

War and Culture in the Seleucid Empire¹

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Introduction: the post Alexander world

Alexander's legacy to the world was a mess. By failing to ensure the succession after himself he left the door open to the conflicting ambitions of his followers, who were only too glad to follow his example. After Alexander there was no *pax macedonica* that could compare with the later *pax romana*. War was an almost continuous presence and had pervasive effects, not easily described as either positive or negative, nor to be classified neatly as specifically social, cultural, economic, or political.

Ancient writers commenting on the post-Alexander world illustrate this. For example, Polybius and Strabo write about the enlarged geographical horizons and knowledge of the existing world that took place after Alexander (Polybius 3.59, Strabo 1.2.1).² This was not just an incidental by-product of invasion: geographical exploration fulfilled an imperial purpose and was one of the instruments of conquest (Strabo 1.1.16). War also redistributed wealth. Athenaeus mentions (6.231b-e) the rise in prosperity and the increased circulation of gold that took place in the late fourth century in what he calls the 'Macedonian period' (6.229c and ff). The conquest of the Persian empire had the effect of releasing immense wealth in the world (*eurysthenes ploutos*; 6.231e), through the forcible seizure of the Persian treasures of precious metals (cf. F. de Callatay 1989). War also displaced persons, with numerous cultural consequences. Demetrius of Phalerum, the Aristotelian philosopher, expelled from Athens in 307, eventually took refuge at the court of Ptolemy I and was influential in launching the Library and Museum of Alexandria.³ Under the early Ptolemies Alexandria became in the third century a magnet that attracted talent from far and wide in the Greek

world. In the second century, the process then went into reverse. According to Athenaeus (4.184b-c):

The Alexandrians were the teachers of all Greeks and barbarians at a time when the entire system of general education had broken down because of the continuous disturbances which took place in the period of Alexander's successors.

He then goes on to mention the effects of Ptolemy VIII's massacre in 145:⁴

He murdered many of the Alexandrians; not a few he sent into exile, and filled the islands and towns with men who had grown up with his brother (Ptolemy VI)—scholars, philosophers, mathematicians, musicians, painters, athletic trainers, physicians, and many other men of skill in their profession. And so they, reduced by poverty to teaching what they knew, instructed many distinguished men.

Similarly in the early first century the Mithridatic Wars had the result, as was shown by Elizabeth Rawson, of driving numerous skilled Greeks away from the Greek world, to the eventual benefit of Rome (Rawson 1985, 7f., 14-18, 69f.).

The post-Alexander world thus offers a vast field of study for the impact of war on cultural and social life. My subject within that world is the Seleucid monarchy. There are two facts about the Seleucid empire that stand out immediately. The first is that, of all the monarchies

of the age, the Seleucids were perhaps the most overtly military in character. As Guy Griffith put it, 'The Seleucid empire becomes known to us usually when it is at war, and the best that can be said is that it was at war reasonably often' (Griffith 1935, 142). The second is that, as far as cultural achievements are concerned—and perhaps I should make clear that I am dealing here specifically with Greek cultural achievements—the Seleucids seem to rank well behind the other monarchies of the age, above all the Ptolemies. For example, the Seleucid empire has no obvious equivalent for Ptolemaic Alexandria and everything that it stood for, despite the fact that rivalry between the two monarchies can be seen as one of the guiding threads of their history. It is perhaps not surprising that modern treatments of the Seleucids and of the cultural history of the age have relatively little to say about this aspect of Seleucid history. Edwyn Bevan

in 1902 had a number of comments of detail to offer, but the most comprehensive treatment of the question is an imaginative chapter in Franz Altheim's *Weltgeschichte Asiens im griechischen Zeitalter* published in 1948, which develops points raised by Eduard Meyer in 1925 and after him in more detail by Tarn in his *Greeks in Bactria and India* first published in 1938.⁵

I will divide this paper into two parts, War and Culture respectively, though the first part is rather brief and aims only at providing the context for the second. The conjunction of the two topics may appear rather abrupt, even artificial. But it seemed worthwhile to juxtapose them, to see what connections there might be. And it may also be useful to attempt an integrated view, and to set aside the artificial dividing line between political and military history on the one hand, and social and cultural history on the other.

War

I would like to limit myself here to two groups of points, first about the character of the Seleucid monarchy, and second about the Seleucid empire.

On the first point. Like every other dynasty of the age, the Seleucids owed their royal status to victory in war (Bikerman 1938, 12-17; Austin 1986; Sherwin-White & Kuhrt 1993, 53-59). A Seleucid king was in the first instance an active military leader, so much so that generalship and statesmanship were in practice one and the same thing (cf. Suda s.v. *basileia*). The sources regularly present the kings acting in military contexts.⁶ The nucleus of the monarchy was also military in origin: the king, his 'friends', and his military forces, to use the convenient shorthand that is found in several Greek inscriptions and in Jewish sources (Austin 1986, 462 for the inscriptions; I Maccabees 6.28, 6.57-61, 12.43). This group constituted what may be called the 'royal establishment' and was the direct beneficiary of empire, from which it derived great wealth (Rostovtzeff 1941, I 517f.). The empire owed its existence to conquest: it was 'territory that had been won by the spear', to use the terminology current in the period after Alexander, and this concept was openly appealed to by several Seleucid rulers from Seleucus I down to at least Antiochus IV in the late 170s

(Diodorus 21.1.5; Polybius 5.67, 38.1.4; cf. Bikerman 1938, 15; Schmitthenner 1968; Mehl 1980-81).

Kings were normally on the move, fighting one campaign after another, as the reigns of Seleucus I and Antiochus III illustrate in detail. Of Antiochus I, son and successor of Seleucus I, Memnon of Heracleia comments that 'he preserved his father's empire (*arche*) through many wars though with difficulty and not in its entirety' (*FGrHist* 434 F1 §9.1). It is not till Seleucus IV (187-175 BC) that one finds a reign which shows a prolonged period of peace without any significant military activity. But this was just an interlude and the result of the defeat of Antiochus III by the Romans and the peace of Apamea in 188. After him military activity was resumed in the reign of Antiochus IV with his campaigns against Egypt, and the king was to die while launching a major eastern expedition. Thereafter there were yet more major expeditions, the last one of any size under Antiochus VII against the Parthians in 131-129, but there was also a proliferation of dynastic wars between rival branches of the dynasty or competing claimants to the throne (cf. Millar in Kuhrt and Sherwin-White 1987, 130). Seleucid history thus displays almost every kind of war known at the time: wars of conquest, wars in de-

fence of the empire, against every possible type of opponent, from kings and dynasts inside and outside the empire, to cities, Greek and other, to rivals for the throne, to barbarians such as the Galatians in Asia Minor.

The precise impact of all this on Seleucid history is a vast subject, and difficult to assess for the empire as a whole. This is because of the fragmentary nature of the evidence and its predominantly local character, which makes it easier to see Seleucid rule from a series of local perspectives than from a wider imperial view.

The kings themselves took completely for granted their military role and their regular involvement in warfare, as the reign of Antiochus III illustrates in detail. Polybius' narrative of his early years (223-217 BC) provides an excellent insight into the functioning of the monarchy and how policy was decided in practice (5.40-71, 79-87). At every moment of decision the question for the king and his advisers is simply, Which is the next war that should claim the attention of the king and how should it be fought? (see notably Polybius 5.41-42, 45, 49, 51, 58). Alternative courses of action do not seem to be considered. The king and his advisers assume that the military forces needed for these wars are available and prepared to fight. Nor is there any sign that decisions for war were affected by calculations of the possible risks and costs, or of the expected benefits. Still less is there any indication that the effects of warfare on the local populations were thought to be a factor to be taken into account. For example, after the failure of the war against Ptolemy IV in 217, Antiochus III was anxious to re-establish control in Asia Minor, where his cousin Achaeus had proclaimed himself an independent king and ruled from Sardis. Antiochus eventually captured Sardis and took Achaeus prisoner (213). Polybius tells how Antiochus burst into tears at the sight of his cousin and the fall in his fortunes, though he went on to have Achaeus executed in the most gruesome fashion (8.22-23). But we are not told that Antiochus shed any tears over the fate of the city of Sardis, which was predictably plundered by the soldiery (Polybius 7.18). A group of inscriptions from Sardis in 213 after its recapture adds detail to the picture, and shows the king taking measures to alleviate the distress which his own actions had brought about, and laying down restrictions on the billeting of his troops in the city.⁷

There is in fact a substantial body of epigraphic evidence to illustrate the same problem later in the king's reign, during his recapture of Asia Minor and his conquest of southern Syria from the Ptolemies. Even Antiochus III, perhaps the most military of all Seleucid kings, was never able fully to control the behaviour of his own troops. A series of pronouncements by the king himself or his officials attempts in one way or another to remedy the results of destructive warfare or to control the effects of the presence of troops on the local population. Apart from Sardis in 213, examples are known from Labraunda in Caria in 203, Amyzon also in Caria in 203 and again ca. 200, Scythopolis in Palestine in 201, 200 and 195, and in the period after 197 from Kildara, Iasos and Heracleia in Caria, and perhaps too from Xanthos in Lycia.⁸

From his own experience the king must have been perfectly aware of the consequences of military activity, but this never apparently inhibited any decision for war. The kings did not wish to oppress their subjects and repeatedly professed their concern for their welfare. But they did not have any answer to the recurring difficulty of enforcing their own edicts,⁹ and were unable to see that they themselves were part of the problem. The ambivalence towards war that is a regular theme in Greek literature from the *Iliad* onwards seems to be absent from royal warfare. Still less is there any counterpart among all the Macedonian kings to the remarkable sentiments expressed by their contemporary Asoka (269-232 BC),¹⁰ the third ruler in the Mauryan empire in India, as we know from a series of rock cut edicts, in one of which the king mentions his revulsion at his own actions:

On conquering Kalinga the Beloved of the Gods (i.e. Asoka himself) felt remorse, for when an independent country is conquered the slaughter, death, and deportation of the people is extremely grievous to the Beloved of the Gods, and weighs heavily on his mind.¹¹

The Seleucids had regular diplomatic relations with the Mauryan kings from Seleucus I and Chandragupta onwards (cf. Fraser 1972, I 180f.). Asoka knew of the kings in the west and mentions them by name in that same edict where he refers to the extent of his influence:

on all his frontiers to a distance of six hundred *yojanas* [i.e. about 1500 miles], where reigns the Greek king Antiochus (II), and beyond the realm of that Antiochus in the lands of the four kings named Ptolemy (II), Antigonus (Gonatas), Magas (of Cyrene), and Alexander (of Corinth or Epirus).¹²

It would be interesting to know how the Seleucid kings might have reacted to these sentiments. The short answer is perhaps simply that they were unable to rethink their own position: war was simply part of royal status, the foundation of the monarchy and of the entire 'royal establishment', the king himself, his followers, and his military forces, who all took for granted the benefits of successful warfare. Wars against other kings had the highest status of all (cf. Polybius 5.42, 45; Austin 1986; Sherwin-White & Kuhrt 1993, 58).

On the second point, the Seleucid 'empire'. For a start, the kings themselves assumed that they had a natural right to rule their territories, through victory in war and through inheritance from their predecessors (Bikerman 1938, 12-17). They constantly use the language of ownership: the empire belonged to them as of right, and if anything was lost from their control they were entitled to try to reassert that control, no matter what the cost (cf. *OGIS* 219 [Antiochus I]; Livy 33.38 [Antiochus III]; I Maccabees 15.3-4 [Antiochus VIII]).

But what exactly was the 'empire'? The word 'empire' is misleading, if it suggests a cohesive and integrated unit that functioned as a single whole. In practice, the Seleucid empire was made up of a multiplicity of local and regional entities of many kinds, cities, Greek and non-Greek, peoples with different forms of social and political organisation, dynasts and kings, all scattered over a vast area. All these units pre-existed the foundation of the empire, and in many cases survived the passing of Seleucid history. The kings themselves accepted implicitly the diversity of their empire and never imagined that it could be transformed into a completely new and integrated entity. Their relations with their subjects were based on the assumption of diversity and fragmentation. This had obvious elements of strength: by dispensing favours on an individual basis as a reward for loyalty, royal rule could benefit from existing divi-

sions. But it also had its weaknesses: from the perspective of the local communities Seleucid rule was something external and therefore an unnatural imposition. This emerges from many pieces of evidence. It is what one would expect from non-Greek sources, such as the author of the Book of Daniel, who writing in the mid 160s presented the history of his world as a continuing struggle between the 'king of the north' (i.e. the Seleucids) and the 'king of the south' (i.e. the Ptolemies) (Daniel 11:2-30).¹³ But the same point of view is found even in the case of Greek communities that professed loyalty to the kings. Thus a decree of Ilium relating (probably) to the accession of Antiochus I states:

King Antiochus ... has sought to recover his ancestral rule, and has therefore embarked upon an honourable and just enterprise, with not only the ready assistance of his 'friends' and his military forces in his fight for his interests but also the goodwill and collaboration of the deity, and has restored the cities (*poleis*) to peace and the kingdom (*basileia*) to its former state (*OGIS* 219, lines 7-12).

The 'cities' (i.e. the Greek cities) and the 'kingdom' seem therefore to be perceived as two distinct entities: a city like Ilium might profess its devotion to the king, but it sees the Seleucid kingdom as something separate of which it is not itself an integral part.¹⁴ The consequence is that the empire owed its continued existence to the perception of the kings by their subjects as strong enough to enforce their rule. It is true that the greatest conquering kings, Seleucus I and Antiochus III, used diplomacy and conciliation as much as force to acquire or restore their power. Appian makes this point about Seleucus I in general terms (*Syriake* 55). Antiochus III is seen in action in Asia Minor in the early 190s when he sought to bring the Greek cities back under his control but encountered resistance from Smyrna and Lampsacus:

He was not relying so much on the fear inspired by force, but through envoys he would send them [*sc.* Smyrna and Lampsacus] conciliatory messages and reproach them for their rashness and obstinacy (Livy 33.38).

But the underpinning for such diplomacy had to be military power: without it there was no motive for submitting to Seleucid rule. And there were plenty of enemies, who would take advantage of any perceived weakness on the part of the rulers. What Seleucid rule meant from the receiving end is illustrated by the reaction of the peoples of Asia Minor in 189 after the defeat of Antiochus III by the Romans and the expedition of Manlius Vulso against the Galatians inland. Polybius comments:

All the peoples of Asia on this side of Mt Taurus rejoiced not so much at the prospect of the defeat of Antiochus and being relieved from tribute, garrisons, or other royal injunctions, as at the removal of all fear of the barbarian Galatians, and

at their escape from their insolence and lawlessness (21.41.2; cf. Walbank's *Commentary* III p.153).

Tribute, garrisons, royal commands: this sums up the content of Seleucid rule, which has been described by Fergus Millar as 'primarily a system for extracting taxes and forming armies' (Millar in Kuhrt & Sherwin-White 1987, 129f.). On the other hand the Seleucid kings were not barbarians, but part of the civilised world of the time, and therefore different in character from the savage and uncontrolled violence of the Galatians of Asia Minor.¹⁵

Mention of the Seleucid kings as part of the civilised world brings me to the second part of this paper, on the Seleucid kings and Greek culture.

Culture

It is nowadays generally agreed that the Seleucid rulers did not have any policy to 'hellenise' their empire (whatever may be meant by that).¹⁶ While an earlier generation of historians (Bevan 1902, Bouché-Leclercq 1913-14, Meyer 1925) credited the Seleucids with a cultural mission and presented them as champions of Hellenism in the east, a reaction against this set in even before World War II.¹⁷ Thus Rostovtzeff dismissed the idea rather unceremoniously (Rostovtzeff 1941, I 499-502 esp. 502). No one has put the point more elegantly than Bickerman:

[Seleucid policy was characterised by] a wise and salutary neglect .. not infected by the Christian zeal which later became the liberal itch, the Seleucids did not try to convert anybody—either to the true religion or good plumbing. They left people as dirty and blissful as they had been before the Macedonian conquest (Bickerman 1966, 97).

My purpose here is not to re-examine this very broad issue, but to ask a much more limited and specific question. What did the Seleucid rulers do to promote Greek culture at the individual level, and what evidence is there for links between known cultural figures of the age and Seleucid kings?

At this point let me make two things clear. First, I am not implying that Greek cultural life in the post-Alexander monarchies was dependent solely on the encouragement of rulers. Cultural life went on in the Greek cities, whether the kings themselves did anything about it or not. The history of the Seleucid empire illustrates this very clearly: it was precisely when the Seleucids themselves were in decline that cultural figures from the new Seleucid foundations in the east began to appear, and the process continued after their disappearance and under Parthian rule.¹⁸ In what follows, I am therefore dealing with only part of a larger picture. Second, I am not assuming that royal patronage of cultural life was an unmixed blessing. One could easily point to all the limitations of Alexandrian cultural life under the Ptolemies in addition to the great achievements: monarchy was not necessarily conducive to freedom of thought.¹⁹

So, what did the Seleucids do personally to promote Greek cultural life in their empire?

The scantiness of the available evidence presents obvious problems: the record is clearly very incomplete. For example, the Polybian tradition provides evidence on several dozen figures from the court circles of Antiochus III, but the choice of individuals and the way they are presented clearly reflects Polybius' own interests.

They earn their place in the record because of their role in political and military history, and none of them is specifically presented as a cultural figure. If we turn to a different source with different interests, Athenaeus, the picture of the Seleucid court changes. Thus Athenaeus mentions as present at the court of Antiochus III the historian Mnesiptolemus of Kyme, who wrote a history of the Seleucids (*FGrHist* 164),²⁰ his son, aptly named Seleucus, who wrote poetry,²¹ and in the same context Epinicus a comic poet (Athenaeus 10.432b-c, 15.697d). Hegesianax of Alexandria Troas is known from the Polybian tradition, but only as an ambassador active at the time of Antiochus' encounters with the Romans. It is from Athenaeus that we learn that before being employed in this capacity by Antiochus he was also an actor, a historian, a poet, and was at the Seleucid court before he was elevated by the king to become one of his 'friends' (*FGrHist* 45; Athenaeus 3.80d, 4.155a-b, 9.393d-e).²² It is quite possible therefore that the Seleucid record in cultural history is seriously under-represented in the evidence.

For convenience I will divide the subject under four main headings, Literature & Philology, Medicine, Military Technology, and Philosophy.²³

Literature and Philology

Literary activity by kings themselves starts early in the post-Alexander period, with Ptolemy I and his account of the campaigns of Alexander (*FGrHist* 138). This was continued by his successors in the dynasty, several of whom are known to have written prose works or poetry, including Cleopatra herself. The literary activities of the rulers no doubt facilitated their patronage of other writers (Fraser 1972, I 311f.). So too Attalus I, who encouraged literary talents, was a writer himself (cited by Strabo 13.1.44). Even Pyrrhus of Epirus is known to have been a writer, on tactics and siege engines, and he may conceivably have written his own Memoirs (*FGrHist* 229, though Jacoby doubts the existence of the latter). In comparison with this there is no known literary activity by any of the Seleucid kings for most of the history of the dynasty. One has to wait till Antiochus VIII, very late in the day, to find a ruler with an attested literary record: he is known to have had a particular interest in poisonous snakes, and verses of his on the subject are

quoted by Galen (Pliny *HN* 20.264; Galen 14.185 & 201; cf. Marasco 1996, 465f.).

Nor is the evidence for libraries in the Seleucid empire very impressive. A 'public library' is attested at Antioch in the reign of Antiochus III, who is mentioned as having attracted the poet Euphoriion of Chalcis in Euboea to be its librarian. Euphoriion enjoyed some celebrity as a poet, in his time and after his death, though his poetry was thought to be obscure (which he may have taken as a compliment).²⁴ But his activity as librarian at Antioch is known solely from an entry in the *Suda* (*Suda* s.v. *Euphoriion*), and there is no further information about this library at Antioch.

The only other mention of a library in the Seleucid empire is again at Antioch, but under the late Seleucids. Malalas (*Chronography* 235.15) has the story of the foundation by an Antiochus Philopator of a sanctuary of the Muses at Antioch and also (by implication) of a library, both of them located in the agora. Antiochus Philopator is either Antiochus IX or Antiochus X, and this places the foundation towards the end of the second century or in the 90s BC. But the foundation was carried out by the king not on his own initiative, but following the terms of the will of a certain Maron of Antioch. Maron had emigrated from Antioch to Athens (possibly as a security move in a period of trouble), and had left money in his will for the foundation of a sanctuary of the Muses and a library.

The evidence on Seleucid libraries is thus very limited, and the argument from silence may have some force here. There is certainly nothing to compare with the fame of the great library of Alexandria nor with that of Pergamum in the second century which Eumenes II developed in open emulation of the Ptolemies. Nor is there any trace on the part of the Seleucids of the almost fanatical hunt for books which was ascribed to both Ptolemies and Attalids.²⁵

To turn to individual literary figures with a known Seleucid connection. I have already mentioned several writers under Antiochus III: Mnesiptolemus of Kyme the historian and his son the poet Seleucus, the comic poet Epinicus, Hegesianax of Alexandria Troas, historian and poet, and the poet Euphoriion of Chalcis. Other poets at the Seleucid court are hard to document.²⁶ A certain Simonides of Magnesia wrote a poem, now lost,

commemorating the victory of (probably) Antiochus I over the Galatians.²⁷ The only poet of real repute with a Seleucid association apart from Euphoriion is Aratus of Soli, who is said to have been invited by the same Antiochus I from the court of Antigonos Gonatas. The exact date and duration of his stay are uncertain. He was reportedly asked by the king to produce an edition of the *Iliad*.²⁸

Prose writers are more numerous, at least under the first two Seleucid rulers. Megasthenes wrote an account of India (the *Indica*) that was the main source of Arrian's own work on India, and was also used and cited by Diodorus, Strabo and the Elder Pliny (*FGrHist* 715). He is usually assumed to have composed his work as a result of a mission to the court of Chandragupta carried out under Seleucus I. That Megasthenes had an association with Seleucus is shown by Clement of Alexandria (*Stromateis* 1.72.4 in *FGrHist* 715 F3) but there is in fact no evidence of any mission on his part to Chandragupta on behalf of Seleucus. This has been pointed out recently by Bosworth who argues that the diplomatic activity of Megasthenes took place earlier than Seleucus I, in the period 320-318 and not in 304/3 (Bosworth 1996).²⁹ Be that as it may, his work represents an obvious example of the literary and cultural consequences of the expansion of Greek horizons in the wake of Alexander's conquests. The same is true of three other writers who are definitely associated with the first two Seleucid kings. Demodamas of Miletus is known from two Milesian decrees of 299 when he was a member of the *Boule* of Miletus and was instrumental in promoting honours for the Seleucid dynasty.³⁰ Demodamas is also known from a reference in the Elder Pliny (*HN* 6.49), who shows him to have been a general and explorer in the service of Seleucus and his son in the far east, and the author of an account of his explorations, though the exact nature of this work is not clear (*FGrHist* 428).³¹ A similar case is Patrocles (*FGrHist* 712), who was serving Seleucus I already in 312 (Diodorus 19.100.5-6) and seems to have continued in Seleucid service for a long time until at least the early years of Antiochus I (cf. Memnon *FGrHist* 434 F1 §9.1). As an admiral of the Seleucids he explored the Caspian sea and wrote an account of his findings which was used, according to Strabo (11.7.3), by Eratosthenes and Apollodorus of Artemita (*FGrHist* 779

F4). He is mentioned by Strabo with particular respect for the reliability of his information (2.1.2 & 9; 11.7.3; 11.11.5 & 6) and also by the Elder Pliny (*HN* 6.58).³² Finally a certain Deimachos, another writer on India (*FGrHist* 716), is mentioned by Strabo (2.1.9) as an envoy to Bindusara, the son and successor of Chandragupta, presumably in the reign of Antiochus I.³³ Strabo was critical of the reliability of his account, as indeed he was of other writers on India with the exception of Patrocles (cf. e.g. 15.1.5 on Megasthenes). In addition to these three Greek writers mention should also be made of Berossus of Babylon, whose work on Babylonian history, written in Greek, was dedicated to Antiochus I (*FGrHist* 680; cf. Burstein 1978; Kuhrt in Kuhrt & Sherwin-White 1987, 32-56). The first two rulers in the dynasty thus fostered, directly or indirectly, significant prose writing. But after them, the number of known prose authors who wrote under the patronage of Seleucid kings dwindles abruptly, the only known figure being Mnesiptolemus of Kyme under Antiochus III, already mentioned.³⁴

There is clearly a pattern with the first two Seleucid kings: Demodamas, Patrocles and Deimachos, and perhaps Megasthenes, were acting as generals or envoys in the far eastern empire, and combined their service for the kings with literary activity based on their experiences of travel and exploration. This was a period of expanding horizons and almost limitless possibilities following up what had been started by Alexander's conquests. Exploration was promoted by a king (Seleucus) who had himself been a member of Alexander's expedition, and geography here went hand in hand with an imperial purpose.³⁵ The territorial thinking of Seleucus shows in fact unusual breadth. He is said to have wanted to cut a canal between the Caspian and the Black Sea (Pliny *HN* 6.31). Very striking is also the neglected report in the Elder Pliny (*HN* 2.167-8) that Seleucus and Antiochus wanted the Indian Ocean to be called Seleukis and Antiochis after themselves (cf. Bikerman 1938, 22), a rare example of the naming of a *sea* after rulers. This recalls the name Seleukis which was given, presumably by Seleucus himself, to at least part of North Syria, and possibly to an even more extended region.³⁶ The exact territorial scope of the name Seleukis has been debated and it may have changed in time,³⁷ but a central point is regularly

overlooked, namely that here was a king who wanted to name after himself or his son entire regions, and even an ocean, not just individual cities as was the case with the other kings.³⁸ This development, however, was cut short. After the first two rulers the dynasty was on the defensive in the far east, and no more writers like Demodamas and the others are known for the Seleucid period. In general, it looks as though the promise of the early Seleucids as regards literary activity faltered, and the relative dearth of information about significant literary figures after this time may not be accidental.³⁹ There can certainly be no question of comparing the Seleucids with the Ptolemies in this respect. Though emulation between the two dynasties was an almost continuous feature of their history, it did not seemingly extend to patronage of literature.

Medicine

Like every royal court of the age and before, the Seleucids had their contingent of royal doctors. Several names are known (up to seven altogether), from the time of Seleucus I down to Antiochus IX, though most of the known cases date from the third century.⁴⁰ Doctors at court were by definition influential persons who enjoyed the trust of the king. One good though controversial example is Erasistratus of Ceos, together with Herophilus of Chalcedon the most celebrated doctor of the third century.⁴¹ Erasistratus plays in virtually all ancient accounts a prominent role in the celebrated story of the love of Antiochus I for his stepmother Stratonice in the reign of Seleucus I (Brodersen 1985; Mehl 1986, 230-67).⁴² (The story incidentally was made the subject of an opera by Méhul in 1792 called *Stratonice* which enjoyed great fame in its day and was praised by the young Berlioz.) Another well-known royal doctor is Apollophanes of Seleucia in Pieria, seen in action early in the reign of Antiochus III in the account of Polybius, and clearly a very influential person at court (Polybius 5,56, 58-61). More is known about Apollophanes than is mentioned in Polybius' account.⁴³ A noted doctor of the age, he is honoured in a dedication from Lydia made by a Seleucid officer (Arkesilaos) to Zeus Porottenos on his behalf, though the exact date and context are unknown (Herrmann 1970; *TAM* 5.1.689). It also emerges from another inscription, a letter of Antiochus III to Cos, that

Apollophanes had in fact been a doctor at court for many years before this, since he was doctor to Seleucus II and then to Seleucus III (R. Herzog, *Parola del Passato* 38 (1983), 64; *SEG* 33.673). And finally we are told that he was a follower (*sectator*) of Erasistratus (Caelius Aurelianus *Acutae Passiones* 2.173, 175; cf. Fraser 1969, 528 and n. 25). Whatever precisely that implies, the information is suggestive and brings us back to Erasistratus, a key figure in any discussion of medicine and the Seleucids, but at the same time a terrible problem.

I wish I knew the truth about Erasistratus, but there is no modern consensus about his exact date, and more importantly about his role and importance at the Seleucid court. On the question of chronology, the central difficulty seems to be the discrepancy between the *floruit* given for Erasistratus by Eusebius, viz. 258/7 and the story of Erasistratus' role in diagnosing the love of Antiochus I for his stepmother Stratonice, which must have taken place in about 293/2. If the Eusebian date is treated as a firm peg, then Erasistratus has to be dissociated from the story of Antiochus and Stratonice. The suggestion here is that the name of Erasistratus, the more famous figure, displaced that of his father Cleombrotus, who is briefly mentioned in one passage in the Elder Pliny as having 'saved' Antiochus (Pliny *HN* 7.123).⁴⁴ This suggestion was put forward long ago by Wellmann and it still seems to be the majority view.⁴⁵ If on the other hand the connection between Erasistratus and Antiochus I is retained, then the Eusebian date must go. This in brief is the argument developed at length by Fraser in 1969 and accepted by others, and I have to confess that I find it attractive.⁴⁶

Equally unclear is the question of Erasistratus' relations with the Seleucid court. Fraser's study of Erasistratus was concerned to react against the general assumption that his activity was associated with Alexandria and the Ptolemies, not the Seleucid court. The presumed connection of Erasistratus with the Seleucid court depends to a large extent on the story of Antiochus I and Stratonice, but it probably remains true that in any case the Ptolemaic associations of Erasistratus are themselves conjectural. All that can be asserted with confidence is that there were a number of royal doctors at the Seleucid court, which is hardly surprising, and that Erasistratus may have been one of them, but how far one can go in

talking of a Seleucid ‘school of doctors’ is unclear.⁴⁷ Assuming there was such a school, it is not known how far it may have received explicit royal encouragement, and it remains true that in any case it was less prominent than that at Alexandria.⁴⁸

The point of relevance for the present discussion is the obvious connection between military activity and medicine. Royal doctors tend to be noted in the non-medical tradition for their advice and personal influence at court, as the case of Apollophanes shows, but no less important to the kings were their professional skills. Seleucid kings, like Philip and Alexander before, fought in person in the front line, and a recurring element in the biographical tradition about such rulers is their reckless exposure to physical risk and the wounds they suffered in battle. Philip was reputedly wounded many times,⁴⁹ and so was Alexander.⁵⁰ The same is known of several Seleucid kings, and Bickerman reckoned that 10 out of the first 14 rulers were killed in a military context (Bickerman 1938, 13). An inscription from the time of Antiochus I illustrates the point: a decree of the city of Ilium grants proxeny and citizenship to Metrodorus of Amphipolis, the doctor of Antiochus I. This was done at the express request of the king, who mentioned in his letter to Ilium that Metrodorus had successfully treated the king for a wound in the neck he had suffered in a battle (*OGIS* 220).⁵¹ Seleucid kings thus had a very personal interest in medicine, and on this point at least war and culture seem to converge.

Military technology

Mention of war leads to a related point: did the Seleucid kings play any role in promoting military technology, as other kings did? The Ptolemaic record is clear. Ctesibius of Alexandria, the third century inventor of various mechanical instruments, received the patronage of Ptolemy II, and in addition to various inventions he perfected a catapult. This is mentioned by Philo of Byzantium in his work on catapults (ca. 200 BC), who comments on the success of the Alexandrian engineers and the benefit they gained from royal patronage: ‘they received considerable support (*choregia*) from kings who were eager for fame (*philodoxoi*) and were well disposed to the arts and crafts (*philotechnoi*)’.⁵² Another third or second century writer on siege-engines, Biton, dedicated

his work to a king Attalus.⁵³ In comparison the Seleucid record appears to be a blank, and there is nothing in the extant evidence that associates them particularly with military technology. Contrast the reputation in this field not just of other kings but of several Greek cities, Rhodes, Massalia and Cyzicus, according to Strabo (14.2.5; cf. Marsden 1969, 75f.). The Ptolemies and the Rhodians are known to have made their artillery resources available at times to friendly states abroad. This is illustrated by two decrees from Samothrace in the reign of Ptolemy III (*Syll.*³ 502 line 10; Bakalakis and Scranton 1939, at p. 453f. lines 20-23; cf. Marsden 1969, 76f.) and by the Rhodian gift to Sinope in 220 mentioned by Polybius (4.56.3). By contrast the only explicit mention of the use of artillery in the Seleucid army comes from the defence of Thermopylae by Antiochus III against the Romans in 191, though this obviously cannot be the whole story.⁵⁴

Nor do the Seleucids figure at all in the conspicuous naval ‘arms race’ that was a striking feature of the rivalry between Ptolemies and Antigonids down to the mid third century (Casson 1995, ch. 6 esp. 137-40). But then the Seleucids failed to develop into a major naval power in the Aegean and eastern Mediterranean despite the probable ambition of Seleucus I and his successors. It seems in fact that the only major contribution made by the Seleucids to the military history and techniques of the age was through their ostentatious use of elephants obtained from India (Bickerman 1938, 61f.; Bar-Kochva 1976, 75-83; cf. in general Scullard 1974). Seleucus I and his successors picked up the fashion that had been started off by Alexander. Strabo mentions that the Seleucid kings kept their elephants at Apamea, together with the larger part of the army (16.2.10). The need for elephants gave extra significance to the maintenance of their connections with the ‘upper satrapies’ in the east,⁵⁵ and also had the effect of driving the Ptolemies their rivals to develop their own supplies of elephants from Africa. But having said this I am not sure how far elephants should be categorised as a ‘cultural and social’ phenomenon.

Philosophy

From elephants to philosophers is admittedly a rather abrupt transition. But philosophers require a mention in

any discussion of the monarchies of the age.⁵⁶ By the time of Alexander philosophy had achieved a status such that the kings of the time, all of them upstarts, were anxious to attract to their courts intellectual figures of distinction from the Greek world because of the special *chic* this conveyed. Kings needed philosophers as a sign of acceptance by the best brains of what was for them the civilised world. But then, philosophers hardly needed kings, and were if anything anxious not to be seen to be too closely involved with them. Philosophical schools were already established in Athens by private initiative, and unlike other branches of intellectual activity such as philology, literature, medicine and the sciences, philosophy did not benefit from royal patronage which threatened to compromise its independence. Hence philosophical schools normally flourished in cities that were not at the same time centres of royal power (Athens above all, then in the second century Rhodes and Tarsus), and Alexandria was in no position to compete here.

The record of the Seleucid kings is for the most part patchy compared to the other major monarchies. One may first mention briefly a mysterious story in Athenaeus (12.547a-b) of a king Antiochus, not further identified, who is reported as writing to an official with orders for the immediate expulsion of all philosophers from 'the territories', the stringing up of young men found in their company, and the holding of their fathers under the gravest charges. Unusually for Athenaeus no source is quoted, and the context of the story, if genuine, is uncertain.⁵⁷ For the third century the evidence yields only two names of philosophers with possible Seleucid connections. Early in the century a certain Clearchus dedicated at Ai Khanoum in remote Afghanistan a set of Delphic maxims which he claims to have copied at Delphi. He may be identical with Clearchus of Soli, an Aristotelian philosopher, as was argued by Louis Robert (Robert 1968, 442-54). Assuming the identity, we do not know whether he had any personal connection with Seleucus I, or whether he was a freelance traveller. Apart from this, a king Antiochus, probably Antiochus II, is reported to have sought to attract Lykon of Alexandria Troas, the head of the Peripatetic school at Athens, a man who according to Diogenes Laertius was 'esteemed beyond all philosophers by Eumenes (I) and Attalus (I)', though without success (Diogenes Laertius 5.67-8; cf.

Habicht 1989, 9). The direct record then dries up almost completely for the rest of the third century, apart from stray scraps of information,⁵⁸ and one has to wait till well into the second century to see connections between Seleucid rulers and philosophers of the time develop in a rather unexpected way.

The evidence relates to a certain Philonides of Laodiceia by the sea, one of the Seleucid foundations in North Syria. His case illustrates very well how far we are dependent on the chance survival of information. From epigraphic evidence one knew of a certain Philonides from Laodiceia and his two sons Philonides and Dicaearchus, who were obviously influential at Laodiceia in the time of Seleucus IV and Antiochus IV and had made a positive commitment to the Seleucid monarchy, on whose behalf they promoted good relations with the Greek mainland. They are honoured in a decree from Eleusis for services to Athens (*IG* II² 1236).⁵⁹ The youngest son Dicaearchus is honoured in another decree from Delphi (*OGIS* 241), dated most probably to 168/7; he is honoured for his devotion to Delphi and for interceding on its behalf with Antiochus IV. The two sons are also mentioned in another inscription from Delphi, a list of *theorodokoi*, where they are identified as sons of Philonides.⁶⁰

None of the inscriptions specifies that any members of this family had any philosophical connections. But it so happens that a Philonides was a noted mathematician and Epicurean philosopher in the early second century. For long he was known only as a mathematician through an allusion in Apollonius of Perge (*Conica* II, I p. 192 Heiberg; cited by Gallo 1980, 33 n. 33), until one of the papyri from Herculaneum shed remarkable new evidence on him in the form of a biography of the philosopher, though the text is unfortunately very mutilated and fragmentary.⁶¹ Among other things⁶² the extant fragments give an account of the influence he exercised on the Seleucid king Demetrius I. This makes it clear that he must be one of the men called Philonides from Laodiceia mentioned in the inscriptions from Athens and Delphi, probably the father rather than the son.⁶³ The Herculaneum papyrus tells how Antiochus IV was hostile to the Epicureans, but Philonides was able to bring over to his doctrines his nephew Demetrius I (fr. 30) who became devoted to Epicureanism (frs. 12, 19, 20,

27, 30). Demetrius treated Philonides with great consideration, though Philonides was not willing to become a member of the king's council or to go on embassies on his behalf (fr. 27). Philonides may also have exercised his influence on Demetrius at the time of his accession when the king, wishing to placate the Romans, wanted to punish Laodiceia for the assassination in 162 of the Roman envoy Cn. Octavius by a certain Leptines (Polybius 32.3.2-5, 10-13), but Philonides was able to deflect his anger (frs. 9, 32; cf. also fr. 62, 16; the reading of the papyrus is uncertain).⁶⁴

All this fits more or less with the epigraphic evidence. The papyrus biography has an obvious eulogistic streak and may well exaggerate the influence of Philonides on Demetrius (cf. Gallo 1980, 40), but here for the first time is evidence of a philosophical figure with close relations with a Seleucid ruler.⁶⁵ Besides, Philonides was a native of Laodiceia, a Seleucid foundation and not an old Greek city. He was therefore home grown, and not an import from the old Greek world, as had been the case so far with the vast majority of intellectual figures active at the courts of the kings.⁶⁶ In this respect he was not alone: several philosophers emerged from Seleucid cities in Asia in the second century, though this was seemingly a development that took place independently of any royal encouragement (cf. Tarn 1938-1951, 40-3; Altheim 1948, II 139-41).

Whether the example of Philonides could have signalled the start of a new process is hard to say, given the turbulent history of the end of the dynasty. The reign of Demetrius I turned sour, a rival, Alexander Balas, put forward by Attalus II of Pergamum supposedly as a son of Antiochus IV, received the recognition of the Roman Senate (153/2) and Demetrius was overthrown and killed (150). Remarkably, Alexander Balas is also credited with philosophical connections, though too much significance should not be read into this. His credentials as a legitimate ruler were suspect, and in his brief reign (150-145) he was no more than a puppet in the hands of others, whether outsiders hostile to the Seleucids or his own favourites (cf. Will 1982, 374-9; Habicht in *CAH VIII*² (1989), 362-5). One may therefore take with a pinch of salt the report in Athenaeus that Balas was gentle and fond of literary conversations (*philologos*). Though devoted to Stoicism, he showed according to Athenaeus re-

markable patience with the rude outspokenness of one Diogenes, an Epicurean philosopher, whereas later Antiochus VI ordered Diogenes to have his throat cut (Athenaeus 5.211a-d, with anecdotal material taken from his own work *On the Kings of Syria* [*FGrHist* 166 F1]).⁶⁷ With that episode the known relations of the Seleucids with philosophers come to an abrupt end.

To sum up. Once more, considerable allowance has to be made for the inadequacies of the evidence. It may well be that the picture I have drawn is largely fantasy, but on present evidence the impression is of a patchy record on the part of the Seleucid monarchy. As far as cultural achievements are concerned they cannot sustain comparison with the Ptolemies or the Attalids. A few cultural figures are found to have an association with the first two rulers. One wonders in fact whether there may not be rather more to Antiochus I in this respect than we know of, as his association with several literary figures suggests (the poets Aratus of Soli and Simonides of Magnesia, Berossus of Babylon, the geographical explorers and writers). But after the first two rulers the momentum seems to flag. More individuals from the court circles are known for the reign of the flamboyant Antiochus III than for any other Seleucid king, and they include several literary figures, but few of them apart from Euphorion could be described as showing any special eminence. Antiochus III is remembered for his military, not his cultural achievements. The geographer Strabo is always interested in highlighting cultural figures (especially philosophers) produced by particular Greek cities or active in them, but he has few names to mention in his account of the major Seleucid cities in Syria and in Mesopotamia. None of these cities is presented by him as a noted intellectual centre.⁶⁸ It is therefore not surprising that the Seleucids have a generally low profile in most general accounts of the culture of the post Alexander period.⁶⁹

If this impression is correct, what is the explanation? There was no a priori reason why the Seleucids should not have been able to attract outside talent as did the other monarchies. They had the resources and a reputation for wealth second only to that of the Ptolemies (Bikerman 1938, 35f., 119, 126f.). Nor was there any problem of distance: the North Syrian coast was just round the corner from the Aegean and long familiar to the

Greeks. 'Have brains, will travel' had long been the motto of many an opportunist Greek, long before the time of Alexander. If Clearchus could travel all the way from Delphi to Aī Khanoum in Afghanistan to set up a copy of Delphic maxims, then anybody could go anywhere. Furthermore, there was no incompatibility between the maintenance of a high military profile and the pursuit and promotion of cultural activities: both brought fame to the rulers. Monarchy had many faces other than the purely military. Long before Alexander, Archelaus of Macedon, according to Thucydides, developed the military potential of the country more than all the eight kings who preceded him (2.100). It was the same Archelaus who was the first to raise the cultural profile of Macedon on the Greek scene, by attracting, for example, Euripides from Athens to his court. Plutarch comments on the two sides of Demetrius Poliorcetes, the king at war and the king at peace (Plutarch *Demetrius* 2). In the third century the Ptolemies presented themselves simultaneously as great conquering kings and friends of the arts.⁷⁰

Why then did the Seleucid monarchy fail as a whole to develop in the same direction? Several reasons might be suggested.

The first is evidently a simple question of personal inclinations and political will. Cultural centres with lasting cultural institutions did not just happen (cf. Engberg-Pedersen 1993), they had to be created and promoted, and for this the personal commitment of the king was essential. It did make a difference who was king. The ruler needed to establish and maintain contacts with cultural figures on a person to person basis. This is obviously true of Alexandria under the early Ptolemies,⁷¹ and also of Pergamum, especially under Eumenes II. The adjectives *philologoi*, *philomousoi*, or *philotechnoi*, are sometimes applied to kings in general or to individual rulers,⁷² but to my knowledge the only Seleucid king to be described in those terms (as *philologos*) is, ironically, Alexander Balas, a short-lived and ineffectual ruler who may not even have belonged to the dynasty. There is no Seleucid equivalent for the wide intellectual interests attested for the early Ptolemaic kings or for Antigonos Gonatas.

A related point is the comparative lack of contacts between the Seleucids and the mainland of Greece, and

especially Athens, for much of their early history down to the late third century, as has been shown by Habicht (Habicht 1989). Several pieces of evidence suggest that Seleucus I cultivated a connection with Athens, including the gift of a tiger which was mentioned in contemporary comedy (Athenaeus 13.590a-f; cf. Sherwin-White & Kuhrt 1993, 93). The sculptor Bryaxis of Athens made a statue of Seleucus (Pliny *HN* 34.73), and Athenians were among the settlers of Antioch transplanted by Seleucus from the earlier foundation of Antigoneia (Habicht 1989, 7-9). Thereafter evidence of Seleucid relations or presence in the Aegean and mainland is scanty at a time when Ptolemies and Antigonids were competing for influence there (cf. Habicht 1992). The Attalids too had a close interest in the Aegean and the mainland from early in their history (McShane 1964, 40f.). Seleucid weakness as a naval power in the Aegean and eastern Mediterranean may have been a contributory reason for their absence.⁷³ One has to wait till the second century to see a change taking place in this respect. The ancient tradition emphasises the role of Antiochus IV, his devotion to Athens as a result of his prolonged stay there, and his conspicuous generosity to her and to other Greek cities (Livy 41.20; Mørkholm 1966, 55-63; Habicht 1989, 18-22). In fact the renewal of Seleucid connections with the Greek mainland had started already in the reign of Antiochus III, even before his own invasion of the mainland in 192 (Habicht 1989, 10-18). After Antiochus IV Seleucid links with the mainland and especially with Athens continue to be attested almost to the end of the dynasty.⁷⁴ It is striking that relations between the Seleucids and the mainland of Greece should have become much closer at a time when Seleucid power was now circumscribed by the Treaty of Apamea than they had been for most of the third century. But by this time it was perhaps too late for the Seleucids to make a fresh start in the cultural field, as the history of the dynasty from after the death of Antiochus IV is one of almost continuous turmoil and instability. One can only speculate on what might have happened if the position had been different at an earlier date. Compare once more the Ptolemies. Demetrius of Phalerum, the Peripatetic philosopher placed in charge of Athens by Cassander of Macedon in 317, was expelled in 307 by his namesake Demetrius Poliorcetes. He took

refuge at first in Boeotia but eventually ended up at the court of Ptolemy I in Alexandria, not at that of Seleucus, and went on to assist Ptolemy in launching the Library and Museum.⁷⁵ In the third century it was in fact more common for political exiles from the mainland to end up at the Ptolemaic court than anywhere else.⁷⁶

Another point of relevance is that for a long time the Seleucid empire did not have anything that could be called a genuine 'capital city'. I use the word 'capital' with some hesitation, because I am not always sure what is meant and whether this concept should be projected back to the ancient world, as it often is, without further examination of the terminology used by ancient writers.⁷⁷ But there is an obvious difference between Alexandria and Pergamum on the one hand, where all the functions of government and social life were concentrated in one single large centre, and the position in the Seleucid empire on the other. The creation of a large centre of this kind was itself dependent on the size and nature of the kingdom. Ptolemy was in charge of Egypt almost from the moment of Alexander's death in 323. The country formed a natural unit and base, and Alexandria had been founded nearly a decade before. Egypt also had long been well known to the Greeks, some of whom had settled there as early as the seventh century. From an early date Ptolemy was thus in a position to make Egypt look an attractive destination to Greeks ready to offer their services and he presented himself as an appreciative employer (Diodorus 18.28.5-6, cf. 33.3). The Attalid kingdom, on its side, though it only started to develop later, enjoyed comparable advantages of closeness and familiarity to the Greek world, and compactness with a well defined centre in Pergamum. It also enjoyed under Eumenes II the benefit of active Roman support.

The Seleucid empire was different. Its starting point was Babylonia, to which Seleucus was appointed satrap in 321, though his real beginning only came in 312. From that time onwards Seleucus devoted the rest of his long career to enlarging the empire till it reached enormous proportions. He added successively the far eastern provinces, then North Syria, then Asia Minor and at the very end of his life a foothold on the European mainland. It is not obvious that this vast and evolving empire had a clear centre or any single city that could be called its

'capital'.⁷⁸ Seleucus left an empire that lacked a final shape, and where different parts were not equally settled and controlled. From the moment of his accession Antiochus I was plunged into a series of wars in an attempt to keep the empire together, and the kings were on the defensive for most of the time until the reign of Antiochus III when the fight back began.

One consequence was that the kings were kept on the move, and mobility was a characteristic of the Seleucids that distinguishes them from most of the other kings of the period (Sherwin-White & Kuhrt 1993, 38, 135f., 198). There has been some discussion of what was the 'centre' of the Seleucid empire and what was its 'capital', or whether it had several centres and capitals.⁷⁹ The debate is perhaps somewhat unreal. For a long time no single city seems to have been thought of by the rulers as being the 'capital' for the whole empire or indeed could have been.⁸⁰ An indication of this comes as late as the 190s in the reign of Antiochus III, when he was actively reasserting Seleucid claims to parts of the European mainland: he declared his intention to rebuild Lysimacheia across the straits as a residence (*oiketerion*) for his son Seleucus (Appian, *Syriake* 3; cf. Will 1982, 189; P. Briant in *Topoi* 4 [1994], 367). This implied a future shift away from Sardis, hitherto the main Seleucid centre for Asia Minor, but also a possible division of spheres of activity between himself elsewhere in Asia and his son, as had happened already before, under Seleucus I with his son Antiochus I in the far east in the period 292-282. After the Treaty of Apamea Antioch did eventually become in effect what one may now call the 'capital city' of the Seleucids, possession of which was essential to confer legitimacy to the ruler (Grainger 1990, 125, 162). But this is a late development which should perhaps not be projected back to the early history of the dynasty, as is often done.⁸¹ On any interpretation the Seleucids were slow to develop any true counterpart to Ptolemaic Alexandria or Attalid Pergamum. Mobility was the normal state of affairs for the kings down to the time of Antiochus III and indeed beyond, and it was the direct result of military necessities. Although military command often had to be delegated, the visible presence of the king at the head of his troops was constantly required.⁸²

Conclusion

In the end one seems therefore to be drawn back from the cultural to the military aspect and to war. In an extensive survey of Syria in the period after Alexander Fergus Millar came to the conclusion that its apparent lack of visible development under the Seleucids may have been related to war and instability (Millar in Kuhrt & Sherwin-White 1987, 130: 'an area dominated by war and political instability'). The same point was made explicitly by Strabo in relation to Hyrcania, commenting on the lack of attention devoted by successive rulers to the development of the country's considerable resources (11.7.2):

The cause of this lack of attention was the fact that the first rulers of the Hyrcanians, I mean the Medes and the Persians, as also the last, I mean the Parthians [...] were barbarians, and also the fact that the whole of the neighbouring country was full of brigands and nomads and deserted regions. The Macedonians⁸³ did indeed rule over the country for a short time, but they were so occupied with wars that they could not attend to their remote possessions.

The point may perhaps be extended to much of the history of the Seleucid empire.⁸⁴ One of the functions expected of a king by his subjects was the provision of peace and security. This the Ptolemies were able to do for Egypt for much of their history. Theocritus says of Ptolemy Philadelphus: 'his people go about their occupations in security; no enemy by land has crossed the teeming Nile to raise the battle cry in villages that do not belong to him, nor has he leaped in arms on to the shore from a swift ship with hostile intent to seize the herds of Egypt' (17.97-101; cf. Polybius 5.34). It is doubtful whether any Seleucid king could have truthfully made such claims for any large part of his empire, though the aspiration receives occasional expression.⁸⁵

But I would like to end not with the kings, but with a cultural figure. The greatest single intellectual to emerge from the Seleucid empire in the whole of its history is without doubt Posidonius, but he dates from the time when the dynasty was by now in terminal decline (c. 135-c. 51; for the testimonia cf. Edelstein-Kidd 1972-1989). Posidonius was a native of Apamea in Syria, one of the major foundations of Seleucus I and ironically the military headquarters of the kings according to Strabo (16.2.9-10). But beyond the fact of his birth in one of the Seleucid cities Posidonius' intellectual development owed virtually nothing to his origins in the Seleucid empire. Like other intellectual figures that arose in the Seleucid empire in the second century (cf. Tarn 1938-1951, 40-42; Altheim 1948, 139-41, 145), he moved away from the Seleucid empire and went west. He left his native Syria early, escaping one imagines from the turmoil of late Seleucid history, studied in Athens then at Rhodes where he received citizenship and opened a famous school. He travelled extensively in the west, but it seems clear that he never returned to Syria (cf. T3 Edelstein-Kidd; Syria is not mentioned in his travels T 14-26). In his history he did not behave towards his native country as other expatriate Greek historians did, from Thucydides via Timaeus to Polybius his predecessor, but turned against the late Seleucid rulers, of whom he gave a very unflattering picture as decadent rulers corrupted by excessive wealth, and against his own fellow countrymen in North Syria whom he ridiculed in the same vein (cf. Malitz 1983, 257-302). The ability of the Seleucid monarchy in its greatest days to attract and retain intellectual figures of weight from the outside seems, from the above survey, to have been at best inferior to that of rival monarchies.⁸⁶ In the period of its decline all it could do was to drive its own best men away and thus enable others to derive the benefit.

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Notes

- 1 I am very grateful to all the participants at the conference for their comments, and in particular to Lise Hannestad for inviting me in the first instance.
- 2 Cf. Fraser 1972, I 527 on Eratosthenes.
- 3 See n. 75.
- 4 Cf. Fraser 1972, I 86-88 with notes, index III p. 67 s.v. 'expulsion of intelligentsia'.
- 5 See notably Bevan 1902, I 199f, 222-32, 256f., 281-83, 297-99; II 276-78; Meyer 1925; Tarn 1938 & 1951 ch. 2 'Literature and Social Contacts' esp. 39-44; Altheim 1948, II 136-68 'Die hellenistische Literatur im Seleukidenreich'; Bickerman 1938, 39f. is brief; the question is briefly noted in Green 1990, 164; the subject receives no treatment in its own right in Kuhrt & Sherwin-White 1987 or Sherwin-White & Kuhrt 1993. Schneider 1967, I 605-30 is derivative, unsystematic, and of doubtful reliability. See also below nn. 69, 81 on Fraser 1972.
- 6 Cf. e.g. the meeting of Seleucus I and Demetrius Poliorcetes (Plutarch *Demetrius* 32) or the embassy of the Samian Boulagoras to find Antiochus (II?) in *SEG* I 366 lines 10-20.
- 7 P. Gauthier *Nouvelles inscriptions de Sardes, II* (Geneva 1989), nos.1 p. 13-15 and 3 p. 81-83.
- 8 *Labraunda*: J. Crampa, *Labraunda* vol.3, part 2: *the Greek inscriptions* (Lund 1972), no.46 pp.61-63 and Robert 1983, 139f. *Amyzon*: Robert 1983, nos. 10 p. 138-41, 11 p. 141-42, 12 p. 142-43, 18 p. 195-96. *Scythopolis*: Landau 1966, with corrections in *Bull.* 1970, 627 and further discussion of the text by T. Fischer *ZPE* 33 (1979), 131-38 and J.M. Bertrand *ZPE* 46 (1982), 167-74; cf. also *SEG* XLI.1574. *Kildara*: Robert 1983, 181-87. *Iasos*: G. Pugliese-Carratelli *Annuario* 45-46 (1967-68), 445-53 and *Bull.* 1971, 621, now in *I.Iasos* 4. *Heracleia*: M.Wörrle *Chiron* 18 (1988), 421-70 and *SEG* XXXVII.859. *Xanthos*: le Roy 1986; cf. generally Sherwin-White & Kuhrt 1993, 49f., 58f. 176 & 178, 201f.
- 9 Cf. also the inscription from Failaka-Ikaros in the Persian Gulf (C. Rouéché & S.M. Sherwin-White, *Chiron* 15 (1985), no. 3 p.13-39; Sherwin-White & Kuhrt 1993, 172-78). On the question of its date cf. Hannestad 1994 (probably Seleucus II rather than Antiochus III).
- 10 Dates according to Thapar 1997, ch. 2.
- 11 13th Major Rock Edict, Thapar 1997, 255-57 at p. 255; cf. p. 35f. on the context.
- 12 Thapar 1997, at p. 256, cf. p. 40f. for the identification of the kings; cf. generally Sherwin-White & Kuhrt 1993, 100-3.
- 13 See also I *Maccabees* I.1 for a view of Alexander, his successors, and Antiochus IV, all presented as hostile military kings; cf. Millar in Kuhrt & Sherwin-White 1987, 110f.; Sherwin-White & Kuhrt 1993, 53.
- 14 Ma 1999, 217 f. Cf. also the remarks of Carsana 1996, 173-94 esp. 192-94 on the detached attitude of Hellenistic historiography towards the monarchies, though note the critical comments of Savalli-Lestrade 1998a, esp. 316f.
- 15 Cf. generally Ma 1999, ch. 3. For Seleucid kings posing as champions against the barbarian world cf. n. 27 and also Pausanias 10.20.5 for the support given by Antiochus I for the defence of Delphi against the Celtic tribes (cf. L. Hannestad in Bilde & others 1993, 20f.); the appeal of Euthydemus of Bactria to Antiochus III in Polybius 11.34.5 with Walbank *Commentary* II p.313.
- 16 Cf. Bilde and others 1990, 11f.; Briant *ib.* 40, 60f.; Hannestad & Potts *ib.* 122f.
- 17 Schneider 1967-68 is a step back in this respect.
- 18 Cf. esp. Tarn 1938-51 and Altheim 1948, both cited in n. 5 above; Bickerman 1966.
- 19 Cf. Altheim 1948, II esp. 137-53 for a negative assessment of the Ptolemies in contrast to the Seleucids, developing hints in Meyer 1925, 37f., 46: the authoritarian approach of the Ptolemies stifled creative freedom. The question does not seem to be explicitly raised in Fraser 1972, I 305-12 on royal patronage in general and under the Ptolemies, cf. too 551 on Alexandrian history and geography, contrast 484f. on philosophy where the negative influence of the Ptolemaic court is explicitly noted.
- 20 Listed in Carsana 1996, 165 as E20, Savalli-Lestrade 1998b, 33.
- 21 Seleucus son of Mnesiptolemus was also one of 39 contributors to a loan to Miletus in 205/4: A.Rehm *Milet* I.3 *Das Delphinion* no.147 line 102-3; L.Migeotte *L'Emprunt public dans les cités grecques* (Paris 1984), no. 97.
- 22 Olshausen 1974 no. 136; listed in Carsana 1996, 119f. as B6. Savalli-Lestrade 1998b, 29.
- 23 I leave aside the construction work patronised by Seleucid kings. See for example the extensive gifts of Antiochus IV in the Greek world; cf. Mørkholm 1966, 55-63.
- 24 Cf. Cicero, *De natura deorum* 2.133; on Euphorion cf. O. Skutsch, *RE* 6 (1909) s.v. Euphorion (4), 1174-1190; Altheim 1948, 141, 152; Pfeiffer 1968, 150; P.E. Easterling and B.M.W. Knox (eds.) *Cambridge History of Classical Literature* (Cambridge 1985), I 607-9; listed in Carsana 1996, 164f. as E19. Savalli-Lestrade 1998b, 27.
- 25 Fraser 1972, I 325; Erskine 1995; cf. Strabo 13.1.54 for the Attalids' interest in the library of Aristotle.
- 26 Lucian, *Pro imaginibus* 5 has the story that Stratonice, wife of Seleucus I, set a contest to poets to praise her hair, despite being bald. Cf. generally Altheim 1948, II 152.
- 27 *FGrHist* 163 (the Suda dates him to the reign of Antiochus III, but the poem is usually referred to Antiochus I); cf. Mitchell 1993, I 18f.; listed in Carsana 1996, 165 as E21.
- 28 Pfeiffer 1968, 120-22; listed in Carsana 1996, 160 as E4. Savalli-Lestrade 1998b, 10f.
- 29 For the standard view see, e.g., Olshausen 1974 no. 127 p. 172-74; Mehl 1986, 187-91; Kartunen 1989, 96-99; Sherwin-White &

- Kuhrt 1993, 12f., 91-101; J.F.Salles in *Topoi* 4 (1994), 599f.; Carsana 1996, 117f. (B2). Savalli-Lestrade 1998b, 8f.
- 30 In the first decree Antiochus I is honoured for his services to Miletus (*OGIS* 213; Holleaux 1942, 111-17). The second decree honours Apame, wife of Seleucus I for her care for the Milesians serving in the army of Seleucus (Holleaux 1942, 99-110).
- 31 He is not mentioned by Strabo; cf. Robert 1984; Mehl 1986, 218; Sherwin-White & Kuhrt 1993, 19, 25-27, 82f.; listed in Carsana 1996, 142 as D4 (on which cf. Savalli-Lestrade 1998a, 320; Savalli-Lestrade 1998b, 4f.).
- 32 Cf. Meyer 1925, 32f.; Gisinger 1949 (attempts to reconstruct Patrocles' work); Pearson 1960, 163f., 227f., 231 citing Tarn 1938-1951, 488-90; Fraser 1972, I 535; Mehl 1986, esp. 113f., 118f., 279, 301; Sherwin-White & Kuhrt 1993, 19; listed in Carsana 1996, 102 as A3. Savalli-Lestrade 1998b, 9, 14.
- 33 It is not clear that he is identical with the author of a work on siegecraft (*FGrHist* 65 F3 & 4) and a work on piety (F8), cf. Jacoby's comments; the discussion of Schwarz 1969 is therefore based on tenuous grounds. Cf. generally Fraser 1972, I 535; Olshausen 1974 no. 126 p. 171f.; Mehl 1986, 187-91; Kartunen 1989, 100; Sherwin-White & Kuhrt 1993, 13; listed in Carsana 1996, 118f. as B4. Savalli-Lestrade 1998b, 4.
- 34 Demetrius of Byzantium (*FGrHist* 162) wrote 8 books on Antiochus I and Ptolemy II; he may have been a contemporary of the king, but it is not known whether he had any connection with him. A certain Archibius is reported to have written to a king Antiochus with advice on how to prevent storm damage to crops (Pliny *HN* 18.294; cf. D.J. Thompson in *CAH VII*².1 364f.). It is not clear whether this implies a literary work dedicated to the king.
- 35 Altheim 1948, II 142-44 draws a contrast between the Seleucid explorers who wrote their own accounts and the Ptolemaic geographers (above all Eratosthenes) whose accounts were based not on their own travels but on the explorations of others. This contrast is not explicitly taken up by Fraser 1972, I 520-53 in his detailed discussion of Alexandrian geography.
- 36 The name was apparently already in current use by the accession of Antiochus I, cf. the decree from Ilium *OGIS* 219 lines 4-5; cf. too *OGIS* 229 lines 2, 13; Strabo 16.2.4.
- 37 Cf. Musti 1966, 60-81 esp. 79-81 who argues for an originally more extensive use of the term (he does not mention the passage in Pliny); Grainger 1990, 41 makes no reference to Musti.
- 38 Strabo 11.11.5 notes the habit of the 'Macedonians', i.e. the Seleucids (cf. n. 83), of naming or renaming rivers and places to suit themselves; cf. Fraser 1996, 82, 86, 87f.
- 39 Cf. Tarn 1938-1951, 40 and Altheim 1947, I 152f. on the general lack of literature at the Seleucid court. According to Carsana 1996, 188-90 Antiochus III sought (unsuccessfully) to use Greek historians for dynastic propaganda purposes, unlike the early Seleucid kings who used them to chart the eastern part of their newly acquired empire; the contrast is based on rather tenuous evidence, cf. Savalli-Lestrade 1998a, 316f.
- 40 Bikerman 1938, 36f.; Fraser 1969, 536f.; Marasco 1996, 438-47 for a recent conspectus.
- 41 There is disagreement among recent writers as to the scope and character of his medical researches. Cf. Fraser 1969 with the qualifications of Lloyd 1975, cf. too Lloyd in *CAH VII*.1² 347-50 for an evaluation of his medical achievement; Longrigg 1993, 181-83, 188f., 199-203, 205-8, 210-18.
- 42 Notably Plutarch *Demetrius*; Appian *Syriake* 59-61, but two authors (Valerius Maximus and Pliny) as well as mentioning Erasistratus also give each an alternative name; see below n. 44.
- 43 See Walbank *Commentary* I p. 584 for his medical reputation; he is listed in Carsana 1996, 162f. as E12 (with corrections by Savalli-Lestrade 1998a, 319f.). Savalli-Lestrade 1998b, 19-21, 24f.
- 44 But elsewhere Pliny refers the same episode to Erasistratus (29.5), and his information seems in any case garbled. In neither passage does Pliny make any direct reference to the story of Stratonice, and in both passages he states that 'king Ptolemy' rewarded Cleombrotus-Erasistratus for 'saving' or 'curing' the king. In the second passage 'king Ptolemy' is described as 'son' of Antiochus (the second Pliny passage appears not to be mentioned by Mehl 1986, 239). No other ancient account mentions any Ptolemaic connection with these events. In another version of the story of Antiochus and Stratonice Valerius Maximus (5.7, ext.1) states that Antiochus was cured either by the (otherwise unknown) mathematician Leptines 'or, as some relate, by Erasistratus the doctor'.
- 45 Wellmann 1909, 333-34, followed e.g. by Brodersen 1985, 462 and 1989, 171; Mehl 1986, 250-53 (but Mehl accepts that Erasistratus was present at the court of Seleucus I at the time); Longrigg 1993, 181-3; Marasco 1996, 439-41 & 442-44.
- 46 Fraser 1969, 533-35 followed by Lloyd 1975, 172; von Staden 1989, 47, 142.
- 47 It may be relevant that the poet Euphoriion of Chalcis, placed in charge of the public library of Antioch by Antiochus III (above) is recorded to have written, among his many works, a Hippocratic glossography (Wellmann 1930, 328-31; Fraser 1969, 537); cf. O. Skutsch *RE* 6 (1909), 1189.
- 48 This is conceded by Fraser 1969, 536f.; Marasco 1996, 442-44 does not take a clear position.
- 49 Cf. Riginos 1994 for a detailed collection of material and discussion.
- 50 Cf., e.g., Arrian, *Anabasis* 7.10.1-2; Berve 1926, I 79f. on Alexander's doctors.
- 51 Metrodorus is listed in Carsana 1996, 159 as E3. See also Savalli-Lestrade 1998b, 13f.
- 52 *Belopoeika* §50 ed. Marsden 1971, 106-84 at p. 108; the motivation given is interesting; fame was as important as practical usage. On Ctesibius cf. Fraser 1972, I 428-32.
- 53 Athenaeus 14.634a; Marsden 1971, 66-103; cf. generally Préaux 1978, I 216f.
- 54 Appian *Syriake* 18.78 cf. too Livy 35.51.9, 36.10.7; cf. Bar-Kochva 1976, 161. Note the gift of hair by Seleucus II to Rhodes (Poly-

- buis 5.89), which must have been intended for use in catapults; cf. Walbank on Polybius 4.56.3.
- 55 The satrap of Bactria sent 20 elephants in 274/3 for the 'First Syrian War', cf. the Babylonian text cited in Sherwin-White & Kuhrt 1993, 46f.
- 56 For what follows cf. generally Engberg-Pedersen 1993; Préaux I 212-17, 226-30 on the relations between philosophers and kings; a rapid narrative survey in Vatai 1984, 116-29. On philosophers in the Seleucid empire cf. Tarn 1938-1951, 40-43 and Altheim 1948, II 139-41 for a contrast with Alexandrian philosophy, on which cf. Fraser 1972, I 480-94 (esp. 484f. on Alexandria's lack of attractiveness till the first century), cf. too 551.
- 57 Altheim 1948, II 140f. attributes this to Antiochus IV, but there is no obvious way of identifying the relevant king.
- 58 These suggest that there may have been more connections than we know of in detail. (1) An anecdote in Athenaeus (13.593b-d) from Phylarchus (*FGrHist* 81 F24) concerns Danae, daughter of the Epicurean Leontion, who was attendant of Laodice, the former wife of Antiochus II. (2) Athenaeus 14.652f-653a quoting Hegesander reports a correspondence between Amitrochates (Bindusara, the second Mauryan king of India) and a king Antiochus (I) about the sale of various goods including a sophist: Antiochus replies that it is not a Greek custom to sell sophists! (3) Two Athenian inscriptions of c. 229-209 and 184/3 BC respectively honour Aristocreon of Seleucia, the son of the sister of Chrysippus of Soli the Stoic philosopher (*Syll.*³ 475 and 474 with Habicht 1989, 13f.).
- 59 Habicht 1989, 18; the decree belongs probably to the reign of Seleucus IV.
- 60 Plassart 1921, IV.78-80 at p. 24, cf. p. 37.
- 61 *P.Herc.* 1044; Gallo 1980 supersedes previous work, notably the *editio princeps* of W. Crönert in 1900 and Philippson 1941, cf. Gallo 1980, 29f. on Crönert and 31f. on Philippson. See Gallo 1980, 23-49 for the papyrus and the life of Philonides (esp. 33-41), 51-166 for the papyrus fragments and commentary, and pls. I-III; cf. Habicht 1988 for two corrections of detail. Gallo's edition is not mentioned by Carsana 1996, 166f. (E24 & 25). On Philonides and his sons see also Savalli-Lestrade 1998b, 46f., 51-53, 71-73, Gera 1999.
- 62 Such as information about the teachers of Philonides; cf. Gallo 1980, 36-38.
- 63 Modern scholarship is not unanimous on this point. Father: Habicht 1989, 18; son: Philippson 1941, 64; Fraser 1972, II n. 320 p. 601 (on I p. 416 Antiochus IV is incorrectly described as father of Demetrius I, whose uncle he was); Gallo 1980, 34 (Philonides born not long before 200).
- 64 A grammarian and lecturer of the name of Isocrates, active in Syria in the 160s, is also mentioned by Polybius as being implicated in the murder of Octavius (Polybius 31.33.5 and 32.2, 3.6-9; Diodorus 31.29, from Polybius); it is not known whether he had any connection with the Seleucid court.
- 65 It seems that Philonides is the only philosopher known to have acted (in effect) as tutor to a Seleucid king, whereas there are several known cases for the other dynasties (Préaux 1978, I 214f.; cf. Fraser 1972, I 308f. on the tutors of Ptolemaic kings). There is a striking dearth of information about the education of Seleucid kings (contrast, e.g., Alexander the Great).
- 66 Cf. on this Tarn 1938-1951, 41; Altheim 1948, II 140, 144f.; Fraser 1972, I 307-9 on Ptolemaic Alexandria.
- 67 Athenaeus describes Diogenes as from Seleucia in Babylonia; if true he is otherwise unknown, but there may be a confusion on the part of Athenaeus with the well known Stoic philosopher Diogenes, also from Seleucia on the Tigris, but commonly known as Diogenes the Babylonian, who became head of the Stoa in Athens; the Epicurean Diogenes may be Diogenes of Tarsus (cf. on this point Carsana 1996, 169 [E37] citing Bouché-Leclercq 1913-14, 339). See also Savalli-Lestrade 1998b, 75f.
- 68 Cf. 16.2.10 (Posidonius of Apamea); 16.1.6 (Seleucus of Seleucia); 16.1.16 (Diogenes of Seleucia); contrast e.g. all the names in 14.2.13 (Rhodes), 14.5.13 (Tarsus), or 17.3.22 (Cyrene). For a survey of intellectual figures from the Greek cities in the east in the post Alexander period cf. briefly Jones 1940, 281f. and more fully Tarn and Altheim cited in n. 5 above.
- 69 Pfeiffer 1968 is able to devote six chapters to the Ptolemies and Alexandrian scholarship and one to the Attalids, but the Seleucids are conspicuously in the background. Cf. Pfeiffer 1968, 120-122 (Aratus), 150 (Euphron); the more positive estimate of the Seleucids given by Fraser 1972 is a partial exception; see above on Erasistratus and below n. 81.
- 70 For instance, Theocritus in his poem in praise of Ptolemy II celebrates the wide empire of Ptolemy and his military might, the wealth that came from all this, and the use that Ptolemy made of it for the benefit of the gods and for the generous support of poets such as Theocritus himself (Theocritus 17.73-117). So too Calixteinus of Rhodes, in the description of the great procession at Alexandria in 271/0, mentions in the same breath the vast naval resources and constructions of Ptolemy Philadelphus and the Library and Museum at Alexandria (*FGrHist* 627 F 2, from Athenaeus 5.203c-e).
- 71 Cf. Fraser 1972, I 309-12 on the personal interest of the Ptolemaic kings.
- 72 For example on kings in general, Plutarch *Moralia* 140c, 1095c (*philomousoi, philogoi*); Philo of Byzantium on the Ptolemies (*philodoxoi, philotechnoi*; see n. 52); Theocritus 17.115-17 on Ptolemy Philadelphus, and see the index in Fraser 1972 for individual rulers; Tarn 1913, ch. 8 on Antigonos Gonatas. Plutarch does not name any Seleucid ruler in his comments on the intellectual pursuits of kings (*Demetrius* 20).
- 73 The Seleucids probably maintained a fleet in the Persian Gulf, but that is a different story: cf. J.F. Salles in Kuhrt & Sherwin-White 1987, 75-109 esp. 96-98, 108f.
- 74 Cf. the redating to the reign of Antiochus VII in the late 130s of

- an Athenian decree concerning relations with the Seleucids, Tracy 1988, cf. Habicht 1989, 22-24 and generally 22-26 on the continued links of the Seleucids with Athens.
- 75 Fraser 1972, I 306f., 314-16, 321f.; testimonia on Demetrius of Phalerum in *FGH Hist* 228.
- 76 E.g., the Athenians Chremonides and his brother Glaucon after the Chremonidean war; Cleomenes of Sparta after Sellasia.
- 77 E.g. Marinoni 1972, 579-81; Will 1990 (who does not mention Marinoni).
- 78 Grainger 1990, 122-26; cf. Weber 1997, 35f. on the major monarchies and the difference between Attalids and Ptolemies on the one hand, and Seleucids and Antigonids on the other.
- 79 Cf., e.g., Invernizzi in Bilde et al. 1993, 230-50, whose discussion does not take into account Asia Minor.
- 80 Compare Gabbert 1997, 68f. on Antigonus Gonatas.
- 81 Rostovtzeff 1941, I 462, 480f. (Antioch the capital); Marinoni 1972 (Antioch, not Seleucia in Pieria, meant from the start by Seleucus I to be the capital of his empire, replacing Seleucia on the Tigris); Fraser 1972 I esp. 100, 343, 345, 347, 349 (Antioch in the third century the capital of the Seleucid empire and comparable to Alexandria in its cultural life); Green 1990, 164; Will 1990 (Antioch becomes the capital perhaps from Antiochus I onwards, though its urban development remains modest until the Roman empire); Invernizzi in Bilde et al. 1993, 236, 239, 241 (Antioch replaces Seleucia on the Tigris as royal capital, though Seleucia on the Tigris retained its 'cultural centrality' [237 cf. 240] as well as its economic importance [239, 240f.]). For the first century BC, the flattering description of Antioch in Cicero *pro Archia* 4.3 as a city full of learned men and liberal studies is not easy to substantiate.
- 82 Cf. Polybius 5.41, 45, 49 on the early years of Antiochus III; Livy 35.42, cf. 45 on his invasion of the Greek mainland in 192.
- 83 The Seleucids are meant, cf. Edson 1958.
- 84 Cf. also Rostovtzeff I 1941, 475 on 'the prevailing atmosphere of incessant war', 484 on Dura-Europus; briefly, Green 1990, 164.
- 85 Cf. *OGIS* 219, decree of Ilium for Antiochus I 'he has restored peace to the cities and has advanced his interests and the kingdom to a more powerful and brilliant position'; a decree of Iasos of the period after 197 talks of Antiochus III 'maintaining his ancestral disposition towards all the Greeks, and bringing peace to some, helping individually and in common many others who have met with troubles' (lines 41-44) (G. Pugliese Carratelli cited in n. 8). Not even North Syria could take peaceful conditions for granted. Serious disturbances are known already at the accession of Antiochus I (*OGIS* 219). The port of Seleucia in Pieria, almost on the doorstep of Antioch at the mouth of the Orontes, was in Ptolemaic hands for more than two decades from Seleucus II to the early years of Antiochus III (Polybius 5.58). Cf. also the evidence for Ptolemaic mercenaries present near Laodicea in the third century, J.P. Rey-Coquais *Syria* 55 (1978), 313-25.
- 86 Compare Fraser 1972, I 307-9 for Ptolemaic Alexandria.