

PREFACE OF THE VOLUME EDITORS

Every book has a history of at least two parts. The first ends with the submission of the book to the press, the second starts thereafter. As editors, we would like to share with our readers some insights into the former, while leaving the latter to our hopes.

The roots of this book go back to the beginning of our friendship in 2012. From early on, Seleukid history and modern political theory were among the preferred topics of our convivial conversations. They became the focus of our scholarly cooperation from *Seleukid Study Day III* on (Bordeaux, September 2012). By 2016, we decided to co-organize a *Seleukid Study Day* at Nipissing University, North Bay, ON, and we settled on a topic that naturally derived from the previous workshops, then also including *Seleukid Study Day IV* (Montreal 2013) and *V* (Brussels 2015).

Since all our literary, epigraphic, numismatic, and visual sources on the Seleukids are so heavily imbued with ideological constructs, at times even in multiple and conflicting layers, we felt a more systematic approach was an important desideratum. Historians of the Hellenistic age have always shown some awareness of this aspect. They had thus already begun questioning the 19th-century frameworks that were either Christian-teleological (appreciating the spread of Greek to pave the way to the Gospel) or Nationalistic (decrying inter-ethnic marriages and intercultural exchange as decay). The narrowness of colonial perspectives had also become visible and insufficient in the face of the diversity and complexity of Seleukid materials. Yet, many historical narratives still carried forward uncritical readings of the partisan and moralizing Greek sources, echoed the prejudice of Seleukid weakness as a result of its cultural hybridity, or were slow to overcome the one-sided emphasis on Greek agency at the Macedonian courts.

Seleukid Study Day VI thus encouraged the systematic analysis of ideology in all its appearances and sought to focus on the reception of and response to ideological messages. We tried to explore which impact the selections, additions, nuances, and reconfigurations from the perspective of the subjects, vassals, and neighbours had on the ideological discourse, as we find it in our sources. We gradually saw more clearly that all ideology is communication, hence also the legends and symbols shaped at the early-Seleukid court were designed in a dialectic process involving predecessors, neighbours, and subjects.

The workshop on *Seleukid Ideology* resulted in a stimulating event, yet manuscripts came in slowly. Some of the participants had presented work in progress at an early stage, while others had committed their research elsewhere and did not want to duplicate publication. Three of the papers formed part of or developed into

independent book projects.¹ Thus only four of the chapters of the present volume go back to earlier versions delivered in North Bay (Rolf Strootman, Germain Payen) or committed to the planned volume in 2017 (Babett Edelmann-Singer, Gillian Ramsey). We are grateful to these authors for their patience with us, and their revisions and updates (mostly in 2022).

In 2018, our concentration shifted to the publication of the proceedings of *Seleukid Study Day V* and the preparation of the upcoming *Seleukid Study Day VII* (Sopot near Gdańsk 2019). The two of us continued our work on our own related research areas, Richard on the reaction to the Seleukids by the Greek *poleis* and Altay on the ambiguous Judaeoan-Seleukid relations. The conference *Culture and Ideology under the Seleucids: An Interdisciplinary Approach*, organized by Eva Anagnostou-Laoutides (Macquarie University, Sydney, 29-31 March 2019) revived our interest and allowed us to present important chapters of our research.²

Encouraged by these discussions, we began redesigning our project. However, the Covid-19 pandemic resulted in yet another slowdown. But then the launch of the digital *Seleukid Lecture Series* in May 2021 reinvigorated our efforts. We renewed our exchange with participants of former *Seleukid Study Days* and connected with many more students and scholars for the first time. Kyle Erickson, Eva Anagnostou-Laoutides, Deirdre Klokow, and Eran Almagor were so kind as to develop their lectures into chapters for the present volume. Richard's chapter also finds its place here, but likewise represents, together with Altay's (chs. 14–15), the natural outflow of a discussion we have been entertaining for the past six years. One further chapter was offered by Ben Scolnic (after the conference held at Sopot in 2019) and by Altay (to replace his paper given in North Bay)³ to complete the volume.

We would like to express our gratitude to the aforementioned authors for their trust and cooperation. In particular, we are indebted to Ben Scolnic and Deirdre Klokow for their energetic and unwavering support in the production of this book. Thanks also go to the anonymous reviewer and in particular to Laetitia Graslin-Thomé for her help with all matters Babylonian and Akkadian. Last but not least, a project like this does not come to fruition without the patience and background support of those whom we love most, Liz and Doro (respectively).

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North Bay, ON
Richard Wenghofer

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¹ Kosmin, P.J. 2018: *Time and Its Adversaries in the Seleucid Empire*, Cambridge, MA. A. Coşkun's paper on the Seleukid era had been designed as a response to Kosmin; his research was developed further and partly published in 'Expansion und dynastische Politik in Pontos: Zwei neue Ären unter Pharnakes I.', *Historia* 77, 2022, 2–26; other materials will hopefully feed into a later *Seleukid Study Day* themed 'Anchored in Time'. And see B. Scolnic and A. Coşkun, *Jewish Responses to Seleukid Rule*, in preparation as *Seleukid Perspectives* 3.

² A. Coşkun, 'The Reception of Seleukid Ideology in 2nd-Century BC Judaea', and R. Wenghofer, 'Popular Resistance to Seleukid Claims to Hegemony', in E. Anagnostou-Laoutides and S. Pfeiffer (eds.), *Culture and Ideology under the Seleucids. Unframing a Dynasty*, Berlin 2022, 151–166 and 167–184 respectively.

³ His ch. 4 on Miletos replaces his paper on the Seleukid era, see n. 1 above.