

Archaeology and Biblical Studies

The Middle Maccabees

**Archaeology, History,
and the Rise of the
Hasmonean Kingdom**

**Edited by
Andrea M. Berlin
Paul J. Kosmin**



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Seleucid Throne Wars: Resilience and Disintegration of the Greatest Successor Kingdom from Demetrius I to Antiochus VII

Altay Coşkun

Introduction

Over the past generation, scholars have not tired of contradicting the view that the Seleucid kingdom was weak from early on and have also shown greater appreciation for Antiochus III Megas and his *anabasis*—his eastern campaign from Armenia to Bactria (212–205 BCE). Judgments remain, however, divided on the effect of this king’s defeat by the Romans at Magnesia (190 BCE) and the peace terms imposed at Apamea (188 BCE).¹ But, apart from the defection of Armenia, there is no evidence for a deleterious chain reaction (Strabo, *Geog.* 11.14.5, 15; Traina 1999/2000, 59–62;

I would like to thank Andrea Berlin and Paul Kosmin for allowing me to be part of the stimulating Enoch Seminar on the Middle Maccabees and for their patience with me. I am also grateful to Catherine Berzon for her helpful feedback on an earlier draft. Given the limitation of space, my bibliography largely concentrates on the past fifteen years; for completion, see especially Ehling 2008; Grainger 2015a; Chrubasik 2016; Engels 2017a, 2017b; Coşkun and Engels 2019; Coşkun forthcoming A, forthcoming B.

1. Pessimistic views: e.g., Wolski 1999; Dąbrowa 2005, 75; Assar 2006b, 88; Coloru 2009; Plischke 2014; Grainger 2015a, 2015b; Kosmin 2018b, 187–233; Chaniotis 2018, 193–94. Optimistic views: e.g., Aperghis 2004, 198–99; 231–32.; D. Engels 2011; 2017b; Chrubasik 2016, 123; Wenghofer and Houle 2016; Wenghofer 2018; Strootman 2018; Coşkun and Engels 2019; Payen 2019; Coşkun 2019b; also see Eckstein 2008, 334–36, 339–40. *Anabasis*: Feyel and Graslin-Thomé 2017; Engels 2017b, 307–47; also Kosmin 2013, 65–67 (Persian Gulf); Plischke 2014, 265–76; Almagor 2019.

2017; Roller 2018, 679, 683; below, n. 16). His immediate successor Seleucus IV (189/187–175 BCE), once decried for his weakness, has recently been acknowledged for the consolidation of the kingdom (Mileta 2014; Elvidge 2017; see Chaniotis 2018, 194). Considering the achievement of his other son, Antiochus IV Epiphanes, overly negative views do not seem to be warranted: he was the first Seleucid monarch to ravage Ptolemaic Egypt and besiege Alexandria (170–168 BCE). While he is rightfully seen as the mightiest ruler of his time, pessimists point to his humiliation by Gaius Popilius Laenas on the beach of Eleusis: he boldly forced the king to abort the campaign with no more in his hands than a rod and a letter by the Roman Senate. But, contrary to a widespread opinion, proof for the destabilization of the kingdom is not forthcoming (*pace* Chaniotis 2018, 194–95; see Dąbrowa 2005, 75–76; Assar 2006b, 88–89; Plischke 2014, 291–92).²

The Judeans, admittedly, revolted in 168 BCE, but their anger was directed against the undeserving high priest Menelaus. The Seleucid government overreacted in its attempt to eradicate all resistance by normalizing the cult of Jerusalem. An unintended religious war ensued.³ But Antiochus's rule stood firm regardless. Who may be a better witness than the contemporary Judean pamphleteer Daniel? He was keenly awaiting divine intervention but had to concede that the king was invincible for some years to come (Dan 11:40–45; Coşkun 2019a). At any rate, the administration soon rectified its mistake, Jerusalem and the temple were pacified between 165 and 162 BCE, and opposition was undermined with arms and diplomacy by 158 (Nodet 2005; Dąbrowa 2010; Grainger 2012; Regev 2013; Seeman 2013; Schwentzel 2013; Atkinson 2016; Bernhardt 2017; also Wilker 2011; Trampedach 2012; Coşkun 2018b, 2019b).

Epiphanes began his *anabasis* by reconquering Armenia (165 BCE). His main intention was to tighten links with his administrators, priests, satraps, vassal kings and subjects, a project he had inaugurated with the spectacular procession at Daphne (166). Besides, he fostered Seleucid presence in the Persian Gulf, enticed by its high economic potential, a clear indication of his entrepreneurial spirit (Mittag 2006; Feyel and

2. Egyptian campaign: Fischer-Bovet 2014b.

3. Religious motivation: Bernhardt 2017, 222–74; see Gruen 1993; Scolnic 2019. Fiscal: Bringmann 1983, 99; Gruen 1993; Kosmin 2018b, 220. Political: Bickerman 1937; Engels 2014; Plischke 2014, 296–97; Chaniotis 2018, 196–97. Combination of political and fiscal factors: Gorre and Honigman 2014; Coşkun forthcoming A.

Graslin-Thomé 2014; also Coşkun and Engels 2019).⁴ His death in Persian Gabai (164 BCE) came unexpected, but resulted from a revolt neither of Persis nor other subject territories.⁵ His (minor) son Antiochus V Philopator was proclaimed king, though under the guardianship of Lysias, who successfully defended his role against his rival Philip. The Senate denied Demetrius, the twenty-two-year-old son of Seleucus IV, to inherit the throne and dispatched Gaius Octavius as inspector to Syria (163). He had the Apamean elephants hamstrung and the Laodicean fl et burnt. Polybius (*Hist.* 31.2.1–11; see Appian, *Syr.* 46.238–240) claims that this had been his mandate, but the senator probably acted spontaneously under the impression that the accumulated power in the hands of Lysias was too risky.⁶ Leptines, an outraged citizen of Laodicea, killed Octavius, but the Senate was hesitant to take punitive action (Polybius, *Hist.* 31.2.6; 31.11.1–3; 32.3.1–13; see Gera 1998, 291). Demetrius's chance had come.

The Rise of Demetrius I Soter

Despite the turmoil in Syria, the Senate was still reluctant to give Demetrius leave (Polybius, *Hist.* 31.11.9–12; Appian, *Syr.* 46.241–47.24). He fled from Rome in late spring 162 BCE, recruited mercenaries in Lycia, landed in Tripolis, and proclaimed himself king by October. Not much later, he

4. Daphne: Iossif 2011b; Strootman 2019. Coin imagery: Iossif and Lorber 2009; Anokhin 2014; Erickson 2019; see Hoover 2009. *Anabasis*: Coloru 2014 (Media Atropatene); Clancier 2014 (Babylonian sources); Martinez-Sève 2014; Plischke 2014, 312–14 (Elymais, Gulf, Antioch-in-Persis); see Kosmin 2013, 68 (with Pliny, *Nat. hist.* 6.28.147; *ADART* –164 C 13–14; *SC* 1:110–13. Itinerant court: Capdetrey 2007, 374–83; Iossif 2011b, 150; Kosmin 2014a, 142–80.

5. Combine Polybius, *Hist.* 31.9.1–3, with 2 Macc 1:10–17; 9:1–2; see Mittag 2006, 319–20; Coşkun 2019b, 462–63 n. 22; see also Walbank 1979, 3:474, for *Tabai*; *pace* Plischke 2014, 296–97 (different: 292: Elymais). Persian hostility? Thus (also with Pliny, *Nat. hist.* 6.32.152) Mittag 2006, 305–7; Plischke 2014, 293–95, 311–12; Kosmin 2018b, 203 (see Kosmin 2013, 67); contra Engels 2017b, 253 n. 28, 256, 273–74 (different: 304): dates and ethnic attributions problematic.

6. Polybius's accusation is accepted by Volkmann 1925, 381; McDonald and Walbank 1969; Gera 1998, 289; Scolnic 2019, 220–22, but rejected by Gruen 1984, 664. The terms of the Treaty of Apamea had not been enforced in years (Walbank 1979, 3:466–67; Sekunda 2019) and were no longer legally binding (Coşkun 2019b, 469). Other explanations: fear of Ariarathes: Polybius, *Hist.* 31.7.2–8.8; Lysias was blackmailed with the release of Demetrius: Gera 1998, 290.

took Antioch and executed Lysias together with his little cousin.⁷ Such swiftness may cast doubts on the stability of the kingdom, but unnecessarily so, because many factors contributed to Demetrius's success. Most of all, the previous regime was quite unpopular, not only because of the failure of Lysias to uphold Seleucid sovereignty against Rome but also because sole-ruling child kings had never found wide acceptance, as the barely noticed execution of Antiochus, the son of Seleucus IV (170 BCE), exemplifies.⁸ Besides, Demetrius had influential and skillful friends, including his former tutor Diodorus, the historiographer Polybius, and the Egyptian ambassador Menyllus.⁹ This said, the seeming ease of the transition of power in Syria contrasts with the uproar the coup caused elsewhere in the kingdom.

Demetrius and Judea

The violent succession in Antioch revived the conflict in Judea, but Demetrius's response was based on the two principles that had also led his predecessors to victory: the search for strong allies among the local elite and the staggered allocation of resources, depending on urgency. Lysias had already replaced the compromised high priest Menelaus by Alcimus, a member of the Oniad family who could be expected to enjoy broader support (1 Macc 7:5–25; 9:54–57; 2 Macc 14:3–13, 26; also Ps 79:1–4).¹⁰

7. Senate: Polybius, *Hist.* 31.11.9–12; Appian, *Syr.* 46.241. Flight from Italy: Polybius, *Hist.* 31.12–15. Lycia: Zonaras, *Chron.* 9.25. Syria: Appian, *Syr.* 47.242; Eusebius, *Chron.* 154.3 = 162/161 BCE. Few mercenaries: 1 Macc 7:1, *pace* 2 Macc 14:1; Ehling 2008, 123; see Josephus, *Ant.* 12.389. See Ehling 2008, 122–31; Coşkun forthcoming A; see also Volkmann 1925, 381–89; Walbank 1979, 3:478–84. Arrival in November 162: Bringmann 1983, 17–18. Arrival in 161: Van der Spek 1997/1998, 167–68; Boiy 2004, 162–63; see also Chanotis 2018, 201.

8. Execution: Van der Spek 2004, *CM* 4; see Del Monte 1997, 208–11. Accusation of Antiochus IV: John of Antioch *FHG* 4:558 F 58. Allusive: Dan 7:8, 20, 24; Diodorus Siculus, *Bib. hist.* 30.7.2. See also, e.g., Mittag 2006, 47–48; SC 2.1:35–39; Scolnic 2014, 2016. Different views: Ogden 1999, 141–42, 145; Boiy 2004, 162; Monerie 2014, 128.

9. Supporters: Polybius, *Hist.* 31.11–15; see also Walbank 1979, 3:478–84; Ehling 2008, 122–24; Primo 2009, 153–57. Menyllus and Egyptian context: Gera 1998, 292–95; Hölbl 2004, 159–69; Grainger 2015a, 43–44. Alleged endorsement of the Senate: Zonaras, *Chron.* 9.25.

10. Different: Josephus, *Ant.* 12.9.7 (387); 12.10.1–6 (389–413); 20.10.1 (237) (Jacimus). See Scolnic 2005; Nodet 2005, 348–59, 384; Ehling 2008, 116; Dąbrowa 2010, 29–31; Bernhardt 2017, 325, 331–33; also Coşkun forthcoming A.

When the latter requested help against Judas, Demetrius miscalculated the strength of the two Judean factions, and the troops under his *strategos* Nicanor were routed at Adasa in March 161 (1 Macc 7:26–50; 2 Macc 14:1–15:37; Josephus, *Ant.* 13.402–412). Only then did the king send a fully fledged army under Bacchides, to destroy Judas for good at Elaza (October 161; 1 Macc 9:1–31; Josephus, *Ant.* 13.420–434).¹¹ Judea remained quiet until the death of Alcimus in 159/158 BCE. When Judas's brother Jonathan rekindled turmoil, Bacchides negotiated new terms: Jonathan was given a small fiefdom around Michmash in northern Judea, where he had free reign for his radical ideals, a small price to pay for leaving Jerusalem and the temple in peace. Since no candidate for the high priesthood had sufficient backing among the deeply divided Judeans, the position remained vacant (1 Macc 9:57–73; Ehling 2008, 135–39; Grainger 2015a, 47–49; Kosmin 2018b, 222–23). Demetrius had thus eliminated a dangerous threat in his rear in 161 BCE. Having boosted the spirits of his soldiers, he was ready to turn against his major enemy, Timarchus.¹²

Timarchus and Artaxias versus the Alliance of Demetrius

As an appointee of Epiphanes, the satrap of Media Timarchus refused to acknowledge Demetrius. He proclaimed himself king of Media and, once the Senate endorsed him, invaded Babylonia (161; see Diodorus Siculus, *Bib. hist.* 31.27a; also Pompeius Trogus, *Procl.* 34: *rex Mediae*; Gera 1998, 280–82; Ehling 2008, 124–31; Coşkun 2018c, 99, 103–4 [*pace* Zollschan 2017]; Coşkun forthcoming A; Volkmann 1925, 392).¹³ Eventually, Demetrius defeated him at Zeugma¹⁴ early in 160 (Diodorus Siculus, *Bib. hist.* 31.27a; Ehling 2008, 126–28; Grainger 2015a, 47).¹⁵ Diodorus names

11. See nn. 5–7 (Maccabean bibliography) and 31 (chronology).

12. Relative chronology; see Coşkun 2018b versus Zollschan 2017.

13. Appian (*Syr.* 45.235) regards Timarchus and his brother Heraclides as satrap and treasurer of Babylon respectively; Boiy (2004, 163–64) suggests a revolt under Antiochus V (see SC 1:141–50), which is incompatible with Van der Spek 2004. On Timarchus and Media, also see Capdetrey 2007, 252–53; Chrubasik 2016, 127, 147–54; Wenghofer 2019, 267.

14. *Pace* SC 1:145, 151: Babylon. But this is not implied in Appian, *Syr.* 47.242; see Ehling 2008, 128–29; Muccioli 2013, 165–66.

15. Undated overstruck coins from Seleucia-on-the-Tigris do not help with the chronology, *pace* SC 1:141, 145 no. 1588. The inscriptions from Babylon do not provide a *terminus* either, *pace* Boiy (2004, 163–65 [May 161]) as well as Van der Spek

Artaxias of Armenia as an ally of Timarchus. The Orontid (or pseudo-Orontid) king, who had dedicated his lifetime to creating a new dynastic identity for his Armenian kingdom, thus embraced his opportunity to return to independence.¹⁶ His son Artavasdes succeeded him around 160, which is compatible with the view that Artaxias died in combat or was eliminated soon thereafter. Further tensions between Demetrius and Artavasdes are not recorded, so that the Battle of Zeugma likely reestablished Seleucid hegemony over Armenia (*pace* Traina 1999/2000, 59–63 [agreement with Artaxias; confused chronology]; Grainger 1997, 40; Payen 2019, 293).

Some scholars regard Ptolemy, the *epistates* of Commagene, as another ally of Timarchus (thus Payen 2019, 294; see Gera 1998, 296–97, 303–4).¹⁷ But if he had openly resisted Demetrius, the victor would certainly have invaded Commagene, which was located just north of Zeugma (Grainger 2015a, 53–54). And the belief that there ever was a dynastic era beginning in 163/162 has recently been shattered (Facella 2016). A Commagenian coin issue imitating Demetrius types from Antioch also implies continued loyalty to the Seleucids (*pace* SC 1:207 [with nos. 1767–70]; see Grainger 2015a, 62–63). Ptolemy hence provided active support to Demetrius. Moreover, Demetrius made an alliance with Pharnaces of Pontus, probably sealing it in 162/161 with the betrothal of his cousin Nysa. An Athenian decree identifies her as a daughter of King Antiochus (IV) and Queen Laodice (IVb), and attests the marriage in winter 160/159 (Durrbach and Jarde 1905, no. 61 = IDelos 1497*bis* = OGIS 771 [171/170 BCE]; also PHI 63933; Ghița

(1997/1998, 164; Chrubasik 2016, 128–29. [September 161]). They rather suggest that Babylon remained loyal to Demetrius (also on 18 January 160 [Boiy 2004]) and thus escaped Timarchus's control. The Babylonians had always been close to the the dynasty: see, e.g., Scharrer 2000; Boiy 2004, 137–66; Capdetrey 2007, 25–252; Graslin-Thomé 2012, 2017; Kosmin 2014b; Plischke 2014, 149–72; 201–4; Pirngruber 2017; Engels 2019; see also Coşkun 2019b, 472–75; Ramsey 2019.

16. Revolt: Diodorus Siculus, *Bib. hist.* 31.27a; see Kosmin 2018b, 213; Payen 2019, 292–94; see also Gera 1998, 296; Ehling 2008, 127; Plischke 2014, 292–93. Identity: Khatchadourian 2007; Traina 2017; Kosmin 2018b, 211–18.

17. Others agree that Ptolemy revolted, without specifying his relation to Timarchus: Facella 2006, 199–205; Capdetrey 2007, 245–46; Ehling 2008, 127. I doubt that Ptolemy's attack on Melitene, a possession of Ariarathes V (Diodorus Siculus, *Bib. hist.* 31.19a), belongs to this context, *pace* Facella 2006, 199, 204.

2011 [160/59 BCE]; Bringmann and von Steuben 1995, 77–80, no. 37 [160/59]: ll. 14–15, 19).¹⁸

More difficult to understand are the Seleucid-Cappadocian relations, which had been shaped by intermarriage for nearly a century, although Ariarathes IV had to shift his alliance toward Pergamum, constrained by the Treaty of Apamea (McAuley 2019; also Simonetta 1977, 16; Grainger 1997, 40; Capdetrey 2007, 242–43; Michels 2009, 122–25). But blood bonds had long-term implications, and they must have been felt strongly around 163/162 BCE: Antiochis, the daughter of Antiochus III, was the widow of Ariarathes IV and mother of Ariarathes V, while also the aunt of the boy king Antiochus V. For unknown reasons, she and her daughter sojourned in Antioch and became victims of infighting at the Seleucid court. Ariarathes (silently) blamed Lysias, so that the general's execution by Demetrius should have been welcomed in Mazaca (Polybius, *Hist.* 31.7).

Diodorus makes a vague reference to a renewed marital alliance between the two royal houses, which was dissolved before Ariarathes dispatched ambassadors to Rome later in 160.¹⁹ The traditional reconstruction goes as follows: Demetrius betrothed his sister Laodice, the widow of King Perseus, to Ariarathes V in 162 or 161, but the latter canceled the arrangement following the advice of Gaius Tiberius Gracchus in 161 (Volkman 1925, 390; Simonetta 1977, 24; Grainger 1997, 49 [different from Grainger 2015, 50]; Ehling 2008, 88, 139, 155; Michels 2009, 125; Payen 2019, 295–96). Diodorus's wording implies, however, that the marriage had been in effect for some time, and Gracchus, a grandson-in-law of Scipio the Elder, is not attested as advising against the marriage; he merely testified for Ariarathes in the Senate (Gruen 1984, 582–83, with Polybius, *Hist.* 31.3.1–5; see Payen 2019, 296).²⁰

This would leave enough time for the alliance to have been in force, so that Ariarathes probably supported Demetrius's fight against Timarchus

18. For 160/159, see also Walbank 1979, 3:318; Rigsby 1980, 241; Grainger 1997, 52; Ehling 2008, 140; Ballesteros Pastor 2013, 248; Strootman 2019, 190. *Pace* Tracy 1992, 307–13, who dates to 196/195 BCE; see Højte 2005, 142–43; Heinen 2005, 40; Michels 2009, 89; Paton, Walbank, and Habicht 2012, 468 n. 19; Avram 2016, 216; Ballesteros Pastor 2007; contra Traill 1994; Coşkun, forthcoming B. Undecided: Engels 2017b, 64 (n. 101), 85.

19. Diodorus Siculus (*Bib. hist.* 31.28, ἀπόρρησιν τοῦ γάμου) dates the embassy to the 155th Olympiad (160/159–157/156). Polybius (*Hist.* 32.1) only mentions the embassy to Rome; Justinus (*Epit.* 35.1.2, *fastiditas sororis nuptias*).

20. This removes the ambiguity of Gracchus's actions; see below.

either with soldiers or material resources, before the Attalids urged him to reconsider his allegiance later in 160. Admittedly, the *Prologues* of Pompeius Trogus have been read as proving the opposite, namely, that the Cappadocian was allied with Timarchus. But this interpretation is based on an emendation by Otto Seel.²¹ He failed to see that Polybius's report on Ariarathes's embassy to Rome in 160/159 would have been pointless, had this king fought with Timarchus, a friend of the Romans. It rather seems that a whole line listing the allies of Demetrius is missing.

Further on, Demetrius may have been joined by Mithrobuzanes, a young king of Sophene, whom Ariarathes had saved from Artaxias (Diodorus Siculus, *Bib. hist.* 31.21–22; see Polybius, *Hist.* 31.16; Walbank 1979, 3:484: 162 BCE or later; Payen 2019, 293; Facella 2006, 204 n. 28: 163 BCE; *pace* Plischke 2014, 293). Another possible ally is the Elymean king Hycnapses (or Oconapses): his capture of Susa harmed Timarchus, if dated to circa 161 BCE (Grainger 2015a, 70; see Le Rider 1965, 346–47; Ehling 2008, 130; Assar 2006a; SC 1:191). We have no sure way of knowing which side the Seleucid vassals in Parthia, Bactria, and Persis took; perhaps they remained neutral. At all events, Demetrius showed himself very capable of renewing bonds of loyalty, owed to him as the only surviving grown-up male descendent of Seleucus I. Diplomatic skills and dynastic prestige did much of the fighting for him (Ehling 2008, 129).

Demetrius and Rome

Throughout the late 160s, Rome played a moderately destructive role in the Near East. The “falcons” among the senators wanted to curb Seleucid power and to punish Demetrius, but his friendship with the Scipio clan fended off the worst.²² Soon after Timarchus and Judas²³ had been recognized by the Senate (161 BCE), the embassy of Gracchus gained the

21. Pompeius Trogus, *Prol.* 34: “Ut mortuo Antiocho rege Syriae Demetrius cognomine Soter, qui Romae fuerat obses, clam fugit occupataque Syria bellum cum Timarcho Medorum rege habuit <et> Ariarathe rege Cappadocum” (Seel 1972). Engels (2008) believes in a confusion with Artaxias.

22. Gruen 1984, 1:42–46 (Senate indifferent); Engels 2008 and Grainger 2015a, 43, 47 (cynical); Wenghofer 2019 (concerned about peaceful dynastic succession); Gera 1998, 292–95 (anti-Attalid; see Volkmann 1925, 383–85, and 373–74: also anti-Seleucid); Chrubasik 2016, 124, 255–60 (inconsistent).

23. 1 Macc 8 is largely authentic; see Coşkun 2018b, 2019b, forthcoming A; see also Gera 1998, 304–11; *pace* Seeman 2013; Zollschan 2017.

impression that Demetrius posed no threat to Roman interests. When he returned to Italy (late 160), Timarchus and Judas had conveniently been eliminated, and no further action was needed.

The way for a polite reception of the king's envoys was paved. In 160/159, they delivered a golden crown and, as a bonus, the abovementioned Leptines for punishment. The Senate received the gift but did not reciprocate it. They also rejected the murderer of Octavius. Demetrius's status as *rex* was thus recognized, but he was not yet welcomed among the *amici populi Romani*.²⁴ On balance, the embassy was a success, considering that Demetrius had defied the Senate and murdered a legitimate king.

Attalus II, Ptolemy VI Philometor, and the Fall of a King

Ariarathes, Attalus, and Balas

Ariarathes V had afterthoughts. The Attalids convinced him that his allegiance to them (and their friends) was exclusive. Since this change of heart happened after the defeat of Timarchus, its immediate negative effect was limited, but the long-term ramifications were nevertheless devastating. The betrayal encouraged Demetrius to interfere in Cappadocia by supporting Holophernes against his brother. The latter's victory was only temporary, albeit, and he was ousted by Ariarathes, when Pergamene forces became available to him (158/157 BCE). Holophernes returned to Antioch and, disappointed by Demetrius's shallow commitment, stirred up a revolt (Polybius, *Hist.* 31.3; 32.10; Diodorus Siculus, *Bib. hist.* 31.19.7–8; 31.32; Appian, *Syr.* 47.244–45; Justinus, *Epit.* 35.1.3–4; see Ballesteros Pastor 2008, 46–48; Michels 2009, 125–39).

Even worse, Attalus sought out the half-brother of Antiochus V, (Alexander) Balas, in Smyrna and established him in Cilician Olba (158/157 BCE). Initially only a little thorn in Demetrius's skin, the challenge gained

24. Polybius, *Hist.* 31.15.10–12; 31.33 on Gracchus; 32.3 on Demetrius's embassy; Diodorus Siculus *Bib. hist.* 31.28–29 contrasts with Ariarathes, whose gift was reciprocated; 31.30 qualifies the Senate's response as "devious and enigmatic." See Coşkun 2018b; also 2017 and 2019c on *amicitia*. See Gera 1998, 298–300; Engels 2008, with Appian, *Syr.* 47.243. Ehling (2008, 140) doubts "ob Demetrios I. jemals offiz. Il als König anerkannt war." Chrubasik (2016, 255–56) remains vague. Untenable is the view that friendship pertained to a Seleucid state and thus automatically extended to Demetrius (Zollschan 2017, 187–89, 229; contradicted 177, 188).

momentum when Heraclides, the brother of Timarchus, took him to Rome and the Senate allowed him to seize his inheritance (154/153). His favorable reception meant outright betrayal, even if Demetrius had never been deemed worthy of *amicitia*.²⁵

At any rate, in October 153, an Attalid fl et established Balas in Phoenician Ptolemais.²⁶ Among the fi st local leaders to go over to him was Jonathan, despite his recent promotion by Demetrius. Alexander Balas was more generous, making him high priest of the Jews and *strategos* of Coele Syria (1 Macc 10:1–12:40; see Ehling 2008, 148–51; Chrubasik 2016, 165–66). But Demetrius maintained the upper hand until Ptolemy doubled the usurper’s military strength and royal prestige by offering him his daughter Cleopatra Thea in marriage. Demetrius I was eventually defeated early in July 150.²⁷

Justinus (*Epit.* 35.1.1, 3, 10–11) singles out Demetrius’s aggression as ultimate cause for the alliance against him. Josephus (*Ant.* 13.35–36) explains his unpopularity with the neglect of public aff irs and a life in seclusion. His reproach of sluggishness matches the sentiment of Livy’s *Periochae* (50, 52), which add the stereotyped desire of feasting.²⁸ At least the reproach of negligence may result from the fact that he had tolerated Balas in Ptolemais, instead of eliminating him while still a minor threat. But his major difficulty was to operate without a fl et, a fact that allowed

25. Polybius, *Hist.* 33.18.5–14 (Senate meeting); see 33.15.1–2 (Heraclides driving force; see Grainger 2015a, 54–55; Chrubasik 2016, 130); Justinus, *Epit.* 35.1.6–7 (concerted action of Ptolemy VI, Attalus II, Ariarathes V); see Ehling 2008, 145–48; Primo 2009, 156–57 (Polybius’s judgment); Boulay 2018.

26. 1 Macc 10:1: Alexander began ruling as king in Ptolemais in 160 SE, i.e., 153/152 (Macedonian) or 152/151 (Judean-Babylonian) BCE; see n. 31 (calendar). See Coşkun forthcoming A (153 BCE), *pace* Ehling (2008, 147–48 [152 BCE]); Chrubasik 2016, 129–30 (downplays Attalid involvement).

27. BAD (Sachs and Hunger 1996, 3:86: –149 A Rev. 6 = Van der Spek 1997/1998, 168–69) reports Demetrius’s last victory (see Just. 35.1.10) on the twenty-third day of month 3 in 163 SE^B = 13 July 150 BCE, a *terminus ante quem*. 1 Macc 10:48–40 and Josephus, *Ant.* 13.2.4 (58–61) only mention the fi al battle he lost. Porphyry (*FGrHist* 260 F 32 §15) knows Alexander as sole king for Olympiad 157, year 3, beginning in July 150 BCE. Ehling (2008, 152–53) argues for a revolt in Antioch, but see *SC* 1:152, 209, 257–59. See Grainger 2015a, 63–64; 212 n. 37; Chrubasik 2016, 131 (July). On the wedding, see Ager 2017, 176, and below.

28. On the *topos*, see Ceccarelli 2011; see also Primo 2009, 257–62, also 168–76; 210–12; *pace* Volkmann 1925, 403.

his enemy to extend his strongholds along the coast by the end of 151 (Ehling 2008, 152; Grainger 2015a, 64).

Philometor, Demetrius, and Balas

Of crucial importance is the involvement of Ptolemy VI Philometor, whom Justinus lists among the supporters of the Demetrius's enemies since around 156 BCE. Contrary to this, the detailed account of Diodorus only presents Ariarathes, Attalus, and Heraclides as the protagonists of the plot. Philometor's energy was absorbed by the fierce rivalry with his brother Ptolemy VIII Euergetes. The conflict escalated when Euergetes began occupying Cyprus with diplomatic support from Rome (154). The brothers were reconciled only by 152 (Justinus, *Epit.* 35.1; Diodorus Siculus, *Bib. hist.* 31.32–34).²⁹ Most scholars believe that Demetrius lost Philometor's friendship by trying to snatch away Cyprus during this crisis (Walbank 1979, 3:41–42; Hölbl 2004, 167; Ehling 2008, 142–47; Grainger 2015a, 58–59), although our sources on Demetrius's bribery of Philometor's *strategos* Archias do not hint at such a context (Plutarch, *Virt. vit.* 5.2–4).³⁰

First Maccabees, in turn, dates the wedding and alliance to 150/149 BCE, explicitly after the defeat of Demetrius. This skewed chronology results from an erroneous conversion of the Seleucid era (1 Macc 10:48–50, 57; see Josephus, *Ant.* 13.80–85)³¹ but also suits the pro-Maccabean tendency of the work: Jonathan now figures as the only ally of Balas until the defeat of Demetrius. Josephus (*Ant.* 13.103), however, attests that Alexander was already the king's son-in-law before the major offensive in spring 150 (also see Livy, *Per.* 50 for Ammonius). The marriage hence took place early in 162 SE^M, around October 151, within a year after the Ptolemaic conflict had been resolved. Philometor decided that he had less

29. See Hölbl (2004, 159–69) on the Ptolemies.

30. Suda s.v. “Archias,” “Aulaia,” and “Kenoi kena logizontai,” ascribed to Polybius (*Hist.* 33.5.1–4) on uncertain grounds.

31. The Macedonian year began in Dios (September/October) 151 BCE, the Judean-Babylonian year in Nisan (March/April) 150 BCE. See Kosmin 2018b, esp. 35–36 (general); Coşkun forthcoming A (specific for 1 Maccabees). Hölbl (2004, 170), Ehling (2008, 154–55), and SC (1:209) follow 1 Maccabees for the wedding, but not for the alliance (*pace* Chrubasik 2016, 131, 163, 166–57); Volkmann (1925, 406) assumes an earlier betrothal.

to gain from a strengthened Demetrius, even if friendly, than from a weak Balas, whom he could control. Only in this situation, Demetrius bribed Archias on Cyprus in an act of self-defense, hoping to win a fleet to attack Balas's harbor cities (Volkman 1925, 401–2, 404–5, *pace* Ehling 2008, 142–43). While the attempt failed, Balas's allies managed to gain a foothold in southern Babylonia in spring 150.³²

Philometor, Mithridates, and the Fall of a Kingdom: From Alexander Balas to Antiochus Sidetes

Toward the Deaths of Balas and Philometor

Philometor expected to dominate politics in Syria through the courtiers he sent together with his daughter, most prominently Ammonius (Livy, *Per.* 50; Diodorus Siculus, *Bib. hist.* 33.5; Josephus, *Ant.* 13.106–108; Grainger 1997, 76; Ehling 2008, 155, 158, 161–62; *pace* Chrubasik 2016, 167–68) and Hierax (Diodorus Siculus, *Bib. hist.* 32.9c; 33.3; Athenaeus, *Deipn.* 6.61 (252e); Grainger 1997, 94; also Ehling 2008, 155, 162). Balas's coins heralded this new political orientation by use of a jugate portrait (with Cleopatra in front position), the Egyptian cornucopia, and the Ptolemaic eagle.³³ Regardless of such concessions, Balas made quite remarkable efforts to build up a royal persona of his own, attempting to prove himself a legitimate and capable ruler. Many of his silver tetradachms display the legend *Basileos Alexandrou Theopatoros Euergetous*. His throne name *Alexander* corresponds with the assimilation of his portrait to that of the great Macedonian conqueror (Chrubasik 2016, 163–65, 168). The title *Theopator* emphasizes descent from his divine father Antiochus “the Manifest God” (Muccioli 2013, 189–90). His coin reverses repeat nearly all themes that had once been popular in the Seleucid dynasty, from Apollo to Nike,

32. Thus possibly implied in BAD of 13 July 150 BCE and a contract from Uruk dated to 1/1/162 SE^B = 23 April 150 BCE under King Alexander. See Van der Spek (1997/1998, 169); Coşkun (forthcoming B) suggests a naval campaign of Philometor, *pace* Del Monte 1997, 91–94. We may soon expect an investigation by Catherine Berzon, Moscow.

33. SC 1:211–12, 242 (jugate portrait and cornucopia; see Ehling 2008, 155–56; Ager 2017, 171–72) and 212 (Ptolemaic eagle; see Hölbl 2004, 170); *pace* Chrubasik 2016, 253–54, 167–68.

from elephants to the anchor (SC 1:211–56, with summary on 212–13).³⁴ Another novelty was his title *Euergetes*, which most likely alludes to privileges granted to Greek cities (Muccioli 2013, 190).³⁵

Inevitably, the interests of the two uneven allies quickly began to drift apart. Philometor needed Balas to be inactive and staying in his proximity, ideally in Ptolemais. In contrast, the violent succession of 150 BCE required that the new Seleucid king appropriate all territories not only with his imagery and titulature but also with his physical presence. The subjects had to be convinced that he had at his disposition the formidable skills and huge resources needed to keep the kingdom together. While central cities in Babylonia and Media acknowledged him soon after Demetrius's death, some places at least escaped his authority.³⁶ We have no evidence that the eastern vassal monarchs ever recognized him in the first place. But it is for sure that the Parthian King Mithridates invaded Media in 148/147 (Justinus, *Epit.* 41.6.7; Dąbrowa 2005; 2018, 74–75; Assar 2006b, 89–90; Ehling 2008, 182; Grainger 2015a, 68–70).

The vicious circle became unstoppable when Balas was also challenged in the west in 165 SE^B (148/147 BCE). Here, his rival was the son of Demetrius I, Demetrius II, then perhaps fourteen years old.³⁷ He came over from Crete with a strong mercenary force under Lasthenes. Things went from bad to worse when Philometor openly shifted his allegiance (and daughter) to the young pretender, while Balas was confronting Demetrius in Cilicia in 146/145. When he rushed south to win back Antioch from Philometor, he was defeated and sought refuge but found murder in Arabia. Ptolemy VI Philometor died a few days later (August

34. Zeus had been the main divinity for Seleucus I, whereas Apollo dominated as of Antiochus I (Erickson 2011, 2013, 2014, 2019; Hoover 2011; Iossif 2011a; Wright 2012, 2018; Ogden 2017).

35. Further indicative could be the “quasi-municipal” coinage in the cities of the Seleucis (SC 1:224, 228–31; see Ehling 2008, 158–59), Phoenicia (SC 1:234–241) and southern Coele Syria (SC 1:245–47). Also see below, nn. 54–55.

36. Identified eastern mints: Seleucia-on-the-Tigris, Antioch-on-the-Persian-Gulf, and Ecbatana, and perhaps Orcha/Uruk: SC 1:248–56, without my negative interpretation; see Grainger (2015a, 68) for a more positive view. The mint in Antioch-in-Persis had issued for the last time under Demetrius I (SC 1:190).

37. Volkman 1925, 407 (nearly fifteen); Ogden 1999, 148 (about fourteen); Hölbl 2004, 170 (about fifteen); Ehling 2008, 159 (thirteen); Chrubasik 2016, 132 n. 33 (at least sixteen).

145),³⁸ leaving the rule of Egypt to his brother Ptolemy VIII Euergetes (Physkon) and the throne of Antioch to Demetrius II.

First Maccabees reproaches Philometor for coveting to rule both realms and of achieving this, though only for three days. In contrast, a tradition more favorable to this king lets him get involved as an ally of Balas, before changing sides due to the latter's incompetence or disloyalty. We can still grasp Ptolemaic court propaganda behind those texts: an Egyptian audience was to understand that Philometor reversed the disgrace of Antiochus IV's coronation in Memphis (168); but one may also understand the double diadem as leverage against Demetrius II, forcing him to cede Coele Syria and probably also Phoenicia (1 Macc 10:67–11:19; Diodorus Siculus, *Bib. hist.* 32.9c; Josephus, *Ant.* 13.106–119; Livy, *Per.* 52; Justinus, *Epit.* 35.2; Coşkun forthcoming B; Volkmann 1925, 407–11; Hölbl 2004, 170–71; SC 1:209–10, 257, 259, 261–68; Ehling 2008, 159–64; Grainger 2015a, 70–75; Chrubasik 2016, 133–34). Most probably, however, he had been plotting against Alexander from the beginning, encouraging the usurpation of Demetrius, once news of the Parthian invasion of Media had spread (likewise Chrubasik 2016, 133–34).³⁹ Philometor did not intend to help the teenager but to stay in Antioch until the Romans would ask him to go; having arranged for a *pax Ptolemaica*, he would abide by their wishes, with as much joviality as Antiochus III, the father-in-law of Ptolemy V, had “pleased” the Romans by not occupying Egypt. Philometor's premature death thwarted these plans.

New Hope under Demetrius II

Demetrius's ideological program is encapsulated in his titlature *Theos Philadelphus Nicator*. The first epithet is often related to his wife Cleopatra Thea, the second (vaguely) to one of his brothers, and the third to the founder of the Seleucid dynasty, besides perhaps glorifying his victory over Balas. But the first two titles should better be understood as echoing the dynastic cult Ptolemy II had established, calling his parents

38. Demetrius was acknowledged in Babylon on day 17 in month 6, year 167 SE^B = 8 September 145 BCE (Van der Spek 1997/1998, 170). His first coins are from 167 SE^M, ending in September 145 BCE (SC 1:267).

39. Demetrius did not issue coins before the death of Philometor; see SC 1:263, 267–68 (without the argument).

Ptolemy I and Berenice I *Theoi* and himself and his sister-wife Arsinoe II (*Philadelphoi*). Ptolemy VI Philometor and Cleopatra II were living a new edition of such a sibling marriage. The titulature *Theos Philadelphos* was thus in all likelihood shared by the royal couple, designed to perpetuate the high status of Cleopatra and the couple's links with both major dynasties of the Hellenistic world.⁴⁰

While this Ptolemaic bequest was acceptable to Demetrius, the garrisons Philometor had established all the way up to Antioch were not. Their removal earned him a reputation of ingratitude and cruelty, but we have already noticed how inept moralizing judgments in the ancient tradition can be. Violence was likely the response of the soldiers told to leave the lands allotted to them. And, while it may be true that the Cretans became the pillar of Demetrius's power, he barely fed all the Macedonian troops, as the negative press has it. More plausibly, he dismissed those who had not declared for him before the final battle, sending them home with neither reward nor punishment. These men included in particular the followers of Diodotus, since he had handed over Antioch to Philometor rather than to Demetrius. Such dismissals also eased the pressure on his strained treasury: soldiers were already complaining about arrears. Demetrius's (or Lasthenes's) actions were politically and financially sound, despite their long-term repercussions (1 Macc 11:31–32, 38–40; Josephus, *Ant.* 13.120–130, 144 on arrears; Livy, *Per.* 52).⁴¹

For the time being, Seleucid authority was reestablished over nearly all the Levant. This even included Judea under Jonathan, who was willing to pay for his local rule the lump sum of three hundred talents, further offering military service on demand. Cretan and Judean forces saved Demetrius when the Antiochenes revolted. Previous warfare had devastated its *chora* and detracted all royal attention from it, so everyday life must have been precarious. Disgruntled veterans would be among the rioters, but they can barely account for the mass mobilization, as Diodorus wants us to believe. Whether Demetrius's response to the insurrection was excessively brutal is a different question, but this

40. *Philadelphus* is normally explained by love for his brother Antigonus (*SC* 1:266–68) or Antiochus VII (Ehling 2008, 184; Muccioli 2013, 213–15; Chrubasik 2016, 132 n. 33). An earlier nonincestuous “sister”-wife: Grainger 1997, 38.

41. Different views: *SC* 1:261; Grainger 2015a, 77. Babylonian perspective: Van der Spek 1997/1998, 170, with *ADART* -144 Obv. 35–37, month 7, 167 SE^B = September/October 145 BCE; see Porphyry, *FGrHist* 260 F 32.15 (*Olympiad* 158.4 = 145/144).

cannot be answered easily either, since our sources bluntly exaggerate the facts.⁴²

Meanwhile, Seleucid rule in the east had been limited to Babylonia, but pressure increased due to raids from the Elamite insurgent Camnascires. Demetrius made an impressive move and led the last Seleucid campaign beyond the Tigris that resulted in success. In winter 145/144, the mint of Susa issued coins in his name (Van der Spek 1997/1998, 170–71; *SC* 1:307–14 for all eastern mints; Grainger 2015a, 78; but also see Plischke 2014, 289–91, 313). On the flip side, disappointed Syrians rallied behind Diodotus, who was well connected not only in Antioch and his hometown, Apamea, but also with the Arab chieftain Jamblichus, the host of Alexander Balas's little son. Proclaiming the boy King Antiochus VI Theos Epiphanes (144 BCE), Diodotus proceeded to rip apart the Seleucid domains once more. Jonathan joined the revolt, and Demetrius was quickly reduced to the coastal areas (1 Macc 11:39–41, 54–56; Josephus, *Ant.* 13.131–186; Diodorus Siculus, *Bib. hist.* 33.4; Justinus, *Epit.* 36.1.7; Ehling 2008, 165–70; *SC* 1:273–334; Grainger 2015a, 78–81; Chrubasik 2016, 135–38, 154–61; also Van der Spek 1997/1998, 171; Boiy 2004, 166, on Babylonia).

Jonathan resumed his attacks on the royal fortresses in Judea and regularly led his army far beyond, extending his influence up north to Damascus and south to Ascalum. This hurt Demetrius, but was neither in the long-term interests of Diodotus, who arrested the high priest (143 BCE). Demetrius seized the opportunity to make peace with Simon, Jonathan's brother and successor. Simon conquered the last two remaining strongholds (Gezer and the Akra of Jerusalem) and renewed the alliance with Rome—enough to formalize his priestly monarchy in 140 (Ehling 2008, 170–79; Grainger 2015a, 81–82; Chrubasik 2016, 138–40; Coşkun 2018a, 2019c, forthcoming A, forthcoming B; also see n. 7).⁴³ This was an acceptable price for Demetrius to pay in order to keep Diodotus occupied while he was heading east once more. The Elamites had already vindicated their freedom from him in 144/143, and, worst of all, Mithridates had resumed his offensive, invading Babylonia in 142/141.⁴⁴

42. 1 Macc 11:20–37 (agreement with Jonathan), 42–52 (Antioch); Josephus, *Ant.* 13.4.9 (121–128); Diodorus Siculus, *Bib. hist.* 33.4 (conflict resulted from the refusal of the Antiochenes to disarm); see Ehling 2008, 164–66.

43. Though Ehling (2008, 174–75) unconvincingly suggests that Diodotus's motivation was fear of Jonathan changing sides to Demetrius, again.

44. Mithridates conquered Babylon by 9 July 141 (Van der Spek 1997/1998, 171),

Demetrius knew well enough that there was no chance of reviving the kingdom in the west without the resources of the east. Every further delay would weaken the allegiance that the Babylonians were expected to show the rightful successor of Seleucus. His action lacked neither courage nor foresight and thus belies the stereotyped reproach of *inertia* (Justinus, *Epit.* 36.1.1–2, 9). Justinus (36.1.4) records that he gathered a coalition including the Bactrians, Persians, and Elamites (Grainger 2015a, 85–86; Engels 2017b, 256). Due to these pressures from the east, Mithridates ceded Babylonia to Demetrius by early 140 BCE. But he quickly defeated the Persians and Elamites and returned to Babylonia (139). Demetrius was eventually captured in July 138, whence all possessions east of the Euphrates were lost to the Seleucids.⁴⁵

Mithridates put him on display in Parthian victory parades. The symbolic implication was felt even more strongly so shortly after the death of the rival king Antiochus VI, whence Diodotus assumed the diadem for himself, now under the throne name *Tryphon* (142–137). His request for recognition by the Roman Senate failed, but no one seemed to care very much in those troubled times.⁴⁶ This little failure was outweighed by the news of Demetrius's perils. One might expect that the support for his wife and little children in Seleucia-on-the-Tigris would quickly fade away, and Seleucid kingship would be history.⁴⁷

if not by 13 April 141 (Boiy 2004, 167). See Dąbrowa 2005, 79–80; Assar 2006b, 90–93; Monerie 2014, 128; Ramsey 2019, 436–39.

45. BAD 3–137 A (dating the defeat ca. July 138 BCE; see Van der Spek 1997/1998, 172; Boiy 2004, 168; Assar 2006b, 93–95). Also see 1 Macc 14:1–3; Josephus, *Ant.* 13.5.11 (184–186); Justinus, *Epit.* 36.1.4–5; Porphyry, *FGrHist* 260 F 32.16: Olympiad 160.2 = 139/138 BCE; Dąbrowa 1999 (also 2005, 79–80); Ehling 2008, 178–90, esp. 185–86; SC 1:262–63; Grainger 2015a, 82–86; Chrubasik 2016, 140; Coşkun forthcoming A.

46. Antiochus died accidentally: Josephus, *Ant.* 13.7.1 (218); see Ehling 2008, 179; Grainger 2015a, 81, *pace* 1 Macc 12:39; 13:31; Diodorus Siculus, *Bib. hist.* 33.28, 28a; Appian, *Syr.* 68.357; Justinus, *Epit.* 36.1.7; Chrubasik 2016, 256 (also 139). Diodotus's revolt and chronology: Ehling 2008, 165–70; 178–82, 190; Grainger 2015a, 78–81. Titulature: SC 1:336–38 (also 318); Muccioli 2013, 303; Chrubasik 2016, 155–61; Ehling 2008, 180–81. See also Coşkun forthcoming B.

47. See Josephus (*Ant.* 13.7.1 [221–222]) for Cleopatra's perspective, Diodorus Siculus (*Bib. hist.* 33.28) for her location. See Grainger 2015a, 83–84; Chrubasik 2016, 140.

Antiochus VII Euergetes Megas (Sidetes), the Shooting Star

The unexpected happened when Demetrius's brother Antiochus VII Euergetes (Sidetes) showed up on the political stage. Coming from Side in Pamphylia, he gathered forces on Rhodes and arrived in Syria to marry Cleopatra Thea in September 138 BCE. Some have interpreted this amazing speed as betraying that a plot against Demetrius had been underway. But Cleopatra rather appears to have acted swiftly upon hearing of the disaster, for she had been safe only as long as her husband's victories were reported to Syria.⁴⁸ First Maccabees attests diplomatic activities "on the islands," quoting a letter by Antiochus to the high priest and ethnarch Simon. The document contains largely authentic material and further presupposes negotiations with the ruler of Jerusalem, which could have been facilitated through the court of Seleucia (1 Macc 15:1–9, with Coşkun 2018a; see Coşkun 2019c). A few months later, Antiochus was laying siege to Tryphon in Galilean Dora, before chasing him down and killing him in Apamea (137 BCE; 1 Macc 15:10–14, 37; Josephus, *Ant.* 13.223–224; Ehling 2008, 191–92; Grainger 2015a, 88–90; Chrubasik 2016, 140). Shortly before, Antiochus demanded that Simon either return the Akra, Gezer, and Jaffa or pay one thousand talents. War was thus rekindled, but Simon's oldest son, John Hyrcanus, pushed back the *strategos* Cendebaeus (137/136). The high priest was killed by his son-in-law Ptolemaeus, who hoped to gain the king's goodwill (135 BCE; 1 Macc 15:25–16:22; Josephus, *Ant.* 13.225–235; Ehling 2008, 192–95; Atkinson 2016, 49–55; Coşkun 2018a, forthcoming A).⁴⁹

John, however, prevailed but soon had to face a yearlong siege in Jerusalem by royal troops. Peace was negotiated on Yom Kippur (134 BCE): John remained high priest and ethnarch but had to cease most extra-Judean territories. He avoided a garrison in Jerusalem by paying five hundred talents. Antiochus had no interest in eliminating Maccabean rule, which was useful to check chronic infighting among the Judeans and thus to make some of their resources serviceable to himself. Josephus (*Ant.* 13.236–248; see Diodorus Siculus, *Bib. hist.* 34/35.1 = 35 frag. 36a [Goukowsky 2017])

48. He still minted coins in 174 SE^M: SC 1:267; 2:282–83. Plot by Antiochus: Ehling 2008, 184. Plot by Cleopatra: Grainger 2015a, 86 with n. 32. Cleopatra's invitation after Demetrius's capture: Josephus, *Ant.* 13.7.1 (222), with Coşkun forthcoming B, *pace* SC 1:349; Chrubasik 2016, 140. Political programs and titles: SC 1:354; Muccioli 2013, 190, 549.

49. Different chronology: Grainger 2015a, 93–95.

styles the king as a pious supporter of the Jerusalemite cult, closely following the public-relations version of John.⁵⁰ Bronze coinage minted in Jerusalem during the years 181 and 182 SE (132/131 and 131/130 BCE) is consistent with this image: they display the Judean lily and the Seleucid anchor, omitting the royal portrait, which would have been offensive to Jews (SC 1:391–92, with Coşkun 2018d).⁵¹

Antiochus systematically reestablished control from Rough Cilicia down to Palestine. When he embarked on his *anabasis* in early spring 131, his allies ranged from the Hasmonean John Hyrcanus to Samus of Commagene, the son of the aforementioned Ptolemy (Josephus, *Ant.* 13.250–253; John; Justinus, *Epit.* 38.10.4: *multi orientales reges*; see Grainger 2015a, 98–105).⁵² His first task was to recover Armenia (Josephus, *Ant.* 13.250–252), whence he invaded Mesopotamia, Babylonia, and Elymais. Seleucia-on-the-Tigris issued Seleucid coins, again, in summer 130, and Susa followed suit by the end of the year (coins from Seleucia, Uruk, and Susa: SC 1:394–96). Antiochus was billeting his troops in Media for the winter, when King Phraates II asked for peace terms. The conditions offered to him were outrageous, albeit, so that he unexpectedly renewed the war and managed to kill Antiochus in March 129.⁵³

Outlook: The Swansong of an Erstwhile Superpower

With this death, even the last hope of a revival of the Seleucid Empire was extinguished. As of then, Seleucid history was confined to fights for

50. See Coşkun forthcoming A, forthcoming B, *pace* Bar-Kochva 2010, 399–439 (tradition hostile to Antiochus) and Atkinson 2016, 55–58 (ironic). See Primo 2009, 171–74 (positive tradition of Antiochus VII); Kosmin 2014a, 155–56 (ritualized way of enforced reintegration); Coşkun 2018c (Greco-Roman tradition on Judean revolt and defeat). Different views: Ariel, Finkielsztejn, and Syon in this volume.

51. For other views, see *TJC*, 31; Hoover 2003; Hendin 2010, 161; Dąbrowa 2010, 69 n. 10 (under pressure); Gitler 2012, 485; Syon 2015, 146–48; Grainger 2015b, 97; Atkinson 2016, 62. Different views: Ariel, Finkielsztejn, and Syon in this volume.

52. Ballesteros Pastor (2018) argues for cooperation; contra Coşkun (forthcoming B), with SC 1:399–407; Krenzel and Lorber 2009.

53. Inscriptions from Babylon are inconclusive (Boiy 2004, 172–74). Parthians: Diodorus Siculus, *Bib. hist.* 34/35.15–19. Whole campaign: Justinus, *Epit.* 38.10. See Ehling 2008, 200–208; Grainger 2015b, 109–15; also Fischer 1980; Dąbrowa 2005, 81–84; Coşkun forthcoming B. *Pace* SC 1:391–92: campaign began in 130; Assar 2006b, 99–106; Atkinson 2016, 62–65: Antiochus stayed in Babylon until October 129.

the spoils west of the Euphrates. The case of Judea is symptomatic for the further disintegration of the realm: Hyrcanus's troops were not involved in the rout by the Parthians, and, upon safe return, he shook off Seleucid suzerainty for good. He did not hesitate to invade his Samaritan and Idumean neighbors. Another phase of expansion followed in his final years, and further under his sons Aristobulus I and Alexander Jannaeus (Josephus, *Ant.* 13.250–329; Coşkun forthcoming A, forthcoming B; also 2019c, 377–78; with Ehling 2008, 208–9; Grainger 2015a, 113, 126–27, 129, 132; *pace* Barag 1992/1993; Bar-Kochva 2010; Shatzman 2012; Atkinson 2016, 65–78; Chaniotis 2018, 197, who date the expansion to 115/111). The rulers of Armenia and Commagene likewise reclaimed their independence,⁵⁴ and ever more cities in the Levant obtained privileges or began issuing autonomous coinage (Rigsby 1996; Hoover 2004, 2009 [Syrian cities]; Duyrat 2005; Cohen 2006; SC 1 [including pseudo-municipal coins]; Grainger 2015a, 128–33, 140; Chrubasik 2016, 184–92).

Yet there was no interregnum in 129, since Phraates had released Demetrius II from captivity to undermine the position of Antiochus. Demetrius resumed his position as king and husband of Cleopatra Thea in Syria (Justinus, *Epit.* 38.10.7–11; Ehling 2008, 200–201, 205).⁵⁵ Unfortunately for him, the Ptolemies entangled him in their domestic strife: his mother-in-law Cleopatra II had fled from her brother-husband Euergetes and his younger wife (her own daughter) Cleopatra III. She encouraged Demetrius to seize the throne of Alexandria, but, at the end of the day, Euergetes managed to set up a rival king in the Levant, Alexander II Zabinas, allegedly a son of Balas. Demetrius was defeated by Zabinas, rejected by his own wife in Ptolemais, and slain by the commander of Tyre in 126/125.

By then, Seleucid power was gravitating around the Ptolemaic princess Cleopatra Thea. She appointed as co-ruler Seleucus V, her oldest son from Demetrius II, but was not slow to kill him when he wanted independence (126/25). Instead, she chose her younger son, Antiochus VIII Grypus, and as part of the Ptolemaic reconciliation he was married to Cleopatra Tryphaena, the oldest daughter of Euergetes and Cleopatra III.

54. Samus became king ca. 130 BCE. But he more likely succeeded before 140, since he imitated coins of Antiochus VI; see Facella 2006, 205–8; *pace* Strootman 2016, 215–18. Armenia: n. 16.

55. Different views: SC 1:435–39; Chrubasik 2016, 143; see Grainger 2015b, 116–18. Also see n. 36 for the Parthians.

Cleopatra II returned to Alexandria, and her husband withdrew his support for Alexander Zabinas, whence he was killed in 123. The co-rule of Grypus and his mother was ended by a cup of poison, mixed for him but drunk by her in 121 (Hölbl 2004, 174–83; Ehling 2008, 205–16; Grainger 2015a, 118–35; Chrubasik 2016, 142–45, 169–72).⁵⁶

With Cleopatra's death, Seleucid rule was eventually incumbent on a single king, again, but his realm had downsized to Syria, Cilicia, and fragments of Phoenicia and Coele Syria. When Antiochus IX Cyzicenus, a son of Antiochus VII, revolted against his half-brother (113 BCE), he too was equipped with a Ptolemaic bride, Cleopatra IV. The sisters were chasing each other with as much hatred as the brothers. After the capture of Antioch, Cyzicenus's wife put to death the rival queen. The surviving sister got her turn when Grypus retook the city (112/111 BCE).

The most heated phase of this War of Scepters saw the direct involvement of the brothers and also the mother of the two killed Seleucid queens. King Ptolemy IX Soter II Lathyrus took the side of Antiochus IX Cyzicenus. Having sent an army to support the latter against John Hyrcanus in 108, he was expelled by his mother Cleopatra III from Egypt. Later on, he interfered once more for Cyzicenus: coming from Cyprus, he went against Alexander Jannaeus in Gaza, who in turn enlisted support of Cleopatra III. While her arrival meant relief to Jannaeus, Lathyrus diverted his campaign to reconquer Egypt. Cleopatra's alliance with Grypus, which was sealed by marrying off yet another of her daughters, Cleopatra Selene, prevented this from happening, so that she could safely return to Alexandria—only to be murdered by her younger son, Ptolemy X Alexander I (103–101). Grypus and Cyzicenus soon followed her into the realm of the shades (98/97 and 97/96 BCE respectively; Dumitru 2016; also Hölbl 2004, 183–90; Hoover 2007; Ehling 2008, 215–32; SC 1:483–585; Grainger 2015a, 118–69; Bartlett 2016; Coşkun 2019b). They left behind some six sons and three grandsons, who would fight and mostly die over the spoils of the Seleucid kingdom, before Pompey put an end to this protracted tragedy (64/63).⁵⁷

56. Demetrius II: SC 1:409–34; Zabinas: SC 1:441–64; Cleopatra, alone: SC 1:465–67; co-rule with Grypus: SC 1:469–81.

57. The genealogical table of Ehling (2008) names the following sons of Grypus: Seleucus VI (98/97–94?), Demetrius III (98/97–88), Antiochus XI (94/93?), Philip I (94–83, father of Philip II Philorhomaues, 67–65) and Antiochus XII (87–84/83). Cyzicenus was the father of Antiochus X (97/96–93/92), and through him the grandfather

Concluding Remarks

The preceding narrative has aimed to identify the multiple factors that determined the development of the Seleucid kingdom in the course of the second century BCE. The house of Seleucus showed itself sufficiently resourceful to overcome with relative ease the shock of the Roman victory at Magnesia, the humiliation of Eleusis, and the disruptive embassy of Gaius Octavius. The revolt of Timarchus was triggered by inner-dynastic rifts, but his defeat likewise demonstrated the capability of Demetrius I. Only a combination of negative forces could bring him to his knees, as did the alliance of Attalus II, Ariarathes V, and Ptolemy VI Philometor with Alexander Balas, endowed with the blessing of the Roman Senate. What made this event so critical for the kingdom's history is not only the breadth of the coalition but also the continued damage done by Philometor. His ongoing interference undermined Balas's attempts to establish himself as a legitimate and vigorous heir to the Seleucid throne, and later to defend his realm, when a firm stand was needed in the east against Mithridates and in the west against Demetrius II.

Dynastic prestige apparently eroded between 153 and 145, but not even then was it worn out completely. That the kingdom was not yet doomed to fall is illustrated by the limited though remarkable success of Demetrius II. He led two campaigns into the east, the first falling short of complete victory perhaps only due to the revolt of Tryphon, the latter ending in disaster possibly because of the same usurper, who limited the resources available for warfare in the east. The biggest surprise of all is that yet another highly capable and charismatic member of the dynasty entered the stage in the deepest crisis: Antiochus VII defeated Tryphon within a year, united the territories first on this side of the Euphrates, then west of the Tigris, before successfully crossing this river as well. True enough, his rejection of Phraates's peace offer resulted in his undoing and may thus convey the impression that he gambled away the kingdom. But such a negative view should not obliterate his—and probably also his contemporaries'—confidence that his rule would soon reach as far as Parthia, Bactria, and Persis. This was the kind of boldness that, for nearly two centuries, had been driving Seleucus Nicator and a long line

of Antiochus Philometor (92), Antiochus XIII Philadelphus (69/67–64), and Seleucus Cytiosactes. See above for references.

of tremendously resilient successors to claim and reclaim preeminence as kings of kings.