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**Between Antioch and Seleucia-Ctesiphon:  
Defending the Seleucid Middle Euphrates in the second century BC**

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With the expansion of the Parthian Empire inexorable in the second half of the second century BCE, a new system of Seleucid fortifications was established on the escarpment overlooking the Euphrates River north of its confluence with the Khabur River. At a similar time the fortifications of Dura Europos below the Khabur confluence were upgraded contributing further to the defence of the Middle Euphrates valley and protecting the rich Seleucid cities further west, especially Antioch-on-the-Orontes. Of key interest in understanding this initiative and how a Seleucid-Parthian frontier developed on the Middle Euphrates during this period is the evidence for a Parthian occupation of Dura Europos. A proposition that Dura was captured by the Parthians in 113 BCE, which was made in the 1940s, has long been accepted in scholarship despite significant problems with the numismatic evidence it is based on. This paper analyses the archaeological evidence for the late Seleucid upgrading of defences on the Middle Euphrates and revisits the evidence for the Parthian occupation of Dura to better understand the nature of the demise of Seleucid power in the area.