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**Contempt etched in metal: Coinage, defacement & resistance in the Seleucid Empire**

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Traditionally, most Seleucid scholarship focused on the study of Empire at an ‘imperial level’, exploring particularly the inherent strengths/ weaknesses of the empire, or the political machinations of its rulers. However, developments in the study of empires (particularly in a post-colonial context) have led to something of a renaissance in the approach taken when addressing the topic. Newer scholarship on empires (e.g., Newsinger 2006, Liebman 2011) seeks to understand the interactions – both positive and negative – between imperial powers and their subject peoples. For the Seleucids, this has begun to mean considering the reaction of subject peoples to royal ideology (e.g. Kosmin 2018); extant evidence, however, makes this undertaking a difficult one. In this paper, I suggest a new vehicle by which we can engage in discussion about individual acts of resistance within the Seleucid Empire – coinage.

In this paper, I show that individuals could deface coinage not only as acts of pure vandalism, but that they could also make pointed political statements by attacking the key dynastic markers on these coins, or attributes associated with individual rulers. I will also demonstrate that the damage done to these coins can be contextualised by wider cultural and historical considerations, thus providing potential explanations as to why these cuts may have been made. In doing so, this paper will demonstrate that Seleucid numismatic evidence can be used to engage with examples of resistance within the Seleucid Empire on an individual, person-by-person basis.

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