways still a Cyclopean, or even Golden Age, land, which trumps Odysseus' ideal colony site, in that here the rain and sun not only make everything grow of its own accord but also ensure rich harvests twice a year. Indeed, so luxuriant is the climate that some plants are cooked by the heat of the sun and need no preparation before being eaten: the raw turns cooked in an extraordinary confluence of nature and culture.

So far, so extraordinary. Yet, there is always a sense, in Megasthenes, that India is still part of the Seleucid world, if only as the starting point for Patrocles' extraordinary network of trade routes across eastern Asia. The theme of trade and exploitability which frames Megasthenes' *mirabilia* becomes more strongly apparent in a passage from Strabo that discusses the remarkable golden rain. According to some writers it occasionally rained gold in India, but Megasthenes has a different explanation:

[229] Text from *BNJ* 715 F4.

ἐγγυτέρω δὲ πίστεώς φησιν ὁ Μεγασθένης, ὅτι οἱ ποταμοὶ καταφέροιεν ψῆγμα χρυσοῦ, καὶ ἀπ᾽ αὐτοῦ φόρος ἀπάγοιτο τῶι βασιλεῖ ·

Closer to credulity is when Megasthenes says that the rivers carry down scrapings of gold and from it a tribute is paid to the king.

Strabo 15.1.56-57[230]

Here we see that Megasthenes demystifies one of India's traditional wonders by explaining the golden rain as gold dust in India's rivers. Indeed, he not only provides a scientific explanation for a strange natural phenomenon, but also links it directly to the royal administration, as, according to Megasthenes, the gold dust from the rivers was paid as tax. A further example of rationalising Indian wonders in terms of resource administration can be seen in Megasthenes' reworking of Scylax' list of strange Indian people:

τοὺς μὲν οὖν ἀγρίους μὴ κομισθῆναι παρὰ Σανδρόκοττον (ἀποκαρτερεῖν γάρ), ἔχειν δὲ τὰς μὲν πτέρνας πρόσθεν, τοὺς δὲ ταρσοὺς ὄπισθεν καὶ τοὺς δακτύλους. ᾿Αστόμους δέ τινας ἀχθῆναι, ἡμέρους ἀνθρώπους· οἰκεῖν δὲ περὶ τὰς πηγὰς τοῦ Γάγγου, τρέφεσθαι δ᾽ ἀτμοῖς ὀπτῶν κρεῶν καὶ καρπῶν καὶ ἀνθέων ὀσμαῖς, ἀντὶ τῶν στομάτων ἔχοντας ἀναπνοάς·

The wild men could not be taken to Sandracottus for they would starve themselves to death, and they have their heels in front and the flat of their feet and toes at the back of the foot. The mouthless ones, on the other hand, who were tame people, were led [to the king]. They live around the source of the Ganges and nourish themselves with the vapors of roasting meat and the scents of fruits and flowers, because instead of mouths they have only breathing holes.

Strabo 15.1.56-57[231]

Rather than populating the furthest corners of the knowable world, hovering on the edge of mythical space, the people with reversed feet or without a mouth now inhabit the same world as Megasthenes and Chandragupta (Sandracottus), a world of kings and armies which accommodates them in as much as they make themselves useful (we only encounter 'the wild men of India' when they are brought to the king as tribute or in order to pay tribute) and adjust to civilised surroundings.[232] 'Normal' Indians are described as just and temperate:

εὐπραγεῖν δ᾽ ὅμως διὰ τὴν ἁπλότητα καὶ τὴν εὐτέλειαν· οἶνόν τε γὰρ οὐ πίνειν ἀλλ᾽ ἐν θυσίαις μόνον, πίνειν δ᾽ ἀπ᾽ ὀρύζης ἀντὶ κριθῶν συντιθέντας. καὶ σιτία δὲ τὸ πλέον ὄρυζαν εἶναι ῥοφητήν. καὶ ἐν τοῖς νόμοις δὲ καὶ συμβολαίοις τὴν ἁπλότητα ἐλέγχεσθαι ἐκ τοῦ μὴ πολυδίκους εἶναι· οὔτε

[230] Text from *BNJ* 715 F27b.
[231] Text from *BNJ* 715 F27b.
[232] Cf. Strabo's list of strange Indian people in Megasthenes and Deimachus (*Geographica* 2.1.9).

γὰρ ὑποθήκης οὔτε παρακαταθήκης εἶναι δίκας· οὐδὲ μαρτύρων οὐδὲ σφραγίδων αὐτοῖς δεῖν, ἀλλὰ πιστεύειν παραβαλλομένους. καὶ τὰ οἴκοι δὲ τὸ πλέον ἀφρουρεῖν.

[Megasthenes says that] they flourish because of their simplicity and thriftiness. They do not drink wine, bar only at sacrifices, but they drink a creation made from rice rather than barley, and most of their food is a rice gruel. In their laws and contracts their simplicity is proven, by the fact that they are not litigious, for there are no lawsuits regarding mortgages or deposits, and they do not need witnesses or seals, but trust those to whom they commit their interests. Moreover, they generally leave their houses unguarded.

Strabo 15.1.53-55[233]

The justness of the Indians (another utopian trait since Homer) is also stressed in the fact that they never tried to conquer the countries beyond their borders. Like the indigenous tribes that Patrocles describes, many tribes of Indians are not cunning or mercantile, but live off the land without agriculture or farming. Both the just nature of the people and the abundance of nature come together in another story related by Megasthenes, where he enumerates the different castes of India and tells us that the farming caste worked on the royal lands and was only charged with the task of producing food. The farmers were considered common benefactors so that, even when war broke out, the soldiers left farmers in peace as "sacred and inviolate" instead of destroying their crops.[234]

The normalization of India in Megasthenes' work shows that, despite all its wonders, the land has become a knowable and understandable entity for the Seleucids. Unlike his forerunners in the Greek ethnographic tradition, Megasthenes provides detailed knowledge about the tasks of administrators and craftsmen, as well as special hunting and fighting techniques. We have seen that the display of knowledge of outlying regions within or outside of the Seleucid kingdom was not just of scholarly interest; it was also a political statement of appropriation and power.[235] The knowledge expounded in these works could entail a variety of features, including the geography, natural features, and ethnography of an area.[236] These themes are recurrent also in other ethnographical works of the early Hellenistic period such as Hecataeus' *Aegyptiaca* and Berossus, *Babyloniaca*. Unlike these works on Egypt and Babylon, however, the *Indica* described a country that lay *outside* Greek political control, and

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[233] Text and translation based on *BNJ* 715 F32.

[234] Diodorus Siculus, 2.36.6-7 (*BNJ* 715 F4).

[235] See p. 38-40, Cf. Edney (1993), 61-67, esp, 63-65, who makes a very similar point regarding the mapping of India by the British Empire.

[236] Diodorus' extract of Megasthenes is a perfect example of a treatise encompassing the knowledge of various features of India (Diodorus, *BNJ* 715 F1). As we have already seen, the outline of the *Indica* is reminiscent of the ethnographical descriptions in Herodotus' *Histories*, and more directly in the work of Hecataeus of Abdera.

this, I argue, helps to explain a feature of the *Indica* that appears to have been unparalleled in Hecataeus and his successors: its emphasis on India's vastness, and on controlling that vastness with precise measurements.

Megasthenes, like Herodotus and Ctesias before him, focussed on the sheer size of India. Indeed, he trumped earlier speculation by including hitherto unknown regions in his survey: rather than considering the Indus valley the centre of India with only deserts to the east, Megasthenes' account focusses on the Ganges river basin. This shift in perspective becomes clear when Megasthenes turns his attention to the rivers of India. According to him, India does not only have more rivers than any other land,[237] the Ganges is also the biggest river in the world:

> μεγίστην δὲ πόλιν <ἐν> Ἰνδοῖσιν εἶναι <τὴν> Παλίμβοθρα καλεομένην ἐν τῆι Πρασίων γῆι, ἵνα αἱ συμβολαί εἰσι τοῦ τε Ἐραννοβόα ποταμοῦ καὶ τοῦ Γάγγεω· τοῦ μὲν Γάγγεω τοῦ μεγίστου ποταμῶν, ὁ δὲ Ἐραννοβόας τρίτος μὲν ἂν εἴη τῶν Ἰνδῶν ποταμῶν, μέζων δὲ τῶν ἄλληι καὶ οὗτος, ἀλλὰ ξυγχωρέει αὐτὸς τῶι Γάγγηι, ἐπειδὰν ἐμβάληι ἐς αὐτὸν τὸ ὕδωρ.
>
> The largest city in India is called Palimbothra, in the land of the Prasians, where the Erannoboas River issues into the Ganges. The Ganges is the largest of all rivers, and the Erannoboas, although only the third largest of the Indian river, is still larger than those anywhere else. But it yields first place to the Ganges since it flows into it.
>
> Arrian, *Indica* 10.5-6[238]

Palimbothra, Chandragupta's capital, is located by means of two rivers, the Ganges and the Erannoboas. Megasthenes claims that the Ganges is the largest river in the world and supports his claim by reporting that the Erannoboas River issued into it. The Erannoboas River itself was the third largest in India but still larger than any other river in the world. Since rivers provided an important way of measuring a country's size and significance in Greek ethnography since Herodotus, Megasthenes' insistence on the superior size of Indian rivers carries a significance beyond mere geographical fact.[239]

In other ways too, India dwarfs other lands. For example, there are more people living in India than in the rest of the world, and in greater variety:

> ἔθνεα δὲ Ἰνδικὰ εἴκοσι καὶ ἑκατὸν τὰ πάντα λέγει Μεγασθένης δυοῖν δέοντα.

[237] See e.g. *BNJ* 715 F 9a (Arrian, *Indica* 4.2). The fragment shows Megasthenes' interest in the navigability of Indian rivers. We have seen this interest also in Patrocles' description of the rivers of Central Asia.

[238] Text from *BNJ* 715 F18a

[239] Cf. Herodotus on Scythia and its rivers (West (2002), 439-446; Myres (1953) 33-34), and also Herodotus on Egypt as being defined by the Nile (Myres (1953), 41-43).

> Megasthenes says that there are a total of 118 ethnic groups in India.
> Arrian, *Indica* 7.1-8.3[240]

One-hundred and eighteen ethnic groups in just one country: as this fragment confirms, Megasthenes' description of India is pervaded by an almost overwhelming sense of the land's exuberance. Yet, it also shows that Megasthenes can master this exuberance. One important way in which he establishes control is to provide precise figures: one-hundred and eighteen ethnic groups, no more, no less. Another is to provide (seemingly) precise geographical and ethnographic data. Megasthenes laces his account of rivers, mountains, and even astrology, with the names of Indian tribes, each of which is fixed to a specific landscape or ethnographic detail: the Madyandinoi, Mathai and Silaioi live near certain rivers;[241] the Sourasenoi and the Pandaiae were especially connected with Heracles;[242] the Monaides and Souaroi lived where shadows fall to the north in winter.[243] This ethnographical, botanical, historical and geographical knowledge was framed by precise measurements of the region.

Measuring India became a popular topic among Greek geographers after the conquest of Alexander: Nearchus, Onesicritus, Megasthenes, Patrocles and Deimachus all wrote on the precise size of India.[244] The richness of this discursive field is illustrated in Book 15 of Strabo's *Geography*, in which he describes Asia on the other side of the Taurus.[245] Here is what he has to say about India, and the authors that described it:

> τῆς μὲν οὖν ἑσπερίου πλευρᾶς ἀπὸ τῶν Καυκασίων ὀρῶν ἐπὶ τὴν νότιον θάλατταν στάδιοι μάλιστα λέγονται μύριοι τρισχίλιοι παρὰ τὸν ᾿Ινδὸν ποταμὸν μέχρι τῶν ἐκβολῶν αὐτοῦ, ὥστ᾽ ἀπεναντίον ἡ ἑωθινή, προσλαβοῦσα τοὺς τῆς ἄκρας τρισχιλίους, ἔσται μυρίων καὶ ἑξακισχιλίων σταδίων. τοῦτο μὲν οὖν πλάτος τῆς χώρας τό τ᾽ ἐλάχιστον καὶ τὸ μέγιστον. μῆκος δὲ τὸ ἀπὸ τῆς ἑσπέρας ἐπὶ τὴν ἕω· τούτου δὲ τὸ μὲν μέχρι Παλιβόθρων ἔχοι τις ἂν βεβαιοτέρως εἰπεῖν (καταμεμέτρηται γὰρ σχοινίοις, καὶ ἔστιν ὁδὸς βασιλικὴ σταδίων [δισ] μυρίων), τὰ δ᾽ ἐπέκεινα στοχασμῶι λαμβάνεται διὰ τῶν ἀνάπλων τῶν ἐκ θαλάττης διὰ τοῦ Γάγγου ποταμοῦ μέχρι Παλιβόθρων· εἴη δ᾽ ἄν τι σταδίων ἑξακισχιλίων. ἔσται δὲ τὸ πᾶν, ἧι βραχύτατον, μυρίων ἑξακισχιλίων, ὡς ἔκ τε τῆς ἀναγραφῆς τῶν σταθμῶν τῆς πεπιστευμένης μάλιστα λαβεῖν ᾿Ερατοσθένης φησί· καὶ ὁ Μεγασθένης οὕτω συναποφαίνεται, Πατροκλῆς δὲ χιλίοις ἔλαττόν φησι. τούτωι δὴ πάλιν τῶι διαστήματι προστεθὲν τὸ τῆς ἄκρας διάστημα τὸ προπῖπτον ἐπὶ πλέον

[240] Text from *BNJ* 715 F12
[241] *BNJ* 715 F 9a/10a (Arrian, *Indica* 4.2; 6.1-3).
[242] *BNJ* 715 F 13a (Arrian, *Indica* 8.4-9.8).
[243] *BNJ* 715 F 7b (Pliny, *Historia Naturalis* 6.69).
[244] For an analysis of Nearchus and Onesicritus, see: Badian (1975), 147-170; Pearson (1960), 83-111 and 112-149.
[245] Strabo, 15.1.1.

πρὸς τὰς ἀνατολάς, οἱ τρισχίλιοι στάδιοι ποιήσουσι τὸ μέγιστον μῆκος· ἔστι δὲ τοῦτο τὸ ἀπὸ τῶν ἐκβολῶν τοῦ ᾿Ινδοῦ ποταμοῦ παρὰ τὴν ἑξῆς ἠιόνα μέχρι τῆς λεχθείσης ἄκρας καὶ τῶν ἀνατολικῶν αὐτῆς τερμόνων· οἰκοῦσι δ᾿ ἐνταῦθα οἱ Κωλιακοὶ καλούμενοι. (12) ἐκ δὲ τούτων πάρεστιν ὁρᾶν, ὅσον διαφέρουσιν αἱ τῶν ἄλλων ἀποφάσεις, Κτησίου μὲν οὐκ ἐλάττω τῆς ἄλλης ᾿Ασίας τὴν ᾿Ινδικὴν λέγοντος, ᾿Ονησικρίτου δὲ τρίτον μέρος τῆς οἰκουμένης, Νεάρχου δὲ μηνῶν ὁδὸν τεττάρων τὴν δι᾿ αὐτοῦ τοῦ πεδίου, Μεγασθένους δὲ καὶ Δηιμάχου μετριασάντων μᾶλλον· ὑπὲρ γὰρ δισμυρίους τιθέασι σταδίους τὸ ἀπὸ τῆς νοτίου θαλάττης ἐπὶ τὸν Καύκασον, Δηίμαχος δ᾿ ὑπὲρ τοὺς τρισμυρίους κατ᾿ ἐνίους τόπους· πρὸς οὓς ἐν τοῖς πρώτοις λόγοις εἴρηται.

The western side from the Caucasus Mountains to the southern sea is said to be about 13,000 stadia, along the Indus River to its mouths. Thus the opposite – eastern – side, adding the 3,000 of the promontory, is 16,000 stadia. This is the width of the territory, the least and the most: the length is from west to east. The distance as far as Palimbothra can be defined with somewhat greater certainty, for it has been measured with a line, and there is a royal road extending for 10,000 stadia.[246] The stretch beyond is obtained by guesswork, on the basis of journeys up the Ganges from the ocean to Palimbothra, which would be about 6,000 stadia. In its entirety, the length is 16,000 stadia, which Eratosthenes claims he took from the most accepted record of stopping points. Megasthenes is in agreement, although Patrocles says 1,000 less. To this distance, however, is added the distance that the promontory extends further to the east, i.e. 3,000 stadia, and that produces the maximum length, the distance from the mouths of the Indus River along the subsequent shore to the previously-mentioned promontory and its eastern boundary. Here live those called the Coliacoi. (12) From this it can be seen how much the various opinions differ. Ctesias says that India is no smaller than the rest of Asia, Onesicritus that it is a third part of the inhabited world, and Nearchus that it is a four-month journey simply through the plain. But Megasthenes and Deimachus are somewhat more moderate, for they make it over 20,000 stadia from the southern Ocean to the Caucasus, although according to Deimachus at some places it is over 30,000, but I have refuted these previously.

Strabo 15.1.11-12[247]

In this passage Strabo discusses the length (east-west) and width (north-south) of India.[248] He gives precise figures and in some cases tells us how they have been arrived at, e.g. "καταμεμέτρηται γὰρ σχοινίοις (measured with the schoinos)". Strabo quotes Eratosthenes'

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[246] Although the manuscripts read 20,000 (Radt (2005), vol. 4, 150), both Radt and Meineke's Strabo editions emendate to 10,000. This emendation is accepted by Jacoby (*FGrHist*) and Roller (*BNJ*) in their commentaries on Megasthenes. They claim that 20,000 miles is an absurdly high number and argue that it is not difficult to eliminate the δισ- as an erroneous addition.

[247] Text from *BNJ* 715 F6c, translation from Roller (2008), in *Brill's New Jacoby Online* (*BNJ* 715).

[248] The passage is directly preceded by a discussion of Strabo's predecessors and must be read in the broader context of a Hellenistic culture of competition in wisdom . Strabo, 15.1.10: μάλιστα δ᾿ ἐκ τῆς διαίτης ἐδόκει τῆς τότε πιστότατα εἶναι τὰ ὑπὸ τοῦ Ἐρατοσθένους ἐν τῷ τρίτῳ τῶν γεωγραφικῶν ἐκτεθέντα κεφαλαιωδῶς περὶ τῆς τότε νομιζομένης Ἰνδικῆς, ἡνίκα Ἀλέξανδρος ἐπῆλθε.

measurements first, as he deems his work most trustworthy,[249] and only mentions Megasthenes and Patrocles insofar as they deviate from Eratosthenes. Later on in the same passage however, in paragraph 12, when Strabo describes older views on the size of India, he introduces Megasthenes and Deimachus as the writers measuring distances with precise numbers for the first time.

Strabo's account culminates in precise measurements provided by Megasthenes and Deimachus. This seems to be a new development in the geography of India, as in all accounts by later geographers Megasthenes, Patrocles and Deimachus are the first writers mentioned as providing specific distances in India and Bactria.[250] The implication is clear: India was inconceivably large, but could still be measured, and therefore controlled, by the early Seleucid writers, Megasthenes foremost among them. What we see here is not just a by-product of sustained interaction between the Seleucids and India but also an imperial conquest of the mind.

Precise knowledge about a region can suggest imperial control regardless of the political realities on the ground: I have argued that that is certainly part of Megasthenes' agenda, and indeed that of other Seleucid geographers. However, precise geographical knowledge also helps to establish the authority of a writer in a crowded discursive field. In Strabo, we can see just how crowded discussions of India in particular had become by the later Hellenistic period. He adduces no fewer than seven authors who trump each other with ever more 'accurate' (i.e. accurate-looking) information about the size and position of India, from Ctesias to Strabo's own *Geographica*.

According to Strabo, Ctesias claimed that India was as large as the rest of Asia, an imprecise measurement from the perspective of later writers which reflects Ctesias' use of basic patterns of symmetry in determining the size and arrangement of the continents.[251] Onesicritus described the size of India in relation to the whole *oikoumene*, thus placing

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[249] Strabo, 15.1.10. Engels discusses the relationship between Strabo and his predecessors Eratosthenes and Posidonius at length (Engels (2013), cf. Karttunen (1997), 102-105).

[250] Demodamas is apparently absent from the ranks of geographers who introduced precise measurements of the eastern regions of the Seleucid realm: Diodorus Siculus, 2.35.2; Arrian, *Indica* 3.6-8; Strabo, 2.1.4, 2.1.7, 2.1.14, 2.1.17, 15.1.12. Deimachus, being later than the other two writers, is in these accounts often dependent on Megasthenes and quoted in support of his statements. We have no direct evidence that Demodamas also took part in this game of numbers. However, Pliny claims to have followed him to a great extent in his description of the Caspian Sea region, so it is possible that Demodamas indeed did also provide precise measurements of Bactria, but that this has not been transmitted (Pliny, *Naturalis Historia*, 6,49). There is no indication that Demodamas provided a detailed description of India.

[251] Dueck and Brodersen (2012), 74.

himself in the Herodotean tradition.[252] Nearchus, by contrast, cast the geography of India in the form of an itinerary or rather the march of an army, taking up Alexander's highly effective practice of measuring his progress by special bematists, or step counters.[253] Measurement as a form of imperial conquest reaches a climax with the three Seleucid writers on India. Megasthenes, Deimachus and Patrocles were the first geographers to put precise distances on the geography of Asia, not as an itinerary but as quantifying geography. What we see here, with paradigmatic clarity, is a shift in the way Indian space is measured and framed, from continental symmetry in the classical period to imperial conquest during the Seleucids.

Personal experience seems to have played an important part in this sudden change: Megasthenes' embassies to the Mauryan kings will have given him first-hand knowledge of their heartlands on the upper Ganges; and of course he could draw on reports of Alexander's explorations along the Indus. But whatever sources of knowledge he had at his disposal, more important for Megasthenes' Seleucid readers – and thus for our purposes here – would have been the political significance of this operation: just as the Seleucids conceded a boundary to their realm in the Indus treaty, Megasthenes, like Demodamas on the Jaxartes, showed that he could reach beyond it by describing 'the whole' of India – a new, much bigger, 'whole' as it turned out than that envisaged by miracle mongers like Herodotus and Ctesias. The significance of this act of appropriation must not be underestimated: already in Herodotus and Ctesias there are hints that if you could describe India you could map the whole world. In the *Indica* Megasthenes showed that he could certainly do the former and so, a fortiori, might have done the latter too.

On the Hellenistic Stage: Knowledge and Appropriation in Geography

As we have seen, the geography of the East and especially of India was hotly contested among geographers from across the Hellenistic world. In this section I will look more closely at the interactions between early Seleucid geographical literature and its Ptolemaic counterpart. I will especially consider Eratosthenes, the well-known geographer at the

[252] Herodotus' conception of the *oikoumene* derived from the Ionian philosophers, esp. Anaximander and Hecataeus of Miletus. For further discussion of Herodotus and the *oikoumene* see Asheri, Lloyd and Corcella (2007), 608-609; Thomas (2000), 75-100; Hartog (1988), 8-13.
[253] The *bematistai* in Alexander's army measured travelling time and distances. The three known *bematistai* of Alexander are Baiton, Diognetus and Philonides (*FGrH* 119-121). cf. Pearson (1960), 95, 261; Brown (1957), 19.

Ptolemaic court. I argue that, although Eratosthenes became famous for his mathematical and apparently objective geography, his work was shaped by its political environment, especially the military and cultural rivalry between the Seleucids and Ptolemies. In eastern geography, the Seleucids set the pace, but the careers of two Ptolemaic geographers, Dionysius and Eratosthenes, highlight the interest of the Ptolemies in this area, and their desire to follow suit. To surpass the Seleucid geographical treatises of the East, the Ptolemies needed data, either by collecting them first hand or by using those of their Seleucid rivals. As we shall see, both these strategies were employed by the Ptolemies and their geographers in the third century BC.

Dionysius was a courtier of Ptolemy II Philadelphus, who sent him to India. This places his *floruit* between 285 and 246 BC. Most likely, he wrote slightly later than Megasthenes, Patrocles and Demodamas. He might be the same as the Dionysius who was an astronomer, active in the years 275-241 BC, and who reformed the Egyptian calendar for Ptolemy II.[254] If so, his range of interests is comparable to that of Eratosthenes, who was a geographer, astronomer and mathematician. According to Pliny, Dionysius was sent to India by Ptolemy II in order to observe the country and publish his observations 'for the sake of the imperilled truth'.[255] This statement, reminiscent of Megasthenes' claim that all previous reports on India were unreliable, gives an indication of the tone of Dionysius' report: it was meant to supersede that of his Seleucid predecessors.[256] Unfortunately, nothing of his report is preserved in any later geographers' work, so it is hard to draw any further conclusions about its content. The fact that Eratosthenes, Strabo and Pliny all use Megasthenes, and to some extent Patrocles and Nearchus, rather than Dionysius, suggests that he did not make a lasting impact.

Eratosthenes of Cyrene, on the other hand, certainly did. We have encountered him several times already in this chapter;[257] born in the 280s BC he came to Alexandria around 240 BC, after the accession to the throne of Ptolemy III Euergetes and Berenice of Cyrene.[258]

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[254] *Brill's New Pauly* Dionysius [25] (Hübner); for the calendar reform see Ptolemy (*Syntaxis Mathematica* 9.7; 9.10; 10.9; 11.3).

[255] Solinus, *Polyhistor* 52.3.

[256] A scholion to Apollonius' *Argonautica* notes that Dionysius recorded the wars between Dionysus and the Indians. As this matter was treated extensively by Megasthenes, one wonders why the scholiast preferred to refer to Dionysius rather than Megasthenes.

[257] In modern scholarship Eratosthenes is often credited with establishing the discipline of geography, because he combined an interest in the surface of the world, its shape and the processes that form the earth (Roller (2010), 1; Geus (2003), 232-245; Geus (2002); Aujac (2001), 65-67).

[258] Suda, s.v. Eratosthenes; Roller (2010), 7-8; Fraser (1972), Vol. I, 525-534; Fraser (1970), 175-176. Before he came to Alexandria, Eratosthenes lived in Athens, where he studied philosophy and mathematics and became

Eratosthenes quickly rose to the position of head librarian and royal tutor, both roles that indicate his high status at the Ptolemaic court. Although in modern times Eratosthenes is best known for his work on geography, his fame in Alexandria was equally based on his poetry and his adherence to 'Callimachean' aesthetics.[259] For example, he composed a mathematical proof for doubling a cube in verse, while at the same time commemorating his appointment as librarian and honouring his royal pupil, Ptolemy IV.[260] One of his last known works is a eulogy of Arsinoe III, the wife of Ptolemy IV, probably composed after her death in 204 BC.

Eratosthenes' close links to the Ptolemaic kings suggest that we look for a specifically Ptolemaic agenda within his geographic writings, just as the works of the early Seleucid geographers turned out to reflect a Seleucid imperial agenda. The relationship between the geographic works of Eratosthenes and the reign of Ptolemy III is especially interesting, since Ptolemy III invaded Syria and conquered parts of the Seleucid realm.[261] In one royal inscription, which I shall study in greater detail elsewhere, the king even claims to have taken the whole Seleucid realm up to Bactria.[262] The accuracy of this statement is debatable, but the inscription certainly shows the king's interest in geography and in conceiving his conquests in grand geographical terms.[263]

Eratosthenes' most lasting legacy was his mathematical approach to geography, exemplified by his method of calculating the earth's circumference and the creation of meridians and lines of latitude.[264] This gave him a reputation of objectivity which underpins his modern status as the first 'real' geographer.[265] However, Eratosthenes' geographical writing was not *simply* objective or value free. Indeed, specifically Ptolemaic interests can be seen in some of the most important innovations of his *Geographica*: the description of the

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well known as a true polymath. For his nickname 'Beta', 'the second', because he always came second in any subject due to his extensive learning, see Suda, s.v. Eratosthenes; Roller (2010), 9. For his Athenian years and his philosophical studies, see Roller (2010), 8-9; Glucker (1998), 310-311; Dragoni (1975), 49-52.

[259] The Suda does not mention the *Geographica*, and Plutarch places him with Alcaeus and Euripides due to his poetry (Plutarch, *Symposiakon* 7.1.3; *Greek and Roman Parallel Tales* 9; *On Stoic Discrepancies* 29).

[260] Fraser (1970), 185-186. This feat is reminiscent of Aratus' poetic description of the constellations but at the same time shows the pervasive interest of Alexandrian writers in epigrams, as this poem was said to be inscribed on a stone stele in Alexandria.

[261] For the Third Syrian War, see Chapter 3, p 131-132.

[262] *OGIS* 54 (*Adulis Inscription*). See below pp. 148-149.

[263] Chapter 3, pp. 148-150.

[264] On Eratosthenes' method to calculate the earth's circumference, see Nicastro (2008); Geus (2002); Blomqvist (1992); Goldstein (1984), 411-416; Aujac (1975), 15-20; Pfeiffer (1968), 152-170. Pliny, *Historia Naturalis* 2.247, describes the ancient appreciation of this feat.

[265] Roller (2010). Guckelsberger criticises the pedestal of 'real geography' and mathematics on which Eratosthenes has been placed and sees his calculations as part of the 'analogous' mathematics of the ancients (Guckelsberger (2014), 235-239).

oikoumene as a *chlamys* draped over the northern hemisphere, the application of a 'prime-meridian' through Alexandria, and the description of the world in geometrical shapes called 'sphragides'. All these features show that in Eratosthenes' geography Alexandria held a central position. For example, in the 'grid' of longitudes and latitudes that Eratosthenes placed over the inhabited world centred on a prime meridian that ran through Meroe, Syene, Alexandria, Rhodes, and Lysimacheia, thus casting the Nilotic and nesiotic empire of the Ptolemies as the central axis of world geography. An even more direct display of Eratosthenes' geographical bias can be seen in his description of both Alexandria and the *oikoumene* as a whole as *chlamys*-shaped.[266] On this view Alexandria mirrors the shape of the inhabited earth.

Beside these assertions of Ptolemaic primacy, Eratosthenes also engaged in overt competition with Seleucid geographers. Strabo attests that Eratosthenes attacked the measurements of India in Patrocles, Deimachus and Megasthenes on several occasions.[267] We have already seen that Strabo listed different geographical opinions on India. In the second book of his *Geographica* he describes the *direct* competition between different geographers. After summarizing Eratosthenes' methods of calculation, Strabo discusses Hipparchus' critique of Eratosthenes:[268]

> πρὸς δὲ τὴν ἀπόφασιν ταύτην ὁ Ἵππαρχος ἀντιλέγει, διαβάλλων τὰς πίστεις· οὔτε γὰρ Πατροκλέα πιστὸν εἶναι, δυεῖν ἀντιμαρτυρούντων αὐτῶι Δηιμάχου τε καὶ Μεγασθένους, οἳ καθ᾽ οὓς μὲν τόπους δισμυρίων εἶναι σταδίων τὸ διάστημά φασι τὸ ἀπὸ τῆς κατὰ μεσημβρίαν θαλάττης, καθ᾽ οὓς δὲ καὶ τρισμυρίων· τούτους γε δὴ τοιαῦτα λέγειν, καὶ τοὺς ἀρχαίους πίνακας τούτοις ὁμολογεῖν.
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> Hipparchus contradicts this assertion [of Eratosthenes, regarding, in part, the dimensions of India] by attacking the proofs. [He says] that Patrocles is not trustworthy, since there are two witnesses against him, Deimachus and Megasthenes, who say that in some places the distance from the southern sea is 20,000 stadia, and in others 30,000. Both say this, and the ancient maps agree with them.
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> Strabo, 2.1.4[269]

[266] Zimmerman (2002), 23-40.

[267] See for example Strabo, 2.1.9 (*BNJ* 715 T4) for Eratosthenes attacking Megasthenes; and Strabo 2.1.19 (*BNJ* 716 T2) for Eratosthenes' critique of Deimachus. For further discussion, see: Roller (2010), 82-83, 138.

[268] Hipparchus of Nicaea was an astronomer and geographer from the 2nd century BC. For Hipparchus' *Against the Geography of Eratosthenes*, see Russo (1994), 207-248; Dicks (1960), 56-103, 113-207; Diller (1934), 258-269. See Bowen and Goldstein (1991), 233-254; Jones (1991), 440-453; Neugebauer (1956), 292-296, for an appraisal of Hipparchus as astronomer.

[269] Text from *BNJ* 715 T5.

Two important points are highlighted in this passage. The first is the rivalry between different geographers wishing to display their knowledge on the Hellenistic stage. The second point illustrates the importance of early Seleucid writers in later geographical debates: both Hipparchus and Eratosthenes based their measurements of India upon Seleucid predecessors, who they evidently felt provided the only reliable information on the subject. In the passage quoted above, Hipparchus cites Megasthenes and Deimachus to refute Eratosthenes, who had adopted Patrocles' measurements. While denouncing Patrocles as unreliable, Hipparchus felt able to say so only by adducing the testimony of two of his Seleucid colleagues. Similarly, Eratosthenes supported his attacks on Megasthenes by enlisting Patrocles for his cause. Even for these Ptolemaic authors, India had become an essentially Seleucid space. But the triumph was short-lived. Ironically, although Eratosthenes used data from his main Seleucid rivals, he asserted himself as the leading authority on the geography of the East.

Eratosthenes not only attacked Seleucid writers on the measurements of India. He also seems to have criticised Megasthenes' account of Heracles' and Dionysus' Indian campaigns:

> καὶ τὰ περὶ Ἡρακλέους δὲ καὶ Διονύσου, Μεγασθένης μὲν μετ᾽ ὀλίγων πιστὰ ἡγεῖται, τῶν δ᾽ ἄλλων οἱ πλείους, ὧν ἐστι καὶ Ἐρατοσθένης, ἄπιστα καὶ μυθώδη, καθάπερ καὶ τὰ παρὰ τοῖς Ἕλλησιν
> As for the stories of Hercules and Dionysus [in India], Megasthenes, along with a few others, considers them trustworthy; but most of the others, among whom is also Eratosthenes, consider them untrustworthy and legendary, like those stories current among the Greeks.
> Strabo, 15.1.7[270]

In this passage, Strabo marshals Eratosthenes to frame his own discussion of the Indian tales of Heracles and Dionysus, in direct contrast with Megasthenes. Arrian, too, singles out Eratosthenes' critique of these claims in his history of Alexander the Great.[271] Although Arrian makes it clear that Eratosthenes directed his suspicions primarily against Alexander, we have seen that Megasthenes also uses Dionysus and Heracles as role models for Seleucid conquests. Eratosthenes' rejection of the tradition must have targeted Megasthenes as well as the Alexander historians, and at the very least undermines his legitimizing historical framework.[272]

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[270] Text from *BNJ* 715 F11a.
[271] Arrian, *Anabasis* 5.3.1-4.
[272] From the celebrated procession of Ptolemy II it is clear that the Ptolemies appropriated myths about Dionysus in India for themselves: Callixeinus (*BNJ* 627 F2 = Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistai* 5.31); Pàmias (2004), 191-198 (cf. Fraser (1970), 197-198) reads Eratosthenes' critique as anti-Ptolemaic rhetoric; cf. Roller (2010),

Eratosthenes' *Geographica* does not only defy the Seleucid geographers on their myth-telling and mistaken measurements of India. More generally, the work challenges the underlying claims of Seleucid geographical self-definition: that the Seleucids commanded a world empire transcending all borders. This may be seen, for example, in his description of the different parts of the world as geometrically shaped segments. As is well known, Eratosthenes approached the *oikoumene* as a collage of units described as seal stones (*sphragides*). He begins with India, the first sealstone, followed by Ariana, and Mesopotamia. The fourth sealstone consists of Egypt, Arabia, and Aethiopia. Beyond these four, no more Eratosthenian sealstones are attested, and it is unclear if he envisaged the same structure for the western half of the *oikoumene*. Scholars have focussed on the novelty of Eratosthenes' understanding of the world in geometric forms, which has obscured the geopolitical realities behind his choices.[273]

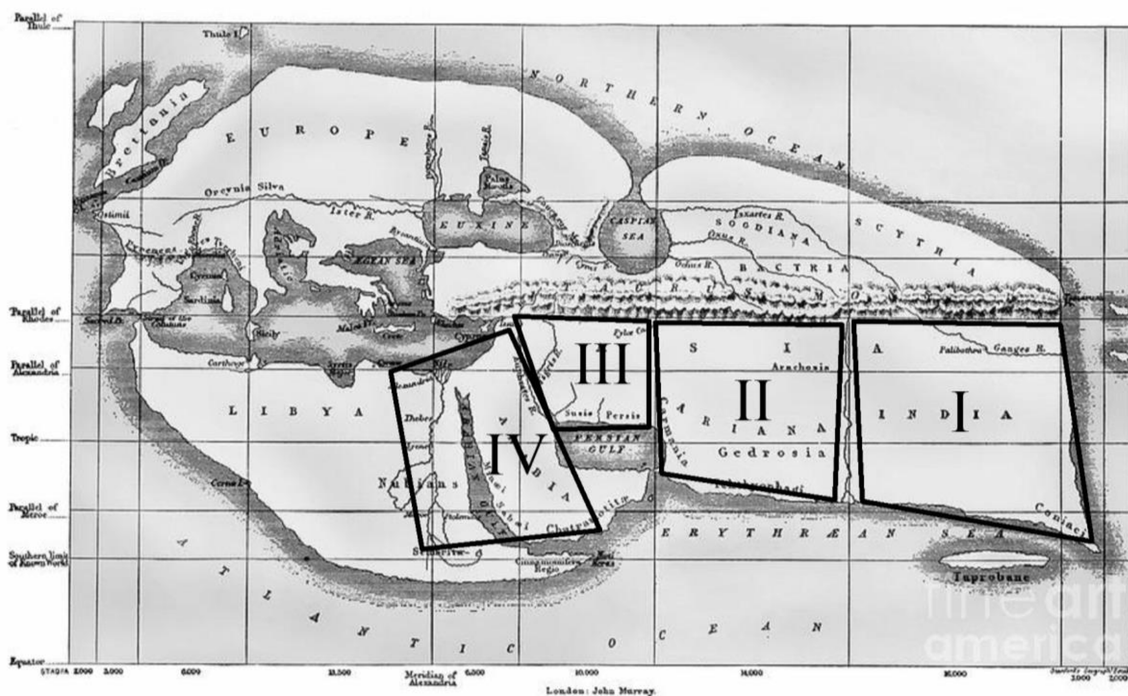

Figure 2 - Eratosthenes' map of the world with four sealstones

By dividing the (eastern) world into distinct geometrical units, Eratosthenes subverts Seleucid imperial discourse and consolidates Ptolemaic political history within an a-temporal geographical frame. Let us look at the implications of his claims one by one. First,

22, who takes Eratosthenes' rejection of the story as a sign of his reliability. It seems much better, in my view, to read it as an attack on the Seleucid historians who dominated the field.

[273] Roller (2010), 1-40; Aujac (1975), 15-20. For some of these ideas I am indebted to discussions with Paul Kosmin.

Eratosthenes' division cuts up Seleucid space into small pieces and ignores its unity. Turning the Seleucid Empire into loose pebbles to be collected sits well with Ptolemaic fantasies of world domination in the third century BC. Secondly, in his description of the sealstones, Eratosthenes turns the Euphrates River into a frontier, separating Mesopotamia from Syria and Asia Minor. The Euphrates thus acquires the role of a boundary between East and West, reminiscent of Darius' offer to Alexander to divide the world between Greeks and Persians along the Euphrates.[274] This world view completely overturns Seleucid imperial discourse in which the Euphrates was not a border but the unifying bond of the empire.[275] Finally, Eratosthenes' sealstones, far from being mathematical abstractions, reflect an immediate historical reality. In 246 BC Ptolemy III started the Third Syrian War against Seleucus II Callinicus and acquired parts of Arabia, Syria and the Levant. These Ptolemaic conquests did not last long, as Ptolemy III had to rush back to meet an uprising in Egypt. However, Eratosthenes perpetuated this exceptional *political* situation in his *Geographica* by including all these regions in the fourth sealstone and making Egypt the heart of this area.

Eratosthenes had a complex relationship with the Seleucid writers I have discussed in this chapter. On the one hand, he was an important rival, as we have seen. Yet, he is at the same time our main source for their transmission.[276] Although Strabo may have had first-hand knowledge of Megasthenes' work, it is likely that both he and Pliny only knew Patrocles' works through Eratosthenes. Ironically, then, it is Eratosthenes' use of data from the Seleucid writers he so criticised that supported his reputation as a reliable geographer, and thus allowed him to supersede them. Too often this goes unrecognised by modern scholars who attribute Eratosthenes' superior knowledge of India to Alexander's campaigns, instead of Megasthenes or Patrocles.[277]

Ultimately, the Ptolemaic geographer Eratosthenes beat his Seleucid predecessors at their own game: the geography of Inner Asia and India. What made him so successful? There are two different, but interrelated, factors that play a role in Eratosthenes' success. First, in contrast to the local accounts of Megasthenes, Demodamas and Patrocles, Eratosthenes described the entire world. As we have seen, the early Seleucid geographers all discussed

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[274] Diodorus Siculus, 17.54.2-7.

[275] We shall come back to the relevance of the Euphrates in greater detail in Chapter 2, p. 86 and Chapter 3, p. 150-151.

[276] As far as we know, he never travelled to India or indeed anywhere within the Seleucid realm but instead used the books of predecessors available in the library of Alexandria.

[277] For example, the article on Eratosthenes in *Brill's New Jacoby* (Roller, on *BNJ* 241) does not discuss any of the Seleucid authors and their impact on Eratosthenes' work.

regions where they themselves had been as general or ambassador. Through their geography they claimed the eastern borders of the empire: "we have been here, and this is our space". In contrast, Eratosthenes was a librarian and an 'arm-chair scholar', who spent his life in the library at Alexandria.[278] His *Geographica* encompasses all and provides a novel overview of the whole *oikoumene*. Eratosthenes does not need to be physically present in the lands that he describes: being in Alexandria suffices to assume a global perspective.

Secondly, Eratosthenes' global perspective enables him to reach a greater level of abstraction than the geographers before him had done. This can be seen in the fact that Eratosthenes indeed encompasses the whole world, but it becomes even more tangible in his theory of latitudes, the *sphragides*, and his conceptualisation of the *oikoumene* as a *chlamys*. Eratosthenes combined and superseded previous theories on relative latitude and developed a global matrix for latitude and longitude.[279] As we have seen, Eratosthenes made Alexandria the centre of this framework. His mathematical calculations presented a new way of describing the world as part of an Alexandrian scientific revolution.

Although he did not completely oust Megasthenes and Patrocles, Eratosthenes clearly superseded them, and won this round of cultural warfare for the Ptolemies. However, more was to come.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have looked at the first generation of Seleucid geographers in their political context. I argued that these geographers, who were all attached to the courts of Seleucus I and Antiochus I, appropriated the eastern regions of the Seleucid Empire with their geographical works. This conquest of the mind often worked in conjunction with an actual Seleucid conquest of the region. The works studied in this chapter were not only descriptive, but also strongly prescriptive, providing politically charged mental maps of the Seleucid Empire. The early Seleucid geographers shared important concerns: the image of a world empire, an

[278] Although Kosmin accuses the Ptolemaic geographers of being arm-chair scholars (Kosmin (2014)a, 25; Kosmin (2013)a, 206), the careers of Hecataeus of Abdera, an advisor on Ptolemy's expedition to Palestine in 320-318 BC, and Dionysius, the ambassador of Ptolemy II to the Indian king Asoka, indicate that not all of them were equally detached from the outside world.

[279] Previous geographers had been interested in the relative latitude (and longitude) of cities and mountains but seem to have lacked a global perspective and were less accurate than Eratosthenes. Cf. Megasthenes on India and the Taurus mountains; Patrocles on the latitude of the southern Caspian shore and the Indian mountains. For further discussion, see Romm (ed.) (2010); Dicks (1955), 248-255.

imperial framework for trade, an interest in resources and tax revenues, and a shared concept that geographical knowledge means power.

The first author I discussed was Patrocles, who as general, satrap and trusted friend of Seleucus I wrote a *Periplus of the Caspian Sea*. In this work he described his own exploration of the coastal regions of the Caspian Sea and the Asian river system. Parts of this description appear to be pure invention, especially his claim that the Caspian Sea was open to the northern Ocean and that both the Jaxartes and the Oxus rivers issued into it. I have shown that these seemingly puzzling claims should be read as part of Seleucid imperial propaganda and that they evoked the image of a world empire stretching as far as the edge of the Ocean. In addition, Patrocles' Inner Asian river system enabled trade from India to reach the Caspian, and from there the Black Sea, thus creating the illusion of a vast Seleucid network of maritime trade. Patrocles' status as a supposed eye-witness ensured that his account was held in high regard and influenced mental maps of Inner Asia both in Greece and Rome for centuries.

As a general of a Seleucid army in Bactria and Sogdiana, Demodamas of Miletus was in a similar position to Patrocles. Demodamas also wrote a geographical work, on the north eastern regions of the empire. From the small number of fragments that survive, it becomes clear that this work was concerned with establishing borders for the fledgling empire. Demodamas reaches beyond these borders to establish an image of transcendental rule, an image which he anchors in a specifically Hellenistic view of the succession of empires. A similar view of imperial history is found in the work of the last Seleucid writers that I have discussed in this chapter: Megasthenes.

Megasthenes is the best known of the early Seleucid geographers and his main work on the history, geography and ethnography of India was much quoted in the later Hellenistic and Roman periods. Since India never belonged to the Seleucid Empire, Megasthenes used his work to convey the idea of imperial domination through knowledge, expressed in a colonial key and backed up by targeted cultural re-imaginations and precise measurements. India, while remaining elusive, finds a firmer shape in the Greek mind: Megasthenes' description, I have argued, marks the climax in a centuries-old quest for measuring the unmeasurable, and finally tames that which cannot be conquered.

The final part of my chapter considered the impact of these Seleucid works on Ptolemaic literature from Alexandria. The interplay between geographical works from the Seleucid and Ptolemaic courts indicates the prestige that attached to 'accurate' geographical knowledge of the vast Seleucid realm even among its neighbours. The decisive challenge to the Seleucid

mapping of Asia came from Alexandria, and the Ptolemaic author Eratosthenes. This mathematician, poet and geographer overturned the mental maps created by the Seleucid geographers by incorporating Seleucid knowledge of Asia and India into a much larger mental map that reflected a distinctly Ptolemaic view of the entire world. Despite this hostile takeover, the Seleucid map of Asia continued to resonate throughout the Hellenistic world and even spread towards Rome.

Chapter 2: Babylon, City of Kings

Introduction

In the previous chapter I discussed the ways in which early Seleucid literature described and simultaneously created the borders of the newly established realm. We are now moving on to another moment in Seleucid literature, that of consolidating the empire after the loss of Macedonia. In this chapter I look at Seleucid literature about and from Babylon, in many ways the heart of the empire. The Babylonian texts discussed in this chapter, both Greek and Akkadian, worked to present Babylon as a centre of kingship, a place in which the Seleucids could anchor their claim to rule over Asia.

The cuneiform documents from the Seleucid period show us that the reign of the Seleucids was a unique period in the second half of the first millennium BC, featuring intensive interaction between the Seleucid kings and the city of Babylon. Neither the Achaemenids nor the Parthians are recorded in the cuneiform sources as much as the Seleucid kings.[280] The Astronomical Diaries in particular suggest a step change in terms of the king's involvement with the city.[281] I argue that this high level of interaction between the Babylonian elites and successive Seleucid kings reflects the special status that Babylon occupied both in the minds of Greek observers and those of their Babylonian contemporaries. It seems to me that a broadly shared narrative of legitimate kingship can be found both in texts written by Greeks for a Babylonian audience, and in Babylonian texts directed at a Greek audience; and even in Babylonian texts that were mainly directed at a Babylonian audience, such as the Astronomical Diaries.

This raises the question of why Babylon was considered special. What set it apart from other non-Greek cities of the empire? It could be argued that Babylon's importance derives from two fairly basic facts: the fact that it acted as Seleucus' original powerbase, and that it commanded an unparalleled amount of military and economic resources. There is some truth in that as we shall see, but it does not suffice to explain why Babylon stood out. Babylon, I shall argue, held a special place in the historical imagination of both Greece and the Near

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[280] Waerzeggers (2015)b, 186-187; Boiy (2004).

[281] For an edition of the Astronomical Diaries from 652 BC-60 BC, see Sachs and Hunger (1989-1996) *Astronomical diaries and related texts from Babylonia*, 3 vols.

East. It was above all because of this confluence of ideas in Greek and non-Greek tradition that Babylon obtained its special position in the Seleucid Empire.

The aim of this chapter is to justify that claim by looking at Seleucid literature from and about Babylon. I begin by setting the scene: I first discuss Greek and Babylonian traditions about Babylon's place in the world. I then discuss what we know about the various groups in Hellenistic Babylon and their relationship with the Seleucid administration. I argue that the special position of Babylon under the Seleucids is reflected by the political situation in the city itself. I then go on to discuss the confluence of these ideas and realities in the Hellenistic period by conducting a series of case-studies which focus on the interactions between the kings and the Babylonian elite in literature. This section is divided in two parts: the first takes up my earlier discussion of royal euergetism and applies it to a Babylonian context. The second explores what Babylon offers the king in return: the concept of world rule, preserved by the Chaldaeans, the city's priestly elites. Finally, I consider how the voice of the local priest writing in Greek resonated throughout the Hellenistic world.

Traditions about Babylon

Greek views of Babylon as an Eastern city of exotica, recondite knowledge and ancient imperial tradition can be traced back to various pre-Hellenistic authors. Herodotus stresses the enormous size of the city, its magnificent walls and monumental buildings. He reports some of the strange Babylonian customs and stresses its royal past by relating stories of the kings and especially queens, who contributed to the monumental buildings within the city.[282]

[282] Herodotus, 1.177-200. For a critical analysis of Herodotus' description of Babylon's history and customs, see: Rollinger (1993) and subsequent discussion in Henkelman, Kuhrt, Rollinger and Wiesehöfer (2011); Rollinger (2008); George (2005/6); Kuhrt (2002), 475-496; Bichler (2001), 119-123, 135-143; Bichler and Rollinger (2000), 66-68; Rollinger (1998). A more positive view of Herodotus' description of Babylon is given by Asheri, Lloyd and Corcella (2007), 197-218; Nesselrath (1999), 189-206. Herodotus' account had a massive influence on the perception of Babylon until the modern excavations of the city and growing familiarity with the cuneiform sources. For the wider conceptual framework of Greeks, barbarians and gender see specifically: Hall (1991); Hartog (1988). See also: Dominick (2007), 432-444; Blok (2002), 225-242; Munson (2001), esp. 77-78; Gray (1995), 185-211; Gimelli Martin (1990), 511-529; Sancisi-Weerdenburg (1983), 20-33; Dewald (1981), 91-125; Said and Rosselini (1978), 949-1005; Tourraix (1976), 389-390.

Herodotus "paints the picture of an oriental super-city,"[283] thus conforming to what already in the fifth century BC seem to have been popular views of Babylon among Greek audiences.[284]

One feature of Babylon's status as oriental city is its abundant natural resources and fertility.[285] Herodotus' claim that wheat commonly returned two hundredfold to the sower, and occasionally three hundredfold, stands out here.[286] In addition, Herodotus calculates that Babylonia bore one third of the taxes for all of Asia under the Persians.[287] Theophrastus, in the *History of Plants*, also stresses the fertility of the Babylonian soil, specifically discussing the crop yield for grain.[288] Another set of orientalising tales clusters around the perceived otherness of Babylonian culture, and especially its association with gender inversion. In Herodotus' *Histories* Babylon's most important landmarks were erected by Queen Nitokris and Queen Semiramis.[289] Herodotus only mentions one male king of Babylon by name: King Nabonidus is introduced as the son of Queen Nitokris and the monarch in whose reign Babylon fell to the Persians.[290]

Even more popular with Hellenistic Greeks than Herodotus was his younger contemporary Ctesias who, in his *Persica*, dedicated a significant amount of space to the description of Babylon as founded by Queen Semiramis.[291] The story of Babylon's foundation is immediately followed by an account of Semiramis' inscription at Behistun, the site where

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[283] Haubold (2013)a, 76; cf. Kurke (1999), 227-46; Nesselrath (1999), 190-192; and Liverani (1997), 87-88, who compares biblical and Greek accounts of the extreme size of oriental capitals. For the introduction of the term orientalism: Said (1978).

[284] Herodotus provides the first extensive written description of Babylon; cf. Drews (1973) for an overview of archaic authors and titles on the East. It is possible that Herodotus based himself not only on oral reports but also on early written *Persica* that included descriptions of Babylon (comparable to Ctesias' *Persica*). The lyric poet Alceus of Mytilene (6th century BC) provides a picture of Babylon in his poetry that already shows Babylon's wealth, holiness and remoteness from the Greeks (Alcaeus, fr.48 (P. Oxy. 1233 fr. 11, 6–20); fr. 350 (Campbell (1982))). Liverani shows that the cliché of the oriental super city can also be found in modern times and both influenced modern perceptions of the ancient sources and was influenced by the Greek and Roman writers. His overview of the historiography of the Near Eastern city illuminates the extent to which the gaze of the viewer, and scholar, is led by the political and historical preconceptions of his or her time: Liverani (1997), 85-107, esp. 87-88 on the influence of ancient authors on modern scholarship.

[285] Compare India's reputation as an extremely fertile land, see Chapter 1, pp. 63-65.

[286] Herodotus, 1.193, cf. Strabo, 16.1.14. See Asheri, Lloyd and Corcella (2007), 208-210, and How and Wells (1967), Vol. I, 147-149, for commentary on the passage.

[287] Herodotus, 1.192. See further: Joannès (2004) 215-217; Briant (2002), 390-413.

[288] Theophrastus, *Historia Plantarum* 8.7.4.

[289] Herodotus, 1.184-188. The focus on queens in his history of the city is one example of Herodotus' tendency toward gender reversal (Kurke (1999), 227-246).

[290] Herodotus, 1.188.

[291] Ctesias, 3.7-13. Stronk (2010), 213-221. The story had a wide resonance in Greek literature; see for example Strabo 16.1.6: "His [Ninus'] wife, who succeeded her husband, and founded Babylon, was Semiramis."

Darius had erected the most visible sign of kingship known in the Persian Empire;[292] and of Semiramis' conquests of the known world. The account of Semiramis concludes with her death and the remark that "this woman, after she had been queen over the whole of Asia with the exception of India, passed away".[293] According to Ctesias, the founding figure of Babylon was also queen over all Asia. With that description, Babylon's special place in the Greek imagination had largely been fixed.[294]

In Mesopotamian thought Babylon also occupied a special position, as 'cosmic capital'.[295] This position transcended the notion of a city as the seat of government for an empire, and carried religious and cosmological connotations. The late second millennium composition *Tintir = Babylon* provides an interesting insight into how this idea would have been expressed in a Babylonian context.[296] Tablet 1 lists Sumerian epithets of Babylon and their Akkadian translation. These epithets praise Babylon for its antiquity, justice, piety, abundance and as seat of both gods and kings in a repetitive litany: e.g. Babylon, the might of the heavens (*Tintir*, I 6); Babylon, the city whose brickwork is primeval (8); Babylon, the entrance of the mustering of the gods (22); Babylon, which prevents the upstart foe from gaining power (27); Babylon, which establishes kingship (34); Babylon, which is granted full measure of wisdom (39); Babylon, the city of kingship (44). Many of these titles were originally held by old Sumerian centres such as Nippur, Uruk and Eridu, whose ideological position was usurped by Babylon as part of its rise to political power in the second millennium BC, a process that culminated in the reign of King Nebuchadnezzar I (1124-1103 BC).[297]

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[292] Ctesias, 3.13.

[293] Ctesias 3.20.2, translation Stronk. For Babylon's special role in the history of Near Eastern empires as Ctesias saw it see also the story of how the Assyrian dynasty was brought down by the Medes with the help of a Babylonian priest: Ctesias, 3.24-28.

[294] Cf. Pliny's brief description of Babylon (Pliny, *Historia Naturalis* 6.30): "Babylon, the capital of the nations of Chaldaea, long enjoyed the greatest celebrity of all cities throughout the whole world: and it is from this place that the remaining parts of Mesopotamia and Assyria received the name of Babylonia".

[295] George (1997), 125; Unger (1931), 20-24, cf. Horowitz (1998); and the Babylonian World Map. For Babylon from a Near Eastern perspective, see also: George (1999), 67-86; George (1997), 125-146; George (1992), 1-72; Unger (1931); Koldewey (1913).

[296] The text has been reconstructed from tablets found in the libraries of Assurbanipal and in various Babylonian cities. Extant witnesses date from the mid to late first millennium BC. Although the text itself is considered to date from the second millennium BC, the tablet fragments indicate that it enjoyed continued, or renewed, popularity in the Hellenistic period. For its edition, see: George (1992), 1-72 and 237-382.

[297] George (1997), 128-134. For Babylon usurping Nippur's position see Lambert (1992), 119-126, esp. 120-122.

The political struggles of the second millennium also influenced the Babylonian pantheon and accounted for the ascent of Marduk, the city god of Babylon, as king of the gods.[298] The Babylonian creation epic *Enūma Eliš* celebrates Marduk's supreme position among the gods and affirms Babylon's position as the centre of the universe.[299] This text, composed in the late second millennium, was recited every year in Babylon as part of the *Akītu* festival,[300] when the gods from Babylonia came to Babylon to pay homage to Marduk in his temple Esagila and the position of the Babylonian king was reaffirmed. Just as Marduk was confirmed as king of the gods, the mortal king was confirmed as the ruler of mankind. The immense popularity of the *Enūma Eliš* is indicated by the many copies of it that are extant. It remained popular and was still read and copied in Hellenistic times.

The idea that Babylon in some important sense held the key to universal kingship can also be seen in Greek, and indeed Near Eastern, accounts of a 'succession of empires'.[301] In Herodotus, where we first encounter this idea the succession of empires involves the Assyrians, the Medes and the Persians, with Babylon serving as a test case for the comprehensiveness of their realms. In Ctesias, the succession of empire returns, but in a slightly different guise. Here Babylon appears as always at the background, a catalyst for action, for example in the story of how the Medes conquer the Assyrian capital with the help of the Babylonian priest Belesys.[302] There are undoubted differences between the narratives of Herodotus and Ctesias. But, more important for the present argument than those differences, is the recurring theme of Babylon's exceptional role in the imperial history of Asia.[303] After the sack of Nineveh by the Medes and Babylonians, and the sack of Persepolis

[298] Waerzeggers (2015)b, 188-189; George (1997), 120; see Lambert (1964), 3-13 for a discussion of the relation between the rise of the city and the rise of the god.

[299] Lambert (2013); George (1999), 67-86; Horowitz (1998), 107-129; Maul (1997), 109-124. For editions and commentary, see: Lambert (2013); Kämmerer and Metzler (2012); Talon (2005); Lambert and Parker (1966).

[300] For a further discussion of the *Akītu* festival see below, pp. 116-121.

[301] See Chapter 1, pp. 56-57, cf. Chapter 3, pp. 154-157.

[302] Ctesias, 24.1. Various cuneiform sources, for example texts commissioned by the Neo-Babylonian king Nabonidus and the Persian 'conqueror' Cyrus, share with Ctesias a focus on Babylonian influence. Nabonidus describes the events that led to the fall of the Assyrian Empire. He presents the king of the Medes as the servant of the Neo-Babylonian king and the tool of Marduk. In the narrative that Nabonidus creates the Medes were simultaneously the active agent in the sack of Nineveh and subordinate to the Babylonian king. Cyrus picks up on this narrative when he describes how he was singled out by the gods of Babylon to remove the impious king Nabonidus. See: *Cyrus Cylinder*, 7-12; *Nabonidus Cylinder*; Nabonidus 3.3 (*Babylon Stele*), col. II; discussion in Haubold (2013)a, 80-90.

[303] Haubold (2013)a, 93-94.

by Alexander, Babylon was the last great Near Eastern city that could serve as the capital of a world empire in the minds of Greek and *non*-Greek observers alike.[304]

Interactions in Hellenistic Times

For the Seleucids, Babylon was not only important because it was a *lieu de memoire* for Greeks and Mesopotamians that held the memory of world empires long past. Rather, it played an important part in the Seleucids' own ideology of empire. First, as the chosen capital of Alexander's empire, and place where he died, Babylon carried significant cultural and ideological capital for the Greek successors who presented themselves as the heirs of Alexander.[305] Secondly, the so-called 'Seleucus Romance' attests to the importance of Mesopotamia, and specifically of Babylon, for the self-definition of the Seleucid Empire.[306] Babylon's significance can further be seen in numerous stories that clustered around the figure of Seleucus I and the Euphrates River. One of these stories features Seleucus when he was still a general serving under Alexander. The story relates that Alexander, during a boat ride on the Euphrates, lost his diadem and that Seleucus jumped into the river to retrieve it for him, putting it on his head to prevent it from getting wet. This was interpreted by Babylonian soothsayers as a portent of Alexander's imminent death and later also as an indication that Seleucus would become king.[307] A further story connecting the Seleucids and the Euphrates relates how Seleucus' mother gave him a ring with an anchor engraved on it, after she had a dream that he would become king wherever he lost the ring. Seleucus did indeed lose his seal ring, near the Euphrates River.[308] These stories do not only stress the importance of Babylon and the Euphrates River, they also give pride of place to the Babylonian priests as advisors to the king.

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[304] Susa, the Iranian capital city of the Achaemenids might have been a potential alternative but was tainted by memories of the Achaemenid Empire (it acquired notoriety for the Greeks in Aeschylus' *Persians*). Although the Seleucids used it as a regional administrative centre and renamed it Seleucia on the Eulaios, they actively tried to distance themselves from their Persians predecessors. For example, the early Seleucids never appropriated Behistun as a prime location for proclaiming kingship. As it lay on the road between Seleucia on the Tigris and Ecbatana, it would have been a good place for them to do so. However, we do not find any activity there until the dedication of a Heracles sculpture in 148 BC by a Seleucid governor (Callieri and Chaverdi (2013), 693-694; Sherwin-White and Kuhrt (1993), 223).
[305] Strabo, 15.3.10; Curtius Rufus, 10.2.12.
[306] Fraser (1996), 35-39, see Chapter 1, pp. 53-54, n. 177.
[307] Arrian, *Anabasis* 7.22.1-5; Appian, *Syriaca* 56.
[308] Appian, *Syriaca* 56.

In addition to these traditions, the considerable practical assets of Babylon for the Seleucids must not be underestimated. First, Seleucus received Babylonia as his satrapy during the council of Triparadeisus and built his powerbase from there.[309] Seleucus' retaking of Babylon from Antigonus in 311 BC, after a risky march through the desert with a small fighting force, confirms how important the city was to his plans.[310] Babylon was not only the centre of Seleucus' satrapy, it also held a key position to anyone aiming to conquer the eastern or 'upper' satrapies of Alexander's, and previously the Persian, empire. When Antigonus conquered Babylon from Seleucus, the satraps of the eastern satrapies immediately defected to him. When Seleucus retook Babylon, this enabled him to re-conquer the upper satrapies.[311] The clearest sign that the Seleucids recognised the importance of Babylon is that he backdated the beginning of the Seleucid Era to his conquest of Babylon in 311 BC, not his assumption of the title of king almost seven years later.[312]

Modern scholars have sometimes argued that Babylon's importance was diminished by the founding of Seleucia on the Tigris[313] and by the fact that it was not one of the royal capitals of the Seleucid Empire.[314] Before the discovery of substantial archaeological remains and cuneiform archives from the Hellenistic period, Babylon was believed to be a ruin from the Seleucid period onwards.[315] Classical authors report that the Babylonian population had been deported by Seleucus I to Seleucia on the Tigris, with only the priests remaining within the city walls.[316] Yet we now know that Babylon continued to be a thriving community throughout the Hellenistic and early Parthian periods. Now cuneiform chronicles and the Astronomical Diaries reflect a vibrant priestly elite interacting with the Seleucid king and royal officials and taking a keen interest in political events in and around Babylonia.

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[309] Sherwin-White and Kuhrt (1993), 9-10.

[310] Grainger (1990)a, 72-81.

[311] Leaving Babylon under the protection of Patrocles, one of his most trusted *philoi* and generals, see Chapter 1, pp. 31-33.

[312] For the Seleucid Era, see Kosmin (2014)a, 100-103; Boiy (2000), 115–121; Bickermann (1943), 73-84; Bikerman (1938), 105. See also Invernizzi (1993), 234: "There can hardly be any doubt that the original centre of the Seleucid Empire was in every respect the country between the Tigris and the Euphrates, the very region that was traditionally the centre of the Near East".

[313] Grainger (1990)a, 100-101. However, Kuhrt and Sherwin White (1987), 18-19 were surely right to argue that the Seleucids never harboured anti-Babylonian feelings and that the foundation of Seleucia on the Tigris did not diminish the importance of Babylon, cf. Invernizzi (1993), 234-246, who stresses that by founding Seleucia on the Tigris, Seleucus reaffirmed the importance of Babylonia, if not Babylon itself.

[314] The Seleucids, like the Achaemenids, held a travelling court and had several 'capital' cities throughout the empire. Briant (2002), 255-258; Held (2002), 217-249; Sherwin-White and Kuhrt (1993), 38; Kuhrt and Sherwin-White (1987), 16.

[315] Strabo, 16.1.5: "The great city is a great desert".

[316] Strabo, 16.1.5, 16.1.16; Pliny, *Historia Naturalis* 6.121-122; Diodorus Siculus, 2.9.9; Pausanias, 1.16.3, 8.33.3.

Almost no documents have been found at Seleucia on the Tigris because, in contrast to the cuneiform clay tablets, Greek (and Aramaic) documents left no trace in the archaeological record.[317] However, 25.000 clay seals used to stamp and seal the administrative documents confirm Seleucia's importance as an administrative centre for the Seleucids.[318] This fact was also acknowledged by the Babylonian elites, who called Seleucia the 'city of kingship' (*āl šarrūti*).[319] Some scholars have concluded that with the foundation of Seleucia Babylon lost considerable prestige, even though it is clear that not the whole population of Babylon was deported there, and became a political backwater in the Seleucid period.[320] However, cuneiform records show that the Babylonian elites kept in close contact with the administration in Seleucia. More importantly, Babylon retained its ideological power and capitalised on it.[321]

During the early Seleucid period Babylon seems to have been largely self-governing. Clancier argues that the position of the Babylonian city elite became stronger, rather than weaker, in the early Seleucid period because Seleucid kings made use of it in the administration of their empire.[322] Before I discuss this further let me briefly expand upon the historical background of Babylonian government.

The political position of Babylon within the Seleucid Empire can be reconstructed with some degree of certainty. Most modern scholars consider Babylon to be an 'autonomous and

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[317] Invernizzi (2003).

[318] A full report of the excavations was published by Messina (2006), and a catalogue of the impressed seals by Messina and Mollo (2004), Vol. I; Bollati and Messina (2004), Vol. II and Vol. III. Preliminary publications and discussion of some *bullae* and impressed seals were made available by Invernizzi (1998), 105-112; (1996), 131-143; (1994), 353-364. cf. Le Rider (1998); Invernizzi (1995), 273-280 for further publications on the status of Seleucia. On the Seleucid economic administration in Seleucia, see: Capdetrey (2007), 52-59, 363-364; Aperghis (2004), 154-156, 219-224, 286.

[319] *AD*, Vol. I: 345, no. 273B Rev. 31, 347, no. 273B Rev. 35; *AD*, Vol. II: 333, no. 187 Rev.18, 439 no. 171B Rev. upper edge 1; *BCHP* 12 and 13, cf. Cohen (2013), 164; Sherwin-White (1983), 268-270.

[320] These scholars stress the provincialism of cuneiform culture and the Seleucids' focus on the west, especially on the Syrian Tetrapolis (Boiy (2004), 138).

[321] Clancier (2011), 758-759; Sherwin-White (1987), 18-19; van der Spek (1987), 66. The foundation story of Seleucia on the Tigris in Appian reflects the tensions between the two cities but also offers resolution. In this story Seleucus I asks the Magi to indicate the right day and hour for the foundation of Seleucia on the Tigris. Appian writes that the Magi feared the new foundation and lied about the right hour. However, on the destined hour the soldiers received a sign and started building. After the Magi confessed their duplicity and proclaimed the elevated destiny of Seleucia, the king was pleased with what they said and forgave them. (Appian, *Syriaca* 58) Although this story at first glance seems to highlight the defeat of the Babylonian priests, it also shows their importance to Seleucus and the trust he puts in them. Other references to the story are Pausanias, 1.16.3; Strabo, 16.738; Pliny, *Historia Naturalis* 6.122; Tacitus, *Annales* 6.42; Josephus, *Antiquitates Judaicae* 17.9.8; Ammianus Marcellinus 23.6.23. For further discussion, see: Kosmin (2014)a, 212-214.

[322] Clancier (2012), 298; Clancier (2011), 758-759.

free' city, as were many of the Greek *poleis*.[323] Boiy argues that Babylon was *de iure* an independent city that was governed by local authorities.[324] It is difficult to know what this would have meant from the point of view of the imperial administration. On the level of local politics we are a little better informed due to the Astronomical Diaries and various administrative documents. Although many details are still elusive, it is now widely accepted that there were two main phases in Babylonian government in the Hellenistic period.[325] The first phase fell roughly between the time of Alexander/Seleucus I and Antiochus III and is the period that concerns us here. The second or late phase started from Antiochus IV or (possibly) Antiochus III.

In the early Seleucid period, "Babylonian cities found themselves under the leadership of the clergy of the main temple of the city."[326] The Babylonian temple elites combined civil and religious power and were the only form of indigenous government that is attested in Babylon at the time.[327] They were therefore the most important interlocutors between Babylon and the Greek kings.[328] Two important institutions made up the administrative structure of the main Babylonian temple, the Esagila.[329] The *šatammu*, as the head of the Esagila, was in charge of administrative and religious matters in all the temples of the city as well as representing the city to the king.[330] The second major governing body of the city was the *kiništu* of the Esagila, who concerned themselves with the organisation of the temple and its daily routines.[331] The *šatammu* and *kiništu* usually acted and made decisions together as one body.[332] Clancier argues that the city elites in Babylon can be securely tied to the leading priestly families in the city.[333] For the kings, interacting with the city's indigenous elites thus

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[323] Clancier (2012), 299-300; Boiy (2004), 215-216; van der Spek (1987) 60-70; van der Spek (1986), 45-57.
[324] Boiy (2004), 216.
[325] Clancier (2012), 315-320; Clancier (2007), 21-74; Boiy (2004), 215-216.
[326] Clancier (2011), 758.
[327] Boiy (2004), 194-196.
[328] Clancier (2012), 301; Clancier (2011), 758-759.
[329] Clancier, (2012), 305; Sherwin-White (1983), 269; for a more in depth study of the Babylonian temple administration, see: McEwan (1981)a.
[330] Boiy (2004), 196-197; McEwan (1981)a, 25-27.
[331] The *kiništu* was often further described, with an appositional clause, as 'the Babylonians'. This term does not denote the whole of the Babylonian population but a specific subgroup of the city elite closely connected with the temple of Marduk (Boiy (2004), 196-197).
[332] As can be seen, for example, in: *AD*, Vol. III, -77A:'obv. 27'. Boiy (2004), 194.
[333] Clancier (2012), 301; Clancier (2011), 756-762 discusses Uruk, which presents an interesting foil for Babylon. In Hellenistic times the city was more provincial than Babylon, but relations between the Seleucids and the local elites and institutions seem to have been remarkably similar to what they were in Babylon. The cuneiform documents from the Hellenistic period in Uruk give interesting insights into the adoption of Greek names by the city elites and attest to connections between these elites and the king. For further discussions of

meant interacting with the temples and vice-versa. Besides the temple elites (the *šatammu* and *kiništu*), there were some other figures present in the political landscape of Babylon, appointed directly by the king and acting as a balance for the powerful local elites. The three most important offices were the satrap of Babylonia, the *epistates* and the royal army and its *strategos*.[334] These are less well attested in the cuneiform sources, perhaps because those sources served as a tool of self-representation by the temple elite.

In the second century BC, the temple elite lost part of this power. Clancier argues that Antiochus IV Epiphanes (re-)introduced the office of *zazakku*, as an indigenous representative of the king, alongside the *šatammu*.[335] The *zazakku* could issue orders on behalf of the king and was in control of the temple finances. Indeed, under King Antiochus IV the local elites of Babylon seem to have lost their prominent position in the political interaction between the king and the city.[336] In 173 BC a new group is mentioned in the documents, the Greek *politai*, and this seems to indicate yet another important development in Babylonian politics, the founding of a Greek *polis*. The administrative changes under Antiochus IV highlight by contrast the relative autonomy that Babylon seems to have enjoyed in the early Seleucid period.

Beside the evidence for Seleucid politics in Babylonia discussed in the previous paragraph we also have some evidence of individual Babylonians interacting with the Seleucid kings. The figure of Berossus provides a unique insight into the possible form the relationship between the king and a member of the Babylonian elite could take.[337] Berossus was a native Babylonian priest flourishing at the end of the 4th and the beginning of the 3rd century BC. He wrote the *Babyloniaca*, a history of Babylonia and *Fürstenspiegel* in three books.[338] Although

Hellenistic Uruk, see e.g.: Stevens (2013), 132-153; Clancier (2011), 752-773; Sherwin-White and Kuhrt (1993), 149-155; McEwan (1984), 237–241; Clay (1920); see Linssen (2004) for a discussion of religious practices in Hellenistic Uruk.

[334] Boiy (2004), 140-143, 209-214, 217-218.

[335] Clancier (2012), 317-318, cf. Boiy (2004), 161 and 209. The *zazakku* was an office that already existed in Neo-Babylonian and Achaemenid times. It is, however, not attested during the early Seleucid period.

[336] Clancier (2012), 320.

[337] Although unique, Berossus was certainly not alone; throughout documents from Hellenistic Babylon we catch glimpses of Babylonians advising and supporting the king. This can be seen, for example, in *BCHP* 5, col. i, 8, where King Antiochus performs the rituals guided by "a certain Bab[ylonian] (1-*en* lúDUMU E.[KI])", but also in the *Borsippa Cylinder* of Antiochus I, which must be the result of collaboration with the (anonymous) scribe(s) who composed it for the king.

[338] For the most recent scholarship on Berossus see Haubold *et al*. (2013). A recent edition is De Breucker (2012)a. Other important works are De Breucker (2012)b; van der Spek (2008); Dillery (2007); Beaulieu (2006)a; De Breucker (2003); Verbrugghe and Wickersham (1996); Kuhrt (1987); Burstein (1978); Drews (1975); Schnabel (1923).

his precise date is debated, the consensus is that he was a contemporary of Alexander the Great and dedicated his work to Antiochus I.[339] The testimonia that date Berossus all point to the early Seleucid period, although the one that links him directly to King Antiochus I is problematic.[340] Some scholars stress that the dating problems lead to complications when contextualizing Berossus and his relationship with Seleucid royalty,[341] but, although it is important to acknowledge the gaps in our understanding of the precise details of Berossus' life, I follow De Breucker and Haubold in arguing that the testimonia give sufficient indication that he can be dated to the time of the early Seleucid kings, most likely the reign of Antiochus I.[342] The fact that Berossus was a priest at the Esagila, and thus part of the Babylonian elite, increases the likelihood of interaction between Berossus and the king.[343]

The *Babyloniaca* is the only work firmly attributed to Berossus.[344] Despite the difficult transmission of the work it seems clear that it was divided into three books.[345] The first book opened with a geographical, ethnographic and cultural treatise on Babylonia, along the lines of Greek historians like Herodotus, Hecataeus of Abdera, and Megasthenes. It then went on to discuss the earliest history of Babylon, and humankind, starting from the creation of the cosmos and describing the dissemination of all knowledge by the sage Oannes.[346] The second book described the succession of antediluvian kings, the flood story and the post-flood kings probably up to Nabonassar (747-734). Due to the transmission of the *Babyloniaca* through

[339] According to Berossus himself: De Breucker (2012)a T1a/T1b and Tatian, *ad Graecas*, 36 on the link between Berossus and Antiochus I. For in depth discussion of the chronological problems see Stevens (2013), 40-41.

[340] De Breucker (2012)a T1a/b/c, T2, T4a/b/c. Cf. *BNJ* 680 T2: the problem lies in the precise chronology. Tatian's text, quoted by Eusebius, dates Berossus as follows: "Berossus, a Babylonian, priest of their Belos, who was born in the time of Alexander, composed for Antiochus, the third successor after him, the history of the Chaldaeans in three books." As several scholars have pointed out, both Philip III Arrhidaeus and the boy Alexander IV, had been king after Alexander. De Breucker thus considers Seleucus I the third successor after Alexander, but considers this a mistaken reference, inferring that Antiochus I must be meant. I would propose to disregard Philip III Arrhidaeus and Alexander IV, who did not make an impact as kings, and consider the passage as referring to Alexander the Great, Seleucus I and Antiochus I. The third successor, counting inclusively as is common in the Graeco-Roman world, would then be Antiochus I.

[341] Stevens (2013), 40-42.

[342] Haubold (2013)a, 143; Haubold (2013)b, 31-32; De Breucker (2012)a, 25-26.

[343] Clancier (2011), 752-773.

[344] De Breucker (2013); Schnabel (1923), 17-22. For the astronomical fragments, see below: p. 122 n. 478.

[345] This is not the place to go into a detailed discussion of the thorny issues surrounding the reception of the text. Some overviews of the transmission of the *Babyloniaca* are: De Breucker (2012)a, 153-181; Verbrugghe and Wickersham (eds.) (1996); Kuhrt (1987), 34; Burstein (1978), 10-11. On specific problems connected with the transmission see: Stevens (2013), 40-45; Moyer (2013), 213-222; Schironi (2013), 235-253; Schironi (2009).

[346] See De Breucker (2012)a and Burstein (1978) for a text and translation of the first book. On the ways in which Berossus incorporates a paraphrase of *Enūma Eliš* in the first book, see Haubold (2013)b, 34-42, who focusses on links between Berossus' reworking of *Enūma Eliš* and Stoic philosophy.

Christian writers, the flood story is among its better preserved parts, together with the description of the reign of King Nebuchadnezzar. The last book discussed the period from King Nabonassar to Alexander the Great.[347]

Despite the fragmentary nature of the text, it is clear that Berossus' *Babyloniaca* is in many ways a specifically Seleucid text. Written by a member of the powerful Babylonian temple elite, who had every incentive and opportunity to interact with the Seleucid kings, the work can be seen as a test case for exploring the ways in which literature interacted with empire in the Seleucid period. I now turn to an important characteristic that Berossus shares with other early Seleucid authors: his use of the language of royal benefaction (euergetism).

The Kings and the City

Adorning the City

In his book *Antiochos III and the cities of Western Asia Minor*, John Ma interprets the correspondence between the Seleucid king and the Greek cities as an integral part of the workings of empire.[348] He argues that the language of the royal letters and city decrees should be read as a shared literature of euergetism and that this literature enabled the kings and the cities to negotiate power and authority.[349] In his book, Ma analyses the language of euergetism to show the workings of this negotiation on a conceptual level. The language of euergetism stresses reciprocity, durability and shared interest, and enables both the city and the king to reformulate a relation of power as one of co-operation and mutal benefit.[350]

In three case studies I show that Seleucid Babylonian literature was part of, and interacted with, the royal discourse of euergetism. The three bodies of text I want to discuss are Berossus' *Babyloniaca*, the *Borsippa Cylinder* of King Antiochus I, and extracts from the Astronomical Diaries and Babylonian Chronicles. All these texts have a different perspective on the Seleucid period in Babylonia. Upon closer inspection, however, it becomes clear that

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[347] The extant fragments of the *Babyloniaca* end with a discussion of the Persian kings, but a remark of Abydenus indicates that Berossus included Alexander the Great in his narrative of kings in Babylon (De Breucker (2012)a F14, see also the discussion at De Breucker (2012)a, 29).

[348] Ma (1999).

[349] Greek euergetism is an important topic in Hellenistic scholarship, see for example: Ma (2013)a; Curty, Piccand and Coudourey (eds.) (2009); Bringmann and von Steuben (ed.) (1995); Bringmann (1993), 7-24; Veyne (1990); Gauthier (1985), esp. 39-74; Veyne (1976); Funck (1974), 1290-1334.

[350] Ma (1999), 179-180. Ma's analysis comprises a corpus of inscriptions from the reign of Antiochus III, but Ma stresses the durability of this practice by quoting examples of earlier Seleucid kings. Here I would like to corroborate Ma's analysis by extending the reach of euergetic literature to a non-Greek city.

they all employ the Seleucid imperial discourse of euergetism. This discourse is multi-directional and taken up by both the kings and the cities and local sanctuaries.

First I will look at euergetism as a theme in Berossus, the Babylonian priest writing for a Seleucid king. To this end, let us turn to the first case study of this chapter: the Nebuchadnezzar narrative in Book 3 of Berossus' *Babyloniaca*. The passage in question is transmitted via Josephus and provides a fairly extensive continuous narrative (*BNJ* 680 F8a/De Breucker (2012)a, F9a.1). It contains various points of interest but here I would like to focus on the last part of the text where Nebuchadnezzar restores and decorates the temples of Babylon – with the spoils of war from his Western campaign.

> (139) αὐτὸς δὲ ἀπὸ τῶν ἐκ τοῦ πολέμου λαφύρων τό τε Βήλου ἱερὸν καὶ τὰ λοιπὰ κοσμήσας φιλοτίμως, τήν τε ὑπάρχουσαν ἐξ ἀρχῆς πόλιν καὶ ἑτέραν ἔξωθεν προσχαρισάμενος, καὶ †ἀναγκάσας πρὸς τὸ μηκέτι δύνασθαι τοὺς πολιορκοῦντας τὸν ποταμὸν ἀναστρέφοντας ἐπὶ τὴν πόλιν κατασκευάζειν, ὑπερεβάλετο τρεῖς μὲν τῆς ἔνδον πόλεως περιβόλους, τρεῖς δὲ τῆς ἔξω, τούτων <δὲ> τοὺς μὲν ἐξ ὀπτῆς πλίνθου καὶ ἀσφάλτου, τοὺς δὲ ἐξ αὐτῆς τῆς πλίνθου. (140) καὶ τειχίσας ἀξιολόγως τὴν πόλιν, καὶ τοὺς πυλῶνας κοσμήσας ἱεροπρεπῶς, προσκατεσκεύασεν τοῖς πατρικοῖς βασιλείοις ἕτερα βασίλεια ἐχόμενα ἐκείνων, ὧν τὸ μὲν ἀνάστημα καὶ τὴν λοιπὴν πολυτέλειαν μακρὸν ἴσως ἔσται, ἐάν τις ἐξηγῆται, πλὴν ὄντα γε ὑπερβολὴν ὡς μεγάλα καὶ ὑπερήφανα συνετελέσθη ἡμέραις δεκαπέντε. (141) ἐν δὲ τοῖς βασιλείοις τούτοις ἀναλήμματα λίθινα ὑψηλὰ ἀνοικοδομήσας, καὶ τὴν ὄψιν ἀποδοὺς ὁμοιοτάτην τοῖς ὄρεσι, καταφυτεύσας δένδρεσι παντοδαποῖς, ἐξειργάσατο καὶ κατεσκεύασε τὸν καλούμενον κρεμαστὸν παράδεισον διὰ τὸ τὴν γυναῖκα αὐτοῦ ἐπιθυμεῖν τῆς ὀρείας διαθέσεως, <ὡς> τεθραμμένην ἐν τοῖς κατὰ τὴν Μηδίαν τόποις». (142) ταῦτα μὲν οὕτως ἱστόρηκεν περὶ τοῦ προειρημένου βασιλέως καὶ πολλὰ πρὸς τούτοις ἐν τῆι τρίτηι βίβλωι τῶν Χαλδαικῶν, ἐν ἧι μέμφεται τοῖς Ἑλληνικοῖς συγγραφεῦσιν, ὡς μάτην οἰομένοις ὑπὸ Σεμιράμεως τῆς Ἀσσυρίας κτισθῆναι τὴν Βαβυλῶνα, καὶ τὰ θαυμάσια κατασκευασθῆναι περὶ αὐτὴν ὑπ' ἐκείνης ἔργα ψευδῶς γεγραφόσι.
>
> (139) He himself zealously decorated the temple of Belos and the other temples from the spoils of war. He strengthened the existing old city and added another city outside the walls. And †taking thought for the fact that besiegers should no longer be able to turn back the river and array it against the city, he surrounded the inner city with three walls and the outer city with three. Of these walls, the former were made of baked brick and bitumen, the latter of mud brick. (140) After he had fortified the city in this remarkable way and decorated the gateways in a way suited to their sanctity, he built in addition to his father's palace another palace adjoining it. It would perhaps take too long to describe its height and general opulence, except to say that, despite its extraordinary size and splendour, it was completed in fifteen days. (141) In this palace he built high stone terraces and made them appear very similar to mountains, planting them with all kinds of trees, thus constructing and arranging the so-called Hanging Garden, because his wife, who had been raised in the regions of Media, longed for a mountainous scenery'. (142) Berossus gives this account about the above-

mentioned king and many things in addition in the third book of the Chaldaika, in which he censures the Greek historians for wrongly thinking that Babylon was founded by Semiramis of Assyria and for falsely writing that the marvelous constructions within it were built by her.

Josephus, *Contra Apionem* 1.139-142[351]

In this passage we read how King Nebuchadnezzar, after his war with the Egyptians in Coele Syria, his subsequent conquest of Egypt itself and his return to Babylon after the death of his father, decorates and fortifies the city. Not only does he embellish the Esagila and the other temples of Babylon, he also strengthens the city with several new walls and builds himself a new palace, with the famous Hanging Garden.[352] Before I go on to discuss Berossus' engagement with the Hellenistic rhetoric of euergetism, I will contextualise this passage by discussing the sources on which Berossus drew.

Berossus' description is firmly rooted in Babylonian tradition and is partly based on Nebuchadnezzar's own inscriptions celebrating his building achievements.[353] Many of the key elements in Berossus' narrative echo the building inscriptions of King Nebuchadnezzar himself. Spoils of war (λαφύρων) are mentioned in *VAB* 4.15, ii 30-39; decoration of temples is mentioned abundantly in *VAB* 4.1, *VAB* 4.3, *VAB* 4.7, *VAB* 4.15; the building of new walls (ὑπερεβάλετο τρεῖς περιβόλους); the building materials (πλίνθου καὶ ἀσφάλτου) *VAB* 4.1, i 18, *VAB* 4.4, i 24-25, *VAB* 4.5, i 16-17, *VAB* 4.7, ii 17, etc.; the new palace; the set time of 15 days (ἡμέραις δεκαπέντε) *VAB* 4.15, viii 64. These correspondences show the extent to which Berossus made use of cuneiform tradition.[354]

However, it is clear that Berossus not only looks back to the golden age of Neo-Babylonian history but is also aware of the contemporary political situation and in some ways echoes Seleucid texts. In a recent discussion, John Dillery reads Berossus' narrative about the Neo-Babylonian kings Nabopolassar and Nebuchadnezzar II in the context of the early Seleucid court.[355] He notes discrepancies between the Babylonian documentary sources and Berossus' narrative and explains them as motivated by the Seleucid context of the *Babyloniaca*. The following analysis of Berossus' story of Nebuchadnezzar further builds on Dillery's argument.

[351] Text from *BNJ* 680 F8a and translation from De Breucker (2012)a, modified.

[352] For recent scholarship and further bibliography on the Hanging Garden, see: Rollinger (2013)b, 151-155; Dalley (2013); Bichler and Rollinger (2005); Dalley (1994).

[353] Van der Spek (2008) has argued for detailed echoes between *VAB* 4.15 (*ABC* 5 or the Basalt Stone Inscription) and Berossus narrative, cf. Dillery (2013), 79-83. For the inscriptions see Langdon (1912), 70-208.

[354] See for further discussion: Rollinger (2013)b, 137-138, 148-155 and Dillery (2013), 80-81.

[355] Dillery (2013), 82-90.

I start with Nebuchadnezzar's return to Babylon after the death of his father, Nabopolassar. In Berossus' account Nebuchadnezzar is campaigning in Egypt when his father dies in Babylon. He leaves his main army to his friends (*philoi*) and rides to Babylon with a small escort.[356] On arriving in Babylon he discovers that his kingship has been preserved by the Chaldaeans.[357] The power of the Chaldaeans to preserve kingship will be the main focus of the second half of this chapter.[358] For now I would like to make two points about this passage. First, Dillery has argued that the reference to *philoi* and the importance of them to the king(-to-be) is an echo of the Hellenistic, and specifically Seleucid, court environment and the importance of officials called *philoi* in it.[359] We have seen the importance of the *philoi* of Seleucus I in the introduction and first chapter of this thesis, and Berossus' use of the word *philoi* in this passage clearly reflects the same Seleucid structures.[360] Secondly, Dillery tentatively suggests that the story of the death of Nabopolassar reflects both Antiochus' problems when his father died on campaign in Thrace and the support he received from the Babylonian elites.[361] It seems indeed likely that the Neo-Babylonian kings served as positive models for the Seleucids in Berossus, but I propose that this specific passage might also resonate with a different episode in recent Seleucid history. Nebuchadnezzar's dash through the desert with a small force to establish his power in Babylon has many similarities with Seleucus I riding with a small army to Babylon after the battle of Gaza in 311 BC to reclaim the city and his satrapy. Seleucus I still had support in the city after it was taken from him by Demetrius Poliorcetes; these supporters were probably members of the local elite, i.e. the Chaldaeans. The dash through the desert, and the support of the Chaldaeans at times of crisis, are probably best treated as recurring motifs in Seleucid literature. In any case, my reading supplements rather than supplants Dillery's interpretation, and corroborates the hypothesis that Berossus responded to contemporary Seleucid concerns.

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[356] *BNJ* 680 F8a/De Breucker (2012)a F9a.1, 135-136.
[357] The Chaldaeans were an ethnic tribe from southern Babylonia, but from Herodotus onwards the term was used in Greek literature to designate Babylonian astronomers, priests and scholars. See e.g. Herodotus 1.181.5; Ctesias, 3.24.2; Arrian, *Anabasis* 3.16.5; Strabo, 16.1.16; Diodorus Siculus 2.29-31; cf. Quintus Curtius Rufus 3.3.6, 10.4.11. Cf. Rochberg (2010), 31-32; Beaulieu (2006)b, 17-27; Momigliano (1975)b, 141-149. On the Chaldaeans as Babylonian tribe, see: Beaulieu (2013), 31-45.
[358] See below, pp. 112-116.
[359] Dillery (2013), 83.
[360] Introduction, pp. 22-24 and Chapter 1, pp. 31-38. See pp. 114-115 below, for a more indepth discussion of this passage as well as a second instance where Berossus imparts to the *philoi* of the king an essential role in his narrative (the flood story *BNJ* 680 F8a).
[361] Dillery (2013), 82, 90; Kuhrt (1987), 56.

The second example of Berossus' interaction with Seleucid ideology can be found in Nebuchadnezzar's motivation for building his palace. The only motive behind Nebuchadnezzar's building program mentioned in Berossus' text is the construction of the hanging garden because his wife "longed for a mountainous scenery". In Nebuchadnezzar's own inscriptions the queen is never mentioned and only the will of the gods and Nebuchadnezzar's piety are invoked as motivations for his building projects.[362] In Berossus, however, the Iranian queen, rather than a god, motivates the king's most famous building project. Queens are rarely mentioned in Near Eastern royal inscriptions and historical documents but Berossus' description of Nebuchadnezzar's queen can be connected to Greek traditions, in two ways. First, the queen's influence over the king mirrors the Greek conception of Near Eastern kings and their wives. Herodotus and Ctesias, among others, established the image of interfering and powerful Eastern queens in Greek literature and in the Greek mind.[363] In Berossus, however, the queen's power lies not in scheming and intrigue but in a loving relationship with her husband. And this is exactly what we find in Hellenistic court literature about the royal couple: the loving relationship between the king and queen provides stability and growth to the kingdom. This idea is expressed in Hellenistic literature, inscriptions, art, and coins from the Ptolemaic and Seleucid empires.[364]

More directly connected to Berossus, references to Seleucid queens can also be found in Babylonian texts: both in the *Borsippa Cylinder* and in historical documents, such as the Astronomical Diaries. The regular appearance of Seleucid queens in the Diaries again stands out: the Achaemenid and Parthian Diaries contain no comparable passages. The Astronomical Diaries from the Seleucid period report mostly on the death of queens but also attest to prayers made for the life of the king and the royal family.[365] This echoes the rhetoric of the *Borsippa Cylinder* professed by Antiochus I:

ii.24. SIG_5-*tì* $^{\text{m}}$*An-ti-'-ku-us* LUGAL KUR.KUR

[362] For the inscriptions see Langdon (1912), 70-208.

[363] Sancisi-Weerdenburg (2013), 135-147; and Kuhrt (2013), 148-150; Dewald (2013), 151-181; Blok (2002), 225-242; Sancisi-Weerdenburg (1983), 20-33.

[364] Chapter 3, pp. 134-146, discusses various Ptolemaic and Seleucid texts that are relevant here, e.g. Callimachus, *The Lock of Berenice*; Theocritus, *Idyll* 17; and the Stratonice legend. For an example of the importance of Seleucid queens in Greek documents, see e.g. Ma (1999), no. 31; Merkelbach and Stauber (2005), no. 301. For the position of Seleucid and Hellenistic queens more generally, see e.g. Carney (2011), 195-220; Bielman Sánchez (2003); Ogden (1999), xix-xx and 117-118; Bringmann (1997), 169-174 (specifically the Hellenistic queens as benefactors); Carney (1991), 154-172; Pomeroy (1984); Macurdy (1932).

[365] For attestations of queens in the *Astronomical Diaries*, see: *AD*, Vol. II, No. -253; *AD*, Vol. II, No. -248; *AD*, Vol. II, No. -245; *AD*, Vol. II, No. -181.

ii.25. [m]*Si-lu-uk-ku* LUGAL DUMU-*šú*

ii.26. [f]*As-ta-ar-ta-ni-ik-ku*

ii.27. *ḫi-rat-su šar-ra-at*

may the good fortune of Antiochus, king of the lands,
King Seleucus, his son,
(and) Stratonice,
his consort, the queen,
[may their good fortune
be established]
Borsippa Cylinder, col. ii, v. 24-27[366]

In this passage the traditional prayer for the wellbeing and long, prosperous reign of the king is extended to include other members of his family, and notably his queen, which is quite unique in Mesopotamian tradition. Thus, the Babylonian sources clearly reflect the importance of the royal family that the Seleucids propagated and shows that Babylonian elites productively engaged with Seleucid views of the royal family.[367] Specifically, Berossus' focus on the wife of the king as a motivation behind some of his building work can thus be seen as a way of incorporating Seleucid motifs into the *Babyloniaca*.

These links between Berossus' text and Seleucid royal ideology provide a context for the echoes of the Seleucid discourse of euergetism in Berossus. The portrayal of royal euergetism is the last, and for our present argument most significant, link between the Nebuchadnezzar narrative and Seleucid imperial discourse. Dillery notes similarities in the language of Berossus' description of Nebuchadnezzar's building activities and the Hellenistic language of euergetism and city adornment.[368] I would like to take his argument one step further and suggest that the most likely point of access for Berossus to the Hellenistic language of euergetism is the Seleucid court and Seleucid royal letters to the cities. I argue that in this passage Berossus engages with a specifically *Seleucid*, rather than merely Hellenistic, discourse of euergetism and that Berossus consciously echoes it to indicate that this Greek idea could also be used to negotiate with Babylon.

Let us look at the passage from the *Babyloniaca* quoted above in more detail to see how Berossus integrates the imperial discourse of euergetism attested in the interaction between the Seleucid kings and the Greek cities, into his account of Nebuchadnezzar's building

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[366] Text and translation from Stevens (2014), 68-69.
[367] The same focus on family life and marital harmony can also be seen in the Seleucids' Greek inscriptions: e.g. *I Didyma* 480, *I. Iasos* 4 and Zeuxis letter to the Herakleians, Ma (1999), no. 31, cf. Merkelbach and Stauber (2005), no. 301-303.
[368] Dillery (2013), 84-85.

activities. In his article, Dillery analyses Berossus' use of language in the first sentence of *BNJ* 680 F8a, 139 (αὐτὸς δὲ ἀπὸ τῶν ἐκ τοῦ πολέμου λαφύρων τό τε Βήλου ἱερὸν καὶ τὰ λοιπὰ κοσμήσας φιλοτίμως "He himself, with the spoils of war, decorating the temple of Bel and the other temples zealously…"). Dillery points out that *kosmeo*, *philotimos* and related words are often found in Hellenistic euergetic inscriptions and that this indicates Berossus' adoption of Hellenistic Greek language and concepts.[369] In support of his argument, Dillery cites three inscriptions that employ the same language as Berossus, two by private persons in the temple of Apollo Zoster on Rhodes and Demeter's temple at Eleusis, and one by Antiochus I on the upkeep of temples at Ilium.[370] However, a closer match with Berossus than either Rhodes/Osborne 2003, n. 46, *SIG*^{3} 1050, is *I. Didyma* 480, a decree that we already encountered in the first chapter. In this inscription both Apama, the first wife of Seleucus Nicator, and her son Antiochus I, are praised for their support of Apollo's temple at Didyma. This inscription provides the same parallels as the inscriptions that Dillery cites but is a more likely point of reference for the passage of Berossus.[371] It is likely that Berossus came into contact with Greek euergetic language through the first Seleucid kings and their officials, like *OGIS* 219 and *I. Didyma* 480.

If we now look at the rest of the passage in Berossus, we can see a wealth of references to Hellenistic euergetic language. The passage starts with κοσμήσας and φιλοτίμως,[372] words that not only occur in the Didyma inscription that we just discussed, but in many other euergetic Greek texts.[373] The Decrees of the Teians are further examples of Seleucid euergetic literature that are relevant here. In these inscriptions φιλοτίμως does not appear, but two other words from Berossus, προσχαρισάμενος and κοσμήσας do. Both the First and the Second Decree which the Teians set up for King Antiochus III and Queen Laodice are replete with references to χάρις,[374] with almost an exact echo of Berossus in l. 48 of the First Teian

[369] Dillery (2013), 84, n. 44; cf. Ma (1999), 191, 216, who discusses references to the king's zeal in the euergetic language of Antiochus III.
[370] Rhodes and Osborne (2003), n. 46, *SIG*^{3} 1050; *OGIS* 219.
[371] *I. Didyma* 480, l. 11 (συμφιλοτιμῶν), ll. 13-14 (ἐπι] |κοσμῆται); a further parallel is the agency that both texts attribute to the queens: *I. Didyma* 480 stresses Apama's zeal and goodwill that inspired Seleucus' euergetism and Berossus describes Nebuchadnezzar's queen as motivating the building of the Hanging Gardens.
[372] With κοσμήσας recurring in *BNJ* 680 F8, paragraph 140.
[373] Ma (1999), No. 16, ll. 17, 39; First Decree of the Teians (Ma (1999), No. 17, l. 50); Ma (1999), No. 24, l. 15; Ma (1999), No. 44, l. 23.
[374] Ma (1999), First Decree of the Teians (No. 17, ll. 16, 41, 44, 48); Second Decree of the Teians (No. 18, ll. 5, 40, 42, 64, 68, 74, 108); Ma (1999) No. 19A, ll. 5, 9.

decree, χαρισ[ά]μενοι.[375] The idea of enlarging the existing city (ὑπάρχουσαν ἐξ ἀρχῆς πόλιν), moreover, corresponds with a letter that Zeuxis, the Seleucid governor of Asia Minor, sent to the Herakleians.[376] If we read on in Berossus' text, κατασκευάζειν (and later προσκατεσκεύασεν, κατεσκεύασε and κατα-σκευασθῆναι) are very prominent terms in euergetic inscriptions.[377]

With this short analysis I hope to have shown the extent to which Berossus' language in his description of Nebuchadnezzar II reflects the language of Hellenistic euergetic inscriptions. These inscriptions were not isolated or disconnected, but were part of a literature of euergetism that connected the kings and the cities, a literature that Berossus integrated into the *Babyloniaca*, his *Fürstenspiegel* for the Seleucids.

It is significant that Berossus chose to integrate these elements of euergetism into his story of King Nebuchadnezzar II, since his reign was considered a golden period for the Neo-Babylonian Empire and characterised by an extensive building program in Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar II himself became a model king whose name carried great significance.[378] His importance is indicated by several texts and incidents. In these texts, Near Eastern kings, both Babylonian and Persian, imitated Nebuchadnezzar to support their own rule.[379] Furthermore, the significance of Nebuchadnezzar's name is shown by two rebels against Darius who took on the name Nebuchadnezzar to legitimise their revolt.[380] Finally, as we have seen in Chapter 1, Megasthenes also referenced King Nebuchadnezzar, drawing not on Greek but on Near Eastern traditions, which shows that the Seleucid court was aware of the power of Nebuchadnezzar as a model king.[381] Berossus combined the Hellenistic discourse of euergetism and the story of a Babylonian model king and so provided a powerful narrative for the Seleucid kings in their interaction with Babylon.[382]

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[375] Other examples of χάρις in royal euergetic discourse can be found in: Ma (1999), No. 10, l. 18; No. 11, l. 11; No. 16, l. 20; No. 26, l. 18; No 40, l. 10.
[376] Ma (1999), No. 31B II, l. 9.
[377] Ma (1999), No. 2, l. 18; No. 5, l. 8; No. 9, l. 11; First Decree of the Teians (No. 17, l. 54); Second Decree of the Teians (No. 18, ll. 9, 60, 70, 85, 90); No. 19A, ll. 12, 13; No. 24, ll. 14, 39; No. 26A, l. 29; No. 27, l. 11, No. 31B IV, l. 11; No. 34, l. 1.
[378] Haubold (2013)a, 166.
[379] Stele of Nabonidus. Beaulieu (1989), 20-22, inscription 1. This inscription was likely created as an effort to legitimate Nabonidus's reign, since he was notrelated to the previous royal family. For Cyrus, see: the *Persian Verse Account*, Col. VI, 6-10, Schaudig (2001), 571-572.
[380] *Behistun Inscription* (*DB*) Col. I.18-19 and Col. III.49-50; cf. Joannès (2004), 137, 204.
[381] See Chapter 1, pp. 59-61.
[382] By adopting king Nebuchadnezzar as a role model the Seleucids guarded against the possibility of local resistance and acquired a template of kingship in Asia that was unconnected with the Achaemenids.

To conclude this discussion of the Seleucid discourse of euergetism in Seleucid Babylonia, I discuss in a little more detail the way in which some of its central tenets cut across cultures. Here I will look at bodies of text that are firmly rooted in Babylonian tradition, and so might seem *prima facie* unlikely to adopt what might seem like an exclusively Greek political and cultural template.[383] And yet, I will show that these texts too show signs of participating in the Seleucid discourse of euergetism.

I begin my discussion with the voice of the king addressing Nabû, the patron god of Borsippa. In the *Borsippa Cylinder*, King Antiochus I describes how he restored the Esagila, the temple of Marduk in Babylon, and the Ezida, the temple of Nabû in Borsippa in 268BC.[384]

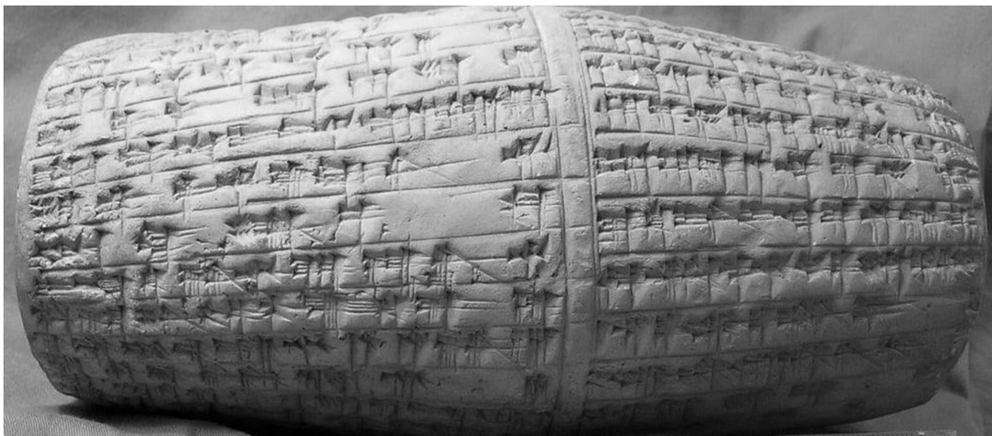

Figure 3 - Borsippa Cylinder[385]

The *Cylinder* was written on a clay barrel and was deposited as a foundation document in the *ziggurat* of the Ezida in Borsippa, "encased in kiln-burnt bricks covered with bitumen in a doorway."[386] Many such documents are known from the second millennium BC onwards.[387] Foundation cylinders continued to be popular throughout the Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian period and there is one example from the earliest Persian period.[388] In the Neo-Babylonian period especially, royal building inscriptions outnumber all other kinds of royal

[383] De Breucker (2012)a, 98-99; Glassner (2004), 4-6; Grayson (1975), 1-10.

[384] For online edition see Stol and van der Spek (2008): http://www.livius.org/cg-cm/chronicles/antiochus_cylinder/antiochus_cylinder1.html. Other editions are: Stevens (2014), 66-88; Kuhrt and Sherwin-White (1991), 71-86; Weissbach (1911) 132–35. See Kosmin (2014)b, 173-198; Haubold (2013)a, 135-142; Strootman (2013), 67-97; Austin (2006), no. 166, for discussion and translations of the text.

[385] Illustration from http://www.livius.org/a/1/mesopotamia/antiochus_cyl6.jpg.

[386] Kuhrt and Sherwin-White (1991), 73 n. 14; cf. Reade (1986), 109.

[387] Ellis (1968), 108-125.

[388] For the Cyrus Cylinder, see: Schaudig (2001).

inscriptions.[389] Da Riva explains this uneven distribution as a consequence of the 'ideological priorities of the monarchs'.[390] Rather than emphasising their conquests, as the Assyrian kings did, the rulers of the Neo-Babylonian dynasty presented themselves as builder kings.

Because royal foundation cylinders were buried in the walls of (newly constructed or restored) buildings, they have been regarded by some Assyriologists as texts without a contemporary audience.[391] These scholars argue that the intended audiences of foundation inscriptions are the gods and future kings who might unearth the inscriptions in subsequent restoration processes, and are then supposed to read them and reverently place their own inscription next to the older text.[392] As Da Riva rightly stresses, future kings in particular provided an important audience, as they could secure the immortality of the current king's name.[393]

However, Nevling Porter argues, and Da Riva at least partially agrees, that royal building inscriptions were also written for a contemporary audience and could have been accessed in a variety of ways.[394] First, these texts would have been directly read and discussed by the scribes composing them on behalf of the king and thus become known to the scribal elite. Secondly, some copies of these texts have been found that were probably meant for archiving, but possibly also for display in palaces or temples.[395] Thirdly, Nevling Porter stresses the importance of the building inscriptions as part of a ritual in which the king ceremoniously built part of the wall or foundations. It is likely that the building inscription would have been read out in front of the people as part of this ritual.[396] Her analysis focusses on Esarhaddon's inscriptions in particular, but can be generalised: the propagandistic elements in the narratives of Assyrian, Neo-Babylonian, Persian and Seleucid royal inscriptions, and their impact on political and cultural history, corroborate Nevling Porter's argument that these texts were intended for a contemporary readership. The *Borsippa Cylinder* of Antiochus is a good example.

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[389] For an introduction to Neo-Babylonian royal inscriptions, see: Da Riva (2008).

[390] Da Riva (2008), 108.

[391] Cf. Oppenheim (1964), 146-148, 234-235; Ellis (1968), 166-167. For further discussion of the matter see Nevling Porter (1993), 105ff.

[392] Descriptions by kings of finding building inscriptions of their predecessors show that the Neo-Babylonians perceived this process to have occurred in real life, Da Riva (2008), 26-27, lists various examples.

[393] Da Riva (2008), 26.

[394] Nevling Porter (1993), 105ff.; Da Riva (2008), 26, cf. Kosmin (2014)b, 183-184; Stevens (2014), 82-84.

[395] Da Riva (2014), 30-32; Da Riva (2008), 60-63; Grayson (1980), 164.

[396] Nevling Porter (1993), 109-112.

The *Borsippa Cylinder* is a unique document for the study of Hellenistic Babylonia and the interaction between the Hellenistic kings and local religion. The edition of the cylinder in the *Journal of Hellenic Studies* by Kuhrt and Sherwin-White made the document accessible to a larger group of classical scholars and the cylinder has since been the object of a variety of different approaches to Graeco-Babylonian interactions.

Some scholars stress the traditional lay-out and language of the *Cylinder*; they argue that the *Borsippa Cylinder* is firmly rooted in a Mesopotamian tradition of royal foundation documents. Kuhrt and Sherwin-White stress, for example, that the *Borsippa Cylinder* is written in archaising language to place itself in a tradition of royal pronouncements.[397] Secondly, they show that the *Borsippa Cylinder* adopts the structure of shorter foundation inscriptions from the Neo-Babylonian period, including Nebuchadnezzar II:[398]

Foundation deposit of King Nebuchadnezzar, *VAB* 4.8:

Col. i, 1-14 Introduction	[King Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon ....am I]
Col. i, 15-29, Col. ii 1-22	Decoration of temples at behest of Marduk
Col. ii 23-31	Invocation of Marduk

Borsippa Cylinder of King Antiochus:

Col i, 1-6 Introduction	[Antiochus, the great king....am I]
Col i, 6-15	Restoration of the Esagila in Babylon and the Ezida in Borsippa
Col i, 16-30, col ii 1-29	Invocation of Nabû

This schematic overview shows that the outlines of both inscriptions follow the same pattern, although the number of lines for the different sections does not match precisely. The *Borsippa Cylinder* dedicates more space to the invocation of the god and less to describing the building activities.[399] It has, however, long been recognised that despite the similarities, the cylinder does not simply copy existing Babylonian building inscriptions.[400] Kuhrt and Sherwin-White acknowledge that the *Borsippa Cylinder* shows some Seleucid adaptations of its Near Eastern models,[401] and more recent scholars suggest that the *Borsippa Cylinder* is in important ways a Seleucid text, which must be read in the context of the early Seleucid

[397] Kuhrt and Sherwin-White (1991).
[398] See Kuhrt and Sherwin-White (1991), 77-78 for a more detailed discussion of this analysis.
[399] For a discussion of the significance of this feature see Haubold (2013)a, 137, 165-166.
[400] Haubold (2013)a, 135-137; Kuhrt and Sherwin-White (1991), 83-85.
[401] Kuhrt and Sherwin-White (1991), 83-85.

court.[402] These scholars have stressed the Seleucid ideology that underlies the text and approached it as a subtle document of intercultural dialogue.[403]

Stevens’ reading of the *Cylinder* in the context of Babylonian intellectual tradition, as well as a Seleucid document, also highlights the importance of caution when interpreting the unique features and oddities of the text. She stresses that these oddities might partially be mistakes due to the unfamiliarity of the scribe with a text genre that may have become obsolescent.[404] Her discussion reminds us that not all features of the *Cylinder* have to be deliberate and that some of them might have arisen because the scribe had a hard time reproducing a traditional foundation cylinder. But mistakes themselves can be telling: the fact that Antiochus chose to revive a genre of royal building inscriptions that appears to have been out of use for most of the Achaemenid period draws attention to the conscious interest on the part of the Seleucid kings in Babylonian traditions of kingship. That mistakes were made only serves to underscore this broader point. As Stevens argues, the scribe combined phrases from various models into an inscription which can in many ways be read as a composite texts built from older texts.[405] This also points to a conscious effort on the part of a Seleucid king to integrate different languages and traditions of empire in one document.

By way of illustration, let us first have a look at the opening words of King Antiochus in more detail.

i.1. ^{m}*An-ti-’-ku-us* LUGAL GAL-*ú*
i.2. LUGAL *dan-nu* LUGAL ŠÁR LUGAL E^{ki} LUGAL KUR.KUR
i.3. *za-ni-in* É.SAG.IL *ù* É.ZI.DA
i.4. IBILA SAG.KAL *ša* ^{m}*Si-lu-uk-ku* LUGAL
i.5. ^{lú}*Ma-ak-ka-du-na-a-a* LUGAL E^{ki}
i.6. *a-na-ku i-nu-ma a-na e-pé-eš*$_{15}$
i.7. É.SAG.ÍL *ù* É.ZI.DA
i.8. ŠÀ-*bi ub-lam-ma* SIG$_{4}^{\text{ḫi.a}}$
i.9. É.SAG.ÍL *ù* É.ZI.DA
i.10. *i-na* ^{kur}*Ḫa-at-tì ina* ŠU^{II}-*iá el-le-ti*
i.11. *i-na* Ì.GIŠ *ru-uš-ti al-bi-in-ma*
i.12. *a-na na-de-e uš-šú šá* É.SAG.ÍL
i.13. ù É.ZI.DA *ub-bi-il ina* ^{iti}ŠE UD 20.KAM
i.14. MU 43.KAM *uš-šu šá* É.ZI.DA

[402] Stevens (2014), 66-88; Kosmin (2014)b, 173-198; Haubold (2013)a, 135-142; Strootman (2013), 77-78.
[403] Stevens (2014), 66-88; Kosmin (2014)b, 173-174; Haubold (2013)a, 141.
[404] Stevens (2014), 69-72.
[405] Stevens (2014), 72.

i.15. É *ki-i-ni* É ^{d}AG *šá qé-reb* BAR.SÌP^{ki}
Antiochus, the great king,
the mighty king, king of the world, king of Babylon, king of the lands,
provider for (the temples) Esagila and Ezida,
foremost heir of Seleucus, the king,
the Macedonian, king of Babylon,
am I. When my heart urged me
to build Esagila and Ezida,
I moulded the bricks
of Esagila and Ezida
in the land of Hatti with my pure hand(s)
using the finest oil, and
for the laying of the foundations of Esagila
and Ezida I brought them. In the month of Addaru, on the 20th day,
of year 43 (SE; 268 BC), I laid the foundation of Ezida,
the true temple, the temple of Nabû, which is in Borsippa.
Borsippa Cylinder, col. i, v. 1-15[406]

The composite nature of the text is apparent from the opening lines, which enumerate the titles and epithets of King Antiochus. The choice of titulary is a key moment in the articulation of royal ideology. Kuhrt and Sherwin-White see Antiochus' titles of Great King, King of all Countries as expressing a "traditional Babylonian claim to universal empire."[407] Yet, scholars have also noted that Antiochus emphasises his descent from King Seleucus I, who is described both as King of Babylon, and as a Macedonian, thus stressing the Macedonian descent of the royal house. This follows Persian models in which the king stresses simultaneously his foreignness and his commitment to Babylon.[408] Moreover, Stevens shows that Antiochus' titles are not just traditional Babylonian, but combine elements from different Mesopotamian empires, that of the Assyrians, the Neo-Babylonians and the Persians.[409] She argues that this must either be an element of pastiche that indicates the unfamiliarity of a Hellenistic scribe with royal titulary or a deliberate mixing of the world-conquering tradition of the Assyrians (and Persians) and the tradition of the Neo-Babylonian builder king.[410] The latter seems to me to be the more likely option, especially in

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[406] Text and translation based on Stevens (2014), 68-69.
[407] Kuhrt and Sherwin-White (1991), 78.
[408] Kuhrt and Sherwin-White (1991), 83; see Kosmin (2014)b, 191-192, who argues that this term is part of the marginalization and provincialisation of Babylon.
[409] Stevens (2014), 73-76.
[410] Stevens (2014), 75.

view of other intertextualities with both Neo-Babylonian and Persian texts, to which we will return shortly.

Following the opening lines, Antiochus relates how he rebuilt the Esagila, the main temple of Marduk in Babylon, and the Ezida, the temple of Nabû in Borsippa, with new bricks, which he moulded with his own hands.[411] The third part of the inscription, which follows immediately after the passage quoted above and is considerably longer than the other two, invokes and praises Nabû. In this section the king requests the god to look favourably on him and his family, and to ensure that his reign will be long-lasting. I now turn to the question of how the text engages with Seleucid ideas of euergetism.

One of the central features of the Hellenistic discourse of euergetism is the king's personal motivation to act as a benefactor. He bestowed favours on cities and sanctuaries not under some external compulsion but out of his own free will. Euergetic inscriptions attest to the importance of the concepts of 'deliberate choice' (προαίρεσις) and 'will' (βούλομαι).[412] Both Stevens and Haubold have shown that the *Borsippa Cylinder* takes up this idea of royal agency, and Haubold describes a king "who alone acts and decides what to do."[413] This rhetoric stands in contrast to the standard Mesopotamian practice of enumerating external factors that moved a king to adorn a temple or rebuild a city.[414] Antiochus mentions none of these factors as reasons for his actions, but rather stresses his own internal motivation for his actions in line 8 with the phrase *libbī ublam* (my heart bade me, i.e. I wished).[415] This wording is very close to some royal letters in Greek stressing the internal motivation of the king. Although the phrase *libbī ublam* does not usually appear in the inscriptions of Nebuchadnezzar II, a close parallel can be found in the *Persian Verse Account* (or *Verse Account of Nabonidus*):

6' [... D]INGIR$^{\textit{meš}}$ *i-la-ab-bi-in ap-pa*
7' [*pa-làh* EN E]N *šá-ki-in ina* ŠÀ-*bu-uš*
8' [...] x ŠÀ-*ba-šú ub-lam-ma*
9' [... *t*]*up-šik-ku* BÀD TIN.TIR$^{\text{ki}}$ *uš-tak-lil*
10' [... *ki-m*]*a* $^{\text{Id+}}$NÀ-NÍG.GUB.ÙRU *ina mi-gir* ŠÀ-*bi-šú e-pe-šú*

[411] He claims to have done so: "in the land of Hatti": for the significance of this geographical reference, see: Kosmin (2014)a, 114-115; Kosmin (2014)b, 192-193.
[412] Ma (1999), 187.
[413] Haubold (2013)a, 139, his argument is based on Stevens' reading of the text Stevens (2014), 78-79.
[414] For example: the kings often point towards divine will, as in Nebuchadnezzar's inscriptions, e.g. *VAB* 4.1, *VAB* 4.7 and *VAB* 4.9; the threat of war was also given as the motivation for a building program, e.g. *VAB* 4.4.
[415] Stevens (2014), 78-79; Haubold (2013)a, 139.

6’ [...] he (Cyrus) prostrated on his face for the gods,
7’ [to revere the gods] is set in his heart.
8’ he conceived the idea,
9’ [...] the basket and he perfected the wall of Babylon.
10’ [...] as Nebuchadnezzar gladly he built,

Persian Verse Account, Col. VI, 6-10.[416]

This text describes how King Cyrus ‘conceived the idea’ (ŠÀ-*ba-šú ub-lam-ma*) of restoring the city of Babylon, as Nebuchadnezzar had done. This is the same phrasing used in the *Borsippa Cylinder* and indicates, like the titulary of Antiochus, that the *Cylinder* draws on different Near Eastern traditions. The focus on the internal motivation of King Cyrus is expressed by repeated references to his heart (ŠÀ-*bu-uš*) in lines 7, 8 and 10. It is clear, then, that the *Borsippa Cylinder* and the *Persian Verse Account* share the idea of a non-Babylonian king restoring the temples and cults that previous kings had neglected and that they do so out of their own free will.[417] Both kings proclaim, to a Babylonian audience, their personal commitment to the city. But for King Antiochus the idea of an unprovoked gesture converged with another, specifically Greek discourse of royal commitment. The narrative of the *Cylinder*, which announces Antiochus’ pious deeds and benefactions to the Babylonian temples, echoes the language and ideas of Seleucid euergetism, in such a way that they do not intrude on Babylon, but are rather seen as an essential part of its own tradition.

On a conceptual level, both the *Borsippa Cylinder* and royal letters in Greek are “performative utterances of the imperial state”.[418] This is shown not only in the texts themselves, in which the kings explicitly state their power but also in the performative act of benefaction that enforces vertical power hierarchies.[419] However, as Ma rightly notes, the model of top-down power hierarchies does not do justice to the complicated reality of the Seleucid Empire. In the Greek euergetic inscriptions we can see an intricate power balance between the king and the city, whereby the king gives to the city and promises more, if the

[416] Text Schaudig (2001), 571-572, the translation is my own.
[417] The *Persian Verse Account* states explicitly that Nabonidus neglected and even disrupted the temples and temple rituals, acts that Cyrus subsequently mitigated and reversed by restoring the termples. The *Borsippa Cylinder* does not indicate that Antiochus’ actions are in response to the neglect of a former king, but the (false) accusations by classical authors that Xerxes destroyed Babylon’s temples show that such a tradition did exist in the Seleucid period. Cf. Strabo, 16.1.5; Arrian, *Anabasis* 3.16.4, 7.17.1. See Henkelman, Kuhrt, Rollinger and Wiesehöfer (2011), 451-458, for a reassessment of Xerxes’ alleged destruction of the temples in Babylon.
[418] Ma (1999), 179.
[419] Ma (1999), 179-180.

city is zealous in its support of the king. By accepting these gifts, the city in turn reinforces and acknowledges the power of the king.

The *Borsippa Cylinder* provides striking examples of this language of reciprocity, both implicitly and explicitly. The extended prayer to Nabû, asking to grant the king a long life, a prosperous reign, and a good fate for the royal family, is a conventional reciprocal request to a god based on the *do ut des* principle. Antiochus however, explicitly promises that more is to come if Nabû grants his wishes.

ii.17. *du-un-qí-iá* KUR.KUR.MEŠ TA *ṣi-it* ^{d}UTU-*ši*
ii.18. *a-di e-re-eb* ^{d}UTU-*ši lik-šú-da*
ii.19. ŠU^{II}-*a-a man-da-at-ti-ši-nu lu-us-ni-iq-ma*
ii.20. *a-na šuk-lu-lu* É.SAG.IL
ii.21. *ù* É.ZI.DA *lu-bi-il*
may my hands conquer the countries from sunrise
to sunset
that I might inventory their tribute
and bring it to make perfect Esagila
and Ezida.
Borsippa Cylinder, col. ii, v. 17-21[420]

Haubold notes that "what Antiochus has brought for Nabû after his exertions in Hatti (Akk. *(w)abālu*, 'bring' at i.13), are bricks for laying the *foundations* of Esagila and Ezida. He does not yet claim to have perfected the temples. That will follow once he is able to bring (Akk. *(w)abālu*, again, at ii.21) the fruits of his future conquests (Akk. *šuklulu*, 'perfect', at ii.20). The king's hands may be pure now (Akk. *ina qātīya ellēti* at i.10),[421] but they will need to become conquering hands too if things are to go further (Akk. *likšudā qātāya* at ii.18-19)."[422] Haubold is right to emphasise the importance of this passage for establishing the conditional and reciprocal relationship between the king and the Babylonian god, but he does not make the connection with the language of euergetism in Greek literature and culture. The language of this passage of the *Cylinder* is part of the royal discourse of euergetism that pervades the royal letters to Greek cities. In the *Cylinder* King Antiochus presents himself not only as a

[420] Text and translation based on van der Spek and Stol on livius.org
[421] See for comparison the building inscription of Esharhaddon, Assur A, Col. IV, 27-40, Nevling Porter (1993), 93.
[422] Haubold (2013)a, 140.

good and pious Babylonian king, restoring the temples of the Babylonian gods but he also acts as a Greek benefactor, directing his euergetism towards local sanctuaries.

So far I have argued that Antiochus incorporated elements from both Near Eastern and Greek traditions into the *Borsippa Cylinder* and used the concept of euergetism as a common ground for these two cultures. In Babylonian sources we see that the Babylonian elite were well aware of the conventions of this discourse and actively participated in the interaction between king and city. Although not named as agents in the *Borsippa Cylinder*, members of the Babylonian elite were clearly involved in formulating its contents. But beyond putting the king's orders into practice they also adopted some of the concepts of Seleucid euergetism in their own texts. The Astronomical Diaries and Babylonian Chronicles are diagnostic here, for unlike Berossus' *Babyloniaca* they were written by Babylonians for a Babylonian audience.[423]

The Astronomical Diaries noted meteorological and astrological data regularly and supplied additional information at the end of each month, including important events that had taken place. The chronicles are a more diverse group of texts that include histories of kings long past,[424] as well as accounts of more recent or contemporary events. Since the discovery of these texts, many of which are still in the process of (re-)edition, they have been used to fill in some of the gaps in our evidence for Near Eastern history in the first millennium BC, and to balance the bias of the classical accounts.[425] It is hard to overstate the importance of these texts for the study of the Ancient Near East, but some scholars have put too much faith in their objectivity as historical sources.[426] Despite their apparent objectivity, they do not operate in a cultural and political vacuum but are constructed by a local elite under Assyrian, Neo-Babylonian, Achaemenid, Seleucid and Parthian rule.[427]

Both the Astronomical Diaries and the chronicles were written and kept in the Babylonian temple milieu. The Babylonian priests maintained and updated both series, and together they form a more or less unbroken chain from the Assyrian kings of the 7th century BC to the Parthian Empire in the 1st century BC.[428] Each set of texts has a slightly different focus: the

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423 For editions of the Babylonian Chronicles, see: Finkel and van der Spek (forthcoming); Glassner (2004); Grayson (1975). For the Astronomical Diaries see: Sachs and Hunger (1989-) (edition); Del Monte (1997); van der Spek (1997/1998), 167-175; van der Spek (1993), 91-102.

424 *ABC* 20A; Glassner (2004), nr. 39.

425 Important publications have been Sherwin-White and Kuhrt (1993); Kuhrt (1987); van der Spek (1986), cf. van der Spek (1993), 92, 94-101.

426 Grayson (1975), 11.

427 Clancier (2012), 299-300.

428 Sachs and Hunger (1996), Vol. III.

chronicles tend to record political and military events of major importance whereas the entries in the Astronomical Diaries tend to focus more on Babylon itself.[429] There is, however, much overlap between them, and in any case, both sets of text represent a local outlook within the multi-lingual and multi-cultural framework of the Seleucid Empire. And yet, these texts, too, though they were written for, and kept by, the Babylonian elites, reflect the imperial discourse of euergetism.

We have already seen in the introduction to this chapter that during the Seleucid period a gear change occurred in the portrayal of the kings in the Astronomical Diaries: the Seleucids were given more attention in the Diaries than their predecessors. On one level this shows us the interest in, and interaction with, Babylon of the Seleucid kings. However, it also indicates the importance that the Babylonian priestly elites attached to this interaction. These documents show us not only that the Seleucid kings interacted with the city *in fact*, but more importantly, that the Babylonian elites thought this worth propagating and remembering.

Three passages from the Babylonian Chronicles as well as Astronomical Diaries attest to building work being done on the temples of Babylonia, two from the reign of Antiochus I[430] and one from that of Antiochus II.[431] The texts are all very fragmentary but it seems clear that they all refer to some type of building activity regarding either the Esagila in Babylon or the Ezida in Borsippa. Here is a typical example:

5’ ..... $^{\text{lú}}$DUMU$^{(?)}$ LU]GAL$^{?}$ *kap-du*$^{?}$*ana a-ma-ru* [.. .. ..]
6’ ....] *šá* É.ZI.DA *ina ku-šá*-[*ar-ti* .. .. ..] x x [.. .....]
7’ ....] x [*p*]*i*$^{?}$*-in-du šá* $^{\text{lú}}$UN[UG.KI-]/*a*\\-*a ana* UGU[......]
8’ .... K]UR URI.KI UMUŠ *šá* LUG[AL *ana*] $^{\text{lú}}$DUMU.MEŠ E.[KI .....]

..... the son? of the ki]ng immediately in order to inspect [.. .. ..]
....] of Ezida in the rep[air work of?.. ..] x x [.. .....]
....] ..... of which the Ur[uk]aean to against [.....]
..... the satrap of] Akkad the order of the ki[ng to] the Babylonians [.....]
BCHP 7, obv. ll. 5-8.[432]

The son of the king here is, most probably, Antiochus I, son of King Seleucus I.[433] In this text we read that he goes to inspect [something] before the text goes on to mention Ezida and,

[429] Clancier (2012), 299.
[430] *BCHP* 6 and *BCHP* 7.
[431] Astronomical Diaries, Vol. II, No. -245.
[432] Text and translation from livius.org.

probably, repair works that took place there. The fragmentary nature of the text does not allow for a complete reconstruction of the events it describes. It is, however, clear that a royal figure is in Borsippa for an inspection and that, perhaps as a result of this, the Ezida is being repaired. The king's commitment to the buildings of Babylon and Borsippa that is propagated in the *Borsippa Cylinder* is thus borne out by this chronicle.

In the second text from the reign of Antiochus I, *BCHP* 6 or the *Chronicle of the Ruin of the Esagila*, we again see an echo of the royal rhetoric from the *Borsippa Cylinder*.[434] The chronicle describes the debris of the Esagila being cleared in Babylon by Antiochus I, when he was still viceroy. The rubble is removed by Antiochus himself, with the help of his troops and elephants.[435] The clearing of the site of the temple was undoubtedly a first stage in larger construction works undertaken by Antiochus on the Esagila temple, as attested in the *Borsippa Cylinder*. The personal involvement of the crown prince is noted, as well as his provision of manpower and equipment in the form of wagons and elephants. The elephants in particular deserve further comment: they were an important symbol of Seleucid royal power, as well as playing a very tangible role in the Seleucids' wars.[436] Thus, the elephants that Seleucus received from the Indian king Chandragupta not only gave him the upper hand at Ipsus, the battle in which Seleucus beat Antigonus, but were also perceived, more broadly, to have won him the throne of Asia. Elephants recur on Seleucid coins, in Seleucid poetry, but also in Ptolemaic imperial rhetoric against the Seleucids.[437] The use of elephants by Antiochus in the reconstruction of the Esagila should therefore be seen, not only as a practical solution, but also as a statement of Seleucid power and commitment to the temples of Babylon. The restauration of Babylonian temples was in itself a powerful symbolic gesture from at least the Neo-Babylonian period onward. The Seleucids were aware of this, as we have seen when discussing Berossus, and as is now confirmed by the *Chronicle of the Ruin of Esagila*. More generally, we can conclude that the Babylonian Chronicles not only confirm the historicity of Antiochus' claims in the *Borsippa Cylinder*, but that they reflect a shared awareness of the symbolic acts of benefaction by the king towards the city.

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433 The chronicle cannot be dated precisely, see: *BCHP* 1 (livius.org).

434 For a more in depth discussion of the *Borsippa Cylinder*, see above pp. 100-108.

435 lú/DUMU\ LUGAL [lúERÍN.ME]Š-š*ú* *giš*GIGIR.MEŠ-*šú* | (*v*) AM.SI.MEŠ<-*šú*> SAHAR.HI.A *šá* É.SA[G].G[ÍL *i*]*d-de-ku-ú*.

436 Kosmin (2014)a, 1-4.

437 For Seleucid coins, see: Newell (1938), 198; Gardner (1878), (index). For Seleucid literature celebrating elephants, see Chapter 4, pp. 176-178. For the Ptolemaic counter-narrative, which acknowledges the symbolic and practical value of elephants for the Seleucids, see Chapter 3, p. 150, n. 588.

The third passage that I wish to discuss here does not date from the reign of Antiochus I but from the last year of Antiochus II, 246 BC. This text is not from one of the chronicles but from the Astronomical Diaries. The relevant part of the text, for the present argument, mentions work on the walls of the Esagila.

i. 11 (…) ITI BI UD 6.KAM BÀD *šá* É.SAG.Í[L …..
i. 12 [.. .. É.SAG].ÍL *ul* x x *il-lik-'u* U_4*-mu šu-ú* SIG_4.HI.A *ina lìb-bi* DU-*'u* ITI BI UD 11.K[AM …..]
i. 13 [.. .. ..] x [^{m}*S*]*i-lu-ku*^{m}*An-ti-'-ku-su u* ^{f}*A-pa-am-mu* DUMU.MEŠ-*šú ina* É.SAG.ÍL x[…..]

(…) That month, the 6th (9 April 246 BC). The wall of Esagi[la …..]
[to Esag]ila not x x they went. That day: bricks within it they made. That month, day 11 […..]
[.. .. ..] x [S]eleucus, Antiochus and Apame,[438] his children, in Esagila x[…..]
Astronomical Diaries II, No. -245, ll. 11-13.[439]

Despite its fragmentary state the passage clearly deals with the Esagila and with building works relating to it in some way. References to the baking of bricks suggest the same rhetoric of royal involvement as is used in the *Borsippa Cylinder*, in which Antiochus describes how he moulded bricks with his own hands. Another interesting point is the mention of the children of King Antiochus II and Queen Laodice, one of whom was the later King Seleucus II. The implication seems to be that they too were present at the Esagila. The personal involvement of the royal family with the Babylonian temples is a recurring theme in the *Borsippa Cylinder*, as well as in *BCHP* 6 and *BCHP* 7. Of course the king's personal interest plays an important part in the royal discourse of euergetism as reflected by the Babylonian sources. However, *AD*, Vol. II, No. -245 goes further when it involves the royal family in this type of activity. As discussed above, the inclusion of events involving the queen and the royal children in the Astronomical Diaries is unique to the Seleucid period. The writers of the Diaries clearly wanted to emphasise not just the close interaction between the Babylonian elites and the king himself but also placed a typically Hellenistic emphasis on the royal family.

[438] Sachs and Hunger (1989), 68-69 read Apames instead of Apame, with a masculine determinative instead of a feminine determinative. However, van der Spek and Finkel insist that the feminine denominator (SAL = f) is clearly visible on the tablet and propose to read Apama, as a daughter of Antiochus and Laodice.

[439] Text and translation from livius.org, cf. Sachs and Hunger (1989), 66-72. This fragment is from the first month of 246 BC, when King Antiochus II was still alive. The events it describes thus took place before the Ptolemies' attack on Babylon.

To conclude this section, we have seen that in his account of Nebuchadnezzar II Berossus uses the language of Greek euergetic inscriptions. Secondly, we have seen how Antiochus I displays his euergetism towards Babylonian temples in Akkadian, and combines the traditional Babylonian format of the royal inscription with some features of Seleucid patronage. In the texts written for a Babylonian audience by Babylonian priests, these themes again recur and we see the importance the Babylonian elite attached to the presence of the king. The elite consciously adopted the royal image of the king as benefactor allowing them to negotiate with him on these grounds.[440] In the next section of this chapter I investigate what leverage the Babylonian elite used to conduct these negotiations. What did the city have to offer the kings in response to their euergetism?

Preserving Kingship

As I have argued above, Hellenistic euergetism constitutes a dialogue between two parties. In this section, I ask what the Babylonians had to offer the king, besides submission and financial resources. Various Babylonian and Greek sources suggest an answer to this question. According to these sources, Babylon, or more precisely the Babylonian temple elites, helped the king cement his power, especially in times of crisis.

As we saw earlier in this chapter, Babylon was perceived as a special city both by the Seleucid kings and by the Babylonian elites themselves because of its links to Mesopotamian traditions of kingship.[441] In this section I will look at how the Babylonian temple elites portrayed Babylon, to a Babylonian and a Greek audience, as a city that can preserve kingship as an institution. I argue that the idea of Babylonian priests, Chaldaeans, as guardians of kingship, is expressed by both Greek and Babylonian sources from Hellenistic Babylon.[442] A focal point is again Berossus, who frames the image of Babylon as a city of kingship by providing a range of different historical *exempla*. I will first look at Berossus' historical narratives and then discuss some of the texts that describe the king and the city *acting out* and confirming the transferral of kingship from Babylon to the Seleucid ruler during the Babylonian New Year festival.

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[440] Cf. Ma (1999), 206.
[441] See above pp. 84-87.
[442] An example of older Mesopotamian tradition is the *Ebabbar Cylinder* of Nabonidus, a text that explicitly connects the Chaldaeans, or the *mārū Bābili* (sons of Babylon), with the preservation of kingship. Schaudig (2001), 384-394, *Ebabbar Cylinder*, I 32-33.

In two passages from the *Babyloniaca* we see how Berossus perceives the ideal division of roles between the king and the city elites. The first passage is part of the flood story, in which the destruction, and preservation, of human civilisation is narrated.[443] This passage relates how, after the disappearance of the story's protagonist Xisouthros and his family, the remaining survivors of the flood hear a voice from heaven and, on divine command, return to Babylon:

> (15) εἶπέ τε αὐτοῖς, ὅτι ἐλεύσονται πάλιν εἰς Βαβυλῶνα, καί ὡς εἵμαρται αὐτοῖς, ἐκ Σι[σ]πάρων ἀνελομένοις τὰ γράμματα διαδοῦναι τοῖς ἀνθρώποις· καὶ ὅτι ὅπου εἰσίν, ἡ χώρα Ἀρμενίας ἐστί. τοὺς δὲ ἀκούσαντας ταῦτα, θῦσαί τε τοῖς θεοῖς καὶ πεζῆι πορευθῆνα εἰς Βαβυλῶνα. [...] (17) ἐλθόντας οὖν τούτους εἰς Βαβυλῶνα τά τε ἐκ Σι[σ]πάρων γράμματα ἀνορύξαι, καὶ πόλεις πολλὰς κτίζοντας καὶ ἱερὰ ἀνιδρυομένους πάλιν ἐπικτίσαι τὴν Βαβυλῶνα.
>
> The voice told them that they [i.e., the survivors from the Ark] would go back to Babylon and that it was decreed for them that they would collect the writings in Sippar and hand them down to men. And the voice said that the place where they found themselves was the land of Armenia. When they heard this, they sacrificed to the gods and proceeded on foot to Babylon. [...] So, when they went to Babylon, they dug up the writings from Sippar. After they founded many cities and established temples, they again founded Babylon anew.
>
> Syncellus, *Chronographia* 13-19[444]

Berossus describes how the survivors of the flood had to retrieve the buried texts that contained the knowledge of mankind from Sippar and then return to Babylon to re-establish human civilisation. In his recent discussion, Haubold stresses the differences between Berossus and other, cuneiform, sources in the narrative of the flood story; rather than focussing on the survival of mankind, Berossus focusses on the survival of the writings, i.e. of antediluvian knowledge.[445] According to Berossus, the tablets were buried at Sippar on the command of Ea, who urged Xisouthros to do this, in order to ensure the preservation of divine knowledge that sprang from the mythical sage Oannes-Adapa at the beginning of history. However, the tablets did not stay in Sippar, but were carried off to Babylon, the city

[443] The Mesopotamian flood story is known (among onther sources) from *Atrahasis*, and the *Gilgamesh Epic*. Cf. George (2003); Lambert and Millard (1969). For a comparative study of the Flood myths, see: Dundes (1988).

[444] Text and (modified) translation from *BNJ* 680, F4b, 15-17; compare *BNJ* F4a for the Armenian translation of the same passage.

[445] Haubold (2013)a, 159-160.

that was from then on entrusted with the preservation of all human and divine knowledge.[446] It is from Babylon that new cities are founded and temples are established.

Haubold rightly reads Berossus' narrative as an "aetiology of the Chaldaeans as a priestly collective charged with guarding human civilisation", in which the companions of the great king Xisouthros are responsible for the continuation of kingship and preservation of all human knowledge.[447] Berossus, in other words, portrays the companions of the king as proto-Chaldaeans, who preserve the archival knowledge buried in Sippar. In this Berossus was not unique: although the details of the story were doubtless Berossus' own contribution, the overall thrust reflects much older Mesopotamian traditions about antediluvian wisdom handed down from the Seven Sages and bestowing on mankind all knowledge of agriculture, writing, religion, and the other arts of civilisation. In the Ancient Near East the most powerful symbol of human civilisation was legitimate kingship, and as the companions of Xisouthros preserved the writing tablets as a substitute for their lost king, so do the Caldaeans now guard the institution of kingship by preserving age-old traditions about it.[448]

The second passage, in which Berossus is more explicit about the role of Babylon and specifically the Babylonian priests, in preserving kingship, is part of the Nebuchadnezzar narrative that we have already encountered earlier in this chapter.

> τῶι τε πατρὶ αὐτοῦ συνέβη Ναβοπαλασσάρωι κατὰ τοῦτον τὸν καιρὸν ἀρρωστήσαντι ἐν τῆι Βαβυλωνίων πόλει μεταλλάξαι τὸν βίον, ἔτη βεβασιλευκότι κα. (137) αἰσθόμενος δὲ μετ᾽ οὐ πολύν χρόνον τὴν τοῦ πατρὸς τελευτὴν Ναβοκοδρόσορος, καταστήσας τὰ κατὰ τὴν Αἴγυπτον πράγματα καὶ τὴν λοιπὴν χώραν, καὶ τοὺς αἰχμαλώτους Ἰουδαίων τε καὶ Φοινίκων καὶ Σύρων καὶ τῶν κατὰ τὴν Αἴγυπτον ἐθνῶν συντάξας τισὶ τῶν φίλων μετὰ τῆς βαρυτάτης δυνάμεως καὶ τῆς λοιπῆς ὠφελείας ἀνακομίζειν εἰς τὴν Βαβυλωνίαν, αὐτὸς ὁρμήσας ὀλιγοστὸς παρεγένετο διὰ τῆς ἐρήμου εἰς Βαβυλῶνα. (138) καταλαβὼν δὲ τὰ πράγματα διοικούμενα ὑπὸ Χαλδαίων καὶ διατηρουμένην τὴν βασιλείαν ὑπὸ τοῦ βελτίστου αὐτῶν, κυριεύσας ὁλοκλήρου τῆς πατρικῆς ἀρχῆς [….].
> It happened that at this time Nabopalassaros, his father, became ill and left his life in the city of Babylon, having been king for 21 years. (137) When Nabokodrosoros heard of his father's death not much later, he settled his affairs in Egypt and the rest of the territory and gave control over the captives

[446] Haubold notes that "Berossus' choice of Sippar as the place where the writings were kept may be motivated by older traditions according to which this city alone was exempt from the flood", Haubold (2013)a, 159; De Breucker (2012)a commentary to F4b (680 *BNJ*), with reference to *Erra* IV.50.
[447] Haubold (2013)a, 160-161.
[448] Babylonian king lists provide a very direct instance of knowledge preserved by the priests. This genre went back to the Ur III period, cf. the Sumerian King List, and remained popular throughout Mesopotamian history. The Uruk King List and Babylonian King List of the Hellenistic Period (King List 5 and 6) indicate that king lists were still composed in the Hellenistic period. See further: Bachvarova (2012); Friberg (2007), 231-243; Grayson (1969); Gelb (1954), 209-230; Landsberger (1954), 47-73; Jacobsen (1939).

> - Judeans, Phoenicians, Syrians, and peoples in Egypt - to some of his friends, ordering to bring them together with the main body of his army and the rest of the booty to Babylon; he himself set out with a few companions and reached Babylon by crossing the desert. (138) Finding on arrival that his affairs were administered by the Chaldaeans and that the kingdom was looked after by the best of them, he gained possession of his father's entire realm […].
>
> Josephus, *Contra Apionem* 1.136-138[449]

In this passage, Berossus describes how king Nabopolassar dies in Babylon while his son Nebuchadnezzar is fighting in Jerusalem and Syria. Nebuchadnezzar, who no doubt fears machinations and intrigues in Babylon, leaves his army, all the spoils and war-captives to his *philoi* and rides quickly back to Babylon with a small group of companions. There he finds that his fears were unfounded because the best of the Chaldaeans had safeguarded his kingship. The effectiveness of the Chaldaeans is shown by the fact that Nebuchadnezzar gains possession of his father's "entire realm (ὁλοκλήρου τῆς πατρικῆς ἀρχῆς)", as is stressed in the text. Haubold quotes this passage to support his reading of the Chaldaeans as allies of the king rather like his *philoi*. Although they are not explicitly described as *philoi* by Berossus, they fulfil largely the same role, or perhaps an even more important one.[450] They do not only maintain the army and the booty, as Nebuchadnezzar's *philoi* do, they maintain his entire kingdom. In the first chapter we saw the central role that the *philoi* of the Seleucid kings played in the administration and military expansion of the empire.[451] Berossus seems to imply here that the priests of Babylon fulfil the same essential function for the kings back in Babylon.[452] They too acted as Hellenistic *philoi*, loyal and supporting.

Yet, their role also differed, in ways that have not always been sufficiently appreciated by previous scholarship: as I discussed in the introduction to this chapter, the Greeks were aware of the traditional Babylonian view which saw Babylon behind all the major power shifts in the Near East.[453] I argue here that Berossus alludes to this focus on Babylonian agency, working 'behind the scenes' on the succession of empires, in his narrative of the Chaldaean priests preserving knowledge and kingship in Babylon. Not only does Berossus echo Ctesias' descriptions of the fall of the Medes, as Haubold shows.[454] He rather develops a version of

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[449] Text from *BNJ* 680 F8a.
[450] Haubold (2013)a, 161-162.
[451] For the importance of *philoi* at the Seleucid court see Introduction, pp. 22-24.
[452] See also Berossus' story about King Nabonidus and his *philoi* who plot together to acquire the throne for Nabonidus (*BNJ* F9a (Josephus, *Contra Apionem* 1.148-149)).
[453] See above pp. 84-86.
[454] Ctesias, 24.1, see: Haubold (2013)a, 166-170.

the Ctesianic idea that Babylonians are always working behind the scenes when history is made. The irrational nature of Babylonian power, its tendency to elude and subvert, is in Berossus recast as a matter of historical depth. The resulting picture of a city in charge of empire could be recognised by Berossus' Greek *and* Babylonian audiences: both groups would see him as the guardian of an immensely powerful ancient tradition – though they came to this agreement from different starting points.[455]

The historical depth that Berossus provided to explain the power of the Chaldaeans and the institution of kingship, at first sight seems to signal a growing sense of nostalgia under Seleucid rule. At the same time, however, they had a direct relevance within the euergetic dialogue between the king and the city. This becomes particularly clear in the literature describing the Babylonian New Year festival, the *Akītu* festival, which was celebrated in the month Nisannu at the start of the calendar year.[456] Babylonian descriptions of the Hellenistic *Akītu* festival provide a deeper insight into the dynamics of the relationship between the Babylonian priests and the Seleucid kings, and the constructive equivocations that underpinned the rise of a specifically Greco-Babylonian form of kingship. The festival was a moment in which the relationship between the king and the priests was renewed. We have only fragmentary knowledge about the exact proceedings, but we know that it lasted several days and comprised elaborate purification ceremonies, processions of the gods through the city and a gathering of the Babylonian gods in the Esagila. During this gathering, Marduk proclaimed the destinies for the coming year and the other gods professed Marduk's authority in a re-enactment of the *Enūma Eliš*. As the *Akītu* festival legitimised and confirmed both the divine kingship of Marduk and the earthly kingship of the Babylonian king, any documents that describe the participation of the Seleucid kings in the *Akītu* festival gain particular significance.

There are two attestations of Seleucid kings participating in or supporting the *Akītu* festival.[457] The first, a Babylonian chronicle from the reign of Seleucus III, describes how the

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[455] For Greek perceptions of the Eastern sages as keepers of knowledge, see: De Breucker (2003), 30-31; Kuhrt (1982), 545-546; Lloyd (1979), 230, 237-238, esp. n. 39; Momigliano (1975)a, 16-17; Momigliano (1975)b, 143-147. For more specific Greek interaction with the Chaldaeans in the field of Babylonian astronomy, see: Jones (1997), 167-172; Jones (1991), 440-453; Rochberg-Halton (1988), 51-62; Neugebauer (1963), 528-535.

[456] On the *Akītu* festival, see: Waerzeggers (2011), 731-732; Zgoll (2006); Linssen (2004), 68-86; Bidmead (2002); Pongratz Leisten (1997), 83-101; Cohen (1993), 400-453, Smith (1976), 1-11. On the Hellenistic ritual: *Akītu Programme*, Linssen (2004), 223, ll. 423-8; Smith (1976), 1-11.

[457] Seleucus III: *BCHP* 12 (*Seleucus III Chronicle*); Antiochus III: *AD*, Vol. II, No. -204 C, ll. 14-19. Due to the fragmentary nature of the evidence, this does not necessarily indicate that these were the only two kings that participated in the rituals, cf. *AD*, vol. II, No. -245 A, for possible evidence that Antiochus II participated in the ritual.

king provided food offerings for the *Akītu* festival in the Esagila from the royal treasury.[458] It seems that the king himself was not present at the festival but that he sent a letter with instructions to the *šatammu*. The second relevant source, however, does record a king's presence in the city during the *Akītu* festival.[459] The text from 204 BC describes how Antiochus III moves from the palace to the Esagila and then to the *Akītu* temple[460] where he offers several sacrifices. Unfortunately, the text breaks off after this and we do not have a full account of the king's participation in the ritual activities.

Two attestations of Seleucids participating in the *Akītu* may not seem very many, but there is other, less direct, evidence, that the *Akītu* festival was important in the Hellenistic period, certainly from a Babylonian perspective. Thus, a ritual text from Hellenistic Babylon provides a detailed description of the festival. The text in question, the so-called *Akītu Programme*, contains extensive ritual instructions for the *Akītu* festival and the involvement of the king in it.[461] This text portrays the Babylonian temple elites as essential to the legitimization of the king by Marduk. Rather than just presenting the king with the *accoutrements* of kingship, the high priest first strips the king of his regalia and then, after he has confessed to Marduk, restores the 'crown of kingship' and other regalia to the king.

415 [*ana* É.SAG].ÍL KU$_4$.MEŠ-*šú* DUMU.MEŠ *um-man-nu ana* KÁ È.MEŠ
416 [*ana* IGI ^{d}]EN *ina* KUR-*šú* ^{lú}ŠEŠ.GAL È-*ma* ^{giš}NÍG. GIDRU ^{giš}GÚR
416 [^{giš}]TUKUL.DINGIR
417 [*sá* ŠU^{II} LUGAL(?)] ÍL-*ši* AGA LUGAL-*ú-ti-šú i-na-áš-ši*
418 [*ana* IGI ^{d}E]N *é-še-rib-šú-nu-tú ina* IGI ^{d}EN
419 [*ina* UGU] KI.TUŠ GAR-*an-šú-nu-tú ina* IGI ^{d}EN
420 [LUGAL(?)] EGIR-*šú* GAR-*an ana* IGI ^{d}EN *ú-še-rib-šú*
421 [EGIR-*šú*(?)] GEŠTUG^{II}-*šú i-šad-dad ina* KI *ú-šá-kam-su*
422 [*adi*/KI(?)] LUGAL 1-*šú an-na-a* DUG$_4$.GA
423 [*ul aḫ*]-*ṭu* EN KUR.KUR *ul e-gi ana* DINGIR-*ti-ku*
424 [*ul ú-ḫa-a*]*l-liq* E.KI *ul aq-ta-bi* BIR-*šú*

[458] *BCHP* 12 (*Seleucus III Chronicle*).
[459] Antiochus III: *AD*, Vol. II, No. -204 C, ll. 14-19.
[460] *ana* É-U$_4$-l-KÁM (*AD*, Vol. II, No. -204 C, l. 17). This temple may be the same as the New Year temple (*bīt akīti*), in which case it would lie outside the city walls (Boiy (2004), 9). For the Temple of the first day (é.ud.1.kám) as the New Year temple, see: Boiy (2004), 85-86, cf. van der Spek (1998), 225. For a case that the two names do not refer to the same temple, see: McEwan (1981)b, 135. For further discussion of the *Akītu* temple see: Bidmead (2002), 115-120; Cohen (1993), 403-406.
[461] *RAcc*. 127-154 (DT 15, DT 109) + BM 32485 (DT 114, MNB 1848). See Kuhrt (2014), 84-87; Sommer (2000), 81-91. The texts contain parts of the twenty-second and twenty-third tablets of extensive ritual instructions for the *Akītu* festival of the month Nisannu in Babylon. The texts list, day by day, the rituals that need to be performed and accompanying prayers and hymns (*RAcc*. 128-129; see also Ebeling (1926), 295-303).

425 [*ul ú-ri*]*b-bi* É.SAG.GÍL *ul ú-ma-áš-*<*ši*> ME-*šú*

426 [*ul am-da*]*ḫ-ḫa-aṣ* TE ^{lú}*ṣab-bi ki-din-nu*

427 [... *ul*] *áš-kun qa-lal-šú-nu*

428 [*ú-pa-a*]*q ana* E^{ki} *ul a-bu-ut šal-ḫu-šú*

When (the king) has arrived [before] Bel, the high priest will go out (of the cella) and
lift up the scepter, the loop and the mace
[of the king?]. He will lift up the Crown of Kingship.
He will make them enter [before Be]l, in front of Bel,
he will place them on a seat. He will go out and strike the cheek of the king.
He will place [the king] behind him. He will make him enter before Bel.
[After this?] he will pull his ears, make him kneel on the ground.
[Together wi]th(?) the king he will say this once:
"[I have not sin]ned, lord of the lands, I have not neglected your godhead.
[I have not dest]royed Babylon, I have not ordered it to be dispersed.
[I have not made] Esagila tremble, I have not forgotten its rites.
[I have not st]ruck the people of the *kidinnu* in the face.
[…] I have [not] humiliated them.
[I have paid attenti]on to Babylon, I have not destroyed its (outer) walls."

Akītu Programme, ll. 415-428[462]

This passage describes a specific part of the *Akītu* festival where Marduk legitimises the power of the king for another year. It describes how the high priest takes away the sceptre, loop, mace, and crown of the king and makes the king prostrate himself before the cult statue of Marduk. After all the signs of kingship have been taken away the king makes a so-called 'negative confession' to Marduk.[463] We will come back to this confession shortly, but first let me discuss the process whereby the king's power is restored to him. Information about this is contained in a very fragmentary part of the text that contains a speech from the high priest to the king.[464] In this speech the high priest professes Marduk's approval of the king. Although we cannot read all lines fully, the priest declares to the king that Marduk will magnify his rule and extol his kingship. At the end of the speech, the priest confirms his words by returning the royal insignia to the king.[465] Here, then, we have a text which quite explicitly suggests that the priests of Babylon saw themselves as the negotiators of divinely protected universal

[462] Text and translation from Linssen (2004), 223, ll. 423-8; cf. Pritchard (1955), 334.
[463] For discussion of the confession see: Kuhrt (2014), 84-87; Haubold (2013)a, 164-165; Sommer (2000), 83-84; Pongratz Leisten (1997), 83-101.
[464] *Akītu Programme*, l. 434-446.
[465] *Akītu Programme*, l. 447-452.

kingship. In return, the king stressed that he had been good to the city of Babylon, the Babylonian gods and citizens, and that he was thus worthy of his kingship.

As we have seen, the king professed his commitment to Babylon in a negative confession in the *Akītu Programme*. In this text the king declares that he has not destroyed the city of Babylon and that he has kept its walls intact. This statement is repeated at the end of the confession, thus signifying its importance as a frame for the rest of the confession. Keeping the city of Babylon safe and protecting its citizens and its walls, is one of the king's main obligations. Since only a Hellenistic testimony of this ritual survives, it is unclear whether the confession and the kingship ritual had been part of Babylonian religious tradition for centuries or was in fact a Hellenistic innovation.[466] However, even if it is not clear whether or not the confession in this form is a Hellenistic ritual, the importance of the concepts expressed in the confession is visible in older texts by Nabonidus and Cyrus. In the *Cyrus Cylinder*, King Cyrus narrates his treatment of Babylon after his conquest:

32 [...] *ú-šar-ma-a šu-bat da-rí-a-ta kul-lat* ÙG$^{\text{meš}}$-*šú-nu ú-pa-aḫ-ḫi-ra-am-ma ú-te-er da-ád-mi-šú-un*

33 *ù* DINGIR$^{\text{meš}}$ KUR *šu-me-ri ù* URI$^{\text{ki}}$ *ša* $^{\text{id+}}$NÀ.NÍ.TUKU *a-na ug-ga-tì* EN DINGIR$^{\text{meš}}$ *ú-še-ri-bi a-na qé-reb* ŠU.AN.NA$^{\text{ki}}$ *i-na qí-bi-ti* $^{\text{d}}$AMAR.UTU EN GAL *i-na ša-li-im-ti*

34 *i-na maš-ta-ki-šu-nu ú-še-šib šu-ba-at ṭu-ub* ŠÀ-bi {*ut*} *kul-la-ta* DINGIR$^{\text{meš}}$ *ša ú-še-ri-bi a-na qé-er-bi ma-ḫa-zi-šu-un*

35 U$_4$-*mi-ša-am ma-ḫar* $^{\text{d+}}$EN *ù* $^{\text{d+}}$NÀ *ša a-ra-ku* U$_4$$^{\text{meš}}$-*ia li-ta-mu-ú lit-taz-ka-ru a-ma-a-ta du-un-qí-ia ù a-na* $^{\text{d}}$AMAR.UTU EN-*ia li-iq-bu-ú ša* $^{\text{I}}$*ku-ra-áš* LUGAL *pa-li-ḫi-ka u* $^{\text{I}}$*ka-am-bu-zi-ia* DUMU-*šú*

36 [XXX-*i*]*b šu-nu- lu-ú* [xxxxx] ÙG$^{\text{meš}}$ TIN.TIR$^{\text{ki}}$ *ik-tar-ra-bu* LUGAL-*ú-tu* KUR.KUR *ka-li-ši-na šu-ub-ti né-eḫ-tì ú-še-ši-ib*

37 [XXX KUR.]GI$^{\text{mušen}}$ 2 UZ.TUR$^{\text{mušen}}$ *ù* 10 TU.GUR$_4$$^{\text{mušen.meš}}$ *e-li* KUR.GI$^{\text{mušen}}$ UZ.TUR$^{\text{mušen.meš}}$ *ù* TU.GUR$_4$$^{\text{mušen.meš}}$

38 [XXX U$_4$-*m*]*i-šam ú-ṭa-aḫ-ḫi-id* BÀD *im-gur*-$^{\text{d+}}$EN.LÍL BÀD GAL-*a ša* TIN.TIR$^{\text{k[i}}$ *ma-aṣ-ṣ*]*ar-ta-šú du-un-nu-nù áš-te-'e-e-ma*

39 [XXX] *ka-a-ri a-gur-ru šá* GÚ *ḫa-ri-ṣi ša* LUGAL *maḫ-ri i-p*[*u-šu-ma la ú-ša*]*k-li-lu ši-pi-ir-šu*

32 [...] I collected together all of their people and returned them to their settlements,

33 and the gods of the land of Sumer and Akkad which Nabonidus – to the fury of the lord of the gods – had brought into Shuanna, at the command of Marduk, the great lord,

34 I returned them unharmed to their cellas, in the sanctuaries that make them happy. May all the gods that I returned to their sanctuaries,

[466] On the significance of the *Akītu Programme* as a Hellenistic text, see the insightful discussion of Smith (1976), 1-11. Smith argues that this version of the *Akītu* festival is a typical ritual for the authorisation of a foreign king (p. 8) and was born of nostalgia; Sommer (2000), 81-91, disagrees with Smith's interpretation and maintains that it reflects older traditions; for the *Akītu* Festival under the Assyrian kings see: *ABC* 16.

35 every day before Bel and Nabu, ask for a long life for me, and mention my good deeds, and say to Marduk, my lord, this: "Cyrus, the king who fears you, and Cambyses his son,

36 may they be the provisioners of our shrines until distant (?) days, and the population of Babylon call blessings on my kingship. I have enabled all the lands to live in peace."

37 Every day I increased by [… ge]ese, two ducks and ten pigeons the [former offerings] of geese, ducks and pigeons.

38 I strove to strengthen the defences of the wall Imgur-Enlil, the great wall of Babylon,

39 and [I completed] the quay of baked brick on the bank of the moat which an earlier king had bu[ilt but not com]pleted its work.

Cyrus Cylinder, ll.32-39.[467]

We see here how Cyrus engages with the rhetoric of the *Akītu* festival by declaring that he collected the inhabitants, rebuilt the temples, returned the gods, and restored the walls of Babylon.[468] Haubold has shown that a similar narrative can be found in the *Persian Verse Account*, in which Cyrus was described as following in the footsteps of Nebuchadnezzar.[469] In Berossus, however, we find a completely different perspective on him: Berossus describes how Cyrus razed the walls of Babylon and thus undid the work of Nebuchadnezzar.[470] In the previous section we have seen that Nebuchadnezzar was a model for the Seleucid kings in his building programme. In many of his inscriptions Nebuchadnezzar himself stressed the defensive walls that he built to defend Babylon from enemies who want to scale and raze them.[471] Cyrus, in Berossus' account is just such an enemy.[472] Even though the two accounts are in opposition, they clearly respond to the same idea of kingship. The *Cyrus Cylinder* shows that the ideas expressed in the *Akītu Programme* already existed before Hellenistic times and that it was used in narratives about and by kings; Berossus' account shows that they were still relevant in the Hellenistic period, and indeed were translated into Greek.

As we have seen, all these ideas mattered to the Babylonian temple elites and Berossus himself relied on them in his depiction of kingship which was directed at a Greek speaking audience. They also made their way into Greek thought. We do not have any Babylonian sources that attest to Seleucid building activities on the walls of Babylon; we only have attestations to their work on the temples in Babylonia. We do, however, find a Greek reflection of this same discourse in Pausanias when he states that "Seleucus was the most

[467] Text from Schaudig (2001), 551-554; translation Finkel (2013), 4-7.
[468] Haubold (2013)a, 93, 130-132, 163-164; Rollinger (2013)b, 143-147.
[469] Haubold (2013)a, 130-132, cf. *Persian Verse Account*, Col. VI (Schaudig (2001)).
[470] *BNJ* 680 F 9a (152); cf. Haubold (2013)a, 163-164, 190.
[471] E.g. *VAB* 4.1, *VAB* 4.4, *VAB* 4.7, *VAB* 4.9.
[472] Berossus, *BNJ* 680 F9a, F9b.

righteous, and in particular the most religious of the kings. [...]. Secondly, when he founded Seleucia on the river Tigris and brought to it the Babylonian colonists he spared the wall of Babylon as well as the sanctuary of Bel, near which he permitted the Chaldaeans to live."[473] In this description of Pausanias the same ideas recur as are found in the *Akītu* confession: the king spares the wall of Babylon, honours the Esagila and respects the temple elite.[474] It seems highly likely that Pausanias' statement reflects older Seleucid royal ideology.

As we have seen, the *Akītu* festival is a key moment for the legitimization of the Seleucid king as a king of Babylon, and a context for negotiating kingship with the city elite. In the '*Akītu* confession' the Babylonians present the king with a 'code' of good kingship, of which Seleucid literature, and later Greek authors such as Pausanias, show an awareness. This interaction provided both the kings and the city with a framework that enabled them to build a mutually supporting relationship.

The Voice of the Local Priests: Manetho and the Ptolemies

The successful relationship between the Seleucids and the Babylonian priests acquired a wider importance: throughout the Hellenistic world the Seleucids were known as patrons of the Babylonian astronomer priests, the Chaldaeans. The Seleucids' connections with Babylonian science, and especially with Chaldaean philosophy, astronomy and divination, were imitated all over the Hellenistic world.[475] The high status of Babylonian priests in the Greek world is indicated by two stories in particular, each of them relating to Berossus: Berossus' golden-tongued statue erected by the Athenians and the alleged founding of an astronomical school at Cos. The first story is related by Pliny the Elder and compares Berossus' status as an astronomer to Hippocrates' influence on medicine. In this connection, he tells the story of how the Athenians erected a statue of Berossus with a golden tongue in the gymnasium to honour his divinatory skills.[476] Even more interesting is the story that Berossus founded an astronomical school on Cos. Because it is only attested in Vitruvius and

[473] Pausanias, 1.16.3. Σέλευκον δὲ βασιλέων ἐν τοῖς μάλιστα πείθομαι καὶ ἄλλως γενέσθαι δίκαιον καὶ πρὸς τὸ θεῖον εὐσεβῆ. τοῦτο μὲν γὰρ Σέλευκός ἐστιν ὁ Μιλησίοις τὸν χαλκοῦν καταπέμψας Ἀπόλλωνα ἐς Βραγχίδας, ἀνακομισθέντα ἐς Ἐκβάτανα τὰ Μηδικὰ ὑπὸ Ξέρξου: τοῦτο δὲ Σελεύκειαν οἰκίσας ἐπὶ Τίγρητι ποταμῷ καὶ Βαβυλωνίους οὗτος ἐπαγόμενος ἐς αὐτὴν συνοίκους ὑπελείπετο μὲν τὸ τεῖχος Βαβυλῶνος, ὑπελείπετο δὲ. τοῦ Βὴλ τὸ ἱερὸν καὶ περὶ αὐτὸ τοὺς Χαλδαίους οἰκεῖν.

[474] In Pausanias the Chaldaeans, in the *Akītu* Confession the *kidinnu*.

[475] Rochberg (2010), 9.

[476] Pliny, *Historia Naturalis* 7.123. Haubold (2013)a, 143. Compare the story that Berossus was the father of the Chaldaean Sybil.

not in any other literary or epigraphic source, it is often dismissed as a later fantasy.[477] Many scholars have argued that the tradition of the school and even the figure of 'Berossus of Cos' was invented to create a single point for the transmission of Babylonian astronomy to Greece.[478] The specific location of the school on Cos is either dismissed or explained as a counterpart of the famous Hippocratic medical school on the island.[479] There is however more to this story than meets the eye: Cos was throughout the Hellenistic period closely connected to the Ptolemaic royal family.[480] Berossus' move to Cos, whether true or invented, thus suggests the appropriation of a Seleucid intellectual, and Seleucid specialised knowledge by the Ptolemies. Both these stories build on the figure of Berossus the astronomer, reflecting the popularity of Berossus outside the Seleucid Empire.

What was so special about Berossus? In the previous section we have seen that the local priestly elite of Babylon acted as power brokers. In the Astronomical Diaries, the priests assert themselves *vis-à-vis* the king, as keepers of local traditions and knowledge.[481] This image fitted neatly into Greek perceptions: since Herodotus, the Greeks considered local priests as a source of wisdom. Berossus of Babylon was one of these, but in contrast to the Astronomical Diaries, he gave the priests a voice in Greek. In this he fulfilled the Herodotean model of the local savant who informs the curious Greek visitor, but at the same time he

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[477] Vitruvius, *De architectura* 9.6.2.

[478] *BNJ* (De Breucker) T5a. Dillery (2015), 231-252; De Breucker (2013), 19-20; Haubold (2013)c, 4; Kuhrt (1987), 36-44, esp. n. 31; Burstein (1978), 31-32; Drews (1975), 51-52 provide good summaries. According to Neugebauer, Berossus did indeed have an astronomical school at Cos, but had no knowledge of real Babylonian astronomy (Neugebauer (1975), 607; (1963), 529). For a suggestion that Berossus did engage with real (if outdated) Babylonian astronomy, see: Steele (2013), 99-113; Schnabel (1923), 211-232. Classical tradition also attributed some astronomical fragments to Berossus. The authenticity of these fragments is hotly debated. Some scholars regard all astronomical fragments as pseudepigrapha, e.g. Kuhrt (1987); Jacoby (1958), *FGrHist*, Berossus. Others try to incorporate the astronomical fragments within the *Babyloniaca* (Verbrugghe and Wickersham (eds.) (1996); Burstein (1978); Schnabel (1923), 17-22). My own position is that it is not unlikely that the original *Babyloniaca* contained a section, or sections, on Babylonian astronomy, but that it is very feasible that in the subsequent classical tradition more astronomical works were ascribed to Berossus to give them credibility. That the name of Berossus gave credibility to astronomical fragments in itself attests to his perceived importance, even if his work was not much read. See Steele (2013), 99-113, for an up-to-date discussion of the 'Astronomical Fragments'; also Haubold (2013)a, 143; van der Spek (2008), 288; Verbrugghe and Wickersham (eds.) (1996), 14-15.

[479] *BNJ* (De Breucker) T5a-b and bibliographical essay.

[480] Ptolemy II was born on Cos and the island is honoured because of Philadelphus' birth (Theocritus, *Encomium of Ptolemy* (*Idyll* 17) and Callimachus' *Hymn to Delos*). See also Sherwin-White (1978), 84-108 on the special relationship between Philadelphus and Cos. Sherwin-White terms what occurred under Philadelphus and his successors a "brain drain" when learned men were drawn to Alexandria from other parts of the Hellenistic world (Sherwin-White (1978), 102-105). On the (strategic) importance of Cos for the Ptolemies in the third century in general, see: Asper (2011), 158-160; Huss (2001), 173-174; Buraselis (1982), 47 n. 38, 146-151, 160-176.

[481] See also the discussion at pp. 27-30, of the Chaldaeans' role of preserving ancient of knowledge.

turned the Herodotean model on its head: by writing in Greek Berossus appropriated and actively shaped the voice of the local priest.[482]

More immediately, the *Babyloniaca* was an answer to Hecataeus of Abdera's *On the Egyptians*, written between 320 and 305 BC, for Ptolemy son of Lagus, before or just after he became King Ptolemy I.[483] *On the Egyptians* was an ethnographic and historical description of Egypt which celebrated the antiquity, cultural primacy and utopian state of Egypt.[484] The work claims to have been based on Egyptian priestly sources and stresses its independence of earlier Greek sources, such as Herodotus.[485]

> ὅσα μὲν οὖν Ἡρόδοτος καί τινες τῶν τὰς Αἰγυπτίων πραξεις συνταξαμένων ἐσχεδιάκασιν, ἑκουσίως προκρίναντες τῆς ἀληθείας τὸ παραδοξολογεῖν καὶ μύθους πλάττειν ψυχαγωγίας ἕνεκα, παρήσομεν, αὐτὰ δὲ τὰ παρὰ τοῖς ἱερεῦσι τοῖς κατ᾽ Αἴγυπτον ἐν ταῖς ἀναγραφαῖς γεγραμμένα φιλοτίμως ἐξητακότες ἐκθησόμεθα.
>
> Therefore, what Herodotos and some of those who have composed works on the affairs of the Egyptians, invented, willingly preferring to tell of marvels and to fabricate myths for the sake of amusement rather than tell the truth, we shall ignore, but we shall put down those things written by the priests of Egypt in their records, after zealously performing a full investigation.
>
> Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca* 1.69.7[486]

Hecataeus insists that he ignored the sensational stories of Herodotus and other Greek authors and instead adhered to the information of local priests. Although this claim seems problematic, it attests to the prestige that local priests enjoyed as informants of Greek historiographers. However, the voice of the local priests in Hecataeus was still only available indirectly. In the *Babyloniaca*, the information about local, in this case Babylonian, history and religion entered the Greek literary tradition directly. The *Babyloniaca* thus trumped Hecataeus' *On the Egyptians* as an authentic account of local history. In this context, the story of Berossus' school at Cos becomes much more pointed as an attempt of the Ptolemies to appropriate this authentically Babylonian Seleucid writer. Whether the story is true, or merely an anecdotal reflection of Berossus' prestige, it illustrates the gravitational pull of the

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[482] For Herodotus' view of local priests: e.g. Herodotus, 1.182; 2.2, 2.65-120, 2.143. Cf. Dillery (2015), 32-51; Asheri, Lloyd, Corcella (2007), 16-21; Moyer (2002), 70-90.

[483] For the dating of Hecataeus' work, see Murray (1970), 143-144.

[484] Diodorus Siculus, 1.28-29, seems to indicate that Hecataeus claimed that Egyptians colonised the world and were thus the original founders of all human culture.

[485] Diodorus Siculus, 1.69.7, cf. Josephus, *Contra Apionem* 1.73 (*BNJ* 609 F1), Hecataeus repeatedly invoked indigenous written records as evidence (*anagraphai*): e.g. 1.31.7, 43.6, 44.4, 46.7-8, 63.1, 69.7, 81.4, 96.2. See also Burstein (1992), 46.

[486] Text from *BNJ* 264 F25.

Ptolemies' patronage and their determination to attract learned men from all over the Greek world.[487]

Although Berossus' alleged presence in the Ptolemaic sphere of influence at Cos is an attractive anecdote attesting to Seleucid-Ptolemaic cultural rivalry, its veracity remains unclear. The Oxyrhynchus Glossary provides firmer ground to assess Berossus' reception in Ptolemaic Egypt.[488] This Glossary lists words from Greek dialects and non-Greek languages, mostly from the Near East, with translations, supported by a quotation or reference to an ancient work.[489] The papyrus fragments date from the 2nd century AD, but the Glossary is likely older and draws on authors that can be dated from the 4th to the 1st century BC.[490] Berossus' *Babyloniaca* is quoted at least twice and possibly two more times.[491] Although the circumstances of its production are unknown, Francesca Schironi plausibly connects the glossary to intellectuals connected with the library of Alexandria.[492] Because the glossary references many different authors and obscure works, its composer would have needed a comprehensive and specialised library.[493] Furthermore, the glossary closely resembles other catalogue literature composed at Alexandria, most notably the Lexicon of Pamphilus.[494] The attestation of Berossus in the Glossary, although not decisive evidence, indicates that his work was known and consulted in Hellenistic Egypt and probably at some point found its way into the Library at Alexandria. Although the Glossary is not incontrovertible evidence for an early reception of Berossus in the Ptolemaic kingdom, it is likely that the *Babyloniaca* made an impact there soon after its composition, because in the early third century, negotiating the relationship with local elites was part of consolidating power for the Hellenistic kings.[495]

A figure that seems relevant in this connection is the native Egyptian historian Manetho. Manetho was an Egyptian priest from Sebennytus who was connected to the Ptolemaic

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487 Chapter 4 discusses this in more detail.
488 Schironi (2013), 235-243; Schironi (2009).
489 The extant fragments of the papyrus preserve parts of the letters, k, l, m.
490 Schironi (2009), 13-27.
491 Two of the fragments refer to the *Babyloniaca* by Berossus, Book one/three, the other two fragments refer to works *On Babylon*. Schironi suggests that all four references might refer to Berossus' *Babyloniaca*, although she remains cautious (Schironi (2013), 237).
492 Schironi argues that the glossary was compiled in Alexandria, on the basis that Alexandria was the only place where all these works would have been collected (Schironi (2009), 15-19).
493 For a comprehensive list, see: Schironi (2013), 238-239.
494 The Lexicon of Pamphilus iself is lost, but it was epitomised by Hesychius, whose medieval manuscripts closely resemble the papyrus of the Oxyrhynchus glossary. Schironi (2009), 43-52.
495 Murray (1970), 141-142.

court.[496] His most famous work, the *Aegyptiaca*, treats the history of Egypt, from its beginnings to the last native pharaohs of the Thirtieth Dynasty.[497] The work is transmitted in fragments, mainly via epitomes of later Christian writers, but it seems to have divided the history of Egypt into periods of gods, demi-gods and thirty dynasties of mortal kings, listing names and dates of kings as well as interspersed narratives. Both the outline and parts of the content are based on Egyptian king lists, such as the Turin List.[498] Moyer has argued that this manner of structuring the work seems to indicate Manetho's independence from Greek narrative historiography and from Berossus.[499] However, the fact that he was active at the Ptolemaic court and wrote in Greek, as well as his regular criticisms of Herodotus, all imply that the *Aegyptiaca* was created in, and shaped by, a Hellenistic Greek environment and that Moyer is too strict in reading the *Aegyptiaca* as independent of its immediate context.[500] Furthermore, Manetho's choice of language implies that he wrote for the Greek elites in Egypt and at the Ptolemaic court. Indeed, Syncellus claims that Manetho wrote his history for King Ptolemy Philadelphus himself, and this is further supported by a passage in Plutarch.[501] Because of its fragmentary transmission, it is hard to get a complete picture of the *Aegyptiaca*; all longer narratives that remain from this book concern the Hyksos dynasty and the Second Intermediate Period (c. 1650-1550 BC).[502]

Throughout history, scholars have compared Berossus with Manetho and have studied them together. This tendency started already in antiquity, with Christian chronographers

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[496] Moyer (2011), 141; Dillery (2007), 221-230; *BNJ* 609 Manetho (discussion by Lang (2005)); Dillery, (1999); Verbrugghe and Wickersham (eds.) (1996); Murray (1972), 200-213.

[497] Dillery (2015), 86, 88-89. The Thirty-First Dynasty (the dynasty of the Persians kings) is added later to Manetho's list and was not originally part of it; cf. Lloyd (1988), 154-160.

[498] The Turin King List, or Turin Canon, is a list of all Egyptian kings composed in the reign of Ramesses II (13th century BC) and preserved on papyrus. In contrast to the king lists preserved on temple walls the Turin List aims to record all kings of Egypt and the lengths of their reign, and is thus seen as an important source for Manetho, see: Ryholt (2006), 26-32; Gardiner (1997); Ryholt (1997), 9-33. For Manetho's interaction with this list, see Dillery (2015), 86-88, 92-96; Moyer (2011), 104.

[499] Moyer (2013), 213-232, esp. 222-229; Moyer (2011), 96-130. As several recent scholars have pointed out, at closer inspection the works appear to be quite different. As we have seen, Berossus' *Babyloniaca* was a historical and ethnographic work on Babylon, describing the geography of Babylon, the birth of civilization and a history of the kings of Babylon. This outline is reminiscent of both Megasthenes' *Indica* and Hecataeus' *Aegyptiaca*, works that were in turn influenced by Herodotus' ethnographic accounts. Manetho's *Aegyptiaca*, however, was structured not as an ethnographical narrative but resembles more closely a chronicle. However, despite these differences in outline and tone, the overall similarities are still recognisible. Not only do the titles *Babyloniaca* and *Aegyptiaca* indicate a shared programme, both works are also divided into three books, revealing further structural similarities, cf. Dillery (2015), vii.

[500] Dillery (2015), xiv-xvi, 348-350.

[501] Syncellus, *Chronographia* 17 M (*BNJ* 609 T11c). For a further testimony: Plutarch, *De Iside et Osiride* 28 (*BNJ* 609 T3).

[502] Dillery (2015), 301-347.

comparing Berossus and Manetho with Biblical tradition to determine the age of the world and the different civilisations.[503] The French scholars Havet and Croiset even thought that there were too many similarities to be a coincidence and argued that Manetho was a late Hellenistic fake, based on the example of Berossus.[504] Although this idea has now been discredited, modern discussions of the Hellenistic period still often study the two authors together.[505] Recently, Dillery has dedicated a whole monograph to comparing them.[506] He argues that these works develop a new form of historiography that combines "large-scale narratives and chronology", and that it is no coincidence that they came into existence at this specific moment in time.[507]

Dillery's point is connected to the well-recognised similarities between the socio-historical background of the two writers. On a general level, both Berossus and Manetho were closely connected to the Hellenistic courts and wrote local history in deliberate contrast with Greek literary tradition. More specifically, both authors came from a centre of local significance (Sebennytus and Babylon) which celebrated the importance of pre-Persian rulers: the Nectanebid pharaohs and Neo-Babylonian kings.[508] Throughout this chapter we have seen the important position Babylon held in the Seleucid Empire and the ways in which the Seleucid kings used the Neo-Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar as an example. Sebennytus was a village in the Delta, which had close links to the last indigenous pharaohs. Nectanebo I came from Sebennytus and made it the administrative centre of Egypt during his reign. The prestige of the Nectanebid dynasty in the Ptolemaic Empire is indicated by the fact that his descendant Nectanebos was appointed *strategus* and *nomarchus* of the Delta by the Ptolemies.[509] Furthermore, the ambitious building programme in Sebennytus initiated by the

[503] E.g. the discussion in Josephus (*Contra Apionem* 1.104-105, 1.223-253), Sextus Julius Africanus and Eusebius of Caesarea. For the latter two, see Syncellus' discussion in his chronographic work (Syncellus, *Ecloga Chronographica* 99.11-144.16)

[504] Havet (1873), cf. Croiset in *Histoire de la Litterature Grecque*, 99. The idea of a late Hellenistic composition can still be found in modern publications, for example Hornung, Krauss and Warburton (2006), 33-35, who argue that because of the negative portrayal of the Jews in Manetho, the *Aegyptiaca* must have been composed around the 1st century AD, after the rise of anti-semitism in the ancient world and after the publication of the Books of Maccabees.

[505] Dillery (2015); Moyer (2013), 213-232; Dillery (2007), 221-230; Gmirkin (2006); Verbrugghe and Wickersham (eds.) (1996).

[506] Dillery (2015).

[507] Dillery (2015), 349.

[508] Nectanebo II also figures in the Alexander Romance, as the real father of Alexander (Stephens (2013), 95-96; Ogden (ed.) (2002), 51; Jasnow (1997); Fraser (1996), 211-214; Stoneman (1994), 122-123); and in the second century BC *Dream of Nectanebo* (Moyer (2011), 137-138; Koenen (1985), 176-183).

[509] Moyer (2011), 87-89; Gorre (2009), 396-401, no. 79; Chevereau (2001), 156–57, no. 230; Sethe (1904) 24-26.

Nectanebid pharaohs was maintained by the Ptolemies.[510] Their ties to these centres of local power connect Berossus and Manetho even more closely than is usually recognised: not only are they both part of the priestly elites in countries conquered by the Greeks, they were also both priests at the centre of pre-Persian native rule. Both Berossus and Manetho combined these local traditions with the expectations of the Hellenistic courts.

They did so by impersonating the crucial mediating figure of the local priest; and in this connection reacted against Herodotus, Ctesias and Hecataeus, who presented these priests as sources of local knowledge but did not give them the opportunity to speak for themselves. Now, it is a cliché of Hellenistic scholarship that during this period, local authors writing in Greek 'discovered' their own voice and history.[511] For the purposes of the present argument, any sense of indigenous empowerment that may or may not have attached to such acts of cultural translation is less important than the specific time and place in which this happened. The fact that local voices came to the fore in the years after the Greek conquest is usually explained in terms of the power relationships between rulers and ruled within the Hellenistic kingdoms; here, however, I would like to add Seleucid-Ptolemaic cultural interaction as an important contributing factor.

This leads me to my last point: the chronology of Manetho and Berossus, both absolute and relative, is unfortunately not securely established. I discussed the date of both writers when I introduced them, but I would now like to investigate their relative dating in a little more detail. Both writers have a long, albeit slightly vague, attested *floruit*, and either could have written first. As we have already seen Berossus cannot be dated with absolute certainty, but it is likely that he wrote his *Babyloniaca* for Antiochus I. Manetho's dating is not much clearer: a number of testimonia attest that Manetho helped Ptolemy I founding a cult statue for Sarapis in 286-278 BC.[512] Other testimonia link him, and the *Aegyptiaca*, to Ptolemy II (285-246 BC).[513] The name Manetho is also mentioned in a papyrus dated to 241/0 BC. If this is the same Manetho, he is also linked to Ptolemy III Euergetes.[514] Because of the similarities between Berossus and Manetho, the debate over their relative chronology has

[510] On the building projects of the Nectanebids: Perdu (2010), 154-156; for the Ptolemies: Hölbl (2001), 86-87; Spencer (1999), esp. 76-78; Arnold (1999), 137-141.

[511] Dillery (2015), 348-353; Haubold (2013)b, 31-45; Moyer (2013), 213-232; Moyer (2011), 103-105; Dillery (1999), 102; Murray (1972), 200-213.

[512] Manetho *FGrHist* 609 T3; Plutarch, *De Iside et Osiride* 28 (*Moralia* 361f-362a), for a discussion of this story see Moyer (2011), 86; Borgeaud and Volokhine (2000), 40-42. A stele found in the Sarapis temple in Carthage inscribed with the name Manetho can be read as further support for the story told in Plutarch (*CIL* 8.1007).

[513] Syncellus, *Chronography* 17 M (*BNJ* 609 T11c).

[514] *P. Hibeh* 1.72.4 (*BNJ* 609 T4).

dominated attempts at finding absolute dates for either of them. Most scholars consider it likely that Berossus was earlier than Manetho, but refrain from drawing any conclusions because of the scantiness of the evidence.[515] Although the exact dating may never be established with certainty, my thesis strengthens the argument in favour of putting Berossus first and shows that, within the larger framework of Ptolemaic-Seleucid cultural interaction, it makes sense that Manetho would have emulated Berossus. Scanty as it is, the evidence seems to me to point toward the Ptolemies attempting to neutralise Berossus by attracting him to their court, and by finding a local priest 'of their own' to write a history of Egypt to rival his history of Babylon. In Hecataeus' work they already possessed a history of Egypt that could trump those of other Greeks – so there was no reason, in principle, to commission another one. The fact that they did, and the way they did it, is best explained by the challenge represented by Berossus, who was even more authentically indigenous than Hecataeus – and whose pro-Seleucid stance (e.g. on the question of *Coele Syria*) directly challenged Ptolemaic claims to historical and political pre-eminence. In the previous chapter I have shown that Ptolemaic geographers like Eratosthenes responded directly, and competitively, to Seleucid ones such as Megasthenes. The same, I suggest, happened in the field of indigenous history. One reason that makes it so hard to prove that Manetho read Berossus in the way in which we can prove that Eratosthenes read Megasthenes, is that authenticity was precisely the point at issue: so, whereas Manetho could be seen to lambast the Greek Herodotus for being inauthentic he could not be seen to engage with the Babylonian Berossus in the same way.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have argued that Seleucid literature from and about Babylon provides insight into the ways in which literature was used to construct and reflect practices of empire. The literature dealing with Babylonia is of special significance because of the important ideological position Babylon held in the Seleucid imagination. Relevant interventions are preserved in a variety of sources, written for different audiences. In this chapter I have discussed the *Borsippa Cylinder*; Berossus' *Babyloniaca* and several texts written by the Babylonian city elite during the Seleucid era for a mainly internal, Babylonian audience. These different sources have their own agenda and style, but they all share common themes

[515] Syncellus is the only source that claims that Manetho is later than Berossus (Manetho, fr. 3 (Waddell (1940)). Cf. Gmirkin (2006), 240-245; Fraser (1972) Vol. I, 505-506. Dillery (2015), xxix-xxx discusses some passages of the *Aegyptiaca* that might be explained by Manetho's knowledge of Berossus.

that indicate interaction across cultural and linguistic boundaries. Specifically, they share a vision of the king as benefactor and patron and thus provide common ground for the king and the city of Babylon to negotiate a mutually beneficial relationship.

We have seen that in the early Hellenistic period the Babylonian temple elites maintained and even strengthened their position vis-a-vis the king. In the literature we see a gear change in the interaction between the city elite and the kings from Alexander and the early Seleucids onwards. The numerous appearances of the Seleucid kings (and the royal family) in the Astronomical Diaries is the best indication not only of a heightened interest of the kings in the city, but also of the city in the kings. This is a marked change from the practice in the Achaemenid period, when the kings appear less often in the diaries; and from the Parthian period, when they again become more distant. It seems that Babylon enjoyed a large amount of autonomy during the first Seleucid kings, which both enabled it to negotiate with the kings, and which was in turn the object of their negotiations.

In Seleucid imperial discourse we thus find different lines of reasoning that all come together in the image of the 'good king' and his behaviour towards Babylon. In the first half of this chapter I pursued this issue from the perspective of royal euergetism toward the city. I showed there that King Antiochus I combined motifs from Mesopotamian kingship and Hellenistic royal practices to create a narrative of Seleucid euergetism embedded in, rather than superimposed upon, Babylonian traditions of kingship. I then discussed other literary sources from Babylon that betray similar tendencies. I argued that Berossus' description of the building programme of Nebuchadnezzar echoes the language of Hellenistic euergetic inscriptions. This does not prove that Berossus read actual Greek inscriptions from Asia Minor or elsewhere but rather that the Seleucid administration disseminated this kind of language which could in turn be picked up and appropriated by others. Finally, the appearance of the Seleucid kings in Babylonian chronicles and Astronomical Diaries suggests that the language and ideas of Seleucid euergetism translated into the idiom of Babylonian royal literature.

In the second half of the chapter I argued that the Babylonian elites reciprocated the king's offer of benefaction by offering him the tradition of Babylonian, and by extension, universal kingship. We have seen that the Babylonian elite presented themselves as the guardians of kingship in several different contexts. Berossus, again, transmits some important examples. In two instances he describes the Babylonian temple elite, the Chaldaeans, as a strong collective that supported the king. I concluded the chapter by looking at Ptolemaic attempts to match Seleucid prowess in the field of indigenous history. I argued that, just as Seleucid

Berossus had responded to the Ptolemaic Hecataeus, so Manetho provided a Ptolemaic-Egyptian version of history to match that of Berossus. Although the relative dates of Berossus and Manetho cannot be determined beyond doubt, the argument presented in this chapter supports the view of those who give priority to Berossus.

Chapter 3: Seleucid Crisis and the Ptolemaic Response

Introduction

After a period of expansion and consolidation during the reigns of Seleucus I and Antiochus I, the Seleucid Empire fell into crisis around 250 BC. In 252 BC, Antiochus II married Berenice Phernophorus (Dowrybringer), the daughter of Ptolemy II Philadelphus and Arsinoe I, confirming the peace treaty of 253 BC between the two kings. This marriage was the first Seleucid-Ptolemaic union,[516] a bond designed to mark the end of war between the two dynasties: after the first and second Syrian wars, and half a century of conflict, both sides were ready for peace. [517]

Yet, the seeds of further conflict lay already enclosed in this marriage. In 266 BC, Antiochus II had married the Seleucid princess Laodice, with whom he had two sons. At the time of his marriage with Berenice, Laodice had moved to Ephesus, away from the king, but after the death of Antiochus II in 246 BC a dynastic struggle erupted between his first wife Laodice I and his second wife, the Ptolemaic princess Berenice. At that time, Berenice had an infant son, so both queens fought for their bloodline. When Laodice proclaimed her son Seleucus II Callinicus king, Berenice retreated to Daphne near Antioch on the Orontes to rally support and send out a call for help to her brother, Ptolemy Euergetes. However, before Ptolemy could come to her aid, she was murdered. Ptolemy subsequently declared war on the new Seleucid king, Seleucus II, and conquered parts of Syria and Anatolia and occupied Babylon.[518] The Seleucid Empire was now in real danger. However, before Ptolemy could consolidate his victories, he was forced to return home to quell an uprising within Egypt. With military pressure lifted, the young Seleucus II recovered his kingdom.[519]

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[516] "Le mariage d'Antiochos II et Bérénice, soeur de Ptolémée Évergète, fut un grande mariage dynastique", Vatin (1970), 90; 89-91.

[517] For a full discussion of these historical events with references to ancient sources and secondary literature, see: Grainger (2010), 149-176; Huss (2001), 338-354; Lehmann (1998), 81-101; Heinen (1984), 419-421.

[518] As Greek and Babylonian sources attest: Ptolemy III Chronicle (*BCHP* 11); Justinus, *Epitome of Pompeius Trogus* 27.1; Polyaenus, *Strategemata* 8.50.

[519] Huss (2001), 345, 373. Apart from chronicles written by Babylonian priests, we do not have any Seleucid literature commemorating this moment of crisis. It is perhaps not surprising that Seleucid writers were wary of treating such a potentially disturbing topic. More generally, the political upheaval of the period just before this crisis seems to have had cultural repercussions; there are no important Seleucid writers or works known from the reign of Antiochus II.

The crisis of what came to be known as the Third Syrian War inspired one of the most brilliant pieces of Hellenistic poetry: Callimachus' *Lock of Berenice*.[520] The *Lock* is usually held to be written, and possibly performed, shortly after the victorious return of Ptolemy III Euergetes from the Third Syrian War in 246 BC.[521] It is an iconic example of Hellenistic poetry, and one that exerted a profound influence on the further course of Greek – and indeed Roman – literature. In language that is by turns pathetic, funny and cleverly allusive, a lock of hair relates its catasterism and preceding separation from the head of Queen Berenice II, after her husband, King Ptolemy III Euergetes, returns safely home from the Third Syrian War. As a love poem that encompasses learned astrological allusions, references to the deification of the late Queen Arsinoe II and subtle flattery of the royal couple, the *Lock* defies expectation on many different levels. As Harder, Fantuzzi and Hunter among others have argued, Callimachus uses his poetry playfully to reflect on, praise and satirise the Ptolemaic dynasty.[522]

So far scholars have concentrated on the Alexandrian environment of Callimachus' work, and on tensions and resonances between Ptolemaic Greek and Egyptian royal ideology.[523] In this chapter I will look at yet another kind of context; Callimachus' *Lock*, I argue, comments not only upon Ptolemaic kingship in the context of Alexandrian cultural politics, but also upon inter-state rivalries on the larger Hellenistic stage, especially the political, military and cultural rivalry between the Ptolemies and their powerful neighbours in Asia. Specifically, I show that the *Lock* capitalised on a moment of Seleucid crisis. Indeed, I shall argue that the *Lock* can profitably be read as an (anti-)*Seleucid* text - by which I mean that Callimachus did not just celebrate a Ptolemaic victory, but also, and more specifically, the annihilation of the Seleucid Empire, both politically and culturally. Much of the poem's power derives from this fact. In keeping with his poetic programme, as outlined in the *Aetia* prologue, Callimachus

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[520] Harder (2012); Fantuzzi and Hunter (2004), 83-89; Marinone (1997); Gutzwiller (1992)a; Marinone (1984). For a full bibliography see Lehnus (2000); for an overview of the most recent scholarship see Harder (2012). The *Lock of Berenice*, a poem of around 100 lines, was the last *aition* in the *Aetia*, Callimachus' four book elegiac masterpiece. The *Lock* celebrates the love of Queen Berenice for her husband Ptolemy Euergetes: when he leaves to go to war shortly after their marriage the distressed young bride dedicates a lock of her hair to the gods for his safe return, or so the poem tells us. The poem starts when this lock has disappeared from the temple and is recognised by the court astrologer as a new constellation among the stars.

[521] Harder (2012) Vol. II, 769; Gutzwiller (1992)a, 363; West (1985), 66. The first recension of the poem is usually dated to the autumn of 245 BC; cf. West (1985) and Pfeiffer (1975), 143-144.

[522] Harder (2012); Fantuzzi and Hunter (2004), 83-89.

[523] Harder (2012), Vol. II, 799; Fantuzzi and Hunter (2004), 87; Stephens (2003), (2002), (1998); Selden (1998); Koenen (1993).

celebrates the triumph of Ptolemaic elegance and subtlety over the brute force of Seleucid Asia.

Royal Romance

In the Hellenistic period, royal marriages provided a fertile ground for imperial ideology.[524] Both the Ptolemies and the Seleucids used the image of royal love to mystify, naturalise and romanticise monarchic power, and to stress the stability of the state by placing at its heart a human bond that carried central importance to definitions of Greek culture in foundational texts such as Homer's *Odyssey*.[525] It is worth pausing over the cultural charge carried by this type of royal myth: non-Greeks were often portrayed in Greek literature and education as fickle, brutal and oversexed – the exact opposite of the loving husband or faithful wife. In the *Lock of Berenice* Callimachus depicts Ptolemy as a latter-day Odysseus, who left home to wage war and whose main preoccupation is his safe return to his faithful wife. Callimachus shaped the Ptolemaic court myth of the dedication, disappearance and catasterism of a lock of hair from Berenice's head into a specifically Greek panegyric to the power of marital love.[526]

Much work has been done on the intricacies of the *Lock* as a love poem; it has been read both as a Catullan love elegy *avant la parole* and as an ironic piece of court literature, which merely uses the narrative voice of the lock in order to mock the royal couple.[527] Kathryn Gutzwiller breaks with these scholarly approaches and traces the ways in which the poem takes up Ptolemaic imperial propaganda, stressing the stability of the Ptolemaic dynasty, celebrating the love between the royal couple and foreshadowing Berenice's deification.[528] She argues that the catasterism of the lock heralds the dawn of a new era under Ptolemy III and Berenice II, whilst at the same time connecting the couple with their deified predecessors Ptolemy II and Arsinoe II.[529] As Annette Harder further argues, the *Lock* as the *Aetia*'s

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[524] For further studies and bibliography on royal love in the Hellenistic world, see: Caneva (2014), 25-57; Carney (2011); Ogden (1999); Burton (1995); Gutzwiller (1992)a.

[525] E.g. Odysseus' famous speech to Nausicaa which celebrates the bond between husband and wife (Homer, *Odysseus* 6.180-185, cf. 24.192-202); cf. Hartog (2001); Goldhill (1991), 17; Katz (1991), esp. 170-181.

[526] Gutzwiller (1992)a, 373. For allusions to marital love see Catullus 66, vv. 11, 15-20, 29-32, 87-88.

[527] As an iconic part of Callimachus' most iconic work, the *Lock* has also served as a predecessor and model of Roman love elegy. Fantuzzi and Hunter (2004), 86; Clausen (1970), 85; Pfeiffer (1975), 142. Cf. Hunter (2006), Fantuzzi and Hunter (2004) and Hutchinson (1988) for general discussion of Roman interaction with Hellenistic poetry. Catullus' translation and adaptation has been particularly influential here, and for a long time scholarship on the *Lock* has focussed mainly on the relationship between the Callimachean and the Catullan versions of the text. This is eloquently discussed in Bing's article in Most (ed.), *Fragmente Sammeln* (Bing (1997)).

[528] Gutzwiller (1992)a, 373. Kathryn Gutzwiller proposes to provide "a literary analysis free of the Catullan context" (Gutzwiller (1992)a, 361).

[529] Gutzwiller (1992)a, 369, cf. Harder on the position of the *Lock* within the *Aetia* (Harder (2012), 39-40).

second episode about Berenice highlights the importance of marital love, and of the royal couple, as a guarantee for the well-being of the Ptolemaic state.[530]

I would like to take Gutzwiller's and Harder's political reading one step further and argue that the celebration of successful Ptolemaic love is meant to form a direct contrast with Seleucid failure, as the struggles between the two wives of Antiochus II brought the Seleucid Empire to the brink of destruction. To argue this point, I first consider how Callimachus celebrates the love between Berenice II and Ptolemy III within a Ptolemaic ideological framework.[531] I then go on to show that Callimachus' *Lock* gains a powerful urgency if read against Seleucid stories of royal love in general, and the recent break-down of the Seleucid dynastic marriage between Antiochus II and Berenice Phernophorus in particular.

Ptolemaic Ideology of Royal Love in Callimachus' Lock of Berenice

The Ptolemies were masters at manipulating Hellenistic preoccupations with dynastic marriage. One common strategy at their disposal was to emphasise the romantic feeling and physical desire between the king and queen.[532] The marriage between Ptolemy I and Berenice I, for example, was celebrated as a love match by various Hellenistic writers[533] and Arsinoe II even received the royal epithet Philadelphus (sibling lover), thus enshrining the love between king and queen in royal titulature.[534]

The *Lock* connects the official image of the royal pair Berenice II and Ptolemy III with that of both Ptolemy I and Berenice I and Ptolemy II and Arsinoe II.[535] Callimachus stresses the romantic longing and desire between the newly-wed but separated king and queen in

[530] Harder (2012), Vol. II, 799.

[531] For discussion of Callimachus (and Theocritus) as court poets, see Reed (2000), 319-351; Stephens (1998), 167-185; Gelzer (1982); Pfeiffer (1926), 161-174.

[532] Clayman (2014); Carney (2013); Bielman Sánchez (2003), 41-61; Hazzard (2000), 82-122; Ogden (1999), 67-116; Macurdy (1932). See Ogden (1999) for an in depth discussion of Ptolemaic polygamy.

[533] E.g. Theocritus, *Idyll* 17 and Posidippus, *AB* 78.

[534] The title of Philadelphus is attested in *AB* 33, 37, 119; for discussion see: Caneva (forthcoming); (2013); (2012), 80; Bing (2002/3); Hauben (1970), 37-39. Cf. the title of *theoi adelphoi* for the king and the queen together: Posidippus, *AB* 74 v. 13; for discussion see: Criscuolo (2003), 324; Fraser (1972), Vol. I, 194, 215-217, 225-228; Hauben (1970), 62.

[535] The *Lock of Berenice* is not the only text in which Callimachus celebrates Ptolemaic royal marriages. In the 270's Callimachus wrote an epithalamium of Arsinoe and Philadelphus (Pfeiffer (1949-1953), frag. 392) and he later composed a lyric poem describing Arsinoe's apotheosis (Pfeiffer (1949-1953), frag. 228). We also have a fragment of an elegy concerning Berenice and her father Magas (Pfeiffer (1949-1953), frag. 388). Gutzwiller (1992)a, 373; Gelzer (1982), 19; Pfeiffer (1949-1953), *ad* frag. 388, p. 320-322.

several subtle ways:[536]

> *id mea me multis docuit regina querellis*
> *inuisente nouo proelia torua viro.* 20
> *et tu non orbum luxti deserta cubile,*
> *sed fratris cari flebile discidium.*
> My queen taught me this with many laments
> When her new husband went to the grim battles. 20
> Left alone were you mourning not only the empty bed,
> but rather the sad separation from your dear brother.
> Catullus 66, 19-22[537]

The contrast between war and love, which was popular in Greek literature ever since the time of Homer, underlies the *Lock* as a whole and plays an important role throughout the poem. In this passage, Callimachus' reference to the empty bed (*orbum cubile*) stresses the fidelity of a loving wife. The implication that there is no other man in the king's bed has clear Homeric overtones: the figure of the faithful, lonely wife evokes the powerful figure of Penelope.[538] Callimachus, then, connects the Ptolemaic king and queen with the quintessential couple of Greek literature. Beyond this mythical comparandum, however, Callimachus also compares Ptolemy III and Berenice II with earlier Ptolemaic couples. As has often been noted, the tone of this passage evokes the marital love between Berenice I and Ptolemy I as described in Theocritus' *Idyll* 17, 34-44, in which Theocritus stresses the importance of mutual love between the king and the queen.[539] The Ptolemaic resonances make an important point about

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[536] Some parts of the *Lock* are only transmitted in the Latin translation of Catullus, not in the original Greek version. See Harder (2012), Vol. I, 289-304, Vol. II, 793-797, 807-809 for further discussion. Many scholars accept that the Latin version of the *Lock* is mostly a faithful translation of the Greek. Pfeiffer, for example, considers it to be an attempt, on Catullus' part, to enhance his Latin by engaging closely with the Greek (Pfeiffer (1975), 142). Bing, however, has shown how too much faith in the fidelity of the translation tempts scholars to fill the 'empty spaces' or even propose unnecessary changes to the Greek that is actually transmitted (Bing (1997), 78-94, cf. Fränkel (1929)). As Bing rightly cautions, "these reconstructions have repeatedly proved to be badly mistaken" (Bing (1997), 94). Other scholars who emphasise the freedom of Catullus' translation include Hutchinson (1988), 322-324; West (1985), 61-66; Putnam (1960), 223-228. For the purposes of this chapter, I will work on the assumption that Catullus' translation can be followed to reconstruct the broad meaning, if not necessarily the exact words, of Callimachus' text when the Greek is missing.

[537] The Latin of the passage from Catullus is based on Mynors' edition (1968), and the translation is my own, based on Harder (2012).

[538] Compare n. 525 above. The image of the king leaving for war provides Callimachus' with the outlines of a *nostos* story.

[539] For discussion of this passage see Caneva (2014), 31-39 and especially Hunter (2003), cf. Stephens (2003), 147-170; Ogden (1999), 72-73; Hunter (1996), 110-138; Burton (1995), 62-82, 133-154; Weber (1993), 213-

the significance of the royal couple in dynastic succession: for both Theocritus and Callimachus, love and erotic desire between king and queen ensure the legitimacy of their children. [540]

Yet, Callimachus presents the king and queen not only as lovers, but more importantly as brother and sister (*fratris*). The allusion to Ptolemy as Berenice's brother evokes the marriage of their predecessors Ptolemy II and Arsinoe II Philadelphus (Sibling lover).[541] Ptolemy II and Arsinoe II, who were full siblings, exploited the framework of the loving royal couple to present themselves as the *theoi adelphoi*. Ptolemaic ideology fashioned an overdetermined image of a couple connected by multiple attachments. Both Callimachus and Theocritus used the sibling marriage to elevate the royal couple to divine status - modelled after Zeus and Hera - and set them apart from normal mortals.[542] This exceptionalism defined the royal couple.[543] Its importance to the Ptolemies' dynastic policies can be gleaned from their nervous response to some of the negative reactions it elicited. When the Alexandrian poet Sotades wrote a scurrilous epigram accusing the king of "sticking his prick in an unholy hole",[544] the Ptolemies responded in force and showed that the royal couple was untouchable: by imprisoning Sotades and, after an attempted escape, drowning him in a lead box. Viewed against the background of the Sotades story, Callimachus' reference to Ptolemy Euergetes as Berenice's 'brother' can be read as a commitment to a specifically Ptolemaic model of royal love.

243; Griffiths (1979). See also Plutarch, *Life of Pyrrhus* 4.4 and Pausanias, 1.6.8 for describing Ptolemy I and Berenice I falling in love.

[540] The theme of erotic love is further strengthened by the relation between Aphrodite and Berenice I. In *Idyll* 17, Aphrodite blesses Berenice by touching her and imbuing her with beauty and grace. See Hunter (2003), 126-128, esp. 128 for discussion of the precise connotation of the Greek words.

[541] Relations among siblings became popular as a model for royal marriage, especially under the Ptolemies (Müller (2009), 105-111). This is shown for example by the fact that from the reign of Arsinoe II onwards, Hellenistic royal couples were described as siblings, even if they were not. A lot has been written about the origin, nature and benefits of Ptolemaic sibling marriage. Although Ptolemy II and Arsinoe II are usually credited with introducing sibling marriage, some scholars have argued that it was Arsinoe II's marriage to Ptolemy Ceraunus, her paternal brother (in 281 BC), that gave Ptolemy Philadelphus the idea (Ogden (1999), 75). One point of contention is the presumed Egyptian, or pharaonic, precedence for the Ptolemies (ancient sources: Memnon *FGrHist* 434 F8; Pausanias, 1.7.1; Scholiast on Theocritus 17.128; Lucian, *Icaromenippus* 15; for modern scholarship see n. 543 below).

[542] Theocritus, *Idyll* 17, 128-134. See further: Burton (1995), 148-150.

[543] For discussion of incestuous marriage and its critics see Carney (2013), 65-105; Müller (2009), 87-155 (for discussion of models: 111-134); Buraselis (2008), 291-302; Ager (2005), 1-34. See further: Pomeroy (1984), 17-19; Burstein (1982), 211-212; Fraser (1972), Vol. I, 117-118; Vol. II, 209; Vatin (1970), 58-85, esp. 81-85; Longega (1968), 73; Macurdy (1932), 118; and especially Ogden (1999), 75-78 and Carney (1987), 420-432.

[544] Plutarch, *On the Education of Children*, 11a; Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistai*, 14, 621a; see Ogden (1999), 79-80.

Callimachus takes the celebration of royal love a step further by connecting it to royal cult. At the climax of the poem, when the lock vanishes from the earth and is prepared for its catasterism, Callimachus again connects Berenice with Arsinoe II. This time however, Arsinoe does not appear in her role as Arsinoe Philadelphus, but as Arsinoe-Aphrodite. Arsinoe-Aphrodite became an important cult figure throughout the Ptolemaic period, as both a mistress of love and patroness of the maritime empire of the Ptolemies.[545] Let us consider in what ways Callimachus ties the small lock of Berenice to this assertion of Ptolemaic maritime power:

ἄρτι [ν]εότμητόν με κόμαι ποθέεσκον ἀδε[λφεαί
  καὶ πρόκατε γνωτὸς Μέμνονος Αἰθίοπος
ἵετο κυκλώσας βαλιὰ πτερὰ θῆλυς ἀήτης
  ἵππ̣ο[ς] ἰοζώνου Λοκρικὸς Ἀρσινόης
.[.]ασε̣ δὲ πνοιῆι μ̣ε, δι’ ἠέρα δ’ ὑγρὸν ἐνείκας   55
  Κύπρ]ιδος εἰς κόλ[πους ἔθηκε
αὐτή μιν Ζεφυρῖτις ἐπιπροέ[ηκε(ν)
  …..Κ]ανωπίτου ναιέτις α[ἰγιαλοῦ
Just freshly cut my sister-locks were pining after me
  and suddenly the brother of the Aethiopian Memnon
a gentle breeze hastened in, circling his swift wings,
  the Locrian horse of Arsinoe with her purple girdle,
[and too]k me with his breath, and carrying me through the humid air,   55
  [he placed] me in Cypris' lap.
Zephyritis herself had sent him on his way,
  … living on the Canopian sea-shore.
Callimachus, *Lock of Berenice*, 51-58[546]

In this passage, Callimachus highlights again the overdetermination of emotional attachments: the lock is mourned by its sisters, the south wind is described as the brother of Memnon, and the goddess Aphrodite is a representation of all human bonds.

The south wind is sent to collect the lock by Arsinoe-Aphrodite, here referred to by her epithet Zephyritis, which alludes to the temple of Arsinoe-Aphrodite on the promontory of

[545] Demetriou (2010), 67-89; Barbantani (2008), 103-134; Gutzwiller (1992)b, 193. Arsinoe's patronage of the Adoneia in Alexandria should probably also be seen in the light of her relationship with Aphrodite.
[546] Text is from Harder (2012), Vol. I, 291.

Zephyrium at Canopus.[547] We have already seen that both Berenice I and Arsinoe II were connected with Aphrodite,[548] but Callimachus' choice of this particular manifestation of Aphrodite has a more specific resonance, in that the temple of Arsinoe-Aphrodite at Zephyrium was associated with maidens on the verge of marriage and with sailors.[549] The intricacies of this connection become apparent in a well-known epigram by Callimachus that commemorates the dedication of a nautilus shell to Arsinoe-Aphrodite.[550] In this epigram, the dedicant Selenaia is described as a young immigrant girl who, upon arriving in Egypt, dedicates the conch as a first offering to the goddess. Gutzwiller has argued that this dedication should not only be regarded as the votive offering of a girl on the threshold of marriage, but also "as a thank offering to the goddess who controls the seas of the Lagid maritime empire".[551] According to Gutzwiller, both the votive offering *and* the recipient of the offering signified this duality. She argues that the nautilus shell was associated both with the ability to navigate the seas and with female sexual organs.[552] At the same time, Arsinoe-Aphrodite was venerated, in epigrams and poetry, both as goddess of love and mistress of the sea.[553]

By connecting the dedication of Berenice's lock with this particular temple, Callimachus implies, first, that Berenice, like her predecessors, enjoyed a special relationship with Aphrodite as the goddess of marital contentment. Secondly, he connects Berenice more directly to her immediate predecessor, Arsinoe II, as one of the tutelary deities who control the sea and provide safe passage for sailors. Arsinoe II's importance as a maritime goddess is shown by the cult centres and eponymous harbour cities dedicated to her throughout the

[547] Founded by the Ptolemaic admiral Callicrates of Samos: Hauben (2013), 47-48; Hauben (1970), esp. 33-45. Harder (2012), Vol. II 821-882; Zwierlein (1987), 275-276; West (1985), 62. According to a testimony in Hyginus it was at this temple that Berenice dedicated the lock (West (1985), 63; Hyginus, *Astronomica* 2.24.) If that is correct, the act of dedication itself already connects Berenice with her predecessor, the deified Arsinoe.

[548] See Demetriou (2010), 75-81; Barbantani (2005), 142; Gigante Lanzara (2003); Bingen (2002); Hauben (1983), 99-127; Robert (1966), 201-202.

[549] Posidippus, *AB* 116.7-10 (=12 GP); also *AB* 39; *AB* 119 (=13 GP), see Caneva (2014), 36-42; On Aphrodite Euploia see Pausanias, 2.4.7. Demetriou (2010), 67-89 discusses Aphrodite's role in marine contexts in Hellenistic epigrams.

[550] Callimachus, epigram 5 (Pfeiffer (1949-1953) (=14GP), on this poem see Gutzwiller (1992)b; Gigante Lanzara (1995).

[551] Gutzwiller (1992)b, 197.

[552] On the nautilus as sailor see Aristotle, *Historia Animalium*, 525a22-25, 622b5-15. For a comparison between the nautilus and female sexual organs, see: Gutzwiller (1992)b, 203-204.

[553] E.g. *P. Goodspeed* 101. For discussion see: Demetriou (2010), 67-89; Barbantani (2005), 142-143. These two sides to the goddess are merged in the literary metaphor of the sea of love. For a more detailed discussion, see: Gutzwiller (1992)b, 199-202.

Ptolemaic Empire.[554] By associating her with her predecessor, Berenice too becomes both a figure of love and of imperial control; in fact, these two aspects of her role are united precisely in her marriage to Ptolemy: Callimachus depicts the loving royal couple, and especially the loving queen, as the ultimate safeguard for the empire as a whole.

To conclude this analysis of the Ptolemaic couple in the *Lock of Berenice*, let us consider Callimachus' use of another Ptolemaic court myth:

anne bonum oblita es facinus, quo regium adepta es
coniugium, quod non fortior ausit alis?
sed tum maestra uirum mittens quae uerba locuta es!
Iuppiter, ut tristi lumina saepe manu! 30
quis te mutauit tantus deus? an quod amantes
non longe a caro corpore abesse uolunt?

Did you forget the deed, by which you achieved
the royal marriage, which another, stronger person, would not dare?
But then, what sad words did you speak when you let your man go!
Iuppiter, how often did you wipe your eyes with your hand! 30
Which god is so powerful that he changed you? Is it because lovers
do not want to be far apart from a dear body?

Catullus 66, 27-32[555]

Callimachus alludes here to the well-known story of the obstacles that Berenice had to overcome to marry King Ptolemy III.[556] The story can be reconstructed as follows: her father, King Magas of Cyrene, had promised her to Ptolemy Euergetes. However, after the death of her father, her mother Apama had different plans and married Berenice off to the Macedonian

[554] For discussion of the veneration of Arsinoe Philadelphus as sea goddess in Delos see: *IG* 1303; Bruneau (1970), 533-544; Vallois (1929), 34-35; cf. Dürrbach (1921), 22-31; Roussel (1916), 246, for the dedication of shells to sea goddesses in Delos. In addition, several harbour cities were refounded as Arsinoe: Arsinoe Lyctou and Rhithymna on Crete (Cohen (1995), 132-134, 139-140), an Arsinoe in the Argolis (Cohen (1995), 124-126, Arsinoe Patara in Lycia and an Arsinoe in Pamphylia (Cohen (1995), 329-330, 335-337, cf. Diodorus Siculus 20.93.3), an Arsinoe in Cilicia (Cohen (1995), 363-364) and an Arsinoe on Keos (*IG* XII 5, no. 1061). For further discussion, see: Barbantani (2005), 146-147.

[555] Text from Harder (2012), Vol. I, 296-297.

[556] The story can be found in Justinus, *Epitome of Pompeius Trogus* 26.3.2-8. Although it is not absolutely certain whether the deed mentioned by Callimachus refers to Berenice murdering her first husband or to her bravery in a battle (Hyginus, *Astronomica* 2.24.2), it seems difficult to believe that readers of Callimachus would not at least also have thought of the Demetrius episode, cf. Vatin (1970), 69-71. For discussion see Harder (2012), Vol. II, 810-811; Marinone (1997), 111-113 (earlier edition: Marinone (1984), 144-146).

prince Demetrius the Fair.[557] When Berenice discovered that Demetrius had an affair with her mother, she took matters into her own hands, killed Demetrius and was thus free to marry Ptolemy.[558] Berenice's murder of her first husband became infamous, and needed to be mitigated in court propaganda. In the *Lock*, Callimachus appears to have portrayed what most Greeks would have regarded as a heinous crime as a brave deed Berenice did out of love for Ptolemy, while at the same time stressing that Berenice was now tamed by the very love that propelled her to murder.[559]

All this goes to show that Callimachus used the theme of love between Berenice and Ptolemy to create an image of dynastic stability. He did this partly by connecting the king and queen to their deified predecessors, especially Ptolemy II and Arsinoe II, and by stressing Berenice's commitment to Ptolemy. However, I argue that he was also working against a less obvious subtext: the myth of Seleucid royal love that had so spectacularly failed in the run-up to the Third Syrian War.

Seleucid Narratives about Royal Love

Propaganda about royal love was not only promulgated by the Ptolemies; royal love was also a popular Seleucid theme. As I have already mentioned, there is a lack of contemporary Seleucid sources about royal marriages, which makes it difficult to establish a direct link between Callimachus and contemporary Seleucid discourse. However, there is plenty of circumstantial evidence for such a link. Let us look at two Seleucid narratives of royal love first, before considering the specific historical context of the *Lock*.

The first story that is relevant here is Seleucus I's marriage to the Iranian princess Apama during Alexander's mass wedding ceremony at Susa.[560] After Alexander's death, Seleucus was the only one of the *diadochi* who kept his Iranian wife and did not marry a Macedonian princess until after Apama died. Apama's importance to Seleucus is further shown by the fact that her son Antiochus I was raised as Seleucus' heir and later became vice-regent of the

[557] This plan was itself shaped by wider Hellenistic politics: Berenice's mother Apama was a sister of Antiochus II and granddaughter of Demetrius Poliorcetes. Demetrius' son, Antigonus Gonatas (who was Apama's maternal uncle), had become king of Macedon. Demetrius the Fair was the youngest issue of Demetrius Poliorcetes and a brother of Stratonice and Antigonus. By marrying off Berenice to Demetrius the Fair, Apama attempted to remove Cyrene from the Ptolemaic sphere of influence and strike an alliance with the Seleucids and Antigonids.

[558] Clayman (2014), 78-104, argues that reflections or reworkings of the story can be found in the Callimachean hymns to *Athena and Demeter*; his *Aconthius and Cydippe* and *Phrygius and Pieria*. She also recognises echoes in Apollonius' *Argonautica*, especially the story of the women of Lemnos and the figure of Medea.

[559] Clayman (2014), 97-100.

[560] Arrian, *Anabasis* 7.4.5-6; Strabo, 12.8.15-16.

empire. More telling still, Seleucus monumentalised his union with Apama by founding the twin cities Seleucia and Apamea on opposing banks of the Euphrates.[561] The two cities were connected by a bridge and together were called Zeugma, which means 'bridge' or 'yoke'. Zeugma connected the western and eastern parts of the empire and thus became a physical manifestation of the royal couple holding the Seleucid realm together. The foundation was particularly significant in view of Seleucid traditions about the dynasty's special relationship with the Euphrates: it placed the river at the centre of the empire, with Zeugma as the ultimate bond unifying its constituent parts. This urban complex did not only celebrate the first Seleucid couple but also the founding of the Seleucid dynasty. Its symbolic significance was clearly understood by successive Seleucid kings, as may be seen from the fact that Antiochus III chose to marry the Pontic princess Laodice at Zeugma, almost a century after the city's foundation:

> ὄντος δ' αὐτοῦ κατὰ τοὺς καιροὺς τούτους περὶ Σελεύκειαν τὴν ἐπὶ τοῦ Ζεύγματος, παρῆν Διόγνητος ὁ ναύαρχος ἐκ Καππαδοκίας τῆς περὶ τὸν Εὔξεινον, ἄγων Λαοδίκην τὴν Μιθριδάτου τοῦ βασιλέως θυγατέρα, παρθένον οὖσαν, γυναῖκα τῷ βασιλεῖ κατωνομασμένην… Ἀντίοχος δὲ προσδεξάμενος τὴν παρθένον μετὰ τῆς ἁρμοζούσης ἀπαντήσεως καὶ προστασίας εὐθέως ἐπετέλει τοὺς γάμους, μεγαλοπρεπῶς καὶ βασιλικῶς χρώμενος ταῖς παρασκευαῖς.
> He [Antiochus III] was at this precise time near Seleucia at Zeugma, and there he was joined by Diognetus, the admiral from Cappadocia Pontica, who brought Laodice, the daughter of King Mithridates, being a virgin, the affianced bride of the king. […] Antiochus, receiving the girl with due escort and pomp, immediately celebrated his nuptials magnificently and royally, employing all preparations.
> Polybius, 5.43[562]

As we shall see in greater detail in Chapter 4, Antiochus III had a penchant for dramatic and symbolically charged gestures. It is therefore no coincidence that he decided to marry his own queen Laodice III in precisely the place that was built to celebrate the first Seleucid couple. Performed immediately upon his coronation in Antioch on the Orontes, this marriage, a major public event, with receptions, processions and a general display of royal splendour, was clearly meant to advertise and cement his kingship. By putting on a lavish wedding at Zeugma, Antiochus attests to the enduring importance of royal love for the inner unity of the Seleucid realm: the marriages of Seleucid rulers were not merely pragmatic political acts, but

[561] Pliny, *Historia Naturalis* 5.21.82; Polybius, 5.43.1; Appian, *Mithradates* 114. Cohen (2013), 67-69; Cohen (2006), 190-195; Sherwin-White and Kuhrt (1993), 15; Grainger (1990)b, 75-77; Cohen (1978), 17-18.
[562] Text from Teubner edition (1899-1905) edited by T. Büttner-Wobst (republished in 1993-1995).

also dramatised a wider cultural poetics in which royal love was a bond that helped to hold the empire together.[563]

Particularly relevant in this connection is the popular Seleucid romance of Antiochus I and Stratonice, which is set in the early 290's BC. As we saw in the previous chapter, the Babylonian *Borsippa Cylinder* depicts King Antiochus and Queen Stratonice as a loving couple in a stable family unit. The Babylonian evidence is fairly minimal, but it does indicate that the Seleucids deliberately created and disseminated court narratives about royal love. Specifically, the Akkadian rendering of Stratonice's name as ^{f}*As-ta-ar-ta-ni-ik-ku* invokes the Greek theonym of Astarte, the Syrian counterpart of Mesopotamian Isthar and Greek Aphrodite.[564] Since Astarte/Isthar/Aphrodite was the goddess of love and sexuality, Stratonice-Astarte was the Seleucid counterpart to Ptolemaic queens such as Arsinoe-Aphrodite.[565]

The story goes as follows:[566] Stratonice was the daughter of Demetrius Poliorcetes, who married her to King Seleucus in 300 BC.[567] At some point, Seleucus' son Antiochus allegedly fell in love with Stratonice, who was his stepmother. The details of the story survive most fully in Plutarch and Appian:[568] The young prince decides not to give in to his desire but prefers to pine away and die from unhappy love. Seleucus, greatly alarmed by his son's illness, sends his court physician Erasistratus to discover what ails Antiochus. Erasistratus

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563 Much theoretical work has been done on cultural poetics and performative acts of kingship. For Antiochus' dramatic tendencies see also Chapter 4, pp. 205-212. For some key contributions and further bibliography see Dougherty and Kurke (ed.) (2003), 6-13; Bonnell and Hunt (ed.) (1999), 1-32; Dougherty and Kurke (ed.) (1993), 1-6; Dougherty (1993); Calame (1990), 275-341, for a theory of cultural poetics which interprets texts as events and events as texts (Geertz (1983), 121-146); see Geertz (1973) (contra Geertz see: Sewell (1999)) for a theoretical framework of the concept of culture and the performance of power. Especially important to the argument here is the inextricable connection between culture and art on the one hand and political power on the other (Dougherty and Kurke (2003), 6).

564 See, Chapter 2, p. 96-97, for the *Borsippa Cylinder*. For Stratonice ~ Astarte see Kosmin (2014)b, 186-188; Del Monte (1997), 41-42; see Stevens (2014), 80-81, n. 75 for a critical assessment of this association. Much has been written about the relation between the goddesses Aphrodite, Astarte and Isthar, see: Sugimoto (ed.) (2014); Budin (2004), 95-140; Groneberg (2004), 150-187; West (1997), 56-57; Bonnet (1996), 144-150; Burkert (1985), 152-153; Jacobsen (1976), 135-143, esp 140-141; Boedeker (1974), 1-7.

565 For further discussion of Arsinoe-Aphrodite see p.137-139 above.

566 In Appian, the Stratonice story is part of the so-called Seleucus Romance.

567 This cemented the alliance between Demetrius and Seleucus in the face of a marriage alliance between the Ptolemies and Lysimachus. Plutarch, *Life of Demetrius*, 31-32.

568 Plutarch, *Life of Demetrius*, 31-32; Appian, *Syriaca* 59-61. For further discussion see: Ogden (1999), 121-124; Sherwin-White and Kuhrt (1993), 24-25; Grainger (1990)a, 152-153; Mastrocinque (1983), 11; Mehl (1986), 230-286; Brodersen (1985), 459-469; Funck (1974), 1290-1334; Breebaart (1967), 154-164; Mesk (1913), 366-394. Remarkably, the story of Stratonice and Antiochus was picked up by scholarship on Seleucid political theory, specifically King Seleucus' speech to the army about the legitimacy of royal power and the practice of army acclamation: Rostovtzeff (1941), 431; Bikerman (1938), 11; Rostovtzeff (1928), 155-196.

duly discovers that Antiochus is in love with Queen Stratonice, and with a clever ruse gets Seleucus to declare that he would happily give up his wife to save his son. After the truth is revealed, the king keeps his word, publicly announces the new union and marries Stratonice to his son.

The story was well known in antiquity.[569] Like the sibling marriages of the Ptolemies, the semi-incestuous relationship of Antiochus with his stepmother indicates the exceptional status of the king. And, as was again the case with Ptolemaic sibling marriage, Antiochus' emotional attachment to a member of his family met with divergent reactions: some authors saw it as a sign of moral degradation,[570] but our main sources, Appian and Plutarch, praise the behaviour of Seleucus and Antiochus. To them, the episode demonstrates both the wisdom of the king and the self-constraint of the prince.[571] In contrast with Ptolemaic authors, Appian and Plutarch do not lay the emphasis on Stratonice's feelings: perhaps they discarded this aspect of the story as unsuitable to their purposes, or perhaps the Seleucids themselves did not emphasise it as much. Whatever the case may be, it seems clear that the story of Antiochus' love for Stratonice played an important ideological role: it cast the royal couple as an exceptional union, which was based on a genuine bond of love and secured the continued well-being of the dynasty.

The foundation of Zeugma, and the story of Antiochus and Stratonice, show that the Seleucids did not lack powerful narratives of royal love. Yet, at the time that Callimachus composed the *Lock*, the Seleucid ideal was strikingly at odds with lived practice, as evidenced by the unsuccessful match between Antiochus II Theos and Berenice Phernophorus, the first Seleucid-Ptolemaic union. The fortunes of the empire started unravelling when Antiochus II left Berenice and her infant son in Antioch to return to, or visit, his first wife Laodice in

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[569] Appian, *Syriaca* 59-61; Lucian, *De Dea Syria* 17; Lucian, *Icaromenippus* 15; Julian, *Misopogon* 60-64. The precise origin of the story is unclear, but there are several reasons to think that it was actively propagated by the courts of Seleucus I and/or Antiochus I. The first is its extremely positive portrayal of the Seleucid king and prince. This is even more remarkable because the two main versions of the story circulated in different contexts: Plutarch includes it in his *Life of Demetrius*, while in Appian it forms part of a digression on the life of Seleucus I within the *Syriaca*. Another indication that the story stems from early Seleucid court propaganda is the importance of Stratonice. As the daughter of Demetrius Poliorcetes, she represented the Macedonian royal house and thus a valuable partner for Seleucus, but even more valuable for Antiochus, who was himself Macedonian only on his father's side. Antiochus' Iranian background is likely to have presented difficulties as well as opportunities for him, and Stratonice may have become a particularly important stake-holder in the transferral of royal power from Seleucus to Antiochus: Sherwin-White and Kuhrt (1993), 25-26, 136; Kuhrt and Sherwin-White (1991), 84-85. For pragmatic considerations behind Seleucus' decision see Ogden (1999), 119-124.

[570] Julian, *Misopogon*, 347-349.

[571] Appian expressly frames the story as illustrating the wisdom and noble character of the king: "Even nobler and wiser was his behaviour in reference to his son' falling in love and his self-restraint in suffering", Appian, *Syriaca* 59.

Ephesus. There he died in 246 BC, poisoned by Laodice according to some.[572] Poison or no poison, it was the disintegration of the royal couple which precipitated the Third Syrian War.

Unfortunately, we have no contemporary accounts of the death of Antiochus II and the subsequent assassination of Berenice Phernophorus. The story has come to us via several later sources, including the following dramatic narrative in Justin's *Epitome*:

> *Porro Beronice, cum ad se interficiendam missos didicisset, Daphinae se claudit. Vbi cum obsideri eam cum paruulo filio nuntiatum Asiae ciuitatibus esset, recordatione paternae maiorumque eius dignitatis casum tam indignae fortunae miserantes auxilia ei omnes misere. Frater quoque Ptolomeus periculo sororis exterritus relicto regno cum omnibus uiribus aduolat. Sed Beronice ante aduentum auxiliorum, cum ui expugnari non posset, dolo circumuenta trucidatur. Indigna res omnibus uisa. Itaque cum uniuersae ciuitates quae defecerant ingentem classem conparassent, repente exemplo crudelitatis exterritae simul et in ultionem eius quam defensuri fuerant Ptolomeo se tradunt, qui nisi in Aegyptum domestica seditione reuocatus esset, totum regnum Seleuci occupasset.*
> As for Berenice, when she had learned that assassins were sent to kill her, she locked herself up in Daphne. When it was reported throughout the cities of Asia, that she and her little son were besieged there, remembering the dignity of her father and her ancestors and commiserating her undeserved misfortunes, they all sent assistance to her. Her brother Ptolemy, too, terrified at the danger for his sister, left his kingdom, and flew towards her with all his forces. But Berenice, before the arrival of help, when she could not be taken by force, was overcome by treachery and killed. The deed was regarded by everyone as unworthy. And so when all the cities, which had revolted, had equipped a vast fleet, they gave themselves up to Ptolemy, suddenly frightened by this example of cruelty and at the same time wishing to take revenge for her whom they had meant to defend. If Ptolemy had not been recalled to Egypt by a rebellion at home, he would have conquered the whole Seleucid kingdom.
> Justinus, *Epitome of Pompeius Trogus* 27.1.4-9

This passage seems to present us with a distinctly Ptolemaic version of events;[573] it describes a civil war that turned into an external war when Ptolemy came to the rescue of his sister. The text tells us that the cities of Asia, the core of the Seleucid Empire, responded with abhorrence to the deeds of the young king Seleucus II and presents Ptolemy as a liberator and loving brother. In addition, it emphasises the nobility and reputation of Berenice's father Ptolemy II, and more generally of her Ptolemaic ancestors. Justin further tells us that Berenice fled to Daphne, near Antioch on the Orontes, and was killed by treachery. While

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[572] On the alleged poisoning, see Phylarchus, *FGrHist* 81 F24 (in Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistai* 13.593D); Jerome, *in Danielem* 9.6. Cf. Grainger (2010), 155-156.

[573] See also Porphyry, *FGrHist* F43.

Justin does not provide any details, Polyaenus claims that she was betrayed by her court doctor Aristarchus.[574] Polyaenus' narrative is slightly confused at points but it does suggest that the plotting continued even after the doctor's betrayal and Berenice's death:

> αἱ δὲ ἀμφ' αὐτὴν γυναῖκες ὑπερασπίζουσαι προσαπέθανον αἱ πλείονες, Παναρίστη δὲ καὶ Μανία καὶ Γηθοσύνη τὸ σῶμα τῆς Βερενίκης κρύψασαι κατὰ γῆν ἑτέραν κατέκλιναν ὡς ἐκείνην ἔτι ζῶσαν καὶ τὸ τραῦμα θεραπευομένην ὑπὸ τούτων. καὶ ἐπὶ τοσοῦτον ἔπεισαν τοὺς ὑπηκόους, ἐφ' ὅσον μεταπομφθεὶς ὑπ' αὐτῶν Πτολεμαῖος ἧκεν ὁ πατὴρ τῆς ἀνῃρημένης καὶ διαπέμπων ἀπὸ τῆς προσηγορίας τοῦ πεφονευμένου παιδὸς καὶ τῆς ἀνῃρημένης Βερενίκης ὡς ἔτι ζώντων ἐπιστολὰς ἀπὸ τοῦ Ταύρου μέχρι τῆς Ἰνδικῆς χωρὶς πολέμου καὶ μάχης ἐκράτησε τῷ στρατηγήματι τῆς Παναρίστης χρησάμενος.
>
> Several of the women, who were about her, fell while attempting to save her. However, Panariste, Mania, and Gethosyne stealthily buried the body of Berenice, and placed another woman in her stead, in the bed where she had been murdered. They pretended that she was still living, and that they were looking after her wound. And they persuaded her subjects of this, until Ptolemaeus, the father of the deceased, arrived. He dispatched letters to the countries around in the names of his daughter and her son, as if they were still alive; and by this stratagem of Panariste he secured for himself the whole country from the Taurus mountains to India, without a single engagement.
>
> Polyaenus, *Strategemata* 8.50[575]

Although Polyaenus gets some facts wrong, for example when he states that the Ptolemy who came to Berenice's rescue was her father instead of her brother, it is of note that he too puts a Ptolemaic slant on the narrative. Particularly noteworthy is the fact that Polyaenus claims that Ptolemy went on to secure for himself "the whole country from the Taurus to India". This is an exaggeration of historical events that corresponds to a claim made by the Ptolemies themselves in the Adulis inscription, discussed further below.[576] As we will see, the language used in the inscription is very similar to that used by Polyaenus, suggesting that Ptolemaic self-representation continued to exert a strong influence on later narratives, even when these were quite far removed from the historical events.

There is no knowing what really happened at Daphne. However, what is beginning to emerge from the disparate sources is a distinctly Ptolemaic version of events. Partial

[574] Polyaenus, *Strategemata* 8.50. Since Herodotus and Ctesias, who was a court doctor himself, court doctors have held pride of place in Greek dynastic narratives; cf. the love story of Antiochus I and Stratonice (discussed above).

[575] Text from Wölfflin's edition (1887).

[576] See below pp. 148-151.

corroboration comes from a fragmentary papyrus,[577] which contains a first person account of Ptolemy's campaign to rescue his sister. In this account, Ptolemy stresses the enthusiastic welcome he receives in Seleucia in Pieria and Antioch on the Orontes. After his triumphant entrance into Antioch, Ptolemy proceeds to visit his sister. Since the literary sources agree that Berenice was dead by the time Ptolemy reached her, the papyrus seems to confirm Polyaenus' assertion that, as far as Ptolemaic propaganda was concerned, some kind of ruse to pretend that Berenice was still alive was indeed in place. All this subterfuge shows that the figure of the Seleucid queen Berenice was valuable for the Ptolemies. It is likely that Ptolemy planned to use his sister to legitimise his conquest of the Seleucid Empire. It is even possible that the king intended to marry her as well as Berenice II, and claim the Seleucid kingdom via levirate marriage.[578]

The stories I have discussed in this section of my dissertation do not tell us how the Third Syrian War really started. However, they do give us a glimpse of how Ptolemaic authors interpreted events. Hostile accounts of what transpired in Daphne circulated in Ptolemaic Egypt. They focussed on the treachery of the new Seleucid king, who failed to respect the Hellenistic royal couple as an integral part of the sacred bond that can reconcile competing empires as well as holding them together. Callimachus in his *Lock of Berenice* does not descend to this level of polemics – we could hardly have expected him to do so. But he does fall in with Ptolemaic propaganda when he looks at the Third Syrian War, a conflict precipitated by the breakdown of a dynastic marriage between the Ptolemaic and Seleucid royal houses, specifically through the lens of Ptolemaic royal romance. Even if parts of this analysis must by necessity remain conjectural, I argue that the marriage and murder of 'the other' Berenice remains significant for our understanding of Callimachus' *Lock*. When read against this backdrop, the *Lock* acquires a point not just as a Ptolemaic manifesto but more specifically as an attack on the Seleucids. Callimachus used the failed Ptolemaic and Seleucid joint marriage to present the Seleucids as external enemies. I now consider in more detail the terms of hist attack.

[577] The *Gurob* Papyrus (*W.Chr.*1 or *P.Petrie* 2.45; 3.144). For text see *FGrHist* 160. For translations see Gambetti (2011) in *Brill's New Jacoby Online* (*BNJ* 160); Bagnall and Derow (eds.) (2004), 53-55; Austin (1981), 363-364. For analysis see Gambetti (2011) in *Brill's New Jacoby Online* (*BNJ* 160); Grainger (2010), 158-159; Piejko (1990), 13-27; Hauben (1990), 29-39.

[578] This later happened when queens such as Laodice IV, Cleopatra Thea, Cleopatra Selene acted as king-makers: marriage to the queen was followed by the accession of the Seleucid throne (Reda (2014), 39, 44-45, 63-64; Ogden (1999), 86, 117, 156).

Cultural Polemic: the *Lock of Berenice* and Barbarian Asia

In this section, I argue that, beside the narrative of royal love, Callimachus reflects Ptolemaic cultural polemic by setting up the Seleucids as an essentially barbarian power on the Ptolemies' doorstep. Rather than recognising the Seleucid Empire as a Greek peer kingdom, he places it in the tradition of Near Eastern empires, and especially the Persian Empire. In order to understand how he could do this, and why he does it in the *Lock*, I now broaden the discussion to take in the wider history of anti-Seleucid polemic in the Ptolemaic world.

Cultural Polemic and the Third Syrian War

The first half of the third century BC had been marked by war and ideological tension between the Ptolemies and the Seleucids.[579] The seeds for these tensions were sown during the wars of the successors and the formation of the Hellenistic empires, especially the division of spoils after the battle of Ipsus. One immediate source of conflict was the question of who held Palestine and the Levantine coast. Both regions were promised to Seleucus I as a reward for defeating Antigonus in 301 BC but Ptolemy I never gave them up and Seleucus did not pursue the matter 'out of his great friendship with Ptolemy'.[580] After the death of these two kings, the unresolved issue of Palestine and the Levant sparked the First and Second Syrian war between the two kingdoms. However, the rivalry between the Seleucids and Ptolemies did not only concern Syria and the Levantine coast; as powerful neighbours in Asia Minor and Syria they also competed for the legacy of Alexander the Great. In the late fourth and early third century, all successor kings tried to link themselves to Alexander in order to legitimise their claims to kingship.[581] The Seleucids could make a particularly strong case to be regarded the true heirs of Alexander. After all, they held the lion's share of Alexander's empire, including Alexander's own chosen capital, Babylon.[582] At the same

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[579] The First Syrian War (274-271 BC) was fought over control of Asia Minor and Syria, the Second Syrian War was resolved by the union between Antiochus II and Berenice Phernophorus, which in turn gave rise to the Third Syrian War.

[580] Diodorus Siculus, 21; Plutarch, *Life of Demetrius* 30.1. See further: Waterfield (2011), 173-174; Bosworth (2002), 261-266; Grainger (1990)a, 121-122; Bevan (1927), 35-38; Bevan (1902), 61-63.

[581] Seleucus' coinage linked him to Alexander (Erickson (2013), 109-127). Furthermore, stories about Seleucus I's conception were modelled on Alexander's (Justinus, *Epitome of Pompeius Trogus* 15.4.3, cf. Plutarch, *Life of Alexander* 3); in another powerful story Seleucus returned Alexander's diadem to the king after it had fallen into the Euphrates (Arrian, *Anabasis* 7.22.1-5). Cf. Ptolemy I's abduction of the corpse of Alexander (e.g. Diodorus Siculus, 18.3.5, 18.28.2-3; Justinus, *Epitome of Pompeius Trogus* 13.4.6; Strabo, 17.1.8-9. See for further discussion: Huss (2001), 109; Grainger (1990)a, 2-3, 13; Hadley (1974); Eddy (1961), 108-109.

[582] Strabo, 15.3.9.

time, however, the Seleucid Empire could also be regarded as the successor of the Persian Empire, the ultimate enemy of Alexander and all things Greek. Its position thus entailed a weakness which both the Seleucids and the Ptolemies recognised and which they tried to gloss over or bend to their advantage. Although it is impossible to determine the exact flow of ideas, we clearly see traces of inter-state polemics.

A clear example of anti-Seleucid Ptolemaic polemic is the Adulis inscription.[583] This inscription was erected by Ptolemy III Euergetes after his victory over Seleucus II following the successful conquest of Asia in 246 BC.[584] In it Ptolemy claims that he campaigned in Asia and parts of Europe. After an opening in which his royal, and divine, descent is described and all regions encompassed by the Ptolemaic realm are enumerated, the inscription goes on to report the conquests of Ptolemy and the victorious homecoming of the invading army. The Adulis inscription highlights several aspects of Ptolemaic imperial discourse that are relevant to Callimachus' portrayal of the Seleucid Empire in the *Lock of Berenice*. I therefore quote it in full:

βασιλεὺς μέγας Πτολεμαῖος, υἱὸς βασιλέως Πτολεμαίου 1
καὶ βασιλίσσης Ἀρσινόης θεῶν Ἀδελφῶν, τῶν βασιλέω<ς>
Πτολεμαίου καὶ βασιλίσσης Βερενίκης θεῶν Σωτήρων
ἀπόγονος τὰ μὲν ἀπὸ πατρὸς Ἡρακλέους τοῦ Διός, τὰ δὲ ἀπὸ μη-
τρὸς Διονύσου τοῦ Διός, παραλαβὼν παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς 5
τὴν βασιλείαν Αἰγύπτου καὶ Λιβύης καὶ Συρίας
καὶ Φοινίκης καὶ Κύπρου καὶ Λυκίας καὶ Καρίας καὶ τῶν
Κυκλάδων νήσων, ἐξεστράτευσεν εἰς τὴν Ἀσίαν μετὰ
δυνάμεως πεζικῶν καὶ ἱππικῶν καὶ ναυτικοῦ στόλου
καὶ ἐλεφάντων Τρωγλοδυτικῶν καὶ Αἰθιοπικῶν, οὓς ὅ τε πατὴρ 10
αὐτοῦ καὶ αὐτὸς πρῶτο<ι> ἐκ τῶν χωρῶν τούτων ἐθήρευσαν
καὶ καταγαγόντες εἰς Αἴγυπτον κατεσκεύασαν πρὸς τὴν
πολεμικὴν χρείαν. κυριεύσας δὲ τῆς τε ἐντὸς Εὐφράτου
χώρας πάσης καὶ Κιλικίας καὶ Παμφυλίας καὶ Ἰωνίας καὶ τοῦ Ἑλ-
λησπόντου καὶ Θράικης καὶ τῶν δυνάμεων τῶν ἐν ταῖς χώραις 15
ταύταις πασῶν καὶ ἐλεφάντων Ἰνδικῶν, καὶ τοὺς μονάρχους τοὺς ἐν
τοῖς τόποις πάντας ὑπηκόους καταστήσας διέβη τὸν Εὐφράτην
ποταμὸν καὶ τὴν Μεσοποταμίαν καὶ Βαβυλωνίαν καὶ Σουσι-
ανὴν καὶ Περσίδα καὶ Μηδείαν καὶ τὴν λοιπὴν πᾶσαν ἕως

[583] *OGIS* 54. The inscription was found in Adulis, the port of the kingdom of Aksum, on the modern Eritrean coast. The inscription is now lost but was recorded by the monk Cosmas Indicopleustes in the 6th century AD.
[584] Burstein (2008), 141-142.

> Βακτριανῆς ὑφ' ἑαυτῶι ποιησάμενος καὶ ἀναζητήσας ὅσα 20
> ὑπὸ τῶν Περσῶν ἱερά ἐξ Αἰγύπτου ἐξήχθη καὶ ἀνακο-
> μίσας μετὰ τῆς ἄλλης γάζης τῆς ἀπὸ τῶν τόπων εἰς Αἴ-
> γυπτον δυνάμεις ἀπέστειλε διὰ τῶν ὀρυχθέντων πο-
> ταμῶν ...
>
> Great King Ptolemy, son of King Ptolemy and Queen Arsinoe the Brother and Sister Gods, the children of King Ptolemy and Queen Berenice the Saviour Gods, descendant on the paternal side of Heracles the son of Zeus, on the maternal of Dionysos the son of Zeus, having inherited from his father the kingdom of Egypt and Libya and Syria and Phoenicia and Cyprus and Lycia and Caria and the Cyclades islands led a campaign into Asia with infantry and cavalry and fleet and Troglodytic and Ethiopian elephants, which he and his father were the first to hunt from these lands and, bringing them back into Egypt, to fit out for military service. Having become master of all the territory this side of the Euphrates and of Cilicia and Pamphylia and Ionia and the Hellespont and Thrace and of all the forces and Indian elephants in these lands, and having made subjects all the princes in these regions, he crossed the Euphrates River and after subjecting to himself Mesopotamia and Babylonia and Sousiane and Persis and Media and all the rest of the country up to Bactriane and having sought out all the temple belongings that had been carried out of Egypt by the Persians and having brought them back with the rest of the treasure from the regions he sent forces to Egypt through the rivers that were dug.[585]

The inscription opens with the name of the 'great king' Ptolemy and his descent, enumerating his parents, Ptolemy II Philadelphus and Arsinoe II, and his grandparents, Ptolemy I Soter and Berenice I. The divine ancestors of King Ptolemy are also described: they include Heracles, son of Zeus, on his father's side, and Dionysus through his mother.[586]

After this grand opening, the main body of the text reads like an ideological exposé of Ptolemaic power. In enumerating all lands encompassed by the Ptolemaic Empire (lines 6-8) Ptolemy not only maps his own paternal kingdom, but also sets up a foil for the conquest of the even larger Seleucid Empire, in lines 13-20.[587] Like the lands belonging to Ptolemy's 'inheritance' his new conquests are listed at length, overwhelming the reader with the sheer size of Asia and inviting us to follow the tracks of the conqueror to the ends of the earth. From Thrace and Ionia to Bactria, Ptolemy effectively claims the entire Seleucid Empire for

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[585] Text from Dittenberger (1903), translation is by Bagnall and Derow (eds.) (2004).

[586] Cf. Theocritus, *Idyll* 17 and *Idyll* 26. Heracles and Dionysus are prominent in Hellenistic literature, as mythological examples or even divine progenitors, e.g. for Alexander: Strabo, 15.1.8-10; Arrian, *Indica* 4.10.6, 5.2.1; Curtius Rufus 7.9.15; Satyrus, *FGrHist* 631 F1. For the Seleucids: Megasthenes, *FGrHist* 715 F12, F13; Demodamas, *FGrHist* 428; Libanius, *Orationes* 11.91. See, Chapter 1, pp. 55-57.

[587] References to the Ptolemies as masters of all lands can be found in various hieroglyphic inscriptions (e.g. the Satrap Stele, the Pithom Stele); cf. Theocritus, *Idyll* 17, 86-92. See Hunter (2003), 160-163.

himself.[588] The Babylonian *Ptolemy III Chronicle* confirms that he reached Babylon but it is highly unlikely that he went as far as Bactria.[589] Nonetheless, he clearly portrayed himself as the conqueror of the entire Seleucid Empire.[590]

Various landmarks in the inscription serve to map out a specifically Seleucid imperial space, most notably the Hellespont and the Euphrates. The Hellespont marks the ideologically important boundary between Europe and Asia, which Ptolemy casually crosses to incorporate Thrace into his empire.[591] The boundary between Europe and Asia had long been significant in mental maps of the Seleucid realm. Appian, for example, reports an oracle that Seleucus received from Apollo of Didyma, according to which his realm was to be Asia *as opposed to* Europe ("Do not hurry back to Europe, Asia will be much better".)[592] The contrast between Europe and Asia, as the proper realm of the Seleucids, is further marked by Seleucus' death in his campaign to reconquer Macedon; and resurfaces later in Antiochus III's campaign into Europe.[593] In the inscription, Ptolemy defies the conceptual limits of their vast realm.

The other significant landmark in the Adulis inscription, and one that matters more directly in the present context, is the Euphrates River. We have already seen its importance to Seleucid space earlier in this chapter, when discussing the foundation of Zeugma under Seleucus I.[594] In the Adulis inscription, it is mentioned twice and is used to divide the

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[588] The reference to Indian elephants suggests that Ptolemy also won control over the Seleucids' most iconic symbol of military power; for Seleucid war elephants see Bar-Kochva (1976), 75-83; see the discussion about elephants, Chapter 2, p. 110 and Chapter 4, pp. 176-178.

[589] Huss (2001), 345.

[590] Traces of this claim can also be seen, for example, in Jerome: *et venit cum exercitu magno, et ingressus est provinciam regis Aquilonis, id est, Seleuci cognomento Callinici, qui cum matre Laodice regnabat in Syria, et abusus est eis, et obtinuit, intantum ut Syriam caperet, et Ciliciam, superioresque partes trans Euphraten, et propemodum universam Asiam.* "He came up with a great army and advanced into the province of the king of the North, that is Seleucus Callinicus, who together with his mother Laodice was ruling in Syria, and abused them, and not only did he seize Syria but also took Cilicia and the remoter regions beyond the Euphrates and nearly all of Asia as well." In its portrayal of the Seleucid Empire, the Adulis inscription provides an interesting reflection of Eratosthenes' theory that divided the world into collectable gemstones (see Chapter 1, pp. 76-78). In jumping from the Euphrates to the borders of Bactria and India, the inscription, in one sweeping statement, adds two more sealstones to Ptolemy's conquests.

[591] Cf. the ideologically marked stories that circulated about Xerxes and Alexander crossing the Hellespont: Herodotus, 7.33-36, also Polybius, 1.2.2 (Xerxes); Arrian, *Anabasis* 1.11.3-8; Plutarch, *Life of Alexander* 15 (Alexander); for discussion see Briant (2002), 525-528; Fredricksmeyer (2000), 144; Zahrnt (1996), 129-147; Green (1991), 165-166; cf. Grainger (2002), 52-75 and Mastrocinque (1976), 307-322 for Antiochus III crossing the Hellespont (e.g. Livy, 36.4).

[592] Appian, *Syriaca* 56.

[593] As we shall see in Chapter 4. According to Livy, the Romans warned Antiochus to stay in Asia and keep out of Europe (Livy, 34.58.1-2).

[594] See above, pp. 140-141.

Ptolemaic campaign into two parts. The crossing of the river is marked, not only because the Euphrates is strategically the key to the regions of inner Asia but also because of the close ideological connection between the Euphrates and Seleucid rule over Asia. This connection can be seen in numerous stories that clustered around the figure of Seleucus I and the Euphrates. One of these stories features Seleucus when he is still a general serving under Alexander. It relates how Alexander, during a boat ride on the Euphrates, lost his diadem and how Seleucus jumped into the river to retrieve it for him, putting it on his own head to prevent it from getting wet.[595] This was interpreted by the Babylonian soothsayers as a portent of Alexander's imminent death and an indication that Seleucus would become king. A further story connecting the Seleucids and the Euphrates relates how Seleucus' mother gave him a ring with an engraved anchor after she had a dream that he would become king wherever he lost the ring. Seleucus did indeed lose his seal ring, near the Euphrates.[596] These, and similar stories, show us that the seemingly innocent geography of the Adulis inscription marks out a specifically Seleucid space which is now being taken over by the Ptolemies.

Even more relevant for my argument is the fact that Ptolemy III not only claims to have conquered the Seleucid Empire from Thrace to Bactria, but also connects his war with Seleucus II with the wars that the Persians had waged against Egypt. By claiming that he returned the religious objects that the Persians had taken from Egypt as spoils of war, Ptolemy implies that the Seleucids, as the heirs of the Persians, inherited the Persians' crimes.[597] This claim is in fact a recurrent *topos* in Ptolemaic imperial discourse. The hieroglyphic Satrap Stele of Ptolemy I describes how Ptolemy returned the images of the gods from Asia to Egypt and describes the war Ptolemy waged in "the land of the Syrians".[598] Closer parallels to the claims in the Adulis inscription can be found in the hieroglyphic Pithom Stele erected by Ptolemy II.[599] It describes how the king goes to Persia and upon finding there the gods of Egypt, brings them back to Egypt. The inscription goes on to describe the happiness of the Egyptians and the gratitude of the gods who bestow eternal kingship on Ptolemy II. A fourth inscription that is relevant in this connection is the trilingual Canopus Decree, erected by Ptolemy III in 238 BC, 9 years after the Third Syrian War. This

[595] Arrian, *Anabasis* 7.22.1-5; Appian, *Syriaca* 56.
[596] Appian, *Syriaca* 56.
[597] See also Barbantani (2002/3), 42-43. In the Adulis inscription Ptolemy describes that he transported the Egyptian statues via 'the canals that had been dug'; for canals as a marker of imperial power see Chapter 1, 47-48.
[598] Brugsch (1871), 2-3. Cf. Sethe (1904), 11-22.
[599] Brugsch and Erman (1894), 74-88 and Sethe (1904), 81-105.

inscription on the organisation of the calendar and several cults opens with a description of Ptolemy's pious behaviour towards the Egyptian gods:

> καὶ τὰ ἐξενεγχθέντα ἐκ τῆς χώρας ἱερὰ ἀγάλματα ὑπὸ τῶν Περσῶν ἐξστρατεύσας ὁ βασιλεὺς ἀνέσωισεν εἰς Αἴγ[υπτο]ν καὶ ἀπέδωκεν εἰς τὰ ἱερά, ὅθεν ἕκαστον ἐξ ἀρχῆς ἐξήχθη.
> and the holy images, carried out from the country by the Persians, the king, on campaign, brought back to Egypt and gave them to the temples from where they were initially taken.
> Canopus Decree, 5/6 (Greek version, l. 10-11).[600]

We see here that other Ptolemaic inscriptions in Greek and Egyptian share the anti-Persian rhetoric that we find in the Adulis inscription. The Third Syrian War in particular presented an opportunity for turning this longstanding discourse directly against the Seleucids.In an article from 2002 Silvia Barbantani analyses the rivalry between the Ptolemies and the Seleucids over the legacy of Alexander and discusses Ptolemaic anti-Persian discourse as part of that legacy.[601] Barbantani shows that the *topos* of the Seleucids as latter-day Medes can be found in Ptolemaic Egyptian inscriptions, and that it was aimed specifically at the Ptolemies' Egyptian subjects.[602] However, I argue that similar anti-Seleucid motifs can in fact be found in Ptolemaic Greek inscriptions like the Adulis inscription. Furthermore, Barbantani suggests that "in the extant fragments of Hellenistic "court poetry" the rival dynasties are ignored".[603] So far, I have studied anti-Seleucid rhetoric in the Ptolemies' royal inscriptions, but the same phenomenon can also be observed in Greek literary texts. The *Lock of Berenice*, I contend, is a case in point.[604]

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[600] Text from *OGIS* 56, A. Translation from the Greek version, based on Sethe's edition from 1904, Sethe (1904), 125-154.

[601] Barbantani (2002/3), 41-42. See also Barbantani (2001), 165-168. Animosity against the Persians is a recurrent *topos* in Ptolemaic imperial discourse. It is used e.g. in the Diadoch or Satrap Stele of Ptolemy I Soter in 310 BC, Brugsch (1871), 1-13, in which Ptolemy is described as "the avenger of his father", and someone who "expelled the transgressor Xerxes from his palace." (Translation Selden (1998), 293). See also Theocritus, *Idyll* 17, and Callimachus fr. 384, 23-24 (Pfeiffer (1949-1953), *Victoria Sosibii*. Cf. Alexander's rhetoric of revenge for the Persian Wars on behalf of all the Greeks (esp. the burning of Persepolis) among others found in Diodorus Siculus, 16.89.2; Arrian, *Anabasis* 2.14.4, 3.18.12; Polybius, 3.16.13, 5.10; Strabo, 15.3.6; Plutarch, *Life of Alexander*, 37.7, 56.1. See Fredericksmeyer (2000), 148.

[602] On the dual position of the Ptolemaic kings, between their Greek and Egyptian subjects, see Selden (1998); Koenen (1993). On the one hand the king presented himself as the pharaoh of Egypt, who establishes cosmic order (*ma'at*), defeats Egypt's enemies and brings back its cult statues; on the other hand, Ptolemy assumes the role of champion of the Greeks and vanquisher of Persians, the age-old enemy of the Greeks.

[603] Barbantani (2002/3), 42.

[604] Theocritus, *Idyll* 17 is another example of Alexandrian poetry that echoes the cultural warfare of the Ptolemaic royal inscriptions. In this text, the poet praises Ptolemy II Philadelphus and models him on his

Imperial Asia Past and Present

We have seen that the Adulis inscription of Ptolemy III Euergetes is a prime example of Ptolemaic-Seleucid inter-state polemic, which derives much of its force from resonances with a much more widespread tradition of anti-Persian rhetoric in Ptolemaic royal (mainly hieroglyphic) inscriptions. I now show that a similar nexus of ideas and motifs was also used by court poets like Callimachus, though in a slightly more muted form. The *Lock of Berenice* is an excellent example of what that means in practice. We have already seen that the poem is linked to a specific historical moment, that is, Ptolemy III's return home after the successful invasion of the Seleucid Empire. Although Callimachus has not made this the focus of his poem, he sketches out some of the developments that lead to the vow of Berenice and the subsequent dedication and catasterism of the lock in the first half of the poem. Significantly, he does not mention any datable events and does not mention the Seleucid Empire. Instead, he builds a composite landscape of imperial Asia by using the succession of Asian empires – those of the Assyrians, Medes and Persians – to cast the Seleucids obliquely as the heirs of an ancient, and, the implication must be, outdated and essentially barbarian tradition of empire.

The first two references to barbarian world empires in the *Lock* frame Berenice's vow to dedicate the lock after the safe return of her husband and thus encapsulate the premise of the poem as a whole: the actual dedication and catasterism of the lock. The decisive lines 11-12 immediately follow on the astrological opening of the poem where the lock refers to Conon, the court astrologer who recognised it as a constellation after its disappearance from the temple where it was dedicated:[605]

idem me ille Conon caelesti in lumine vidit
  e Bereniceo vertice caesariem
fulgentem clare, quam multis illa dearum
  levia protendens brachia pollicita est, 10
qua rex tempestate novo auctus hymenaeo
  vastatum finis iuerat Assyrios
that same man, Conon, saw me in the heavenly light,
  the lock cut from Berenice's head,

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illustrious predecessors Ptolemy I Soter, Heracles and Alexander the Great. Alexander is introduced as 'the doom of the Persians', vv. 18-19, and in this capacity is presented as a model for the Ptolemaic kings.

[605] As discussed above on pp. 137-138, n. 547.

shining brightly, which she promised to many goddesses
  raising her delicate arms to them,
at the time when the king, blessed by his recent marriage
  went out to lay waste to the land of the Assyrians
Catullus 66, vv. 7-12[606]

Callimachus relates here how Berenice promised to dedicate the lock to 'many goddesses', or rather, 'all the gods', as the fragmentary Greek text has it,[607] when her husband left for Syria. As noted above, Callimachus describes these events in an oblique way, avoiding any reference to the hapless Berenice Phernophorus (Ptolemy's III sister), to Seleucus II, or any other event or protagonist in this war. As the contemporary characters and events are left deliberately vague, the king who goes to lay waste to the land of 'the Assyrians' becomes a timeless figure. At one level, Callimachus here evokes the tone of the hieroglyphic inscriptions which describe the Ptolemaic king going off to fight in Asia.[608] For example, the Satrap Stele reports of a time: "when he (Ptolemy I) went with his men to the Land of the Syrians, as they were at war with him";[609] whereas in the Pithom Stele, Ptolemy II is said to have gone 'to Persia'.[610] By describing the king/pharaoh laying waste 'to the Assyrian lands' Callimachus too evokes an imperial past to articulate the Ptolemaic present, though this time he also appeals to a more specifically Greek set of ideas.

For Greek readers, the Assyrian world empire was the first and in many ways defining kingdom in the so-called 'succession of empires' that we have already encountered in the first chapter.[611] Callimachus, it would seem, has that tradition in mind when he refers to the Seleucids as 'Assyrians'. The implication, I submit, must be that the Seleucids should be seen as one of these barbarian dynasties and their conqueror Ptolemy as a latter-day Alexander.

But did Callimachus in fact use the term Ἀσσύριος? I argue that the term *Assyrios* in vv. 11-12 (Catullus' *qua rex tempestate novo auctus hymenaeo, vastatum finis iuerat Assyrios*), is likely to be a direct translation from the Greek, not a Catullan innovation. This is supported

[606] Text and translation from Harder (2012), Vol. I, 295.
[607] The Greek version has πᾶσιν ... θεοῖς. For discussion see Zwierlein (1987), 275-279.
[608] True to his program not to write about wars and kings, Callimachus juxtaposes the king's warlike intentions with the domestic and refined theme of love: *qua rex tempestate novo auctus hymenaeo/vastatum finis iuerat Assyrios*.
[609] Satrap Stele, 5. Translation based on the German translation of the Egyptian hieroglyphs of Brugsch (1871), 3.
[610] Pithom Stele, E. Translation based on the German translation of the Egyptian hieroglyphs of Brugsch and Erman (1894), 79.
[611] Chapter 1, pp. 56-57.

by two arguments: first, by Pfeiffer's observation that proper names are rendered more faithfully than other words in Catullus' translation.[612] Secondly, an analysis of *Assyrios* shows that Catullus' use of the word in the *Lock* stands out from that of other Roman poets in the first century BC. To answer the question more precisely we must look not only at the use of the term Ἀσσύριος in Callimachus and Hellenistic literature as a whole, but also at the use of *Assyrius* in Catullus' Roman context. To start with the latter, the Latin term *Assyrius* and its derivatives seems to have a fairly distinct use in the first century BC. In almost all examples I have collected *Assyrius* is used either as an adjective and linked to a noun denoting incense, perfume or balm, or else denotes people or lands in the Far East, without any specific reference to the succession of Near Eastern empires or the Seleucids.[613] Catullus himself only uses 'Assyrian' once more in his work, at Catullus 68B, v. 144, where it refers to Assyrian scent, conforming to the usage of other first century writers.[614] Against this background, Catullus' use of *finis Assyrios* in poem 66, the translation of the *Lock*, stands out as unusual. This makes it more likely that he translated literally from the Greek Ἀσσύριος.

To substantiate my claim that Callimachus uses Ἀσσύριος in the *Lock* to connect the Seleucid Empire to the Greek scheme of a succession of empires, we need to establish that Callimachus does not simply refer to 'Eastern lands' in a generic sense.[615] The term is fairly rare in the Hellenistic period, both in poetry and prose texts.[616] Besides two occurrences in Callimachus, Ἀσσύριος can only be found in Apollonius and Phoenix, a lesser known Hellenistic poet. In Apollonius, Ἀσσύριος refers to the coastal region of the Black Sea better

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[612] Pfeiffer (1975), 135. Though note that Bing's counterexamples (Bing (1997), 84, esp. n. 26) exhort us to remain careful even in these cases.

[613] For the former usage, see: e.g. Tibullus, *Elegies* 1.3.7 and 3.2.24; Horace, *Carmina* 2.11.16; Ovid, *Amores* 2.5.40; Virgil, *Eclogues* 4.25; Virgil, *Georgics* 2.465. For the latter, see e.g. Horace, *Carmina* 3.4.32; Horace, *Ars Poetica* 118; Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 5.60 and 15.393.

[614] By comparison, Catullus uses the word Syrian (or derivatives) thrice in his corpus, of smell (Cat. 6, 8), a foreign people (45, 22), and the Roman province of Syria (84, 7). The one Roman writer in the first century BC who uses *Assyrius* to refer to the historical Assyrians is Cicero. In his *De Re Publica* 3.4.15 he mentions the Assyrians in a list of Eastern peoples. In the fragments of the *De Re Publica* Cicero also twice mentions Sardanapalus, king of the Assyrians (Cicero, *De Re Publica* 5.35, 3.36 frag.)

[615] The precise meaning of the word Ἀσσύριος fluctuated over time, but in the context of this chapter I will focus on the Hellenistic period. Nöldeke (1871) and, more recently, Rollinger (2006)a and (2006)b, have analysed the use of the words Assyrian and Syrian in Greek texts. They show that Assyria was by and large used of the Assyrian Empire as the Greeks conceived it, i.e. stretching from the Hellespont to the lands beyond the Tigris. By contrast, the term 'Syria', which originated as a shortened form of 'Assyria', was used predominantly of the lands between the Mediterranean and the Euphrates. However, 'Syria' was also used occasionally as shorthand for the Assyrian Empire as a whole, and in a few cases 'Assyria' was used to refer to the lands on the west bank of the Euphrates.

[616] In Hellenistic prose, Ἀσσύριος occurs only once in Polybius, when he describes Scipio's reflections on the burning of Carthage and the demise of empires (Polybius, 38.22.2).

known as Leukosyria.[617] In the only other attestation of Ἀσσύριος within the Callimachean corpus, *Hymn to Apollo* v. 108, Apollo alludes to the Euphrates with the words Ἀσσύριος ποταμός (Assyrian river). I shall return to this passage in a moment,[618] but for now I note that 'Assyrian river', i.e. the Euphrates, does not point us to 'Eastern lands' in general, but specifically to the heartlands of the Seleucid Empire.[619]

We can safely conclude, then, that Callimachus introduces Ptolemy's war with the Seleucids in language that recalls the succession of Asian empires. After reflecting on the power of love as a reason for Queen Berenice's distress at the departure of Ptolemy, and thus ultimately as the reason for her dedication of a tress of her hair, the lock resumes its account of Ptolemy's exploits:[620]

> *atque ibi me cunctis pro dulci coniuge divis*
> *non sine taurino sanguine pollicita es,*
> *si reditum tetulisset. is haut in tempore longo* 35
> *captam Asiam Aegypti finibus addiderat*
> Then you promised me to all the gods
> for your sweet husband not without blood of bulls,
> if he should return. In hardly any time at all he
> had taken Asia and added it to the Egyptian territory.
> Catullus 66, vv. 33-36[621]

If we are to trust Catullus, Callimachus now uses the broader term 'Asia' rather than Assyria. Asia in Hellenistic Greek can denote the geographical continent of Asia as opposed to Europe, but as we have seen already it also carries more political connotations by referring to the Seleucid 'continent' from Asia Minor to the borders of India. This is for instance reflected in the Seleucid title of 'Kings of Asia' which expresses the geo-political claim the Seleucids had to Asia.[622]

In claiming that Ptolemy conquered 'the whole of Asia', then, Callimachus effectively hails him as the conqueror of the entire Seleucid Empire. Having just evoked the tradition of

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[617] Nöldeke (1871), 463.
[618] See below, pp. 150-162.
[619] For the link between the Seleucids and the Euphrates see above pp. 150-151, and Chapter 2, p. 86.
[620] For ring composition in the *Aetia* see Harder (2012), Vol. I, 11-12.
[621] Text and translation based on Harder (2012), Vol. I, 296-297.
[622] For discussion of the title 'kings of Asia' for Seleucus and his successors, see Kosmin (2014)a, 124-125; and Strootman (2014)b, 46-47. For ancient sources see: Polybius, 5.67.10; Josephus, *Antiquitates Judaicae* 12.119, 13.119; Appian *Syriaca* 1.12.60; 1 Maccabees 8.6.

the Assyrian world empire, Callimachus now reverses one of its standard tropes, which is to add ever new countries to its (Asiatic) territory.[623] This witty reversal clearly owes something to the language of the Ptolemaic inscriptions which I discussed above. However, it can also be read as another reference to the succession of empires in the Near East: Ptolemy has defeated not just the successor of the Assyrian kings but has demolished the very idea of an Asiatic world empire by cutting it down to the size of a Ptolemaic province.

The third passage in the *Lock* that I wish to study here takes us to the last of the Near Eastern empires, and the struggle between the Persians and the Greeks. The passage is part of the lock's assurance that it was unwillingly cut off the head of Berenice. The lock laments the power of iron scissors, against which the lock stood no chance, and points out that even mountains have to succumb to iron, citing as an example the Persians cutting a canal through Mount Athos:

> […] καὶ διὰ μ̣έ[σσου 45
> Μηδείων ὀλοαὶ νῆες ἔβησαν Ἄθω.
> τί πλόκαμοι ῥέξωμεν, ὅτ' οὔρεα τοῖα σιδή[ρῳ
> εἴκουσιν;
> […] and the destructive
> ships of the Medes sailed straight through Mt. Athos.
> What can we, locks, do, when such mountains succumb to iron?
> Callimachus, *Aetia*, fr. 110, vv. 45-48.[624]

The story of the Persians cutting through the peninsula of Athos was well known in antiquity.[625] The feat was performed by Xerxes in preparation of his campaign to Greece in 480 BC, and, like his bridge across the Hellespont, became a byword for Persian *hybris*. By evoking the spectre of Xerxes and the invading Persians, Callimachus invites the reader once more to view the events of the Third Syrian War in light of an essentially barbarian tradition of empire. Allusions to the Seleucids have now become more muted, but there is still a sense that Ptolemy III's opponents stand for the outmoded brutality and megalomania of barbarian Eastern empires which Callimachus, and the Ptolemaic king, are cutting down to size: politically and geographically (adding Asia to Egypt) but also in poetic terms.

[623] Reflected for example in Herodotus, 3.7.1.
[624] Text and translation based on Harder (2012), Vol. I, 290.
[625] E.g. Herodotus, 7.22-24, 7.37 and 7.122; Thucydides, 4.109.2-3; Lucian, *Dialogues of the Dead,* 20.414; Strabo, 7.35; Juvenal, *Satires* 10, 174.

Meta-poetics and Inter-state Rivalry

In the prologue to the *Aetia,* Callimachus sets out his poetic program for the poem, and for his poetry as a whole. The *Lock*, as the last *aetion* of the *Aetia*, can be seen as the culmination of this program and of Callimachus' refusal to write about kings and heroes.[626] Ptolemy's victory in the Third Syrian War, a 'heroic' subject *par excellence*, is told from the perspective of a tiny lock of hair. Moreover, the focus is not on battles and heroic action, but on the intimate love between the king and queen. Harder rightly suggests that the *Lock of Berenice*, as the only story in the *Aetia* which is situated in contemporary Egypt, "can be read as a fitting climax to the long period of human history which began with Minos, pointing to the future beyond the *Aetia*."[627] Indeed, as the last *aition* of the *Aetia* the *Lock* takes us back to the opening of the poem. If we take seriously the connections between the prologue and the *Lock*, new readings open up in which Callimachus' awareness of, and interaction with, inter-state Hellenistic polemic become apparent at a deeper level. Cultural rivalry between the Ptolemies and the Seleucids again plays a crucial part, but in a less direct way than we have seen so far.

The *Aetia* prologue is clearly concerned with poetry and lacks the direct political background of the *Lock*. Yet, it too alludes to the Medes and the Persians in a way that targets the cultural self-portrayal and output of the Seleucids, and their precarious position in the succession of Asian empires. Here are the decisive lines:

> …..]ọν ἐπὶ Θρήϊκας ἀπ' Αἰγύπτοιο [πέτοιτο
> αἵματ]ι Π̣υ̣γμαίων ἡδ̣ο̣μ̣ένη [γ]έρα[νος,
> Μασσαγ̣έ̣ται καὶ μακρὸν ὀϊστεύοιεν ἐπ' ἄνδρα 15
> Μῆδον]· ἀ̣η[δονίδες] δ̣' ὧδε μελιχρ[ό]τεραι.

[626] Callimachus, *Aetia* fr. 1, v. 3-5. West (1985), 66.

[627] Harder (2012), Vol. I, 21. The literary structure of the *Aetia* is closely entwined with the form and contents of the *Lock*, and with the political court environment of the Ptolemies. As Harder has shown, the narrative time frame of the *Aetia*, from the aftermath of the Trojan War to contemporary Egypt, invites the reader to consider Ptolemaic Alexandria the apex of Greek history. (Harder (2012), Vol. II, 796.) Within this thematic and chronological range, the *Lock* is unusual in that it transforms a current event into an aetiological story for the future. It is exceptional, too, in that it is foreshadowed by the Victory of Berenice at the beginning of Aetia book 3. Harder's interpretation of the Lock draws much of its force from reading the two passages in tandem: as a companion piece of the *Victory*, the *Lock* stresses the 'soft' character traits of Berenice as loving wife, in contrast to her 'masculine' victory with the horses (Barbantani (2012), 40-41; Thomas (1983); Gelzer (1982), 16; Parsons (1977)). Berenice's masculine bravery is also alluded to in the *Lock*. For discussion of gender roles in the *Lock* see Gutzwiller (1992)a.

ἔλλετε Βασκανίης ὀλοὸν γένος· αὖθι δὲ τέχνῃ
  κρίνετε,] μὴ σχοίνῳ Περσίδι τὴν σοφίην·
μηδ᾽ ἀπ᾽ ἐμεῦ διφᾶτε μέγα ψοφέουσαν ἀοιδήν
  τίκτεσθαι· βροντᾶν οὐκ ἐμόν, ἀλλὰ Διός.᾽ 20

Let the crane, savouring the blood of Pygmies,
… fly away from Egypt to the Thracians,
and let the Massagetes shoot arrows far away at the
  Median man; poems are sweeter like this.
Be off, destructive race of Bascania, and hereafter
  judge poetry by its art, not by the Persian *schoinos*;
do not search for a loudly thundering song to be born
  from me: thundering is not mine, but of Zeus.
Callimachus, *Aetia*, fr. 1, vv. 13-20.[628]

Callimachus rejects the wrong kind of poetry in several over-determined metaphors, with different layers of meaning complementing and reinforcing each other.[629] Here I would like to focus on the fact that, within only ten lines, we have two references to Eastern empires: first, the Medes fighting the Massagetes, and secondly, the Persian *schoinos* as an unsuitable measurement for poetry. The precise meaning of these references has been much debated.[630] However, scholars have so far failed to ask how this cluster of references might make sense when read in the context of inter-state rivalry in the 3rd century BC. The passage begins with a priamel that illustrates the 'wrong' kind of poetry.[631] In lines 13-15 Callimachus alludes to the battle between the pygmies and the cranes, a well-known motif that first appears in the *Iliad*.[632] There follows the reference to the Massagetes and the Medes. In both cases Callimachus expands further on the notion of length, developed in the previous verses, as a sign of bad poetry. Yet he also provides us with a broader cultural-geographical framework. The cranes fly from Egypt to Thrace, thus leaving behind the elegance and sophistication of Alexandrian poetics and entering a barbarian region *par excellence*.[633] The Massagetes and

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628 Text and translation based on Harder (2012), Vol. I, 117-118.
629 Harder (2012), Vol. II, 44; Barigazzi (1956), 173-174; Acosta-Hughes and Stephens (2002), 242-244.
630 For an excellent discussion of the recent literature see Harder (2012), Vol. II, 44-55.
631 It is debated what type of poetry precisely Callimachus attacks here. The main question in recent scholarship has been whether Callimachus dismisses epic poetry in general or specific types of epic (Harder (2012), Vol. II, 44). For the former view see Wimmel (1960), 30ff.; Puelma (1954), 106; for the latter, see Barbantani (2002/3), Krevans (1993), Barigazzi (1956). It is of course quite possible that Callimachus did not *want* to specify precisely which type of poetry he attacked.
632 Homer, *Iliad* 3.1-7.
633 For the idea that all good things are drawn to – or can be found in – Ptolemaic Egypt, see e.g. Herodas, *Mimes* 1, 23-33, Theocritus, *Idyll* 17, 77-115 and Posidippus, *Lithika* (cf. Strootman (2014)c, 323-339. Petrovic

Medes are once more situated near the edges of the world, but this time in the east. The Median men fighting the Massagetes evoke the battles between Cyrus and Queen Tomyris of the Massagetes which Herodotus describes.[634] According to Harder, both passages imply that the wrong kind of poetry should be confined or banished to the ends of the earth.[635] I agree with Harder on the overall significance of these geographical allusions, but would like to take her interpretation one step further. Specifically, what we see here is yet another allusion to the cultural rivalry between the Hellenistic kingdoms. I argue that with this passage Callimachus did not only mean to suggest that large and out-dated poetry *should* be banished to the ends of the earth, but that this poetry, and a lack of cultural refinement more generally, *was* in fact associated with the Ptolemies' competitor dynasties, the Antigonids in the north and, more relevant here, the Seleucids in the east.

In this connection, Callimachus' reference to the Persian *schoinos* as a measurement of bad poetry takes on a new significance. Callimachus contrasts *techne* and the Persian *schoinos* as two ways to judge poetry and incites the Telchines to use *techne*. The *schoinos* was the Greek name for an originally Egyptian measurement. Herodotus describes it as the biggest measurement known.[636] As we have seen in the first chapter, it was used to measure countries and continents, especially in the East.[637] The *schoinos* thus carries clear implications of great length and has rightly been interpreted by scholars as part of Callimachus' poetic program of valuing quality over size.[638] However, Callimachus' use of the adjective 'Persian' qualifying the measurement often passes unremarked. In my view, this is a crucial qualification, for not only does it make it clear that this measure is not Egyptian (as it is in Herodotus) but it also connects Callimachus' own programme of poetic excellence with imperial Ptolemaic polemic against all things Persian – and beyond, to the theme of inter-state rivalry between the Ptolemies and Seleucids.

My meta-poetic reading of Callimachus in the context of Ptolemaic-Seleucid rivalry culminates in a well-known passage at the end of the *Hymn to Apollo*, a passage that contains the only other occurrence of Ἀσσύριος within Callimachus' works, besides the *Lock*. At the

(2014) analyses this last work, in terms of the riches of the world moving to Ptolemaic Alexandria, not only as an expression of the discourse of universal rule seen in all Hellenistic empires (cf. Strootman (2007), 23-24), but also as a late reflex of Achaemenid imperial propaganda.

[634] Herodotus, 2.214.

[635] Harder (2012), Vol. I, 45-47; see also Stephens (2002), 242.

[636] Herodotus, 2.6.

[637] See above Chapter 1, p. 70.

[638] Asper (1997), 148; Bing (1988), 46-47, see Goldhill (1987) for an interesting interpretation of the occurrence of *schoinos* both as a measurement in Callimachus and as a word for reed in Theocritus.

end of the hymn Apollo himself defends Callimachus against Phthonos (Envy), thus linking the poem to the programmatic statements in the prologue of the *Aetia*, in which he defends himself against his critics:

> ὁ Φθόνος Ἀπόλλωνος ἐπ' οὔατα λάθριος εἶπεν· 105
> 'οὐκ ἄγαμαι τὸν ἀοιδὸν ὃς οὐδ' ὅσα πόντος ἀείδει.'
> τὸν Φθόνον ὡπόλλων ποδί τ' ἤλασεν ὧδέ τ' ἔειπεν·
> 'Ἀσσυρίου ποταμοῖο μέγας ῥόος, ἀλλὰ τὰ πολλά
> λύματα γῆς καὶ πολλὸν ἐφ' ὕδατι συρφετὸν ἕλκει.
> Δηοῖ δ' οὐκ ἀπὸ παντὸς ὕδωρ φορέουσι μέλισσαι, 110
> ἀλλ' ἥτις καθαρή τε καὶ ἀχράαντος ἀνέρπει
> πίδακος ἐξ ἱερῆς ὀλίγη λιβὰς ἄκρον ἄωτον'
> Phthonos said furtively in the ears of Apollo:
> 'not do I admire the poet, who does not sing as much as the sea'
> Apollo trampled Phthonos with his foot and said like this:
> 'Great is the stream of the Assyrian river, but much
> clumps of earth and much refuse it carries with the waters.
> Not do Demeter's bees carry water from everywhere,
> but this pure and undefiled little stream trickles
> from a holy spring, choicest of all.'
> Callimachus, *Hymn to Apollo* vv. 105-112[639]

At the very end of the *Hymn to Apollo* – the passage is only followed by a one-line address to the god – Phthonos remarks that he only appreciates poetry that is as big as the sea. Apollo retorts that the Assyrian river is big but filthy, and contrasts this with water from a small pure fountain.[640] As in the *Aetia* prologue and the *Lock*, Callimachus wraps his poetological statement into a reference to Eastern imperial tradition. As attested by an extant scholion to this verse, the Assyrian river has since antiquity been interpreted as the Euphrates. Indeed, this scholion describes the Euphrates as a specifically Persian landmark.[641] We have seen throughout this thesis that the Euphrates represented a crucial geographical marker of the

[639] Text from Williams' edition (1978).

[640] For discussion of the elaborate water metaphor, see Asper (1997); Williams (1978); Huxley (1971); Wimmel (1960); Cahen (1930), 84-88.

[641] Scholion to v. 108: Ἀσσυρίου ποταμοῖο: τὸν τῶν Περσῶν λέγει τὸν καλούμενον Εὐφράτην. For a different interpretation of the Assyrian river see Huxley (1971), who argues that Callimachus takes up a specific passage of Apollonius Rhodius (2.946), about a large river in the Black Sea region. Although the idea seems attractive (Apollonius calls the region 'Assyria'), the scholion indicates that ancient readers did read the passage as referring to the Euphrates.

Seleucid Empire.[642] By the middle of the third century BC it had become, through a series of stories and images, a powerful symbol of Seleucid kingship. To see it used here so prominently must invite the reader to connect Apollo's scorn for large, bombastic and 'impure' literature with the cultural output of the Seleucid Empire. Apollo's answer to Phthonos thus echoes the concerns that Callimachus voiced in the prologue of the *Aetia* – and of which the *Lock* is the most telling example: Seleucid Asia, represented by its barbarian forerunners, is too large, and too bombastic for comfort. It is also, essentially, a thing of the past.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have looked at a moment of profound crisis in Seleucid history: the dynastic strife between the two wives of Antiochus II that resulted in the Third Syrian War. We do not have much Seleucid literature that is directly connected to this moment of crisis, but there are plenty of Ptolemaic texts that mirror Seleucid concerns. I hope to have shown that Callimachus' *Lock of Berenice* is one of the richest and most complex of this group of texts. This poem, I have argued, can be read as a cultural, political and poetic commentary on a key moment of crisis for the Seleucid Empire.

As shown in this chapter, narratives of royal love are particularly important in this regard, and impossible to dissociate from their political implications. The historical evidence is quite clear: the Third Syrian War was ultimately caused by the failed marriage of Antiochus II and the Egyptian princess Berenice, which was undermined by the fact that Antiochus II already had several children with his first wife Laodice. Indeed, although Laodice was originally repudiated in favour of Berenice, our sources indicate that by the time of his death Antiochus was living with Laodice once again. Callimachus subtly exploits this failure of Seleucid dynastic marriage by celebrating the successful Ptolemaic royal couple, and placing the marriage of Berenice II and Ptolemy III in an unbroken tradition that reaches back via Arsinoe II and Ptolemy II to Berenice I and Ptolemy I. Callimachus hit where it hurt: we have seen that royal romance was an important trope also in Seleucid propaganda; the Seleucids did not abandon Hellenistic ideals of the royal couple but fought to accommodate those ideals within their own distinct political and cultural reality.

In the second section of this chapter, I have shown how Callimachus exploits Ptolemaic

[642] Chapter 1, p. 77; Chapter 2, p. 86; Chapter 3, pp. 140-141 and 150-151.

royal propaganda to cast the Seleucids as the heirs of the Persians and other Eastern empires, rather than an essentially Greek peer kingdom. The Seleucids had made a compelling case for being the true heirs of Alexander: they ruled the majority of his empire and controlled Alexander's old capital Babylon. At the same time, the Ptolemies had also consistently asserted their own primacy as successors of Alexander and true heirs of Greek culture, particularly through their literary endeavours. As conflict between the two rival states escalated, an increasingly effective means of establishing Ptolemaic pre-eminence was to merge the Seleucid Empire into the history and culture of barbarian Asia. Callimachus adopts this approach in the *Lock*, using the well-known Greek historiographical framework of the succession of empires to cast the Seleucid Empire as outdated and fundamentally un-Greek, in contrast with the Ptolemies as the true 'modern' representatives of Greek history and culture.

The poetic implications of this manoeuvre are on display in the *Lock*, in a manner that advertises Callimachus' broader poetic concerns. In the final part of the chapter, I drew out the broader poetic implications of anti-Seleucid polemic by looking at the *Aetia* prologue and Apollo's concluding speech in the *Hymn to Apollo*. I argued that these passages combine meta-poetic reflection with veiled attacks on a tradition of empire which, in the *Lock*, is directly associated with the Ptolemies' Seleucid rivals. Whether or not Callimachus had 'real' Seleucid literature and culture in mind when he rejected the Assyrian river and the Persian *schoinos* is a moot point. What we do see is that in a series of central texts, from the programmatic statements of the *Aetia* prologue and the *Hymn to Apollo* to the climactic realisation of his poetic program in the *Lock of Berenice*, Callimachus engages with the menacing presence of Seleucid Asia. Regardless of whether Callimachus responded to actual examples of Seleucid literature and culture or evoked an image of Asiatic bombast entirely unencumbered by Seleucid realities, he certainly made use of Ptolemaic imperial discourse, shaped and sharpened by a key moment of Seleucid crisis.

Chapter 4: Poets and Politics at the Court of Antiochus III

Introduction

When Antiochus III ascended the throne after three decades of unrelenting crisis the position of the Seleucids was precarious.[643] It was time for a decisive royal response, a display of strong Seleucid kingship. Antiochus III responded to this challenge by dedicating his reign to reappropriating lost regions, restoring Seleucid power and, finally, by expanding the empire; he did so with such success that he was to become known as Antiochus the Great.

The political history of Antiochus' reign has received much attention in previous scholarship.[644] Scholars have in particular focussed on the successful Eastern campaigns and on Antiochus' wars with Rome.[645] Indeed, his reign is generally considered to be one of the most successful of all Seleucid kings after Seleucus I.[646] His military and political strategy aimed to reaffirm Seleucid authority in the peripheral regions of the empire; and ultimately to expand Seleucid influence to the western regions that had nominally been part of the empire after Seleucus I defeated Lysimachus, but were never truly controlled by the Seleucids: Thrace and Macedon.

This chapter explores literary developments during the reign of Antiochus III and their interplay with the political actions of the king. As we saw in the previous chapter, Ptolemaic imperial discourse and Alexandrian poetics acted in concord against the Seleucids, for

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[643] After the crisis of the mid-third century, Seleucus II Callinicus (reigned 246-225 BC) spent most of his reign attempting to restore the ancestral borders of the empire (cf. Appian, *Syriaca* 11.66; Justinus, *Epitome of Pompeius Trogus* 27.1-3; Josephus, *Contra Apionem* 1.206-207; see also: Bevan (1902), Vol. I, 181-204). In this he was ultimately unsuccessful. Seleucus II reclaimed Babylonia and Syria from the Ptolemies in 246 BC, but failed in his attempt to conquer Egypt. Indeed, another dynastic crisis, culminating in the so-called War of the Brothers, broke out in 240 BC when Antiochus Hierax revolted against Seleucus II Callinicus and set up an independent kingdom in Asia Minor (cf. Sherwin-White and Kuhrt (1993), 86-87, 107-108; Will (1966), Vol. I, 265-270; Bevan (1902), Vol. I, 192-203). He defeated Seleucus in battle, but was eventually evicted from Asia Minor by the rising power of the Attalids. Around 230 BC Diodotus, satrap of Bactria, declared independence from the Seleucid Empire. For Bactrian independence see: Justinus, *Epitome of Pompeius Trogus* 41.4, cf. Lerner (1999), esp. 33-45; Holt (1999); Sherwin-White and Kuhrt (1993), 103-113; Tarn (1938).

[644] Some key publications on Antiochus the Great: Taylor (2013); Grainger (2002); Ma (1999); Sherwin-White and Kuhrt (1993), 188-215; Will (1967), Vol. II, 10-200; Schmitt (1964); Badian (1959), 81-99; Cary (1951), 189-212; Bickerman (1938), Ch. 7; Bevan (1902), vol. I, 300-319.

[645] In older scholarship, his successful *anabasis* has been described either as a high point in Seleucid history or as a short respite in a story of inevitable decline. Similarly, the Roman-Seleucid wars are often described as heralding the end of Seleucid sovereignity. These retrospective assessments of Antiochus' reign have recently been nuanced by acknowledging that at this point in history the Seleucids' decline was in no sense inescapable.

[646] Sherwin-White and Kuhrt (1993), 188-215.

example in Callimachus' *Lock of Berenice*. I argue that Antiochus the Great attempted, in part successfully, to turn the tables on his rivals, appropriating some of their cultural and literary practices to give the Seleucid Empire an intellectual edge which it had not had since the days of the Third Syrian War. Like his wars of re-conquest and expansion, Antiochus' literary policies can be summarised under the heading of revival and reappropriation. To demonstrate this, I focus on three themes in particular: the Galatians and the reacquisition of Asia Minor; the appropriation of Alexandrian aesthetics; and finally the westward expansion into Europe.

Inter-state Rivalry: Beating the Ptolemies at their own Game

In previous chapters, I have argued for a contextual approach to the fragments that remain of Seleucid literature. I have shown that the Ptolemies were aware of the Seleucids and interacted with them in literary terms that reflected and shaped contemporary political discourses. I have discussed how Seleucid writers constructed the borders of the Seleucid Empire (Chapter 1) and established Babylon as an indigenous centre for the Seleucids (Chapter 2). Building on this and on my discussion of the Ptolemaic response (Chapter 3), I will now place Seleucid literary activity under Antiochus III in the wider context of political and cultural rivalry in the Hellenistic world. Specifically, I look at the court of Antiochus III and its response to Ptolemaic and Attalid attempts at appropriating the Greek cultural heritage, and explore the impact this had on the development of Seleucid literature.

In the previous chapter we saw how the successor dynasties tried to proclaim themselves heirs of Alexander and undermine each other's legitimacy. Arguably, however, a larger issue was at stake for the Hellenistic kings: the legacy of Greek culture *tout court*. The Seleucids and the Ptolemies were dynasties in diaspora which looked to relate themselves to Greece and to Greek culture.[647] Kathryn Stevens' observation that the "Hellenistic kings competed not only on the battlefield but in the cultural sphere, vying to display their command and cultivation of Greek *paideia*,"[648] is relevant here. Although a shared discourse of Panhellenism and *paideia* underpinned the rivalry between all players,[649] different dynasties

[647] For the term diaspora applied to the Hellenistic Kingdoms, see Kosmin (2014)a, 93-119.
[648] Stevens (2013), 15.
[649] Hall (2002) notes a changing perception of Greekness in the late 4th century BC. This change focussed on culture and education (*paideia*) as markers of Hellenicity and resulted in the emergence of Athens as the centre of Greek culture (cf. Isocrates, *Panegyricus* 50). The work of Isocrates highlights the transition from shared ethnicity to a common education as central criteria for a Hellenic identity. The primary role of Athens is made

were perceived to be leading in different fields. This difference in 'strong suits' resulted in a diverse cultural landscape in which dynasties imitated and emulated each other in a variety of ways.

After the successor wars of the late 4th century, the Hellenistic peer kingdoms were locked into a permanent state of military and cultural rivalry. Although the board had been set in general terms with the foundation of the Seleucid, Ptolemaic, and Antigonid kingdom, the balance of power in the Hellenistic world was constantly renegotiated, both in political and literary-cultural terms. Importantly, this game of ideology and appropriation was not only conducted by the major successor kingdoms; minor dynasts such as Alexander of Epirus, the Attalids in Pergamum and other, even more local players such as the Greek leagues followed suit.[650]

The reign of Antiochus III represented a high point in the Seleucids' patronage of poets, writers and intellectuals, reflecting a conscious policy of literary engagement.[651] During his reign, it became increasingly clear that the Seleucid court had its own overarching literary agenda, closely intertwined with its political aspirations. This attests not only to the general importance of literature on the political stage, but also suggests that Antiochus was challenging the cultural supremacy of the Ptolemies and the growing importance of the Attalids and later on, Rome. To bring out this important feature of Antiochus III's reign, I focus on three authors in particular. First I discuss Simonides of Magnesia, who provides a Seleucid entry point into a pan-Hellenic concern: the fight against the 'barbaric' Galatians. Evidence of Seleucid literary engagement with this subject matter becomes all the more relevant in light of Attalid attempts to use the Galatian 'threat' to exert control over Asia Minor. I then go on to discuss a major representative of Seleucid literature in this period: Euphorion of Chalcis, commonly regarded as one of the main literary heirs of Callimachus. Euphorion brought cutting edge Alexandrian poetry and poetics to the Seleucid court and in part 2 of this chapter I argue that his integration into a distinctly Seleucid intellectual sphere testifies to Seleucids attempts to compete with Ptolemaic literary culture on its own terms, while also contributing crucially to its development. I focus specifically on how the Alexandrian qualities of Euphorion's work were developed further in a Seleucid context.

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clear both in the claim that she brought about the change in the perception of the name of Hellenes and that she was the self-appointed arbiter of Hellenic cultural authenticity.

650 For a broad overview on Hellenistic politics and culture, see: Erskine and Llewellyn-Jones (eds.) (2011); Bugh (ed.) (2006); Chaniotis (2005); Erskine (ed.) (2003); Prost (ed.) (2003); Walbank (1992); Green (1990); Gehrke (1990); Préaux (1978).

651 For an in depth discussion of Seleucid court culture, see Introduction, pp. 22-25.

The third and final part of this chapter focusses on Seleucid interaction with a new player on the Hellenistic stage: Rome. Here, I consider Hegesianax of Alexandria Troas, who was involved in scripting Antiochus' foreign policies, both as a Seleucid official and as an author in his own right. Hegesianax was sent out as ambassador to Rome on several occasions during the Roman-Seleucid War. As an author he wrote a local history of Troy, the *Troica*. His depiction of Rome in this work sheds important light on the interplay between poetry and politics at Antiochus' court. Hegesianax' depiction of the foundation of Rome, in particular, coming at a moment when Roman authors themselves were first beginning to show an interest in this subject, demonstrates how politically charged his work was.

Literary narratives and propaganda seem to have been a particularly potent source of political communication during the Roman-Seleucid War. Indeed, to legitimise interference with the Greek homeland, the actions of key players had to be carefully scripted. I will end the chapter by exploring this in more depth, showing how Antiochus the Great himself engaged with key literary themes, especially through his actions on Euboea and at Thermopylae. Antiochus was not only well aware of the importance of literature as a means of disseminating royal propaganda, he also appears to have staged himself as a Hellenistic author-actor.

Simonides: the Galatian Threat and the Struggle for Asia Minor

The first theme I will consider in this chapter concerns the Hellenistic preoccupation with the Galatian threat and its importance for the right to claim authority over Asia Minor. In the early Hellenistic period the Galatians acquired the role of the archetypical barbarian in the Greek imagination.[652] Defeating them became the ultimate act of kingship, casting the monarch as protector of the Greek polis and restorer of order. Because of the ideological weight attached to them, battles against the Galatians became a focal point for cultural rivalry between the different Hellenistic powers. To aspiring monarchs, victories over the Galatians provided the opportunity to justify their accession to the throne. For example, Ptolemy Ceraunus died in a battle against the Galatians in his attempt to defend his newly acquired Macedonian crown, while Antigonus Gonatas proclaimed himself king of Macedon after his

[652] They inherited this role from the Persians in the Classical period, see Nelson (forthcoming), 1-3; Gruen (2000).

defeat of the Galatians just a few years later.[653] Attalus I in Pergamum also assumed the title of king after his victory over the Galatians.[654] Monarchs who were already established in power, like Antiochus I in Asia Minor, found in victory over the Galatians a way of solidifying the position that they had inherited from their predecessors.[655] Already in the first half of the third century, the Galatians had become king-makers *par excellence*.

The Hellenistic discourse of the Galatian threat was also framed in aesthetic terms: defeating the Galatians was not only a military and political achievement but also became a literary and artistic trope,[656] which was shared across the Hellenistic world, including the Ptolemaic and Seleucid empires, the Greek leagues, the Attalid kingdom and other more local powers. Political reality was reflected in literature and art, which in turn drove political reality.[657]

This section looks at two ways in which the Galatian theme played out across Hellenistic literature and culture. First, I study how representations in literature and art were used to disseminate the royal ideology of victory over the Galatians. Literature here appears as a political tool, wielded by the kings to trump other dynasties and gain renown throughout the Greek world. Secondly, I consider some of the ways in which the Galatian theme became an arena for poetic rivalry and metapoetic statements. I follow these two threads in relation to two defining events: the Galatian attack on Delphi in the 270s, which resonated throughout the Greek world and established the Galatians in the Hellenistic imagination; and the struggle for control in Asia Minor between the Seleucids and the Attalids in the late third and early second centuries BC.

The Galatian Attack on Delphi

The 270's saw three encounters between Galatians and Greek armies that resonated through the Hellenistic world. The first was the Galatian invasion of mainland Greece. The second was Antiochus Soter's 'elephant battle' against invading Galatians which secured Seleucid control over Asia Minor. The third encounter was more of a literary event than a serious military struggle (as we shall see): it saw Ptolemy II quench an uprising among his Galatian mercenaries.

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[653] On Ptolemy Ceraunus: Champion (2014), 169-170; Hölbl (2001), 24, 34-35. Antigonus Gonatas: Gabbert (1997); Chambers (1954), 385-394; Tarn (1913), 160-166.
[654] Barbantani (2011), 194; For Attalus I see also below, pp. 174-175.
[655] Barbantani (2011), 194-195; Gruen (2000), 17, 20.
[656] Barbantani (2014); Nelson (forthcoming).
[657] Gruen (2000), 19.

In 279 BC, a large band of Galatians invaded Greece and launched an attack on Delphi.[658] This attack on the main religious centre of Greece and the heart of Hellenic culture had a profound impact on the Greek imagination, and has rightly been compared to the burning and looting of the Athenian Acropolis by the Persians in 480 BC.[659] Henceforth, the Galatians appeared as the archetypical barbarian in Greek literature and iconography, and defeating them became an act of royal protection against the forces of chaos: even Apollo himself was said to have joined the effort to repel the invaders from his sanctuary.[660] At a more practical level, the defenders of Delphi, led by the Aetolian league, acquired much prestige in the Hellenistic period.[661] Communities throughout the Greek world erected monuments to commemorate the victors over the Galatians.[662]

Understandably, the major Hellenistic powers were eager to win their share of the glory that had accrued to these victors. In 277 BC, Antigonus Gonatas defeated a Galatian army near Lysimacheia in Thrace and used the occasion to assume the titles Soter and king of Macedon. Some Galatian tribes, meanwhile, had split off from the main army that invaded mainland Greece and crossed into Asia Minor.[663] They were met by Antiochus I in the only known Seleucid victory over the Galatians, the so-called 'battle of the elephants'.[664] It was

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[658] Mitchell (2003), 280-293; Strobel (1996); Mitchell (1995), Vol. I. 13-15.

[659] For an account of the attack, see: Pausanias 10.19.5-10.23.24. Pausanias compares the battle against the Galatians directly with the Persian Wars in 7.15.3, 10.7.1 and 10.19.11-10.20.3 (cf. Polybius, 2.35.9), see Ameling (1996), 145-158; Habicht (1985), 95-114, esp. 149, cf. Alcock (1996), 256-258; Bearzot (1989), 71-86; Nachtergael (1977), 21-2, 147-150. Pausanias account is possibly based on Hieronymus of Cardia (for discussion, see: Hornblower (1981), 73-74; Walbank (1957-1979), Vol. I, 212-213, and Frazer (1898), Vol. V, 341-342. On Hieronymus of Cardia more generally, see: Roisman (2010), 135-148; Hornblower (1981).

[660] For discussion of the epiphany and its significance see Platt (2011), 154-157; Chaniotis (2005), 157-160; Champion (1995), 214-217 (with focus on the Aetolian propaganda); Bearzot (1989), 71-86; Tarn (1913), 439-442. These supernatural events at Delphi (Pausanias, 10.23.1-9; Justinus, *Epitome of Pompeius Trogus* 24.8.3-7) recalled Apollo's legendary defence of his shrine against Xerxes (Herodotus, 8.35-9) and so reinforced to equation between the Persians and the Galatians.

[661] Two Athenian paeans to Apollo were inscribed at Delphi for the *Pythais* festival celebrating the defeat of Brennus' invasion, see Furley and Bremer (2001), vol. I, 132. For the Battle of Thermopylae and the attack on Delphi (Nachtergael (1977), 175-209) see Pausanias, 10.23.1-3; Justinus, *Epitome of Pompeius Trogus* 24.4-8. For the Aetolian league: Scholten (2013), 96-110; Grabowski (2012), 83-97; Scholten (2000); Grainger (1999); Antonetti (1990); Larsen (1975), 159-172; Badian (1958), 197-211; Flacelière (1937).

[662] Cos was the first Greek community to commemorate the vicotry with a decree celebrating the Delphic and Aetolian success over the invaders (*SIG*[3] 398), published by Bagnall and Derow (2004), no. 17 and dicussed by Bing (1986), 121-124; Mineur (1979), 124-127; Tarn (1913), 439-442. Other inscriptions that highlight the battle at Delphi were decrees passed by Athens and Chios (*Syll*[2] 205 (*IG* ii 323) and *Syll*[2] 206) to celebrate the Soteria festival at Delphi organised by the Aetolians.

[663] The tribes of the Tolistobogii (or Tolistoagii), Trocmi and Tectosages. See, Justinus, *Epitome of Pompeius Trogus* 25.2.7. Mitchell (2003), 283.

[664] This term is derived from Lucian's description of the battle. Lucian, *Zeuxis* 8-12; see: Bieńkowski (1928), 141-150.

this battle, perhaps fought around 275 BC,[665] that won Antiochus his title of Soter, bestowed on him by some Ionian cities.[666] There were immediate benefits for Antiochus' claims on Asia Minor, and, although we have few contemporary sources, the 'battle of the elephants' clearly resonated widely through the Hellenistic world.[667]

Around the same time, between 277-275 BC, Ptolemy II had to quell an uprising of Celtic mercenaries in his army.[668] According to Pausanias, Ptolemy dealt with the uprising by marooning all Galatian rebels on an island and starving them to death.[669] Although it was a rather unremarkable episode from a military point of view, Ptolemy seems to have encouraged an interpretation that connects it to the battles of the other Hellenistic powers.[670]

This becomes apparent in Callimachus' *Hymn to Delos*, which celebrates Ptolemy's defeat of the Galatians and illustrates the symbolic importance of battling them in the exercise of kingship.[671] In the poem, Delos is honoured as the birthplace of Apollo and Artemis. It features Apollo predicting Ptolemy's birth on Cos and his victories in a remarkable pre-natal prophecy from the womb:[672]

καί νύ ποτε ξυνός τις ἐλεύσεται ἄμμιν ἄεθλος
ὕστερον, ὁππόταν οἱ μὲν ἐφ᾽ Ἑλλήνεσσι μάχαιραν
βαρβαρικὴν καὶ Κελτὸν ἀναστήσαντες Ἄρηα
ὀψίγονοι Τιτῆνες ἀφ᾽ ἑσπέρου ἐσχατόωντος
ῥώσωνται νιφάδεσσιν ἐοικότες ἢ ἰσάριθμοι   175
τείρεσιν, ἡνίκα πλεῖστα κατ᾽ ἠέρα βουκολέονται.
παιδ [   ]..   σα[ ].[ ]   177a
Δ̣ω̣ρ̣ι . . [.] . [   ].   ο̣σ̣α̣[ ] ς   177b

665 Bar-Kochva (1976), 78; Bar-Kochva (1973), 1-8. In support of the later date in 269/8 BC, see: Barbantani (2001), 208-14; Strobel (1996), 257-261; Wörrle (1975), 59-87.

666 Appian, *Syriaca*, 65: "Antiochus, to whom was given the surname of Soter, for driving out the Gauls who had made an incursion into Asia from Europe". For the ideological weight of this battle see also Lucian, *Pro lapsu inter salutandum* 9. Bevan (1902), 135-144.

667 The only sources are Simonides (see further below on him) and Lucian, *Zeuxis*. Inscriptions by the cities of Asia Minor first appear during the 260s.

668 Hölbl (2001), 53-54; Huss (2001), 392-396; Hölbl (1994).

669 Pausanias, 1.7.2; scholion to Callimachus, *Hymn to Delos*, v.175-187. Cf. Grainger (2002), 7; Bevan (1927), 63.

670 According to Bevan there must have been real terror in Alexandria, so that it seemed like a great victory when the Galatian mercenary uprising was quelled. However, it seems more likely that the ideological weight of Galatian victories inspired Callimachus to portray a relatively minor squabble with Galatian mercenaries as a major event in the *Hymn to Delos*.

671 Stephens (2015), 157-232; Barbantani (2014); Giuseppetti (2012), 469-494; Barbantani (2011); Barbantani (2002/3); Strobel (1994), 78-79.

672 On the content of the prophecy and the fact that it is prenatal, see: Stephens (2005), 234-236; Stephens (2003), 117-121; Mineur (1984).

καὶ πεδία Κρισσαῖα καὶ ἠπείροι [ο φάραγγες]
ἀμφιπεριστείνωνται, ἴδωσι δὲ πίονα καπνόν
γείτονος αἰθομένοιο, καὶ οὐκέτι μοῦνον ἀκουῇ, 180
ἀλλ᾽ ἤδη παρὰ νηὸν ἀπαυγάζοιντο φάλαγγας
δυσμενέων, ἤδη δὲ παρὰ τριπόδεσσιν ἐμεῖο
φάσγανα καὶ ζωστῆρας ἀναιδέας ἐχθομένας τε
ἀσπίδας, αἳ Γαλάτῃσι κακὴν ὁδὸν ἄφρονι φύλῳ
στήσονται· τέων αἱ μὲν ἐμοὶ γέρας, αἱ δ᾽ ἐπὶ Νείλῳ 185
ἐν πυρὶ τοὺς φορέοντας ἀποπνεύσαντας ἰδοῦσαι
κείσονται βασιλῆος ἀέθλια πολλὰ καμόντος.
ἐσσόμενε Πτολεμαῖε, τά τοι μαντήια φαίνω.
And one day a common struggle will come to us
later, when against the Hellenes barbarian
sword and Celtic war are raised up
by latter day Titans from the furthest West
who rush on like snowflakes and equal in number
to the stars when they flock most thickly in the sky.
[…]
and Crisaean plains and [the ravines] of the mainland,
be thronged about and around, and they behold the rich smoke
of their burning neighbour, and no longer by hearsay only;
but already beside the temple behold the ranks
of the enemies, and already beside my tripods
the swords and cruel belts and hateful shields,
which shall cause an evil journey to the foolish tribe
of the Galatians. Of these shields some shall be my prize; others,
by the banks of Nile, when they have seen the wearers perish in fire,
shall be set to be the prizes of a king who laboured much.
O future Ptolemy, these prophecies I proclaim for you."
Callimachus, *Hymn to Delos*, vv. 171-189[673]

Callimachus makes the most of what we have already seen was no more than a minor skirmish in purely military terms.[674] The opening line of Apollo's prophecy refers to the defence of Delphi on the part of the Greek cities, led by the Aetolian league, but also to the

[673] Text based on Stephens (2015), 163-172.
[674] Hutchinson (1988), 39 n.24. For a connection with Aetolian propaganda also in Callimachus fr.379 (1949-1953), see: Weber (1993), 309-310; Petzl (1984), 141-144; Nachtergael (1977), 184-191. For the connection between the Ptolemaic kings as 'Saviours' and the Delphic festival of the Soteria, see Fantuzzi and Hunter (2004), 356-7; Nachtergael (1977), 184-191.

myth that Apollo defeated the Galatians himself by sending a snowstorm.[675] Callimachus further strengthens the connection with the defence of Delphi by comparing the trophies of Apollo in Delphi with the shields which Ptolemy set up at the bank of the Nile.[676] Casting the Galatians as 'latter-day Titans rising up against the Hellenes' he writes the Ptolemies into the discourse of the pan-Hellenic struggle against the Galatian threat.

The importance of the Galatians at a political level thus finds a counterpart in literature. Indeed, Callimachus' Galatians acquire a strong metapoetic significance. As has often been pointed out, the *Hymn to Delos* as a whole develops a poetic programme:[677] it celebrates Delos as a small and agile island which is superior to the large, rocky islands created by Poseidon and the Telchines.[678] Callimachus praises Delos as small but precious and in so doing connects the hymn with his poetic ideal of *leptotes*. More specifically, mention of the Telchines evokes the programmatic prologue of the *Aetia*, where Callimachus declares that he will not sing of kings and heroes.[679] When the *Hymn to Delos* describes the conflict between Ares and Apollo, this too can be read as a version of that declaration: Callimachus values the lighter poetry of Apollo over the epic war poems of Ares.[680] The Galatians belong to the sphere of Ares, not only through their warlike nature, but more directly in the phrase Κελτὸν ἀναστήσαντες Ἄρηα. By celebrating Ptolemy's defeat of them, Callimachus validates his own poetic programme of the small-scale and refined, following a pattern similar to that found in the *Lock of Berenice*.[681]

Hence, although politically the Ptolemies were less involved with the Galatians and had a harder time presenting themselves as defending the Greek cities from the Galatian threat than did other Hellenistic powers, authors like Callimachus could still claim this Pan-Hellenic cause for their patrons, and in so doing reaffirm a specifically Ptolemaic cultural and poetic programme. Here we see the power of the Galatian topos in literature: defeating the Galatians became a symbol of restoring order in poetic terms. At the same time, the threat they posed

[675] Witt (2009), 290, see Pausanias, 10.22.12- 10.23.5.

[676] At the level of language, the marked contrast between the Hellenes and the barbarians in the poem evokes the rhetoric of the Persian Wars. This rhetoric was also employed by the Aetolian-led defence of Delphi, by the Attalid dedication of the Athenian stoa and in the Ptolemaic papyrus fragment *SH* 958. Nelson (forthcoming); Barbantani (2002/3), 36-9; Barbantani (2001).

[677] Sling (2004), 279-298; Bing (1988) 93-143; Mineur (1984).

[678] Sling (2004), 283-287; Bing (1988), 119-120.

[679] Callimachus, *Aetia*, frag. 1, 1-6, cf. Harder (2012) for commentary and bibliography.

[680] Bing (1988), 119-123.

[681] In Chapter 3, pp. 146-162, we saw that the same contrast is drawn in the *Lock of Berenice* where Callimachus focalises one of the most successful Ptolemaic wars through the voice of a lock of hair.

was also real, as we see when returning to the Seleucids and their struggle to retain control in Asia Minor against their Attalid rivals.

The Galatians in Asia Minor

We have seen that Antiochus I used his victory over the Galatians in the 270s to strengthen the Seleucid position in Asia Minor. In a similar vein, the Attalids, the Seleucids' main rivals in the region, used victories over the Galatians to legitimise their own position in various ways. This can be seen most clearly in the case of Attalus I, who ruled from 241-197 BC and assumed the title of King and Soter after defeating the Galatian tribe of the Tolistoagii at the Caicus River.[682] The process was transparently designed to challenge Seleucid pre-eminence by appropriating the trappings of Seleucid power. Attalus' victory was engineered by a Babylonian diviner at the Attalid court named Sudines, a Greek rendering of the Babylonian name Šum(a)-iddin.[683] His role as 'Chaldaean' priest provided prestige and authority to the fledgling Attalid dynasty in clear imitation of the Seleucid court and their Babylonian experts.[684] The story of Sudines' intervention during a military crisis with the Galatians is known primarily from the later author Polyaenus.[685] According to him, Sudines performed sacrificial extispicy to determine the outcome of the battle between King Attalus[686] and the Galatians.[687] The king's soldiers, the story goes, were outnumbered and disheartened, and in order to encourage them, King Attalus, or possibly Sudines himself, manufactured a favourable omen by writing 'the king's victory' on the liver of a sacrificial animal. When

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[682] Witt (2009), 290; Mitchell (2003), 283-287. Attalus refused to pay the tribute that the Galatians exacted from rulers and cities in Asia Minor (Livy, 38.16). Cf. Allen (1983), 136-142.

[683] Sudines' presence at the Attalid court is attested by Polyaenus, *Strategemata* (4.20) and Frontinus, *Strategemata* (1.11.15), albeit not with the same king. Strabo, Pliny and Vettius Valens all confirm Sudines' reputation as a Babylonian astronomer. See also: Stevens (2013), 39-51; Rochberg (2010), 8-9; Neugebauer (1975), 263, 610-611. Beside an authority on astronomy, he is also cited as the author of a book on gem stones.

[684] See Chapter 2, esp. pp. 121-128.

[685] Polyaenus, *Strategemata* 4.20.1; cf. Frontinus, *Strategemata* 1.11.15, 2.13.1. For the battle: *OGIS* 269; *OGIS* 276; Polybius, 18.41.7; Livy, 33.21.3, 38.16.4; Pausanias, 1.4.5-6, 1.8.1.

[686] Mistakenly named Eumenes in Frontinus.

[687] Extispicy before a battle was common in both Greece and Mesopotamia (Beerden (2013), 90-92). For *manteis* employed by armies in Greece see *SEG* 16, 193; Xenophon, *Anabasis* 6.21.2–3; Herodotus, 8.27.3; for Greek experts working for the Persians see Herodotus, 9.37.1; 9.38.1; 9.41.4; 9.83.2.; Xenophon, *Anabasis* 1.7.18; 5.6.16-18; 5.6.28-34; 6.4.13. Cf. Pritchett (1979), Vol. III, 47-60 and 92-138; Lonis (1979), 43-67. In Mesopotamia, experts in extispicy were called *barû* and there is evidence that they were also employed in battles, for example *The legend of Naram-Sin*, vv. 72-87 (Standard Babylonian Recension). See also: Koch (2010), 48-50; Heeßel (2010), 163-168; Richardson (2010), 245-247; Westenholz (1997), 263-332, esp. 317-318). For the great prestige of extispicy priests, or *barû*, in Mesopotamia see: Beerden (2013), 68; Heeßel (2010), 163; Maul (2003-2005), 75-81; Lambert (1998), no. 148, l. 8 and no. 149, l. 14-16; Starr (1983), 5.

Sudines announced the favourable omen inscribed on the liver (in this case literally) to the army, the soldiers took heart and defeated the Galatians against the military odds. Sudines the Chaldaean was more than just a foreign expert at the Attalid court; his presence legitimised the process whereby Attalus became king in a distinctly Seleucid key. More generally, by defeating the Galatians and acquiring the title of Soter, Attalus followed in the footsteps of Antiochus I, thus claiming legitimacy as ruler of the historically Seleucid lands of Asia Minor.[688]

Further steps in this direction soon followed: after defeating Antiochus Hierax at the Battle of the Harpasus (229 BC) the Attalids ruled over large parts of Asia Minor.[689] By this time, battles with the Galatians were world-historical, king-making events. The monument that Attalus erected in Athens framed his victory by equating his battle with the Gauls with the Athenian victory over the Persians, the battle of the Athenians and Amazons, and the Gigantomachy.[690] In this visual display, Attalus cast the Galatians as barbarians *par excellence* and himself as the heir of Greek cultural tradition. In contrast to Callimachus' aesthetic programme of *leptotes* and refinement, the Attalid victory monuments in Athens and Pergamon are baroque in their grandeur.[691] Equally baroque, it would seem, were the Seleucids' attempts to bolster *their* claim on the disputed region. These attempts came to fruition under Antiochus III.

From the start of his reign, Antiochus III showed an interest in recovering and retaining Asia Minor. As we have seen, he first sent a general, Achaeus, to reclaim the region from the Attalids. When Achaeus rebelled and proclaimed himself king in Sardis, Antiochus himself crossed the Taurus in 216 BC to regain control.[692] In conjunction with his military concerns, Antiochus displayed a continued interest in the Greek cities in Asia Minor. To support his claim to Asia Minor, he defined it as part of Seleucus' 'spear-won land', as Ma and others

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[688] For the actual conquests of the Attalid kings in Asia Minor, see: Thonemann (ed.) (2013), 1-48; Ma (2013)b, 49-82; Chrubasik (2013), 83-120; Kosmetatou (2003), 159-171; Hansen (1971). (Justinus, *Epitome of Pompeius Trogus* 27.2-3; Polyaenus, *Strategemata* 4.17).

[689] Justinus, *Epitome of Pompeius Trogus* 27.2-3; Polyaenus, *Strategemata* 4.17. In 223-221 BC Antiochus III's general Achaeus won back most of these lands for the Seleucid crown. However, the treaty of Apamea in 188 BC permanently handed control of Asia Minor to the Attalids. Polybius, 4.2.6, 4.48, 5.40-42, 7.15–18, 8.17–23.

[690] Pausanias, 1.25.2; Plutarch, *Antonius* 60.3-4, cf. Stewart (2004), 181-236; Gruen (2000), 17-31, esp. 18; Habicht (1990), 562-564.

[691] Stewart (2014), 105-177; Gutzwiller (2007), 12-13; Pollitt (1986), 111-126; von Salis (1912), 1-18, 150-154.

[692] In order to defeat Achaeus, Antiochus allied himself with Attalus (Polybius, 5.107, 7.15-18, 8.17–23; cf. Chrubasik (2013), 83-120; Heinen (1984), 440; Hansen (1971), 43.

have shown.[693] Yet, this alone was not sufficient. Antiochus also brought into play a third idea, that of defeating the Galatians as a means of claiming legitimacy, both on the political stage and in literature and art.

At least three authors at the court of Antiochus III wrote about the Galatian invasions. Brief fragments of both Euphorion and Hegesianax show that it was a popular topic at the time.[694] Euphorion, as can be surmised from a quotation in the *Etymologicum Genuinum*, described the Galatians as: "The Gaizetai (land-seekers), wearing gold around their necks".[695] The epithet 'land-seekers', and the reference to gold, gives us some insight into Euphorion's perspective on the Galatians: he appears to have regarded them as nomadic intruders rather like the gold-rich Scythians of earlier Greek lore. Hegesianax, a historian from Alexandria in the Troad, also wrote about the incursions of the Galatians and focussed specifically on how they impacted the Troad and the city of Troy.[696] Although we do not know if he described Antiochus I's battles with them, it seems tempting to speculate that he portrayed Antiochus as the saviour of the city and thus a natural ally of its descendant Rome, which had had its own struggles with the Galatians. Be that as it may, Hegesianax' passage clearly demonstrates continued Seleucid interest in the Galatians and Asia Minor.

Perhaps the most important Seleucid author writing about the Galatians is the epic poet Simonides of Magnesia, who extolled the deeds of one King Antiochus against them.[697] Here is what our only source, the Suda, has to say about him:

> Σιμωνίδης· Μάγνης <ἀπὸ> Σιπύλου· ἐποποιός. γέγονεν ἐπὶ ᾿Αντιόχου τοῦ Μεγάλου κληθέντος, καὶ γέγραφε τὰς ᾿Αντιόχου [τοῦ Μεγάλου] πράξεις καὶ τὴν πρὸς Γαλάτας μάχην, ὅτε μετὰ τῶν ἐλεφάντων τὴν ἵππον αὐτῶν ἔφθειρε.
>
> Simonides: of Magnesia on the Sipylos, epic poet. He lived in the time of Antiochus called the Great, and wrote about the deeds of Antiochus [the Great] and on the battle against the Galatians, when he destroyed their cavalry with his elephants.
>
> Suda s.v. Σιμωνίδης[698]

[693] See Ma (1999) for an extensive discussion of the epigraphical evidence and the imperial rhetoric of legitimacy and rule that can be extracted from the inscriptions (Polybius, 5.67; Diodorus Siculus, 21.1.5, cf. Austin (2001), 91; Walbank (1984), 64-68; Mehl (1980-1), 173-212; Bikerman (1938), 15).

[694] Euphorion: fr. 42 (Lightfoot (2009)); Hegesianax: *BNJ* 45 F3.

[695] "Γαιζῆται περὶ δείρεα χρυσοφορεῦντες" *Etymologicum Genuinum* AB, γ 9, cf. Stephanus of Byzantium, s.v. Gaza.

[696] *BNJ* 45, F3, see also Strabo, 13.1.27. In my discussion of Antiochus' ideological statements during the Roman War I will come back to the significance of Troy and the role of Hegesianax, pp. 196-205.

[697] Suda s.v. Σιμωνίδης. See Primo (2009), 87-88; Barbantani (2001), 156-157, 183-184; Austin (1999), 149; Cameron (1995); Nachtergael (1977), 53-4; Ziegler (1966).

[698] Text from *BNJ* 163 T1.

As Paola Ceccarelli has pointed out in her discussion of this passage in *BNJ*, almost every aspect of Simonides' biography is problematic.[699] In particular, there has been uncertainty over which Antiochus was the subject of Simonides' poem.[700] Here I follow Ceccarelli's suggestion that Simonides was active during the reign of Antiochus III, but that he wrote about Antiochus I's victory against the Galatians some fifty or so years earlier.[701] Simonides' 'battle of the elephants' would, in this case, have been a historic epic commemorating the deeds of an earlier dynast.[702] This dating fits well with the context of conflicting Seleucid and Attalid claims on Asia Minor. For Antiochus III, Simonides' poem provided a welcome opportunity to remind the world that the Seleucid kings were the first to defeat the Galatian hordes and that the Attalids were merely aping his ancestors.

The mention of elephants in Simonides' work supports the suggestion that it was indeed about Antiochus I's famous elephant victory.[703] As we have seen above, the battle that Antiochus I fought against the Galatians became known as 'the battle of the elephants'. Elephants were a favourite piece of heavy equipment in the early Seleucid army, and it is plausible that they would have played a part in the battle against the Galatians. However, more is at stake here than mere historical accuracy: by foregrounding the elephants, Simonides connected the defeat of the barbaric Galatians with the ultimate emblem of Seleucid political and military power.[704] The significance of the Seleucid elephant is best

[699] Ceccarelli (2008) in *Brill's New Jacoby Online* (*BNJ* 163).
[700] Some scholars place him under Antiochus I, assuming that Simonides wrote an encomium for the living king and not for a dead predecessor, e.g. Barbantani (2001), 183-184.
[701] As there are no known victories of Antiochus III over the Galatians, I follow Bernhardy's edition (1853) /Adler's edition (1928-1938) of the Suda and regard the second τοῦ Μεγάλου (present in the important manuscript M: the Marcianus gr. 448) as a later addition and delete it. The deletion of the second τοῦ Μεγάλου is supported by the fact that it is absent from codices A, V and G. See Ceccarelli (2008), *Brill's New Jacoby*, Simonides. There are some scholars who think that Simonides wrote an encomium for Antiochus I during his life time, thus deleting both references to τοῦ Μεγάλου from the text of the Suda (Barbantani (2001), 183-184, see n. 11 for further references).
[702] Primo (2009), 87-88, 257.
[703] Ceccarelli (2008) in *Brill's New Jacoby Online* (*BNJ* 163). However, some scholars maintain that Simonides wrote about a victory of Antiochus III against the Galatians that did not involve elephants (cf. II *Maccabees* 8.20; supported by *SH* 958). These scholars assume the reference to the elephants in the Suda to be a later addition: Momigliano (1929), 151-2; for discussion see Cameron (1995), 285 and Nachtergael, (1977), 53-4 n. 134.
[704] On elephants as a Seleucid royal symbol see Kosmin (2014)a, 1-7.

illustrated by the production of figurines depicting an elephant trampling Galatian warriors in the mid-second century.[705]

Figure 4 - War Elephant trampling Galatian warrior

While there is no proof that this or any other of the extant figurines of the trampling elephant is meant to represent a specifically Seleucid victory it seems likely that the iconography goes back to a Seleucid prototype.[706] Lucian's vivid description of Antiochus' elephant battle in the 2nd century AD shows the enduring power of the Seleucids' association with elephants.[707] Returning to Simonides, elephants imply a grandiosity at a poetic level that is reinforced by the epic meter and presumably the scale of the poem. This seems to go against the Callimachean aesthetics of brevity and lightness, and could indeed be the kind of poetry represented by the muddy Assyrian river that Callimachus attacks in the *Hymn to Apollo*.[708] Speculation aside, the creation of an epic about the Seleucid victory over the Galatians in the late third century, reasserted Seleucid primacy over the Greek poleis in Asia Minor and

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[705] War elephant trampling on a Galatian warrior. Terracotta figurine (mid. 2nd century BC) from Myrina, Isle of Lemnos, Greece. Height 11.3 cm Myr 284 Louvre, Departement des Antiquites Grecques/Romaines, Paris, France. First publication: Reinach (1885), 485-493.

[706] Kosmin (2013)b, 106-107; Conolly (1984), 86, no. 110; Scullard (1974), 121; Bieńkowski (1928), 148. For the association between the Seleucids and elephants see also Chapter 2, p. 110 and Chapter 4, pp. 176-178.

[707] Lucian, *Zeuxis* 8-11. Some scholars argue that Lucian's description must be derived from Simonides' poetry, e.g. Nelson (forthcoming); Primo (2009), 256-7; Barbantani (2001), 183-4, n. 11; Bar-Kochva (1973), 1-3.

[708] See Chapter 3, pp. 160-162.

reminded the world that it was Antiochus I who first defeated the Galatians and reclaimed Asia Minor as a civilised, Greek and essentially Seleucid space.

However, in the propaganda wars over possession of Asia Minor the Attalids had the last laugh. In the treaty of Apamea of 188 BC, Antiochus III had to renounce Seleucid rule west of the Taurus. After this defining event, Eumenes II renewed the Attalids' self-portrayal as Galatian slayers in the most magnificent fashion. Eumenes II dedicated the Great Altar of Pergamon in 180 BC or perhaps somewhat later, in the 160's BC,[709] thus monumentalising Attalid dominance by equating victory over the Galatians with the Gigantomachy of the Olympian gods.[710] The Pergamene Great Altar, as well as the dying Gaul, are perhaps the best known example of artistic representations of the fight against the Galatians, which for the Attalids, it would appear, was also – and perhaps even primarily – a contest against the Seleucids.[711]

Euphorion of Chalcis and the Literary Court

The Literary Court

During the early 3rd century BC, the Ptolemies firmly took the lead on issues of literature and art.[712] Under their patronage, Alexandria became the centre of high Hellenistic culture. Much of the success of Alexandria as a cultural capital was based on the famous library and the intellectuals and poets attached to the Museion. The Attalids and the Seleucids followed the Ptolemaic example by emulating these two institutions.

Let us turn to the scholarly institution of the library first. The library in Alexandria represented an institutionalised form of royal patronage that became famous across the Hellenistic world. For both ancient and modern authors, it epitomises the city's gravitational

[709] Massa-Pairault (2007), 24-28; Kästner (1998), 140; Andreae (1997), 121-126; Kunze (1990), 137-139; Schmidt (1990), 148-150; Hansen (1971), 264-268. The dating in the 180's was extensively discussed by Kähler (1948) and is commonly accepted (Smith (1991) 158; Pollitt (1986), 309 n. 22). The late dating (around 160 BC), was proposed by Brückner (1904) and supported by Callaghan (1981), 115-121. If the earlier date is right, the dedication of the Altar would be linked to the celebration of Athena Nikephoros.
[710] See: Queyrel (2005), esp. 130-136; Massa-Pairault (2007), 5-7; Müller (1964), 6-21.
[711] See especially: Kosmetatou (2003), 170-172; Gruen (2000), 17-31. Cf. Whitaker (2005), 163-174; Courtieu (2011), 9-17; Virgilio (1993), 52; Wenning (1978), esp v-vii; Hansen (1971) 26-33, 329-350; von Salis (1912); Bieńkowski (1908).
[712] That said, in the first chapter we saw that the Seleucids set the pace with geographical literature of empire.

pull, and many anecdotes attest to Ptolemaic involvement in creating this pull.[713] The Ptolemies' efforts to collect 'all the books in the world'[714] under one roof – their roof! – are described in several well-known stories. The most famous is perhaps Galen's account of how the Ptolemies acquired the original texts of the Athenian tragedies. Galen tells us that Ptolemy III Euergetes borrowed the Athenian manuscripts of the tragedians by paying a deposit of 15 talents.[715] He sent envoys with the money to Athens and the Athenians handed over the manuscripts, so that the scholars in the library could make copies. After the ship with the texts had docked, copies were indeed made but Ptolemy never returned the originals. The deposit was forfeited and the Athenians had to make do with the copies that the king sent back to them. This story does not only illustrate the Ptolemies' personal interest in Greek literature but also their determination to shift the center of Greek culture to Alexandria. By keeping the originals and handing back the copies, Ptolemy inverts the established relationship between Athens as a centre of authentic Greek culture and Alexandria as its upstart rival.[716] I argue that we should read this anecdote in close association with Isocrates' designation of Athens as the arbiter of Hellenism and Athenian philosophers as the teachers of all (ὥσθ' οἱ ταύτης μαθηταὶ τῶν ἄλλων διδάσκαλοι γεγόνασι).[717] By usurping Athens as the guardian of Greek culture, the Ptolemies sought to establish Alexandria as the new centre of Hellenic culture and the teacher of Greek *paideia*.

Galen's anecdote attests to the success of Ptolemaic cultural policy and Ptolemaic propaganda.[718] It is clear that both the Seleucids and Attalids were aware of the ideological traction that the Ptolemies possessed with both their library and their intellectuals. The Attalids responded by establishing a library and scholarly centre in their own royal city of Pergamum.[719] Contemporary testimony is lacking, but later writers clearly perceived this

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[713] The library was erected by Ptolemy I, see König *et al.* (2013) for bibliography. See further: Jacob (2013), 63-80; Hatzimichali (2013); Casson (2001); Barnes (2000); MacLeod (ed.) (2000); El-Abbabi (1990). For a satirical example of the pull of Alexandria, see: Herodas, *Mimiambe* 1.

[714] [Pseudo-Aristeas], *Letter of Aristeas*, 9.

[715] Galen, *Commentary II in Hippocratis Epidemics*, III, 239-240, cf. Habicht (1992), 68-90.

[716] For the cultural life in Hellenistic Athens, especially philosophers and historians, see Habicht (1997), 98-124; Habicht (1989)a; Habicht (1989)b; Habicht (1982); Pfeiffer (1968), 157.

[717] Those, who she (Athens) taught, have become the teachers of the rest (of the world). Isocrates, *Panegyricus* 50.

[718] Anecdotes such as Galen's show the extent to which stories sprang up around the 'library of dreams', but they do not provide us with clear contemporary evidence about the organisation of the library and the motives behind its foundation. Bagnall deplores the "disparity between, on the one hand, the grandeur and importance of this library, both in its reality in antiquity and in its image both ancient and modern, and, on the other, our nearly total ignorance about it." (Bagnall (2002), 348, cf. Delia (1992)).

[719] *SEG* 45, 1672. Thonemann (2013); Komestatou (2003); Hansen (1971), 397-433.

institution as a challenge to Alexandria. One telling anecdote records that the Ptolemies forbade the export of papyrus to ensure the monopoly of Alexandrian scholarship. Pliny relates that by denying the Attalids the materials for producing books the Ptolemies hoped to cripple the rival institution.[720] This, it is alleged, led to the further development of writing material from the skins of animals, *pergama* or parchment. Although modern scholars doubt the truth of this story, it does indicate how writers in antiquity perceived the rivalry between the two libraries in Hellenistic times.[721]

Although anecdotes concerning the libraries abound, the history of the Attalid library is as unclear as that of its Alexandrian counterpart. Even its location is uncertain, although it is likely that it was located among the royal buildings on the acropolis of Pergamum.[722] It may therefore not come as a surprise that we know even less about the Seleucid library.[723] We know that it existed, or rather, Euphorion's biography in the Suda mentions one at the time of Antiochus III:[724]

> ἦλθε πρὸς Ἀντίοχον τὸν μέγαν ἐν Συρίᾳ βασιλεύοντα καὶ προέστη ὑπ' αὐτοῦ τῆς ἐκεῖσε δημοσίας βιβλιοθήκης˙ καὶ τελευτήσας ἐκεῖσε τέθαπται ἐν Ἀπαμείᾳ, ὡς δέ τινες ἐν Ἀντιοχείᾳ.
> He [Euphorion] went to Antiochus the Great, who was king in Syria, by whom he was put in charge of the public library there. And after he died there, he was buried in Apamea or, according to others in Antioch.
> Suda s.v. Euphorion[725]

The passage indicates that a Seleucid library did exist at the time of Antiochus III, though it is not entirely clear where it was located. There are reasons to believe that it was in Antioch, which acted as the cultural capital certainly of the later Seleucids, even though the court of Antiochus III was not permanently based there.[726] Antioch's continued prominence as a cultural centre after the Hellenistic period supports the traditional assumption that it was

[720] Pliny, *Naturalis Historia* 13.21, for discussion see: Bagnall (2002); Johnson (1970), 115-122.
[721] Johnson (1970), 115-117. Other stories also attest to the competition between the two dynasties for control over the resources of Greek culture. Casson (2001), 48-49; Platthy (1968), 160-165; for the schools of Crates and Aristarchus, see: Strabo, 13.1.54, cf. Pfeiffer (1968), 234-251.
[722] Most recently Coqueugniot (2013), 109-123; see also Höpfner (2002)b, 41-52; Höpfner (1996), 25-36; Mielsch (1995), 765-772.
[723] Casson (2001), 48-49; Pfeiffer (1968), 121-122. See Harder (2013), 96-109 for a discussion of the implicit influence of the library of Alexandria on the poetry of Callimachus and Apollonius.
[724] Suda, s.v. Euphorion.
[725] Lightfoot (2009), Test. 1.
[726] The court of the Seleucids was peripatetic and followed the king. For detailed discussion of the nature of the Seleucid courts see the Introduction, pp. 22-24. For Antioch, see: Downey (1963); Downey (1961).

indeed the location of Antiochus III's 'public' library. Moreover, the reputation of Antioch as a centre of learning appears to have been wide-spread already in the late Hellenistic period, as can be surmised from Cicero's reference to Antioch in his speech *Pro Archia*:

> *Nam ut primum ex pueris excessit Archias, atque ab eis artibus quibus aetas puerilis ad humanitatem informari solet, se ad scribendi studium contulit, primum Antiochiae--nam ibi natus est loco nobili--celebri quondam urbe et copiosa, atque eruditissimis hominibus liberalissimisque studiis adfluenti, celeriter antecellere omnibus ingeni gloria contigit.*
>
> When Archias first outgrew childhood, and outgrew those arts by which young boys are commonly educated in *humanitas*, he devoted himself to the study of writing – first at Antioch, (for he was born there of a noble family) formerly an illustrious and wealthy city, and overflowing with the most learned men and the liberal arts; and it soon fell to him to surpass all with his reputation for *ingenium*.
>
> Cicero, *Pro Archia*, 4[727]

Cicero describes in this passage the beginning of Archias' career in letters. As an Antiochian of noble birth, Archias received his early education in his home town, which Cicero describes as a 'famous and wealthy city'. He further praises his defendant by describing how Archias advanced his studies in this city 'overflowing with the most learned men and the liberal arts'. With *quondam* Cicero stresses that the importance of Antioch is rooted in the past: Antioch's reputation as a centre of learning predated his own time.[728]

Because of the weak evidence for a Seleucid library, modern scholars have often underestimated the Seleucids' investment in literature at the expense of Pergamum and Alexandria.[729] The prevailing opinion is well summarised in the following assessment: "Nothing else [apart from the Suda] is recorded about it; apparently it never acquired much of a reputation".[730] However, this portrayal does not chime with the importance that the Seleucids themselves attached to literary and cultural activity, especially at the time of Antiochus III. I now have a closer look at the writers, poets and intellectuals who gravitated to the court of this king.

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[727] Text from Clarks' edition of the *Pro Archia* (1922).

[728] Unfortunately, the most important Hellenistic historian, Polybius, does not provide much information on the question of Antioch's library. From his discussion of Antioch in books 5, 8, 28 and 30, we can glean the importance of the city as a political centre but he does not mention its importance in cultural terms.

[729] Modern scholarship often disregards the Seleucid library because of the lack of sources. The most recent edited volume (König *et al.* (2013)) on ancient libraries has no discussion of the Seleucid library at all and does not even mention it in its index.

[730] Casson (2001), 48-49. Ironically, most scholars accepted that Euphorion was appointed head librarian in Antioch, even though the Suda does not specify this. Cohen (2006), 82; Pfeiffer (1968), 122. Cf. Libanius, *Orations* 11.119; Grainger (1990)a, 43. n. 63.

As we have seen, Seleucid rulers had always counted writers amongst their *philoi*. At Seleucus I's court, Megasthenes, Demodamas and Patrocles were active as generals, ambassadors and writers; Antiochus I is said to have invited the poet Aratus to stay at his court and produce an *Iliad* commentary.[731] In Babylon, Berossus was a writer who dedicated his work to Antiochus I.[732] However, it is at the court of Antiochus III that we find most evidence for a prolific intellectual life surrounding the Seleucid king.[733] According to Primo, the writers at the court of Antiochus III focussed on producing historical works on the early rulers of the dynasty, describing the deeds and conquests of previous Seleucid kings, thus providing justification for Antiochus's conquests.[734]

The epic poetry of Simonides of Magnesia has already been discussed above. Another author who wrote about the early Seleucid kings at the court of Antiochus was the historian Mnesiptolemus of Cyme.[735] His only known work is the *Histories*: it recorded the deeds of (some) Seleucid kings but we do not know in what context. Mnesiptolemus was sufficiently well-known to be parodied, as we know from a passage in Epinicus, a comic poet.[736] The passage appears to focus on the private life of King Seleucus I Nicator, who gives a speech while drinking wine. Epinicus parodies the grand tone of Mnesiptolemus in contrast to the trivial content of the poem. Because it is unclear which aspects of the passage are Epinicus and which are Mnesiptolemus, it is hard to reconstruct the precise joke or the character of Mnesiptolemus' work from this passage.[737]

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[731] Kidd (1997), 5; Pfeiffer (1968) 121-122, who is sceptical.

[732] See Chapter 2, p. 91.

[733] Primo (2009), 24-29, 87-100. An example of this is Antiochus III's patronage of the Association of the Dionysian Technitai on Teos (Le Guen (2001), Vol. I, 220-225). Both the Ptolemies and the Attalids also subsidised and protected theatre companies, so this provides further evidence that the Seleucids rivalled other Hellenistic kings by patronising important cultural, and especially literary, activities. (Le Guen (2003), 354; Le Guen (2001), Vol. II, 88-90).

[734] Primo (2009) 19-52.

[735] *BNJ* 164, Mnesiptolemus.

[736] Epinicus was a comedy writer in the tradition of Alexandrian New Comedy. See Suda s.v Epinikos; Nesselrath (2004), 'Epinicus [1]', *Brill's New Pauly* 4, 1114-15; Kaibel (1907), 'Epinikos (10)', *RE* 6.1, col. 185.

[737] Athenaeus claims that Epinicus mocked Mnesiptolemus because of his formal tone and pompous poetry. The poetry of Mnesiptolemus seems to have followed other Hellenistic poets by integrating and subverting Homeric and Euripedean phrases in his poetry. In the one line that is quoted by Epinicus we find two references to Euripides, one of which goes back to Homer (see: Cottier (2011) in *Brill's New Jacoby Online* (*BNJ* 164, T2)). The sentence "spanning the whole liquid surface with Demeter's corn" might be a reflection of the geographical literature, that was popular at the Hellenistic courts. It is interesting to consider whether Mnesiptolemus' poetry played with Seleucid geographical themes but unfortunately this is impossible to tell from the fragments.

According to Athenaeus, Mnesiptolemus enjoyed great prestige at the court of Antiochus III.[738] His political importance is shown by a decree granting *proxenia* from Delos honouring the historian Mnesiptolemus, son of Calliarchus of Cyme, and bestowing the right that he and his descendants could call themselves *proxenoi*.[739] As *proxenos* of the Delians, Mnesiptolemus may have been an important go-between for Delos and the Seleucid king, just as Demodamas had been for Miletus and the Seleucids a century earlier.[740] The close bond between Mnesiptolemus and the Seleucid dynasty is also indicated by the fact that he named his son Seleucus. This Seleucus was likewise attached to the court as a writer of comic verses.[741]

The two most important authors at Antiochus' court were Hegesianax of Alexandria Troas and Euphorion of Chalcis, and it is on them that the rest of this chapter will focus.[742] Both authors interacted with Seleucid imperial discourse in novel ways and did not just look back at the earlier Seleucid kings. Hence, they represent literary activity that takes us beyond Primo's assertion that the Seleucid authors of the late third century focussed on historical works and backward-looking apologetics. Furthermore, they provide evidence that these authors were important in their time, and were responding to shifts in the power relations between the Seleucids and their subjects and neighbours: the Greek *poleis*, the other Hellenistic powers, and, most importantly, Rome.

Euphorion of Chalcis as Hellenistic 'Poeta Doctus'

Euphorion of Chalcis was one of the most prominent Hellenistic poets and scholars after Callimachus.[743] We have already encountered him as head librarian of Antiochus III's elusive

[738] Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistai* 15.53.697d

[739] *IG* 11.4.697.1-3 and 7-16 (*Choix* = 54). For a broader context of diplomacy on Delos, see: Reger (1994), 64-67; Vial and Baslez (1987), 281-312, esp. 297; Marek (1984), 71–73, 332–381.

[740] *IG* 11.4.697.1-3 and 7-16; *BNJ* 164, T3.

[741] Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistai* 15.53.697d.

[742] In addition to their importance at the court of Antiochus, the transmission of Euphorion's and Hegesianax' work has been a little more favourable than that of Simonides and Mnesiptolemus. This means that for both authors we can reconstruct part of their writing style and content.

[743] Euphorion has attracted renewed interest from scholars in recent years. For editions and translations, see: Acosta-Hughes and Cusset (2012); Lightfoot (2009). In 2002, Enrico Magnelli published a preliminary study on Euphorion in anticipation of a forthcoming commentary (Magnelli (2002), cf. (Cusset, Prioux and Richer (ed.) (2013)). In addition, several articles on Euphorion have been written, which discuss intertextual and stylistic features of specific texts. These publications show that, despite the fragmentary nature of Euphorion's work, much valuable work can be done with the fragments we do have.

library. That would presumably have been towards the end of the 3rd century BC. Before that, he was attached to the local court of Alexander of Corinth in Euboea. Contrary to Megasthenes, Patrocles, Demodamas and Berossus, who were all prose writers, Euphorion was famous for his poetry. Arguably, he provided an answer to Callimachus' attack on Seleucid literature discussed in the previous chapter: Euphorion was a poet who operated at the cutting edge of Hellenistic aesthetics and yet showed a willingness to demonstrate his attachment to the Seleucid court. As such, I argue, he came to feature prominently in the cultural revival policies of Antiochus III.

Euphorion was born in Chalcis in Euboea probably in the 270's BC.[744] He was a contemporary of Apollonius of Rhodes and Eratosthenes[745] and began his career under the patronage of Alexander, son of Craterus, the ruler of Euboea. The family of Alexander was, through the marriages of his grandmother Phila, related to the royal family of the Antigonids in Macedonia. Alexander himself was the nephew of Antigonus II Gonatas and acted as military commander of Chalcis and Corinth for the Antigonids from 263 to 253 BC.[746] From 253 BC onwards he declared himself an independent king, sponsored by Ptolemy II Philadelphus. Euphorion was a court poet for King Alexander, and seems to have had a close relationship with his wife Nicaea.[747]

It is possible that the death of his patron in 245 BC and the subsequent reassertion of Antigonid control over Euboea led Euphorion to abandon his home country.[748] Like many of his fellow poets he was drawn to the cultural centres of the Hellenistic world.[749] The poem *Hippomedon Meizon* provides an insight into the poet's search for patronage. The poem, while very fragmentary, is a hymn dedicated to a 'famous' Hippomedon, whose name is partly restored from the title.

ὕ̣μν̣ο[ν̣....]φ̣[..].[..]ο μεγακλέος Ἱπ[πομέδοντ

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[744] Suda s.v. Euphorion; for discussion of the date see van Groningen (1977), 249-250; cf. Acosta Hughes and Cusset (2012), 2-3; Lightfoot (2009), 191.

[745] Suda s.v. Apollonius of Rhodes.

[746] Both cities were strategic positions in mainland Greece for the Macedonian kings; for more on the cities of Demetrias, Chalcis and Corinth as the 'fetters of Greece' see p. 212.

[747] Suda s.v. Euphorion; Plutarch, *Moralia* 472 D.

[748] Alexander's widow Nicaea married the Antigonid heir Demetrius II, thus providing the Antigonids with a foothold in Euboea.

[749] For example: Theocritus, Aratus of Soli, Nicander of Aetolia and Alexander of Aetolia. Although the Suda attests that Euphorion studied at Athens, as a pupil of Lacydes and Prytanis, the precise dating is unclear (Suda s.v. Euphorion). Lacydes was the head of Plato's Academy from 241/240 to 224/223 BC (or 216-215 BC). Prytanis was a peripatetic philosopher. The dates of these philosophers would indicate that Euphorion studied in Athens quite late in his life, but this is impossible to corroborate further.

γα̣ίης παρθενι̣κ̣αὶ Λ[ι]βηθρίδος ἐντυ[ν

Πόλτυος ὡ̣ς Αἴν[ο]υ τε ̣ ερ ̣ ̣ ιάδαο π̣ [

]ρ ̣ [...]δηισιν ἀνάρσ[ι]ο̣ν [

]ν ̣ ̣ ˙ πρὸ δέ μιν Θρ̣ηϊ[κ

] .ησδε θανὼν ̣ ̣ [

]ενταπι ̣ ν Πε̣ρ̣ραιβ[

] ε μετὰ πρυλέεσσιν

]ποδας ἐπάλυνε̣ κ̣ο̣ [νιη

] ̣ ν ἔθεν μέτα λεξα̣ [

A song of praise ….. for famous Hippomedon (?)

Maidens of the Libethrian land, now prepare(?)

How (the city?) of Poltys and Ainos, son of …

… (to the Dardanians?) hostile

… him Thracians?

… having died

… the Perrhaiboi (drank?)

…. among the foot soldiers

... scattered dust

... from there ...

Euphorion fr. 34 (Lightfoot (2009))

The hymn seems to have a military theme, but it is hard to establish the precise contents, even of the better preserved lines. The cities of Ainos and Poltys and the partly restored Θρ̣ηϊ[κ both indicate a Thracian setting of the poem. It is possible that a Servius scholion to Virgil contains further information. Servius notes that "Euphorion and Callimachus also say that it (a city in Thrace) was called Ainus after a companion of Ulysses buried there on the occasion when he was sent to fetch provision".[750] This might indicate that the hymn in honour of Hippomedon also incorporated the foundation myths of cities.

Because of its Thracian 'flavour', scholars have argued that the *honorandus* of the hymn is Hippomedon of Sparta,[751] who, during his exile in the mid- to late 3rd century BC, was made governor of Thrace by Ptolemy III Euergetes.[752] If this is correct, Euphorion's hymn can be

[750] Servius, ad Virgil, *Aeneid* 3.17. Lightfoot (2009), fr. 88; van Groningen (1977), fr. 67; de Cuenca (1976), fr. 42. For Callimachus see fr. 697 (in Pfeiffer (1949-1952), 453). Ainus recurs once more in Euphorion's work: (possibly) fr. 166 (Lightfoot (2009)).

[751] He was a member of the royal family of Agis IV (Plutarch, *Agis* 6 and 16).

[752] Teles, *ap*. Stobaeus, 3.40. He was still alive in 219 BC according to Polybius (4.35.13).

compared to Theocritus' poetry for the Sicilian tyrant Hieron.[753] Both writers sought patronage and fame by writing poetry for local Greek rulers before they attached themselves to the courts of greater Hellenistic dynasties. Both in Thrace and in Euboea, Euphorion had several indirect connections with the Ptolemies. His career, however, never led him to Alexandria, the destination of so many of his contemporaries. Instead, he became the court poet of the Seleucids, and when he died, he was buried either in Syria, at Antioch or Apamea,[754] or in Athens.[755]

Although Euphorion never moved to Alexandria, his Roman reception suggests that he contributed important elements to the new poetics that centred around the Ptolemaic court. Indeed, his role in disseminating it to later Roman writers was equal in importance to that of leading Alexandrian poets such as Callimachus and Theocritus.[756] Virgil describes Gallus as writing 'Chalcidian verses' in his *Eclogues*.[757] Gallus is also said to have translated various works of Euphorion, as Catullus did with Callimachus.[758] Moreover, in his defence of Ennius, Cicero scathingly dismisses the epic poet's critics as '*cantores Euphorionis*', suggesting that Euphorion had a large following in first-century Rome.[759] The image that emerges from these testimonia can be fleshed out by textual analysis and comparison between Roman poetry and Euphorion's fragments. Although over two hundred fragments of Euphorion remain, most are just a few lines long and it is hard to reconstruct the precise form and content of the lost poems. However, some conclusions regarding the content and language of his poetry can still be drawn.

Careful study of intertextual resonances between Roman poets and Euphorion highlights his position at the cutting edge of 'Alexandrian style' poetry. For example, Euphorion's intricate influences on Virgil not only show the interest of the Roman poets in this Hellenistic

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[753] Theocritus, *Idyll* 16. Acosta-Hughes and Cusset (2012) compare furthermore the opening of the *Hippomedon* to *Idyll* 17, Theocritus' encomium of Ptolemy.

[754] Suda s.v. Euphorion.

[755] Funerary epigram for Euphorion: *Palatine Anthology* 7.406, cf. Dickie (1998), 54-58.

[756] For the engagement of the Roman poets with Callimachus, see: Hunter (2006); for the Roman reception of Theocritus, see: Bernsdorff (2006), 167-208; Reed (2006), 209-234; Fantuzzi (2006), 235-262. Lipka analyses the language of Virgil's *Eclogues* and his engagement with literary predecessors, including Euphorion: Lipka (2001). If we had more left of Gallus it is likely that we would see an even greater interaction with Euphorion's poetry. For links between the neoterics and Euphorion, see further: Lightfoot (1999), 57-65; Keefe (1982), 237-238; Tuplin (1979); Tuplin (1976); Crowther (1970), 322-327; Clausen (1964), 191-192 (Catullus, Gallus, Virgil); Livrea (2002) (Propertius).

[757] Virgil, *Eclogues* 10.50, cf. Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* 10.1.56.

[758] Servius ad Virgil, *Eclogues* 6.42, Diomedes, *Ars Grammatica* 1.484.21. For Catullus translating Callimachus, see: Bing (1997), 78-94; Hutchinson (1988), 322-324; West (1985), 61-66; Pfeiffer (1975); Putnam (1960), 223-228; Fränkel (1929).

[759] Tuplin discusses the precise meaning of cantores in Cicero's remark (Tuplin (1979), 358-360).

writer, but also tell us important things about the poetry of Euphorion. To illustrate this claim, I consider Euphorion’s aetiology of the hyacinth petals:

> πορφυρέη ὑάκινθε, σὲ μὲν μία φῆμις ἀοιδῶν
> Ῥοιτείῃς ἀμάθοισι δεδουπότος Αἰακίδαο
> εἴαρος ἀντέλλειν τεὰ γράμματα κωκύουσαν
> Purple hyacinth, one story of the bards <relates that>
> When the Aiacid fell on the Rhoeteian shore
> You sprang forth from his blood, inscribed with a lament.
> Σ Theocr. *Idylls* 10.28a[760]

This fragment, possibly part of Euphorion’s hexameter poem *Hyacinthus*, is quoted by a scholiast on Theocritus, *Idyll* 10. The fragment describes Aiax’s suicide after losing Achilles’ armour to Odysseus, a heroic subject which, however, is treated in a characteristically ‘Alexandrian’ fashion. Particularly striking is the strong aetiological element that drives the text: the myth of Aiax’ death explains the letters AI on the petals of the hyacinth.[761] Euphorion’s poem implies that the letters AI on the hyacinth derive from Aiax’ name.[762] Although he tells the story as though it had been told before, his poem is in fact the first attestation of this myth.[763] A different aetiology for the markings on the hyancinth petals, which can be found in ancient literary works, explains the letters AI as part of the lamentation (αἰαῖ) for Hyacinthus, the Spartan prince who died at the hands of his lover Apollo.[764] Euphorion may have provided a source for this myth too in his *Hyacinthus.* Certainly, the poem featured the story of another young man who died under tragic circumstaces. The only line that is securely attested as coming from the *Hyacinthus* of Euphorion is:

> Κωκυτὸς <θ’ ὅς> μοῦνος ἀφ’ ἕλκεα νίψεν Ἄδωνιν

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[760] Euphorion, fr. 44 (Lightfoot (2009)).

[761] The story that the hyacinth petals bore the letters AI (or AIAI) was well known in Greek, and Roman, mythology. For other versions of the myth, see: Hesiod, frag. 171 (MW); (Pseudo-)Palaephatus, *On Unbelievable Tales* 46; Nicander, *Theriaca* 901; Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 10.162-219; Lucian, *Dialogues of the Gods* 14(/16); Pausanias, 3.19.4-5. For interest in aetiology during the Hellenistic period see: Harder (2012), Vol. I, 25-26; Fantuzzi and Hunter (2004); Fantuzzi (1996), 371; Myers (1994), 16; Depew (1993), 57-77; Goldhill (1991), 321-333; Miller (1982), 374

[762] Cf. Eustathius, ad *Iliad*, 2.557, i. p. 439.33 van der Valk.

[763] This play between tradition and innovation was a hallmark of Hellenistic poetry. See Fantuzzi and Hunter (2004); Goldhill (1991), 321-333; Bing (1988).

[764] See Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 10, 205-216. Sometimes the markings on the flower’s petals were interpreted as Y.

Cocytus <who> alone washed Adonis' wounds

Ptolemy Hephaestion, ap. Photius, *Bibliotheca* 190[765]

The line clearly relates to the myth of Adonis, who died in a boar hunt and from whose blood flowers sprang. The obvious similarities between the Hyacinthus and Adonis myth make it plausible that the Adonis narrative would feature as a foil or echo, inside a longer poem on Hyacinthus that included one or more aetiologies of the AI markings on the hyacinth flower.

The same play with tradition and innovation can also be seen when Euphorion departs from traditional myth by describing Aiax as the Aiacid. Even though this seems like an obvious designation, Homer only used the epithet Aiacid for Peleus, son of Aiakos, and Achilles, son of Peleus. Apollonius of Rhodes, who wrote the *Argonautica* almost certainly before Euphorion's *floruit*,[766] called Telamon, Peleus' brother, an Aiacid. Euphorion takes this further by designating Aiax, the son of Telamon, as the Aiacid.[767] His conscious interaction with Apollonius is further shown by the description of the coast of the Troad as the Rhoeteian shore, an allusion to Apollonius' *Argonautica* 1, v. 929.

A final point suffices to show that Euphorion was not only a learned mythographer and poet but also presented himself as a learned grammarian in the tradition of Alexandrian poetry. Euphorion creates an ambiguous reading in the last line of the first of the two fragments quoted above, by playing on the double meaning of εἴαρος. Jane Lightfoot points out that εἴαρος could mean "in the spring", but also "from his blood".[768] The line would thus simultaneously read "in spring time you sprang forth" and "from his blood you sprang forth". The pun, however, does more than just keep these two meanings in suspense; ἔαρ (blood) is only attested in Hellenistic poetry,[769] while ἔαρ (spring) is common usage in Greek from Homer onward. By combining the two meanings of εἴαρος Euhorion demonstrates not only that he masters obscure grammatical issues, but also that he is able to enrich the Homeric tradition with innovations in the Callimachean fashion.

765 Euphorion, fr. 47 (Lightfoot (2009)).

766 The biography of Apollonius, and his relationship with other Hellenistic poets, is notoriously difficult. See: Lefkowitz (2011), 51-71; Köhnken, A. (2011), 73-94; Bulloch (1985), 46-47.

767 Euphorion's innovation remains unparalleled until Strabo (9, 394) and Quintus of Smyrna (3, 244). Cf. Acosta-Hughes and Cusset (2012), 123, who does not comment upon its significance; Lightfoot (2009), fr. 44.

768 Lightfoot (2009), 276-277, n. 76; *LSJ*, s.v. εἴαρος.

769 Callimachus, *Frag*. 523 (Pfeiffer (1949-1953)); Nicander, *Alexipharmaka*, 314.

The two different aetiologies for the hyacinth petals implied in Euphorion's poetry provide us with an answer to a riddle that Virgil poses in *Eclogue* 3. It is worth considering here because it helps us understand better both Euphorion's own poetry and its Roman reception:

> Menalcas: *Dic, quibus in terris inscripti nomina regum*
> *nascantur flores, et Phyllida solus habeto.*
> Tell me, in which lands grow flowers inscribed
> with royal names — and you will have Phyllis for yourself.
> Virgil, *Eclogues* 3.106-107[770]

This riddle recalls the aetiology of the markings on the hyacinth as the letters AI. There are various indications that Virgil has Euphorion's two versions of the hyacinth myth in mind. Earlier in *Eclogue* 3, Virgil describes the hyacinth as *suave rubens hyacinthus*.[771] Apart from Sappho, only Euphorion describes the hyacinth as red (πορφύρεος), while other Hellenistic writers, such as Theocritus, describe it as dark (μέλας).[772] Indeed, if Virgil was alluding specifically to Euphorion, then Menalcas' riddle would have two different answers, based on the two variant aetiologies in Euphorion's work. The answer could be both Sparta and Troy depending on which aetiology is chosen: the myth of Hyacinthus, the Spartan prince killed accidentally by Apollo, or the myth of Aiax, who committed suicide at Troy.

Euphorion, then, was not just a famous poet but an important representative of a specifically 'Alexandrian' approach to poetry which valued learning, allusiveness and aetiology. All this made him an important asset for Antiochus and his court. Yet, in addition to advertising Seleucid patronage on the Hellenistic cultural stage, he also provided opportunities to incorporate Seleucid imperial discourse and a specifically Seleucid cultural geography into the international medium of Hellenistic learned poetry. In the next section I look at ways in which Euphorion's poetry engages with Seleucid imperial discourse.

Euphorion: a Seleucid Poet?

There are several indications that Euphorion engaged specifically with Seleucid imperial discourse. The fragment that links Euphorion to his Seleucid context most directly concerns the so-called Seleucus Romance. Tertullian describes it as follows:

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[770] Text from Coleman's edition of the *Eclogues* (1977).

[771] Virgil, *Eclogues* 3.63; cf.*Georgics* 4.183.

[772] Sappho, fragment 105c, v. 1; Theocritus, *Idyll* 10, v. 28; Euphorion: (Lightfoot (2009), fr. 44/Acosta-Hughes and Cusset (2012), fr. 72).

> *Seleuco regnum Asiae Laodice mater nondum eum enixa praevidit; Euphorion promulgavit.*
> Seleucus' mother Laodice foresaw that he would rule over Asia even before she had given birth to him; Euphorion broadcast the fact.
> Tertullian, *de Anima* 46.6[773]

The story to which Tertullian refers seems to be a combination of two distinct narratives that are more fully extant in Appian.[774] The first is the story of Laodice's dream: Laodice, Seleucus' mother, dreamed that she would find a ring to give to Seleucus and that wherever he would lose this ring he would become king. Appian continues that she did indeed find a ring, which Seleucus lost near the Euphrates.[775] A different set of stories, found in Appian and other writers, considers Seleucus' rule over Asia: according to these narratives Seleucus is to find his future in Asia and not in Europe. In the passage quoted above Euphorion seems to connect the story of the dream with the motif of kingship in Asia. If Euphorion composed a poem which combined different elements from an older Seleucus Romance, this would explain the mix of elements in Tertullian.

Another, less direct, indication of Euphorion's engagement with Seleucid royal ideology emerges from surveying the geographical scope of his poetry, and comparing it to poetic practice at the Ptolemaic court. Asper argues that Callimachus' geopoetics is calculated to connect the Greek cities with Ptolemaic Alexandria.[776] His analysis shows that the places and regions mentioned in the *Aetia* and *Iambi* amount to a political map of the Ptolemaic world. In a similar manner, Magnelli argues that Euphorion created a map centered on Asia to rival the Callimachean view of the world.[777] Most tellingly, Magnelli observes that in all of Euphorion's fragments, Egypt is never mentioned.[778] Arguments from silence are precarious for an author as fragmentary as Euphorion, but the absence of Egypt in his extant work is conspicuous because Egypt was closely connected to Greek myths and history since the *Odyssey*. Euphorion, it seems, redrew the literary map of the Hellenistic world by erasing Egypt from it, or at least by downplaying its presence.

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[773] Text from Euphorion, fr. 119 (Lightfoot (2009)).

[774] Appian, *Syriaca* 56.

[775] A different version can be found in Justin, who connects the story of the ring to Seleucus' divine parentage and Apollo's liaison with Laodice. Justinus, *Epitome of Pompeius Trogus* 15.4. See Chapter 1, pp. 52-54 for further discussion of the link between Apollo and Seleucus I.

[776] Asper (2011), 155.

[777] Magnelli (2013), 181-190.

[778] However, Magnelli also warns that the fragmentary nature of the evidence makes this a mere hypothesis and that it is possible that the omission of Egypt is due to chance (Magnelli (2013), 182).

The argument from silence - which turns on the absence of Egypt in Euphorion's work - can be strengthened by looking at the geographical places that he does mention in his poetry. Euphorion professes a special interest in the Near East.[779] Mapping the place names mentioned in Euphorion's extant poetry shows that there is not only a strong representation of narratives from Asia Minor, but that Euphorion also introduces various legends and myths that come from further east. Below is a visual representation of the places that feature in his poetry.

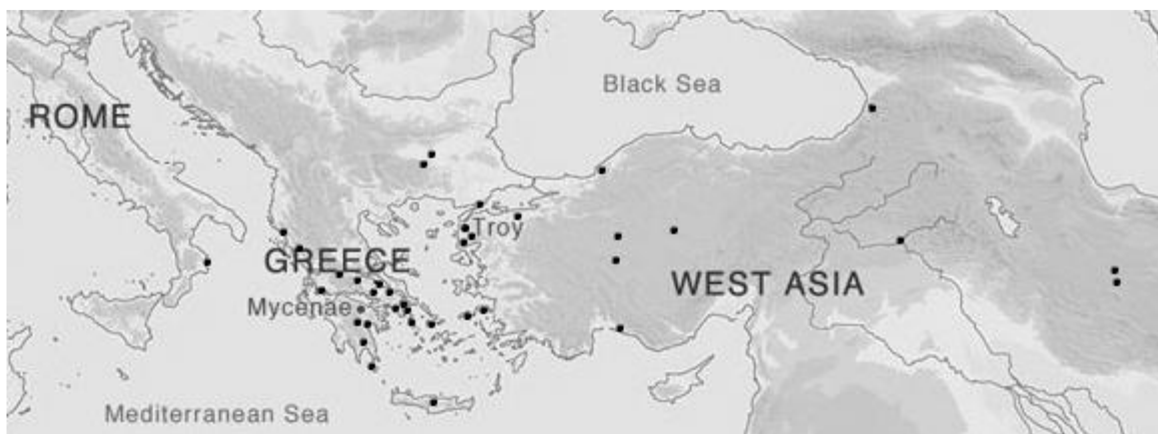

Figure 5 - Places in Euphorion's poetry

This map contrasts with that created by Callimachus' *Aetia*, while also testifying to the fact that the two poets share some reference points in common: Asper has shown that both Callimachus' *Aetia* and his *Iambi* have their focal point in mainland Greece, and this is certainly true also of Euphorion's fragments. However, whereas Callimachus does not venture further east than the Ionian coast[780] Euphorion certainly did. The legend of Semiramis perhaps best illustrates his interest in the Seleucid East, showing also how his distinct vantage point could inspire a novel take on a familiar theme. In Greek myth, Semiramis was a legendary Assyrian queen.[781] Herodotus mentions her as one of two queens that built Babylon, but she rose to prominence in the Greek world through Ctesias' *Persica*, and became part of the Greek novelistic tradition from the Hellenistic period onward.[782] Euphorion mentions Semiramis at least on two separate occasions. First, a scholion on

[779] As argued by Magnelli (2013), 181-190. See Stevens (forthcoming), for similar work on the mental maps of Hellenistic Greek and Babylonian scholarly communities.

[780] Asper (2011), 160-171.

[781] See Chapter 1, pp. 57-58 for further discussion of Semiramis.

[782] Cleitarchus is said to have written about her and she features extensively in Diodorus Siculus and in the Semiramis-Ninus romance. At some point she also became part of the Alexander Romance. For Semiramis in the Greek novel, see Dalley (2013), 117-127; Holzberg (1995), 28-29; Holzberg (1986).

Nicander tells us that he used the adjective θιβρά (‘hot’, ‘sharp’, ‘luxurious’) to describe Semiramis as ‘sultry’.[783] Secondly, Euphorion mentions Semiramis in a list of dangerous liaisons that the speaker wishes upon the addressee:

ἢ Ἰφικλείδαο δαϊθρασέος Ἰολάου
Ἄκτωρ Λειπεφίλην θ[α]λ[ε]ρὴν μνήσαιο θύγατρα,
καὶ δέ σ᾽ ἐράσμιο̣[ν] ἄνδρα Σεμείραμις ἀγ̣κ̣άσσα̣ι̣τ̣ο
ὄφρα [σ]οι εὐόδμοιο [π]αρὰ πρόδομον θ̣α̣[λάμοι]ο̣ 10
παρθενίωι [χ]αρίεντα ποδὶ κροτέοιτο [ ] ̣ ε ̣ [
ἤ νύ τ̣ [ο]ι Ἀπριάτης̣ [τ]εύξω γάμον ὦκ̣ [ ] ̣ ̣ α̣ [ ] ̣ ̣ ς
ἣ̣ν̣ ὅτ[ε] Τραμβήλοιο̣ λέχ[ος] Τελαμ̣ [ω]νιάδα[ο
εἰς ἅλα δειμήνασα κατ᾽ [α]ἰγίλιπος θ̣ό̣ρ̣ε̣ π̣έ̣τ̣ρ̣[ης

Or may you woo Leipephile, the comely daughter
Of brave Iolaus, son of Iphiclus: a second Actor(?)
And may Semiramis embrace you as her lover
So that, beside the porch of your perfumed chamber, 10
Lovely . . . should be rattled by a maiden foot.
Or I’ll devise for you the marriage of Apriate—
Whom, when she feared the bed of Telamon’s son Trambelus
And leaped from a goat-abandoned rock into the sea…
PSI 1390, fragment C, 7-14[784]

This passage is part of a papyrus fragment from the second century AD, *PSI* 1390, fr. C.[785] The papyrus as a whole seems to contain a commentary on various different works of Euphorion.[786] An unconnected fragment from the same papyrus deals with the *Thrax* and our passage may be part of that work. The passage above contains curses that all deal with fatal love affairs based on mythological figures, and the *Thrax* is known to be a curse poem.[787]

Some characters invoked in the passage quoted above were marginal to Greek mythology, as we might expect from a Hellenistic poet treading in the footsteps of Callimachus. A

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[783] Callimachus’ use of the same term clearly shows that θιβρά has an erotic connotation; see Callimachus, fr. 654 (Pfeiffer (1949-1953), 435) “the coupling of the sultry Cyprian”.
[784] Euphorion, fr. 26 (Lightfoot (2009)).
[785]http://www.psi-online.it/documents/psi;14;1390;
http://cpp.arts.kuleuven.be/index.php?page=closeup&id=0231;
http://www.trismegistos.org/tm/detail.php?tm=59773.
[786] The passage quoted above is followed by the opening of the *Hippomedon Meizon* which I discussed earlier. The date of the papyrus gives us an interesting insight into the reception of Euphorion in Oxyrynchus.
[787] In support of reading this text as part of the *Thrax*, see Hollis (1991), 30; Watson (1991), 82-87, 130-131.

version of the story of Leipephile is only known from a fragment of Hesiod but it is not clear if this was the version Euphorion used.[788] Apriate and Trambelus are attested for the first time in Euphorion.[789] By contrast, the figure of Semiramis, the Assyrian queen, is better known: we have seen that she was familiar from earlier accounts in Herodotus and Ctesias, and more to the point, perhaps, she was prominent also in the Seleucid authors Demodamas and Megasthenes. Yet, contrary to our passage, these writers portrayed Semiramis as a conqueror and builder-queen. In Euphorion, she appears in the guise of the *femme fatale*. This side of Semiramis, while foreshadowed in earlier accounts, comes to the fore only in Hellenistic and later literature.[790] Euphorion may have been one of the first to develop it: an innovative depiction of the Assyrian queen would fit not only a broader Hellenistic interest in royal love and romance, but would also help establish a profile for Euphorion as an innovative poet operating in a Seleucid milieu.[791] Euphorion's interest in this Assyrian queen is all the more relevant since, as we saw in the previous chapter, Ptolemaic propaganda equated the Seleucids with the Assyrians and Persians in the wake of the Third Syrian War.[792] Although the transmission of stories about Semiramis requires further research, it seems not unlikely that the Seleucid court in general, and Euphorion specifically, played a role in further developing Semiramis into the popular figure of later Greek romance tradition.

Indeed, Euphorion not merely foregrounds the East in his poetry, but actively constructs "a strong cultural link between the eastern world and mainland Greece".[793] To establish this link Euphorion focusses not only on historical figures from the east, but also on figures from Greece. In the *Alexander*, Euphorion creates a further connection between Asia and Athens by evoking the Athenian Solon:[794]

> Σόλοι, Κιλικίας πόλις, ἡ νῦν Πομπηιούπολις. Ἑκα-
> ταῖος Ἀσίᾳ. κέκληται δὲ ἀπὸ Σόλωνος, ὡς Εὐφορίων ἐν

[788] Hesiod, frag. 252 (MW).
[789] Trambelus, the son of Telamon, was a Trojan captive (Tzetzes on Lycophron, 467), who fell in love with the Lesbian girl Apriate. A longer version of the myth can be found in Parthenius, *Love Stories*, 26 (the story of Apriate).
[790] Culminating in the later romance stories, e.g. Ninus and Semiramis Romance and the Romance of Alexander and Semiramis. See Linant de Bellefonds (2013), 163-180; Mönnig (2004).
[791] On the topic of royal love, see: Chapter 3, esp. pp. 133-134.
[792] Cf. Callimachus' description of the Seleucids as 'Assyrians' in the previous chapter (Chapter 3, pp. 153-156).
[793] Magnelli (2013), 183.
[794] The poem itself might deal with Alexander the Great, or possibly with Paris. In his discussion of the passage, Magnelli focusses on the alternative tradition that the Cilician Soloi was founded by a Solon of Lindus, but rejects the idea that Euphorion had this Solon in mind.

Ἀλεξάνδρῳ.

Soloi, a city of Cilicia, now Pompeioupolis. Hecataeus in his *Asia*. It is named after Solon: so Euphorion in *Alexander*.

Stephanus of Byzantium, s.v. Soloi[795]

According to Euphorion, the Cilician (and in practice that also means Seleucid) city of Soloi was named after the famous lawgiver and Athenian *par excellence*, Solon. Solon's travels would make him a suitable candidate for foundations of cities and various honours.[796] Indeed, Solon was well recognised as the founder of Cypriot Soloi, but Solon's founding of Cilician Soloi is not attested in the ancient tradition before Euphorion.[797] This new foundation narrative created ties between the eastern, 'Asian' empire of the Seleucids and the heart of classical Greek culture: Athens.

A further example of forging ties between Asia and old Greece is the following fragment listing the historical names of Attica, related in a *scholion* on Dionysius the Periegete:

καὶ ἡ Ἀττικὴ δὲ Ἀσία πρώην ἐκαλεῖτο, ὡς ἱστορεῖ ὁ Διονύσιος ὁ Κυζικηνός. οὐ μὴν ἀλλὰ καὶ Ποσειδωνία ἐκαλεῖτο, ὡς Εὐφορίων φησίν·

. . . Ἀκτῆς δὲ παροίτερα φωνηθείσης,
οἱ μὲν δὴ ἐνέπουσι καὶ Ἀσίδα κικλήσκεσθαι,
οἱ δὲ Ποσειδάωνος ἐπώνυμον αὐδηθῆναι.

Attica, too, was formerly called Asia, as is related by Dionysius of Cyzicus. It was also called Posidonia, as Euphorion says:

. . . previously spoken of as Acte,
Some declare that it was named Asian,
Others that it was styled after the name of Poseidon.

Σ ad Dionysius Periegetes 620[798]

According to this *scholion* both Euphorion and Dionysius of Cyzicus[799] referred to the fact that Attica was at some point in history called Asia. That tradition too is not attested before Euphorion.[800] The scholion does not provide information as to why Euphorion, and

[795] Text from Euphorion fr. 3 (Lightfoot (2009)); cf. van Groningen (1977), fr. 3; de Cuenca (1976), fr. 1.)).
[796] For Solon's travels see Herodotus, 1.29-30; Plutarch, *Solon* 26.
[797] Most ancient sources named Rhodes as Soloi's *metropolis* (Strabo 8.7.5 and 14.3.3, Polybius 21.24.10 Livy 37.56.7), cf. Yağci (2013), 5-16.
[798] Text from Euphorion, fr. 37 (Lightfoot (2009)).
[799] Dionysius of Cyzicus was an epigrammatist who flourished around 200 BC and who wrote an epigram for Eratosthenes.
[800] Acosta-Hughes and Cusset (2012), 102-103.

Dionysius, said Attica had been called Asia. In his discussion of this fragment, Magnelli downplays the significance of the name 'Asia' and explains it as a display of obscure knowledge about Attica.[801] While I agree that displaying knowledge about Attica was at stake, Magnelli seems to me to underestimate the importance of linking Seleucid Asia to Attica and Athens as the ancient centre of Greek culture. As we have seen, the Ptolemies prided themselves in having transferred Athenian tragedies to Alexandria and sent back mere copies. In this fragment, Euphorion claims that Attica itself used to be (called) Asia. The force of this statement is all the more evident when we bear in mind, as Euphorion must have done, how references to Asia were used in the poetry of Callimachus.[802]

To conclude this section, we have seen that Euphorion's poetry was not only state of the art Hellenistic poetry based on Alexandrian aesthetics but also had a specifically Seleucid slant. Euphorion challenged Ptolemaic cultural hegemony by being a successful 'Alexandrian' poet at the Seleucid court.

Hegesianax and the War with Rome

Looking West: Rome and Troy

At the turn of the third to the second century BC, Antiochus III marched his army west as part of an expansionist war to incorporate mainland Greece into the Seleucid Empire. A century after Seleucus I's ill-fated Macedonian campaign, Antiochus III was the first Seleucid king to set foot on the Greek mainland.[803] He aimed to connect lands that had not been united since the reign of Alexander the Great. His plans destabilised the balance of power between the Hellenistic kingdoms and, inevitably, led to conflict and war.[804] In addition, Antiochus' expansionist plans made him cross paths with the Romans, a relatively new rival on the Hellenistic stage.[805]

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[801] Magnelli (2013), 186-187.

[802] See Chapter 3, pp. 153-157.

[803] Seleucus I died on his campaign in Macedonia, betrayed by Ptolemy Ceraunus. Antiochus II and Antiochus Hierax both campaigned in Thrace but never got to Greece. Antiochus II: Polyaenus 4.16; cf. Bevan (1902), Vol. II, 176. Antiochus Hierax: Justinus, *Epitome of Pompeius Trogus* 27.3.9-11; Porphyry, *FGrHist* 32 F8; Polyaenus 4.17.

[804] For a more extensive historical narrative of the events leading up to the war, and a discussion of Antiochus' relation with the Romans, see: Dmitriev (2011)b; Grainger (2002); Grainger (1996), 329-343; Walsh (1996), 344-363; Mehl (1990), 143-155; Errington (1989), 244-289; Piejko (1988), 151-165; Mastrocinque (1983); McDonald (1967), 1-8; Brown (1964), 124-136; Badian (1959), 81-99.

[805] The Romans had been involved in the affairs of the eastern Mediterranean, and specifically with the Seleucids, since the 220's BC. The earliest evidence for direct contact between the two powers is perhaps a

In this context, the Seleucids expanded their literary programme, by directing attention, and resources, at Rome. This is evident both in new developments in Seleucid royal propaganda and, less directly, in the literature produced at Antiochus' court. The clearest points of interaction concern the legacy of Troy, which gave rise to a literary engagement that coincided with military and ideological battles for control over Greece, Macedon and Asia Minor. The main representative in this interaction on the Seleucid side was the historian Hegesianax of Alexandria Troas.

The political situation in the Aegean and the growing tension with Rome provides important context to the works of Hegesianax, a *philos* of Antiochus III who wrote a history of Troy. His high position as friend of the king is indicated by his career as ambassador to Rome during the Roman-Seleucid wars. As a diplomat and a historian, Hegesianax of Alexandria Troas straddled the boundary between poetics and politics more adeptly than perhaps any other Seleucid writer.

Hegesianax of Alexandria Troas and the Origins of Rome

According to his biography in the Suda, Hegesianax of Alexandria Troas became a member of Antiochus' *philoi* by impressing the king with his wit and his own poetry. The story goes that once, when he performed for King Antiochus, he was asked to join in the armoured dance of the king and his soldiers; Hegesianax refused and replied "Do you wish, O king, to see me dance badly, or would you prefer hearing me recite my own poems very well?" Subsequently he recited a poem praising the king, and this pleased the king so greatly that he

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letter to one 'King Seleucus' about the autonomy of Ilium which may be dated to the reign of Seleucus II in 246-225 BC (Suetonius, Claudius, 25.3, see: Grainger (2002), 10-13; De Sanctis; Schmitt (1964), 291; Gruen (1984), 64-65. For arguments against its genuineness see: Holleaux (1921), 46-60). Interactions between the Romans and the various Hellenistic kings became more intense after Ptolemy IV Philopator died in 205 BC leaving his infant son Ptolemy V as heir (Grainger (2002), 20-21). In 202 BC there were rumours that Philip V of Macedon and Antiochus had made a secret pact to divide Ptolemy's lands. In the meantime, war was unfolding in Greece between the Romans and Philip V (Polybius 15.20.1). Antiochus III exploited the unstable situation in Egypt, and attacked the Ptolemaic possession in Syria in 202 BC (Grainger (2002), 20-24). In order to maintain control over the situation in Greece, the Romans sent envoys to Philip V, Ptolemy and Antiochus in 200-199 BC. The embassy consisted of three Roman senators: C. Claudius Nero, C. Sempronius Tuditanus and M. Aemilius Lepidus (Polybius, 16.27.5; Livy, 31.2.3; Appian, *Macedonian Wars* 4.2; Justinus, *Epitome of Pompeius Trogus* 30.3.3-4). In particular, the envoys to Antiochus were sent to ensure that he would not intervene on the Greek mainland and to voice their concern should he invade Egypt. (Grainger (2002), 25; Warrior (1996), 43-51). Polybius adds that the Roman embassy ordered Antiochus to stay away from Egypt, see Polybius 15.20.1-8; Justinus, *Epitome of Pompeius Trogus* 30.3.3. Grainger rejects this as later Roman propaganda (Grainger (2002), 28. For contact between Rome and Greece in general, see Waterfield (2014); Dmitriev (2011)a; Erskine (2010), 22-29; Eckstein (2008); Gruen (1984); Derow (1979), 1-15; Briscoe (1972), 22-53.

made Hegesianax his *philos*.[806] Although the story may not be historically accurate, it indicates that Hegesianax was a respected author of poetry as well as prose, and was invited to join the Seleucid court in that capacity. Subsequently he also became an important actor in the political events of his time: during the cold war that preceded the conflict with Rome, Hegiasianax was a member of at least two Seleucid embassies to the Romans.[807] We do not have a precise chronology for Hegesianax' life, but he must have been at least 30 years old when he was sent to Rome on diplomatic duty. Hence it is reasonable to assume that he was born at the latest around 230-225 BC.

Hegesianax is credited with at least two rhetorical-grammatical works: *On the style of Democritus* (Περὶ τῆς Δημοκρίτου λέξεως); and *On poetical words* (Περὶ ποιητικῶν λέξεων). His authorship of these two treatises shows that, like the scholars of Alexandria and Pergamon, Hegesianax was an all-round intellectual. His main work, however, was the *Troica* or *Histories*, an extensive work on the history of Troy.[808] Since Hegesianax was from the Troad himself, his writings on Troy could be seen as something more than a scholar of poetic language espousing an interest in the quintessentially poetic city and its population;[809] on the subject of Troy, Hegesianax could also claim the standing of a local expert. Indeed, he seems to have gone further and invented a uniquely knowledgeable alter ego for himself. Several authors quote early myths of Troy as narrated by a certain Kephalon or Kephalion, a scholar of great antiquity and high reputation.[810] Athenaeus, however, informs us that this Kephalon is none other than Hegesianax himself. If he is correct, Hegesianax created an

[806] Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistai* 4.155a-b, quoting Demetrius of Scepsis.

[807] The embassy to Flamininus in Corinth in 196 BC (Polybius, 18.47.14, cf. Livy, 32.8.15-16 who does not mention Hegesianax by name) and the embassy in 194/193 BC to Rome (Livy, 34.57.1-6). (He was also present as ambassador at the meeting between Antiochus III and the Roman delegates in Lysimacheia (Polybius, 18.49.2-18.50.3)). His visit to Rome undoubtedly provided Hegesianax with information about Roman customs and places. Hegesianax' mention of the Palatine in Festus is significant in this regard. Anctiochus also sent envoys to Rome in 198 BC, but their names are not reported. For further discussion, see: Grainger (2002), 127-128; Walsh (1996), 344-363; Gruen (1992), 42 and n. 166; Mehl (1990), 143-155; Piejko (1988), 151-165; Gabba (1976), 88; Gabba (1979), 631; Olshausen (1974), 191-193; Briscoe (1972), 22-53.

[808] For the fragments of Hegesianax see *BNJ* 45; *FGrHist* 45.

[809] Overlap between Homeric scholarship and the history or geography of Troy was not uncommon, cf. Aristarchus of Samothrace' Περὶ Ἰλιάδος καὶ Ὀδυσσείας (On the Iliad and the Odyssey) and Περὶ τοῦ ναυστάθμου (On the camp of the ships).

[810] Strabo 13.1.19; Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* 1.49.1, 1.72.1; Photius *Bibiotheca* 68, p. 34a Bekker; Parthenius, *Erotica Pathemata* 4.1-7, 34; Steph. Byz. s.v. Ἀρίσβη, s.v. Γραικός; Festus, *De verb. sign.*, p. 326.28-33 Lindsay. For further discussion, see: Costa in *BNJ* 45.

elaborate charade in the interest of maximising his authority: he told the oldest history of Troy, it would seem, through the voice of his alter-ego Kephalon of Gergis.[811]

From the fragments it seems clear that the *Troica* covered Troy's history from the earliest mythological times to the third century BC. Significantly, this meant the work included the foundation of Rome after the Trojan War. Hegesianax' interest in Troy and in the foundation of Rome, came at a politically opportune time. In the early 2nd century BC Antiochus III was deeply involved with the cities of Western Asia Minor and the Troad, and looked even further westward. The political climate at the Seleucid court, especially Hannibal's alleged friendship with Antiochus and the planned invasion of Thrace and Macedonia, brought the Seleucids into closer contact with Rome than ever before. And the Troad was the place where the histories of Rome and the Seleucids intersected.

At a local level, Hegesianax' *Troica* served an important symbolic function. As part of his western campaign, Antiochus showed a keen interest in the cities of Asia Minor, as demonstrated by inscriptions and letters from the king to the *poleis*.[812] In this context, the *Troica* demonstrated that the king had a stake in local history and, moreover, that he was in a position to make authoritative claims about the most iconic *polis* in the region. By mapping out the history of Troy, Hegesianax professes his knowledge, and thereby his control – Seleucid control – over the area.[813] In this regard, Kephalon, Hegesianax' alter-ego, plays an important role as he provides a source of authority that is external to the Seleucid Empire; and bestows power on the Seleucids in the form of superior knowledge of the past.

An example of how this worked in practice can be found in the story of Dardanus, the founding father of the Trojan peoples, a Greek ante-diluvian hero:[814]

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[811] Of the fragments that Jacoby attributed to Hegesianax, all but one are in the ancient sources attributed to Kephalon. The only fragment attributed to Hegesianax himself deals with the invasion of the Galatians in the third century BC and thus describes very recent history. Unfortunately, the fragments we have do not indicate in what ways Hegesianax introducted Kephalon and integrated his account of history into the *Troica*. He might have presented himself as a transmittor of Kephalon's old manuscripts or paraphrased him less directly. For similar constructions of an ancient authorial persona, see, for example, Philo of Byblos' purported translation of the pre-Trojan War, Phoenician author Sanchuniathon and the Greek and Latin accounts of the Trojan War by Dictys Cretensis, allegedly a soldier in this war.

[812] See Ma (1999) for a collection and discussion of the relevant inscriptions.

[813] Cf. the discussion of geographical and historical knowledge as a means to exert power over a region, in Chapter 1, pp. 68-72.

[814] Dardanus featured as a founding father of the Trojans in several Greek writers before Hegesianax: Homer, *Iliad* 20.215-217; Herodotus, 7.43, Plato, *Laws*, 682a.

Ἀρίσβη· πόλις τῆς Τρωάδος, Μιτυληναίων ἄποικος, ἧς οἰκισταὶ Σκαμάνδριος καὶ Ἀσκάνιος υἱὸς Αἰνείου. (...) Κεφάλων δέ φησιν ὅτι Δάρδανος ἀπὸ Σαμοθράικης ἐλθὼν εἰς τὴν Τρωάδα τὴν Τεύκρου τοῦ Κρητὸς θυγατέρα γαμεῖ Ἀρίσβην.

Arisbe: city in the Troad, colony of the Mitylenaians, whose founders were Aeneas' sons Skamandrios and Askanios. (...) Kephalon says that Dardanus came to the Troad from Samothrake and married Arisbe daughter of the Cretan Teukros.

Stephanus of Byzantium, Ethnica s.v. Ἀρίσβη[815]

The passage is quoted in Stephanus of Byzantium, in the context of discussing the city of Arisbe in the Troad. It is unclear whether Arisbe was the focus of interest in Hegesianax as well, or perhaps rather Dardanus. Unfortunately, we cannot discover from the fragment above whether Hegesianax discussed Dardanus' origins in Arcadia or just his journey from Samothrace to the Troad.[816] It is, however, not unlikely that Hegesianax knew and discussed Dardanus' links with Arcadia, which also played an important role in Dionysius of Halicarnassus' argument that the Romans were historically Greeks.[817] If he did, Hegesianax must have stressed the antiquity of Dardanus as an antediluvian hero. After founding Dardania as his royal capital in the Troad, Dardanus established a kingdom and a royal line that would found Troy two generations later. The antiquity of Dardanus lent prestige not just to Troy and the other cities of the Troad but also to the Seleucids as patrons of the area and, through Hegesianax/Kephalon, masters of its history.

But local history, and local politics, was not all there was to Hegesianax' *Troica*. As we saw in the first section of this chapter, the Seleucids competed with the Attalids over control of Asia Minor. During the reign of Antiochus, the two dynasties vied for cultural, as well as political, control over the different regions of Asia Minor in general and the Troad in particular.[818] The Attalids, unlike the Seleucids, had rooted their kingdom in the history of

[815] Text from *BNJ* 45 F4.

[816] Erskine (2001), 25.

[817] Dionysius of Halicarnassus, book 1 and book 7, esp. 1.5-13 and 7.72-74. For discussion of this facet of Dionysius' political programme, see Ascheri (2011), 65-85; Gabba (1991), 106-109, 134-138; Hill (1961), 88-89.

[818] In 199 BC, after his conquest of Gaza and Sidon, Antiochus marched north to Asia Minor to strengthen Seleucid power there in the aftermath of Achaeus' rebellion and take possession of the Ptolemaic possessions in Asia Minor (Grainger (2002), 30). Antiochus' advances enticed King Attalus of Pergamon, until then an ally of Antiochus, to accuse him before the Roman senate of invading Attalid lands (Livy, 32.8.9-16; For discussion of about this account see Grainger (2002), 32-35; Ma (1999) 279-281; Mehl (1990), 146-147; Holleaux (1942) *Études* III, 331-335; Gruen (1984), Vol. II, 538-539; Will (1982) Vol. II, 153-154; Badian (1959), 82-83; Schmitt (1964), 269-276; Bevan (1902), Vol II, 36.). In response, the senate sent out another embassy to discuss matters with Antiochus which was in turn followed in 197 BC by an embassy from Antiochus to Rome (Livy

Asia Minor by connecting their dynasty specifically to the Trojan royal house.[819] In order to substantiate this connection they invoked two ancestral heroes: Pergamus and Telephus. Pergamus, after whom the capital of the Attalids was named, was the son of Neoptolemus and Andromache and so represented both Trojan royalty and a noble Achaean (i.e. Greek) lineage. Telephus had the parallel function of linking the Attalids to Arcadia, Heracles and the kingdom of Mysia in Asia Minor. The Seleucids could not boast the same degree of local rootedness, but they could nonetheless take possession of the region, at Attalid expense, by enlisting local experts like Hegesianax and annexing its history, beyond the two Pergamene ancestors all the way back to Dardanus. Through Hegesianax' work, Antiochus could hope to outflank Pergamene royal ideology both geographically and chronologically.

The *Troica*, then, was important not just for the Seleucids' relationship with the Greek cities of Asia Minor but also for their struggle with the Attalids. Beyond that, it enabled them to engage with the rising power of the Roman Republic. The Attalids and Romans had long invoked their shared Trojan ancestry for diplomatic purposes.[820] The other side of that coin, relevant to both the Seleucids and the Attalids, was that controlling the history of the Troad became a potential mechanism for keeping the Romans on side, or putting them in their place, by taking charge of their history.

The Romans, for their part, were potentially receptive to such manipulations. By the late 3rd century BC, they had developed a strong interest in historical links with the Trojan *metropolis*, as may be seen from the work of Quintus Fabius Pictor, who wrote a history of Rome from its origins to at least the 2nd Punic war.[821] He himself had fought in this war, which implies that he was an adult in 225 BC.[822] In 216 BC he was sent out to Delphi as ambassador of the Roman state to ask the oracle for a resolution of the war.[823] He was well-versed in Greek, and originally wrote his history of Rome in Greek, although he may later have made a copy of the same work in Latin.[824] Although it is unclear how far back the

32.8.15-16 and 33.20.8). Although Antiochus' ambassadors assured the Romans of the king's good intentions towards the Roman people, Attalus' intervention meant that the Romans had become directly involved in the struggle for Asia Minor.

[819] The Attalids also patronised the temples at Ilium, *I.Ilion* 41, 42 (*RC* 62).

[820] See especially Erskine (2001).

[821] The most recent edition of the fragments of Q. Fabius Pictor is *The Fragments of the Roman Historians* (Cornell (ed.) (2013), Vol. I, 13-49 and Vol. II, 32-103). See also Mehl (2011), 43-48; Beck and Walter (2001), 55-136; Chassignet (1996); Wiseman (1995), 1-2; Peter (1914), 69-100.

[822] Livy, 22.7.4; Flavius Eutropius, 3.5; Paulus Orosius, 4.13.6. He was thus around 30 years older than Hegesianax.

[823] Livy, 22.57.4-5, 23.11.1-6; Plutarch, *Fabius* 18.3; Appian, *Hannibalic War* 27.116.

[824] Cornell (ed.) (2013), 163-165; Mehl (2011), 43-48.

historiographical tradition of Rome's Trojan origins went, the turn of the 3rd to the 2nd century seems to have been an important moment in its development.[825] Fabius Pictor is credited with the first formal development of several themes that were to become important for Rome's foundation narratives: the prophecies of Aeneas' deeds, Ascanius' founding of Alba and the birth and upbringing of Romulus and Remus.[826]

For the Seleucids, then, there was a lot at stake when it came to engaging with the origins of Rome in Asia Minor. Unfortunately, it is unclear whether Hegesianax drew any direct connections between the Seleucids and Troy (and hence Rome). A possible point of contact would be his discussion of the Galatian occupation of Troy. This episode is set during a Galatian invasion of the Troad in 278/7 BC. As we saw earlier in this chapter, Antiochus I defeated the Galatians in 275 BC[827] and it is not unlikely that Hegesianax linked the two narratives in his history. However, most fragments attributed to Hegesianax deal with Aeneas' travels and the foundation of Rome. To some extent, this will reflect the bias of our sources, but there may be more to it. Hegesianax, after all, was involved in at least two embassies to the Romans including one that took him to Rome itself. This has led scholars to wonder whether Hegesianax had a political motive for focussing on Rome to the extent that he apparently did, and if so, to ask if he was pro- or anti-Roman. The question may well be unanswerable, but the fact is that Hegesianax, as a Seleucid writer, engaged with Roman traditions at a time when Rome's interest in its own history was becoming much more salient. This was hardly a coincidence, and even though the *Troica* may not have been overtly political in tone and content, Hegesianax must have been aware that it carried political significance at a time of growing political tension with Rome. At the very least, he will have considered carefully what to say about the early history of Troy, and Rome.

To elaborate on this, let me now introduce two important fragments from the *Troica*. The first, transmitted by Dionysius of Halicarnassus, relates the death of Aeneas in Thrace. Aeneas' link with Thrace is apparent in several ancient sources. Hellanicus of Mytilene and Hegesippus tell us that Aeneas took refuge for a while at Pallene in Thrace.[828] Lycophron's Aeneas even founded a city in northern Greece, called Aeneia, as part of his Thracian

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[825] Mehl (2011), 9-17.
[826] Cornell (ed.) (2013), Vol. I, 13-49 and Vol. II, 32-103
[827] See above, pp. 170-171.
[828] Cf. Hellanicus: *FrGHist* 4 F31 (Dionysius of Halicarnassus, 1.47-48.1); Hegesippus: *BNJ* 391 F5 (Dionysius of Halicarnassus, 1.49.1). Hellanicus of Mytilene (or of Lesbos) was a Greek logographer from the 5th century BC, who wrote, among other works, a *Troica*. Hegesippus' only known work is a local history of Pallene in the Chalcidice, which he wrote around the fourth century BC.

wanderings.[829] However, no ancient author, except Hegesianax and Hegesippus, claim that Aeneas died in Thrace, thus cutting his life short before he even reaches Italy. Hegesianax must have been aware that in choosing this version of the myth he weakened the bond between the Romans and their founding figure.[830]

This is not Hegesianax' only deviation from the narratives that we find in the Roman historians. The subsequent foundation of Rome, after the Trojan exiles have buried Aeneas in Thrace, is also attested in Dionysius of Halicarnassus. He refers to Hegesianax' *Troica* as the source for the foundation of Rome by Romos, son of Aeneas:

> ἀμφισβητήσεως δὲ πολλῆς οὔσης καὶ περὶ τοῦ χρόνου τῆς κτίσεως (sc. τῆς Ῥώμης) καὶ περὶ τῶν οἰκιστῶν τῆς πόλεως οὐδὲ αὐτὸς ᾤμην δεῖν ὥσπερ ὁμολογούμενα πρὸς ἁπάντων ἐξ ἐπιδρομῆς ἐπελθεῖν. Κεφάλων μὲν γὰρ ὁ Γεργίθιος συγγραφεὺς παλαιὸς πάνυ δευτέραι γενεᾶι μετὰ τὸν Ἰλιακὸν πόλεμον ἐκτίσθαι λέγει τὴν πόλιν ὑπὸ τῶν ἐξ Ἰλίου διασωθέντων σὺν Αἰνείᾳ. οἰκιστὴν δὲ αὐτῆς ἀποφαίνει τὸν ἡγησάμενον τῆς ἀποικίας Ῥῶμον· τοῦτον δ' εἶναι τῶν Αἰνείου παίδων ἕνα. τέτταρας δέ φησιν Αἰνείᾳ γενέσθαι παῖδας, Ἀσκάνιον Εὐρυλέοντα Ῥωμύλον Ῥῶμον.
> Since there is a great controversy both about the date of foundation and the founders of the city (sc. of Rome), I have also considered it my duty not to merely give a brief account of these things, as if they were universally agreed on. As Kephalon of Gergis, a very ancient historian, says, the city was founded two generations after the Trojan War by the men escaped from Troy together with Aeneas. As the founder of the city he names the leader of the colony, Romos, one of Aeneas' sons. He reports that Aeneas had four sons, Askanios, Euryleon, Romylos, and Romos.
> Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* 1.72.1-2[831]

In this passage, Dionysius claims that there were many different stories about the foundation of Rome. One of these stories, by Kephalon (as we have seen, Hegesianax' *nom de plume*), attributes the foundation of Rome to Romos, one of the four sons of Aeneas, who seems to correspond to Remus known from other sources. According to Hegesianax, he was the brother of Romylos, Askanios and Euryleon, about whom we hear no more.[832] What strikes

[829] Lycophron, 1236-1238. In connection with this fact, Strabo also mentions Aeneas' foundation of Skepsis.

[830] For the Roman Aeneas legend, see: Ennius, Book 1, Quintus Fabius Pictor, F1 and F3 (Cornell (ed.) (2013)); Varro, *Lingua Latina* 5.144; Livy, 1.1-3; Dionysius of Halicarnassus, 1.44.3-71; Diodorus Siculus, 7.5.1-12, and of course Virgil, *Aeneid*. For a discussion of the development of the Roman Aeneas and founding myths: Casali (2010), 43-50; Fox (1996); Miles (1995); Farrow (1992), 354-357; Horsfall (1986), 11-17; Horsfall (1974), 111; Perret (1942), 325-334.

[831] Text from *BNJ* 45 F9.

[832] Another Roman source, Festus reports Hegesianax' narrative differently. According to Festus' summary Hegesianax said that Romos was not Aeneas' son but merely his companion. However, Festus seems to think that according to Hegesianax Aeneas made it to Italy, a suggestion which, as we have seen above, contradicts

one about this narrative is that Hegesianax describes Romos, rather than Romulus (Romylos), as the founder of Rome, thus effectively reversing the Roman narrative.[833] Here, Hegesianax builds on the received Greek tradition that a figure called Romos (or a female equivalent figure Rome) was the eponymous founder of the city.[834] In earlier Greek sources this figure sometimes appears by itself and sometimes together with Romulus. At the same time, however, the figure of Remus, as brother of Romulus was also known to the Greeks at the end of the third century BC.[835] Hegesianax, therefore, made a conscious choice: by blending two existing traditions he subverts the Roman story, in a way that reflects earlier Greek accounts of the foundation of Rome.

Previous scholars have suggested that Hegesianax' account contains overt anti-Roman propaganda. Perret, for example, argues that Hegesianax consciously subverts Roman state ideology by letting the founding hero die before reaching Rome.[836] I agree that Hegesianax' story downplays the role of Aeneas by making him die in Thrace. However, some aspects of Perret's argument are not without problems.[837] In particular, other scholars have focussed on the fact that if Romos was indeed Aeneas' son, Hegesianax' account cannot be anti-Roman to the extent that Perret alleges. Farrow in particular stresses that Hegesianax creates a more direct line between Aeneas and the foundation of Rome than Virgil does.[838] Although Farrow is right that Hegesianax does not deny Rome's Trojan descent, he ignores the way in which the narrative asserts Hegesianax' power over the history of Rome. Indeed, I argue that it is Hegesianax' role as arbiter of Roman history rather than any straightforward pro- or anti-Roman bias that makes his account such a remarkable example of Seleucid court literature.

Focussing on Hegesianax' confident and idiosyncratic portrayal of Rome and its links with Troy, a more rewarding reading emerges, one which moves beyond the dichotomy between pro- and anti-Roman sentiments. For Hegesianax, there was little to be gained by alienating Rome. His work sought rather to impress upon his readers the intellectual supremacy and undisputable authority of the Seleucid narrative in a way that could potentially appeal even to

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other fragments. Although it is hard to determine which story was originally in Hegesianax, Dionysius seems to be the more reliable source.

[833] For the received Roman story see: Livy, 1.6-7; Dionysius of Halicarnassus, 72.90. For an extensive analysis of the myths concerning Remus, see Wiseman (1995).

[834] Wiseman (1995), appendix.

[835] *SEG* XVI 486, an inscription from Chios dating from the late third or early second century BC, cf. Bikerman (1952), 65-81.

[836] Perret (1942), 511-513; he further argues that Hegesianax was influenced by anti-Roman hawks like Hannibal (Perret (1942), 513).

[837] Trachsel (2007), 186-199; Farrow (1992), 354-357.

[838] Farrow (1992), 354-357.

Romans. For this purpose, the archaic Kephalon was a crucial witness, diverting attention away from any specifically Seleucid bias that could otherwise have been read into the text.

The Poetics of Propaganda

In the final part of this chapter I look at how Antiochus performed acts of kingship that display a subtle interaction with history, myth and poetry.[839] This literary turn was not unprecedented in Seleucid history: during the formative period of the Seleucid Empire, just after (and during) the crisis of the successors' wars, Kings Seleucus I and Antiochus I had expanded their realm and consolidated its eastern borders by constructing new protocols of royal authority and maps of imperial unity. Those maps and protocols can be recognised both in the literature of the time and in the actions which the kings performed. One hundred years later, the unprecedented *western* expansion of Antiochus the Great created a similar demand for imperial scripts. The thriving literary culture of his court provided Antiochus with many opportunities to disseminate such scripts, in the interest of the stability and legitimacy of his reign.

Conversely, the active literary production at the court of Antiochus provided an excellent context for political engagement with literary motifs. Although direct evidence is lacking, it is plausible to assume that the king's *literati* directly shaped some of his military and political performances. We have already seen that Antiochus III had a flair for the dramatic and a clear sense of the power of ideological performance. This was demonstrated both by his marriage ceremony at Zeugma on the Euphrates (Chapter 3) and the Babylonian festival where he was hailed as a new Nebuchadnezzar (Chapter 2). In these royal dramas, Antiochus engaged with key moments of Seleucid history and important literary motifs that attached to them, playing tribute to the past while also laying claim to the future. The Roman-Seleucid wars provided a context for similar royal performances.

The first significant act of kingship that I would like to consider in this connection took place at Lysimacheia, during Antiochus' Thracian campaigns of 197/6 BC. In 197 BC, Antiochus crossed the Hellespont to Thrace and restored Lysimacheia, which had been

[839] See Chapter 3, p. 142, n. 563, for some of the works on cultural poetics that has inspired my approach. See also Chaniotis (2011), 186-189 and Chaniotis (1997), 219-259 on theatricality and statesmen (and the king as performer). Chaniotis focusses especially on Demetrius Poliorcetes, but his general conclusions seem relevant here (cf. Bell (2004), 116-150; Walbank (1996), 120); see Bartsch (1994) for a discussion of similar issues in the Roman Empire.

destroyed by Thracians.[840] Several things came together for Antiochus in Lysimacheia: refounding the city as a western capital of the empire was significant in its own right, but also provided an elegant way of staging negotiations with the Romans concerning the Greek cities and the wider issue of control over Asia Minor. Since Antiochus' actions at Lysimacheia were aimed at multiple audiences, from Roman senators to the Greek cities in Asia Minor, they needed to be carefully scripted. According to Livy events unfolded as follows:

> *Lysimachiam inde omnibus simul navalibus terrestribusque copiis venit. Quam cum desertam ac stratam prope omnem ruinis invenisset -ceperant autem direptamque incenderant Thraces paucis ante annis- cupido eum restituendi nobilem urbem et loco sitam opportuno cepit. Itaque omnia simul est aggressus et tecta murosque restituere et partim redimere servientes Lysimachenses, partim fuga sparsos per Hellespontum Chersonesumque conquirere et contrahere, partim novos colonos spe commodorum proposita adscribere et omni modo frequentare; simul, ut Thracum summoveretur metus, ipse parte dimidia terrestrium copiarum ad depopulanda proxima Thraciae est profectus, partem navalesque omnes socios reliquit in operibus reficiendae urbis.*
> From there he proceeded with all his forces, navy and army alike, to Lysimacheia. When he found it almost entirely abandoned and in ruins (the Thracians had captured, plundered, and burned it a few years before), he was seized by the desire of rebuilding a city so famed and so advantageously situated. Therefore, he undertook everything at once; to rebuild the houses and walls, to ransom some of the Lysimacheians who were in slavery, to seek out and bring back some of those who had scattered in flight through the Hellespont and Chersonesus, to attract new colonists by the prospects of advantage held out to them, and to populate the city in every possible manner. At the same time, in order to dispel their fear of the Thracians, he set out in person with half his land forces to devastate the neighbouring parts of Thrace, leaving the rest and all the naval allies engaged in the work of rebuilding the city.
> Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, 33.38.10-14[841]

Livy's narrative focusses on Antiochus' role in the founding of Lysimacheia, as he repairs buildings, restores the scattered population and ransoms citizens who have become slaves. Antiochus emerges from this description as the perfect benefactor in the tradition of his illustrious predecessor, Seleucus I, who strove to conquer Thrace and Macedonia, but was murdered near Lysmiacheia by Ptolemy Ceraunus. Antiochus' successful campaign contrasts with Seleucus' failure, while at the same time fulfilling his ambition, a perfect example of intra-dynastic emulation.

In Livy's passage, we also recognise a script familiar from earlier Seleucid writers, according to which a city is founded by the Seleucid king, then destroyed by barbarians and

[840] Polybius, 18.51.7; Livy, 33.38.10-14; cf. Piejko (1988), 151-165; *I.Ilion* 45.
[841] Text from Briscoe's edition (1973).

finally refounded by the king or one of his successors. We have seen this pattern in Demodamas' account of his Bactrian campaign, and to a lesser extent in Megasthenes' *Indica*.[842] Seleucid imperial discourse, as reflected by Livy, turned Thrace into a mirror image of the north eastern steppes, connecting the two outlying regions of the empire through shared narratives of conquest and restoration.[843] The importance of these symmetries is further reinforced by Antiochus' plan to establish his second son Seleucus as king in Thrace.[844] Since the time of Seleucus I, the Seleucid king had ruled jointly with his appointed heir, who had usually become viceroy of the eastern satrapies. Antiochus III clearly planned to have an analogous construction in the west.[845] Expanding the empire, he at the same time drew it closer together, by fitting its parts into a longstanding map of Seleucid space.

Fittingly, Lysimacheia as the empire's new, western capital became the centre for further negotiations with the Romans. These negotiations did not focus solely on Lysimacheia and Thrace, but paid special attention to the Greek cities of Asia Minor. In 196 BC Rome sent an embassy to Antiochus in Lysimacheia demanding his departure from Europe and the freedom of the Greeks in Asia Minor.[846] These demands were in accordance with Flamininus' proclamation at the Isthmian Games in Corinth that all Greek cities were to be free, without garrisons, subject to no tribute and enjoying their ancestral constitutions.[847] Antiochus did not comply with Roman demands, declaring that Thrace and Asia Minor were his by ancestral right and that the cities of Asia Minor would be granted freedom by him, and not by Rome. This was a crucial political decision, underpinned by a keen sense of history, and of the power of literature to shape not just perceptions of the past but power relations in the present.

[842] Chapter 1, p. 54, n. 179; cf. Kosmin (2014)a, 66, 215.

[843] In addition to the narrative pattern of destruction and restoration, Livy's story also echoes some of the themes and language of Babylonian kingship ideology. Although we do not know his source for these details of Seleucid imperial discourse, the literary circle at Antiochus' court provides good candidates, especially Hegesianax, who was present at Lysimacheia and participated in the negotiations.

[844] Livy 33.40: "[…] to rebuild from its foundations the city of Lysimacheia, which had been destroyed by the Thracians, in order that his son Seleucus might have it as the seat of empire."

[845] Antiochus III's eldest son, Antiochus, ruled jointly with his father from 201 BC as viceroy in the East.

[846] 'Freedom for the Greeks' was a slogan that went back more than two centuries. It was already employed during the Persian and Peloponnesian wars, and during the age of Alexander and the successors became an important diplomatic means of negotiating the relationship between the kings and the Greek cities. For extensive discussion, see: Dmitriev (2011)a; Gruen (1993), 340-343.

[847] Livy, 33.32. Walsh (1996), 344.

Hegesianax had been present as ambassador at the Isthmian Games and was again present at the negotiations in Lysimacheia.[848] He will have been closely involved in formulating a Seleucid response to the Roman 'liberation' of the Greek cities, and his expertise in Trojan history will have been crucial to that involvement.[849] As we have seen, the interest of the Roman Republic in Asia Minor was based very directly on its claims to Trojan ancestry and was supported and further fanned by the Attalid kings and *their* mythology of Trojan descent.[850] The Seleucids were aware of the power of these myths, and sought to reshape them not just in their court literature but also in their political actions. In 192 BC Antiochus marked his crossing from Asia Minor to Greece by visiting Ilium and sacrificing to Athena Ilias, just as Alexander had done when making the journey in the opposite direction to battle the Persians.[851]

> *Priusquam solveret naves, Ilium a mari escendit, ut Minervae sacrificaret.*
> Before setting sail, he [Antiochus] went up to Ilium from the sea in order to offer sacrifices to Minerva.
> Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita* 35.43.3[852]

In this brief remark, Livy describes how Antiochus ascended to Troy and sacrificed to Athena, before he went back to his fleet that lay waiting to invade Greece. The ideological importance of Ilium at the time of Antiochus rested partly on its associations with Homer as the representative *par excellence* of Greek literature and culture, partly on its location between Asia and Europe, already exploited by Alexander, and partly on its associations with Rome. It was a potent mix. For Antiochus III, the first Seleucid ruler after Seleucus I who

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[848] Mastrocinque (1983), 61-83. The delay in the return of the Seleucid envoys, Hegesianax and Lysias, suggests that between the Isthmian Games and the meeting in Lysimacheia they spent time conducting diplomacy with other parties in Greece.

[849] Walsh (1996), 344, and further; Piejko (1988), 151-165; Gruen (1984), 132-158; Mastrocinque (1983), 61, 77-83; Schmitt (1964), 96-99, 280-282.

[850] See above, pp. 200-202.

[851] Livy, 35.43.3. Xerxes was another historical commander who marked the crossing of the Hellespont: ἀπικομένου δὲ τοῦ στρατοῦ ἐπὶ ποταμὸν Σκάμανδρον, […] Ξέρξης, ἐς τὸ Πριάμου Πέργαμον ἀνέβη ἵμερον ἔχων θεήσασθαι: θεησάμενος δὲ καὶ πυθόμενος ἐκείνων ἕκαστα τῇ Ἀθηναίῃ τῇ Ἰλιάδι ἔθυσε βοῦς χιλίας, χοὰς δὲ οἱ Μάγοι τοῖσι ἥρωσι ἐχέαντο. On reaching the Scamander, […] Xerxes ascended into the Pergamus of Priam, since he had a longing to behold the place. When he had seen everything, and inquired into all particulars, he made an offering of a thousand oxen to the Trojan Minerva, while the Magi poured libations to the heroes (Herodotus, 7.43.1-2). By sacrificing to Athena Ilias, Antiochus follows both Xerxes' and Alexander's example and thus holds an ambivalent position as both defender of the Greek cities (as *hegemon* of the Aetolian league) and conqueror from the East.

[852] Text from Briscoe's edition (1981).

made a serious effort to reunite all parts of Alexander's empire, Ilium was a landmark of prime significance. In a strikingly multivocal act of conquest and homecoming, Antiochus both acknowledged Troy's importance for Greece, Rome and the world at large, and claimed it for himself. We have seen that, in so doing, he joined a lively debate involving the major powers of the day, the intellectuals who worked for them (e.g. Fabius Pictor, Hegesianax) and the Greek cities of Asia Minor, including notably Ilium, whose citizens used their kinship with the Romans as a reason to invoke their help.[853] The significance of Antiochus' act is shown by the fact that the Romans repeated it soon after: in 190 BC, during the Roman campaign against Antiochus in Asia Minor, L. Scipio went up to Ilium and sacrificed to Athena. On the eve of their final showdown with Antiochus, the Romans ostentatiously recognised Troy as Rome's metropolis and the people of Ilium as their kinsmen.[854]

The last act of kingship I want to discuss in this chapter does not concern Antiochus' interests in Asia Minor, but was directed toward mainland Greece. It took place when Antiochus landed on Euboea and conquered Chalcis, one of the key cities for controlling mainland Greece.[855] During the winter that followed, the king married a local girl and renamed her after the island. In his analysis of these events, Kosmin stresses that Euboea was the first conquest of Antiochus that was not based on hereditary claims.[856] Antiochus thus had to abandon the rhetoric of restoring his ancestral kingdom, which he had professed so far. This warranted an extraordinary performance of conquest and appropriation. The ideological power of Antiochus' marriage is shown in the work of anti-Seleucid writers, such as Polybius, who writes in his account of the notorious 'winter of love':

> Ἀντίοχος δὲ ὁ μέγας, παρελθὼν εἰς Χαλκίδα τῆς Εὐβοίας συνετέλει γάμους, πεντήκοντα μὲν ἔτη γεγονὼς καὶ δύο τὰ μέγιστα τῶν ἔργων ἀνειληφώς, τήν τε τῶν Ἑλλήνων ἐλευθέρωσιν, ὡς αὐτὸς ἐπηγγέλλετο, καὶ τὸν πρὸς Ῥωμαίους πόλεμον. ἐρασθεὶς οὖν παρθένου Χαλκιδικῆς κατὰ τὸν τοῦ πολέμου καιρὸν ἐφιλοτιμήσατο γῆμαι αὐτήν, οἰνοπότης ὢν καὶ μέθαις χαίρων. ἦν δ᾽ αὕτη Κλεοπτολέμου μὲν θυγάτηρ, ἑνὸς τῶν ἐπιφανῶν, κάλλει δὲ πάσας ὑπερβάλλουσα. καὶ τοὺς γάμους συντελῶν ἐν τῇ Χαλκίδι αὐτόθι διέτριψε τὸν χειμῶνα, τῶν ἐνεστώτων οὐδ᾽ ἡντινοῦν ποιούμενος πρόνοιαν, ἔθετο δὲ καὶ τῇ παιδὶ ὄνομα Εὔβοιαν. ἡττηθεὶς οὖν τῷ πολέμῳ ἔφυγεν εἰς Ἔφεσον μετὰ τῆς νεογάμου.

[853] Suetonius, *Claudius* 25 (Roman treaty with 'King Seleucus', cf. pp. 196-197, n. 805); Livy 29.12.14 (treaty Rome and Philip V); Livy, 38.39.10 (treaty of Apamea). Erskine (2001), 162-197; Schmitt (1964), 291-293.
[854] Livy, 37.37.1-3 and Justinus, *Epitome of Pompeius Trogus* 31.8.1-3 (for an earlier Roman visit to Troy by Livius Salinator, see Livy, 37.9.7).
[855] One of the so-called 'fetters of Greece', see further below p. 212.
[856] Kosmin (2014)a, 139.

> Antiochus the Great, arrived at Chalcis in Euboea and completed his marriage when he was fifty years old and had already undertaken the two most important of his deeds, the liberation of Greece, as he himself called it, and the war with Rome. However, having fallen in love with a young woman from Chalcis, he wished to marry her even though it was still the due time for the war; as he was a wine lover and rejoiced in getting drunk. She was a daughter of Cleoptolemus, a man of rank, and surpassed all other women in beauty. He celebrated the marriage in Chalcis and remained there throughout the winter, utterly regardless of the pressing business of the time. He also gave the girl the name Euboea. After his defeat in the war, he fled with his new bride to Ephesus.
> Polybius, 20.8[857]

According to Polybius, Antiochus III wasted an entire winter with excesses and festivities, while ignoring the war and his own project of liberating the Greeks.[858] Polybius was not alone in his assessment: our extant sources unanimously condemn Antiochus' 'winter of love' as an indication of sexual licentiousness and moral decline typical of an Eastern king.[859] In particular, Antiochus' opulence and decadence were interpreted as indications of Eastern despotism and moral corruption. Modern scholars, however, have convincingly argued that this anti-Seleucid gloss opportunistically depicts Antiochus as the heir of the Persian kings and misrepresents what was in reality a display of Seleucid euergetism and royal power.[860]

The marriage itself was a carefully orchestrated and scripted performance of Seleucid kingship.[861] As we saw in Chapter 3, the royal Seleucid couple in many ways represented the unity of the empire. In his marriage to a local Greek girl Antiochus reinterpreted this template to forge a bond of affection with 'old Greece', the land he had set out to liberate. The key to understanding the full significance of Antiochus' act is the fact that the king renamed his bride 'Euboea'. Kosmin stresses the ideological implications of this act.[862] Not only does the marriage of a local girl constitute a bond between the king and the land, it also re-enacts Greek foundation narratives where a foreign male (and often divine) founder subdues the local female element of the land.[863] In renaming the girl 'Euboea' Antiochus shows that he is

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[857] Text from Teubner edition (1899-1905) edited by T. Büttner-Wobst (republished in 1993-1995).
[858] Cf. Livy 36.11.1-2; Athenaeus, *Deinosophistae* 439e-f; Appian, *Syriaca* 16.
[859] On Eastern kings and sexual licentiousness and extravagance see: Llewellyn-Jones (2013), 96-97, 116-120, 128-133; Briant (2002), 281-285; Sancisi-Weerdenburg (1987), 38, 43; Mastrocinque (1983), 140. Cf. Xenophon, *Cyropaedeia*; Plato, *Laws* 694b-696a.
[860] Haubold (forthcoming); Kosmin (2014)a, 136-137; Mastrocinque (1983), 140-144.
[861] Kosmin (2014)a, 137.
[862] Kosmin (2014)a, 139.
[863] Ancient sources on the feminization of the land: Pindar, *Pythian Odes* 9.5-75; Pindar, *Isthmian Odes* 8.16-23; Pausanias 7.4.8; 9.29.1; colonization as marriage: Justinus, *Epitome of Pompeius Trogus* 43.3.8-11; Athenaeus, *Deinosophistae* 13.576a-b; cf. Plutarch, *De Mulierum Virtutibus* 255a-e. See also Dougherty (1993), 63-67 Calame (1990) 301-304, 320-321; Wilson (2001), 84, on colonization narratives. On sex and agriculture:

aware of this symbolism. In fact, Kosmin takes the argument a step further and reads the whole story as a metaphor for the marriage between Antiochus and the land 'Euboea', personified as a beautiful woman.[864] According to Kosmin, no actual marriage with any real girl was involved. Although I accept that the marriage was indeed highly symbolic, I do not agree that Antiochus' marriage at Euboea was in any sense unreal.[865] Marriage alliances were a well-known tool for conducting diplomacy in the Hellenistic world, as we have seen, and it seems likely that Antiochus did indeed marry the daughter of a local aristocrat.[866] At a local level, this provided him with the opportunity to establish diplomatic ties with Greek elite families. On the level of imperial policy, the union of Antiochus and Euboea shows the king's lasting commitment to Greece, and announces the making of a new, Greco-Seleucid dynasty.

In addition to evoking the image of the royal couple as a unifying bond, Antiochus' marriage at Chalcis also evoked the well-known myth of the arrival from the East of the god Dionysus. Dionysus returning in triumph from his conquests in the East had become a popular narrative after Alexander's conquest of India, and was immediately recognisable throughout the Hellenistic world.[867] The Ptolemies for their part drew on it in their state processions, traced their ancestry to Dionysus and went so far as identifying themselves as new Dionysoi.[868] In religion, Dionysian processions and celebrations were typically seen

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Henderson (1991), 134-136, 166-167; duBois (1988), 39-85. Colonists and natives: Graham (1981/2); Van Compernolle (1983); Rougé (1970).

[864] Kosmin (2014)a, 136-137.

[865] Kosmin argues that Antiochus' marriage to Laodice and the honours he bestowed upon her both before and after the Greek campaign, rule out a marriage to any other women (Kosmin (2014)a, 137). However, Ogden has argued, convincingly in my view, that polygamy was normal for most Hellenistic kings of Macedonian descent; see Ogden (1999). He shows that the many conflicting claims to the throne, and accusations of illegitimacy, that we find in the sources arose from multiple marriages that were not arranged in a clear hierarchical relationship. The issue of polygamy is contentious among Hellenistic scholars, but I accept Ogden's argument that the Hellenistic kings followed Macedonian tradition and could be married to several wives simultaneously.

[866] We do not no know anything about Cleoptolemus except that he was a man of rank (ἑνὸς τῶν ἐπιφανῶν), but we have already seen that the Euboean elite was entangled in various ways with both the Antigonids and the Ptolemies. Cleoptolemus may have been part of Alexander of Corinth's court in the 250's BC and may even have been an acquaintance of Euphorion. As friend of the king and head librarian Euphorion could very well have played a role in conducting diplomacy between the Seleucids and (parts of) the Euboean elite.

[867] For Alexander the Great and Dionysus, see: Fredricksmeyer (2003), 264-265; Bosworth (1999), 1-2; Bosworth (1996)c, 123-125; Bosworth (1996)b. Cf. Chapter 1, pp. 55-56.

[868] Ptolemy II Philadelphus staged a great procession in Alexandria, which celebrated the triumphal return of Dionysus from India (Seaford (2006), 23; Thompson (2000), 365-388; Erskine (1995), 43-45; Green (1990), 158-160; Rice (1983)). For the close associtation between the Ptolemies and Dionysus, see the Adulis Inscription; Satyrus (*FHG* 3, 165); Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistai* 7.726a-c; Both Ptolemy IV and Ptolemy XII were called Neos Dionysos (for the former: Clement of Alexandria, *Protrepticus* 4.54.2, cf. Plutarch, *Cleomenes*, 33.2, 34.2; for the latter: *OGIS* 186.9-10, 191.1, 741.1, *SEG* 8.408).

following an absence of the god and were common throughout Greek history, as attested in both literature and art.[869]

For Antiochus, the image of the returning Dionysus would have been particularly useful as a way of negotiating his complex relationship with mainland Greece. For one thing, it helped him sidestep the language of military oppression that had bedeviled the Antigonids, under whom Chalcis had become known as one of the three 'Fetters of Greece'.[870] These three cities, Demetrias, Corinth and Chalcis, held the key to controlling mainland Greece, for Antiochus as much as for the Antigonids before him. However, in a situation where the 'liberation of Greece' had become the rallying call for all warring parties, it was vital that Antiochus and his Seleucid script-writers found a way of casting his Greek campaign as a peaceful union. That is arguably what Antiochus sought to achieve with his 'winter of love'. This time, he styled himself not as a conqueror who brought with him more powerful 'fetters' than the Antigonids had managed to impose, but as a Dionysiac lover.[871] To be sure, Antiochus was perfectly capable of grand military gestures.[872] But when he arrived in Greece, he wrote himself in an altogether more Callimachean – or might we say Euphorionic – key: like a true Hellenistic poet, he did not focus on his big elephants and epic battles but instead on the romantic love he felt for a Greek girl.

Conclusion

[869] See Euripides, *Bacchae*, esp. the prologue; cf. the advent of Dionysus in a ship-cart at the Anthesteria (Seaford (2006), 18-20, 40-41). For linking the processions of Dionysus with triumphal processions, see: Diodorus Siculus 3.65.8; Arrian, *Anabasis* 6.28.2.

[870] Polybius, 18.11.5; Livy, 32.37; Plutarch, *Flamininus* 10.1. Sekunda (2012), 4; Errington (1990), 162-163, 236-237; Bradford Wells (1938), 252-260. For the Antigonid garrison at Chalcis, see: Hatzopoulos (2001), 24-31 and Hatzopoulos (1996), 396-406. See Errington (1990), 249, for the implications of Philip's description of these cities as fetters.

[871] Seaford writes that: "his [Dionysus] entry into the community is not just an arrival. It is associated with his victory over disappearance or rejection or capture, with the unity of the community (envisaged as its 'purification' from disease), and/or with the arrival of spring" (Seaford (2006), 45). Compare for example the processional entry of Demetrius Poliorcetes into Athens (Chaniotis (2011), 157-195; Chaniotis (2003), 431-433). Compare also the bull horns on the Seleucid coinage from Seleucus I onwards which evoke the god Dionysus (Hoover (2011), 201-203).

[872] Antiochus showed that he could employ both registers in one campaign at the battle of Thermopylae (Appian, *Syriaca* 4.17-18). In 192/1 BC, after the events in Euboea, Antiochus engaged the Romans in combat in that ravine, re-enacting not only the famous last stance of the Spartans against Xerxes' army, but also the Aetolian league's defence of Greece against the Galatians in 278 BC. Appian specifically mentions how Antiochus guarded himself against the tricks with which Xerxes had defeated the Spartans (Taylor (2013), 123-125; Grainger (2002)).

In this chapter I have explored the literature composed at the court of Antiochus III. We have seen that this literature was characterised by a remarkable multiformity. The literary court was active on different fronts; like Antiochus' political career it was directed against different rivals at the same time.

First I discussed literary engagements with the Galatians as a means to assert authority over Asia Minor against the Attalids. Three events that set the scene for the third century all happened in the 270s: the Aetolian league repelled the Galatians in Delphi, Antiochus I defeated them in Asia Minor, and the Ptolemies quelled an uprising of Galatian mercenaries. These three events initiated a shared discourse that depicted the Galatians as the ultimate barbarians and their opponents as the protectors of the Greek cities. In the 240s, Attalus I made good use of this nexus of ideas to present himself as king on the Hellenistic stage and firmly establish his rule over Asia Minor. When Antiochus III launched his campaign to reassert his dominion over Asia Minor in the 210s, he reached back to Antiochus' I victory over the Galatians. The poetry of Simonides of Magnesia, celebrating a Seleucid king battling the Galatians, fits well into the political climate of that time.

In the second part of the chapter, I looked at the emergence of a new Seleucid centre of literature, probably in the Syrian tetrapolis, to rival Alexandria and also Pergamon. As we have seen, these centres had an important impact on Hellenistic culture, and intellectuals and writers gravitated towards them. One such intellectual was Euphorion of Chalcis, a well-known poet who was considered the heir of Callimachus. However, Euphorion never travelled to Alexandria and instead worked for Antiochus III. I have argued that his poetry shows a clear interest in Seleucid motives and themes.

The chapter ended with a discussion of the literature that was written in the context of Seleucid interactions with Rome, the new rival of the Seleucids in Macedonia and Greece. The work of Hegesianax of Alexandria Troas is of particular interest in this connection, because he was active on the political and the literary stage. Here again we see that Seleucid literature had a political dimension: Hegesianax' history of the Troad also included an account of the foundation of Rome and its alleged links with Troy. Finally, I explored Antiochus' political actions during the Roman-Seleucid wars, focussing in particular on some of the ways in which he used literary motifs to frame this conflict. For example, Antiochus painted the Romans as the new barbarians from the west, and himself as a Dionysian liberator from the east.

As we have seen throughout the thesis, the line between literature and diplomacy was often fluid in the Seleucid world. This is particularly apparent when we consider Hegesianax

and Antiochus' actions in the Roman-Seleucid wars. By considering their literary and political contributions in depth, this chapter has aimed to bring the relationship between Seleucid court literature and royal ideology into sharper focus.

Conclusion

As this thesis has shown, the Seleucid Empire was not a cultural wasteland, but a source of inspiration and patronage for a number of important writers whose works resonated throughout the Hellenistic world. Not all of the writers discussed in my thesis were *philoi* of the king, but they all related themselves to Seleucid royal ideology, either consciously placing themselves in a tradition of other Seleucid writers or commenting on it in some way. The notion of a Seleucid literature thus becomes a useful analytical tool for the study of texts that emerged from, or engaged with, the Seleucid court. Despite the fragmentary state of the evidence, we can tell that this court maintained an active interest in literature, especially during certain moments in the history of the empire. In my thesis, I have aimed to observe how the ebb and flow of Seleucid literature tracked the vicissitudes of the empire's political fortunes, highlighting the intimate connection that existed between literary output and ideological orientation among Seleucid elites.

Beyond that, I hope to have shown that the literature of the Seleucids had an impact on Hellenistic culture as a whole; and that it reflected and shaped relations between the Seleucids and other successor kingdoms. Indeed, as argued in this thesis, the military and cultural rivalry between the Seleucids and the Ptolemies – and later also the Attalids and the Romans – was partly fought out in literature. With Alexandria as an established cultural centre of international allure, the Ptolemies clearly had a trump card in hand, but my thesis aims to show that Seleucid literature also extended its influence beyond the borders of the Seleucid realm. By highlighting the ways in which Seleucid literature interacted with other literatures, I hope to have illustrated the interconnected nature of literature during the Hellenistic era.

In fact, I have argued that a good way of looking for clues as to the nature of Seleucid literature is to consider how others responded to it. At one level, this approach is dictated by necessity, since time has not been kind to the works of Seleucid writers; little has been preserved, and the texts we do have are typically very fragmentary. Some of our most important sources are thus receptions by later Ptolemaic and Roman writers, who appropriated, and responded to, works emerging from the Seleucid Empire. In the area of geography, in particular, the works of Seleucid writers remained important reference points for hundreds of years.

These geographical works emerged from an early Seleucid preoccupation with borders and space, a phenomenon that was discussed at length in the first chapter of this thesis, in which I investigated the works of three important early Seleucid writers, Megasthenes, Patrocles and Demodamas. All these men were actively involved in the early expansion of the Seleucid Empire. It is not surprising, therefore, that we should see them reflect on the overall shape of the empire, and its borders in the far east. Collectively, I argue that this literature created an image of Seleucid world empire that stretched to the Eastern Ocean. In order to analyse these texts, I made use of recent developments in geographical studies. Understanding the ways in which geography can inscribe empire on maps – physical or mental – enables us to grasp better the scope, nature and aims of these early Seleucid treatises. As I hope to have shown, they acted not only as descriptive works but also projected an image of the Seleucid Empire which had normative force. Their impact on the development of Ptolemaic geography is shown in the works of the Alexandrian writer Eratosthenes. By displaying knowledge of the outlying regions of the world, the two Hellenistic kingdoms could claim authority over it. This battle of knowledge and power culminated in the description of India and its riches.

My second chapter looked at Seleucid literature about, and from, the city of Babylon. Babylon was not just one of the royal residences at the heart of the empire, it was also considered a city that could bestow kingship in Asia. We saw that this idea can be found not only in apocryphal stories that connect Babylon with the kingship of Seleucus I, but also in the fact that the Seleucid Era was backdated to the conquest of Babylon, well before he declared himself a king. My main focus was on literature composed in Babylon during the reign of Antiochus I, and especially on the concept of euergetism within this literature. I argued that both the Seleucid kings and their Babylonian elites used euergetism to negotiate issues of power and authority. Seleucid kings could use the Greek concept of the *basileus euergetes* to present themselves as good kings to Babylon. In return, Babylonian elites offered the kings a tradition of kingship that was divinely sanctioned and went back to the beginnings of time. In order to show how this worked in practice I discussed a variety of texts: an inscription in Akkadian by Antiochus I, the Greek history of Babylon by Berossus and extracts from the Astronomical Diaries and Babylonian Chronicles, written by and for the Babylonian elites. Finally, I considered the role of the local priest as author at the Hellenistic courts by comparing Berossus, the Babylonian priest, and Manetho, his Egyptian counterpart.

In Chapter 3 I looked in greater detail at how the political, military and cultural rivalry between the Ptolemies and Seleucids informed the development of Alexandrian poetry. I focussed on Callimachus' *Lock of Berenice*, as a crucial statement of Callimachean poetics,

and on two main points: the stability of the royal couple as the central theme throughout the poem and the portrayal of the Seleucids as a barbarian, Asian, and ultimately, non-Greek dynasty. By celebrating the love between the Ptolemaic king and queen against the breakdown of Seleucid royal marriage between Antiochus II and Berenice Phernophorus, Callimachus capitalised on a moment of deep Seleucid crisis. As a result of the failed marriage, a war broke out between the two rival states that almost destroyed the Seleucid Empire. In the first half of the chapter I argued that the power of the *Lock* derives in no small measure from the fact that the royal couple was such a powerful symbol for all Hellenistic dynasties. I then explored the ways in which Callimachus presents the Seleucid Empire as a successor to the Near Eastern empires of the Assyrian, Medes and Persians, both in the *Lock* itself and in other parts of his oeuvre.

In Chapter 4 I explored the literary production at the court of Antiochus III. This chapter focussed on westward expansion and re-conquest, directed not only against the Ptolemies, but also against the Attalids and the Romans. The first section considered the Pan-Hellenic struggle against the Galatians, which came to signify the battle between civilisation and barbarians, order and chaos. All Hellenistic kings strove to take part in this battle, with their armies as well as in art and literature. For the Seleucids, the conflict with the Galatians became connected with their rivalry with the Attalids for control of Asia Minor. In a second section I argued that the career of Euphorion of Chalcis reflected Seleucid ambitions to rival the Ptolemies and Attalids in the field of sophisticated 'Callimachean' poetry. Euphorion was a leading Hellenistic poet who, later in his life, joined the Seleucid court and became the head-librarian of Antiochus III. His poetry clearly adopted an Alexandrian aesthetics as laid down by Callimachus, but at the same time reflects the Seleucid environment in which he was writing. The chapter concluded with the Romans challenging Antiochus III for control over Greece. I argued that the Roman-Seleucid wars inspired a new type of Seleucid literature which was directed at the Romans. Hegesianax' *Troica* was such a work, which simultaneously aimed to assert Seleucid control over the Troad, the Trojan people and the history of the Romans. Finally, I turned to King Antiochus III himself and argued that he used literary motifs to portray himself, and his actions, during this conflict.

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