

Seleukid Study Day V: Rome and the Seleukid East

Veranstalter: Seleukid Study Group, Société d'études latines 'Latomus' & Chaire d'histoire romaine à l'Université libre de Bruxelles

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Previous Seleukid Study Days focussed on the creation of the royal (and queenly) personae, the construction of dynastic bonds as well as the fostering of loyalties among the early Seleukids and their subjects and vassals. It was pointed out repeatedly how important Mesopotamia and the Iranian territories had been both for the traditions that their rule was embedded in and for the material resources they drew their strength from.¹ Continuing this line of argument, Seleukid Study Day V questioned that the defeat at the hand of the Romans at Magnesia (190) and the heavy peace conditions imposed on Antiochos III at Apameia (188) doomed the Empire to collapse. The workshop not only tried to specify the implications of the Roman victory, but also to elucidate factors that strengthened or weakened the Seleukids after Apameia.

The complex problem was approached in 21 papers organized in five panels. Panel I assembled seven presentations of PhD projects, and thus inaugurated a planned sequence of doctoral study days sponsored by the Société Latomus. Four of them pursued literary topics. MARIJN VISSCHER (Durham) tried to enhance our understanding of Antiochos' actions by highlighting the heroic traditions which shaped the expectations of the king and his environment, and thus also his political choices, or perhaps rather the way they were enacted. MARIE-ASTRID BUELENS (Brussels) investigated an intriguing prophecy (attested by Phlegon of Tralles) that the fortune of the Romans, despite their victory at Thermopylai (191), would soon face a reversal. FUAD ALIDOUST (Mainz) deconstructed Justin's narrative of Demetrios II Nikator by following up on anti-Parthian stereotypes. CHIARA GRIGOLIN (Durham) argued that the creation of Seleukid traditions

may date surprisingly late, such as the role of the Zeus Eagle in Antioch's foundation myth, which she referred to the Antonine cultural milieu. Due to some programme changes, only one topic corresponded with the heading of panel III („Symbolic Battles and the Representation of the Seleukids as Persians“). ERAN ALMAGOR (Jerusalem) analysed the echoes of the Graeco-Persian Wars in the literary treatments of the Roman-Syrian War. His case-studies illustrated how roles and perspectives could change in the gradual deployment of a literary tradition. In fact, all papers hitherto mentioned supported the claim that the literary tradition is too complex to be subdivided into pro- and anti-Seleukid authors.

Four further papers (from panels I, II, III and V) dealt with reception issues based on documentary evidence. GUNNAR DUMKE (Halle) discussed coins from Syrian Antioch which continued to depict Philip I until the Augustan age. This conundrum cautions us not to assume that all coin illustrations had political messages; Dumke tried to explain the phenomenon within its broader monetary and economic contexts. CHRISTOPH MICHELS (Aachen) investigated the continuity and change of Hellenistic royalty after the expulsion of the Seleukids from Asia Minor. He argued not to overstate the peculiarities of the Attalids, who, on balance, aptly continued previous kingly models. In his study of the usurper Timarchos' coinage, SVYATOSLAV SMIRNOV (Moscow) argued for a long Near Eastern tradition of representing the royal power with a quadriga. GILLIAN RAMSEY (Toronto) scrutinized Babylonian sources of the 140s and 130s which attest the 'Four Generals in the Land': these had been established by the Seleukids and maintained by the Parthians – yet another example illustrating the importance of decentralized governmental structures as a particular feature of Near Eastern Empires.

Many other papers looked at the immediate or indirect results of the Roman victory. Panel II („Short- and Long-Term Effects of the Treaty of Apameia“) started with two papers dedicated to the immediate implications of the peace treaty. ADRIAN DUMITRU

¹ Cf. <http://seleucid-genealogy.com/ssg.html> (16.12.2015).

(Bucharest) rehearsed its territorial clause as reported by Livy, namely that Antiochos was to withdraw *ad Tanaim*. While most scholars had regarded the River Don as irrelevant for the treaty and suggested to either interpret this as an alternative name for the Kalykadnos in Kilikia or as an error for *ad Taurum*, Dumitru plausibly claimed to maintain the transmitted text: the Romans, besides taking away most of Asia Minor from Antiochos, also insisted that he might not return to Europe along the northern coast of the Black Sea. NICHOLAS SEKUNDA (Gdansk) scrutinized the several attestations of war elephants in the Seleukid army after Apameia, suggesting that Rome did not have a problem with this, at least until the end of Antiochos IV's life.

The latter king was the focus of several further papers, foremost in panel V („Continuity, Revival and Change under Antiochos IV and His Successors“). KYLE ERICKSON (Lampeter, Wales) pointed out that the new prominence of Zeus on the coinage of Antiochos IV responded to his Eastern projects, but did not lead to discontinuing the more traditional dynastic Apollo imagery. BENJAMIN SCOLNIC (New Haven CT) tried to shed new light on the persecution of the Jews by the example set by the Romans who had eradicated the Bacchan movement throughout Italy, when the future Antiochos IV was still a prince in Roman captivity. Scolnic viewed the king's relation with the senate as one of respect (even if this was backed not only by friendship relations, but also relied on the potential threat that the release of his nephew Demetrios would have meant to his throne).

ROLF STROOTMAN (Utrecht) (panel V), in turn, interpreted the famous Procession at Daphne as indicative of a revival of Seleukid expansionism. Especially the Dionysian motifs were explained as promising a successful campaign into the East prior to a triumphal return to the west, with the latter implying the promise of liberation from the Roman yoke.

DJ HOULE (Waterloo / Hamilton ON) (panel I) also took Daphne as his starting point, but rather for an analysis of the use of ethnics as descriptors of military units under Antiochos IV, which were compared to the armies of Antiochos III at Raphia and Magne-

sia. Houle emphasized not only the surprising rise in the number of „Macedonians“, but also the inclusion of so many ethnics relating to areas north or west of the Taurus (Mysians, Cretans, Galatians). He tentatively concluded that Seleukid army units, which often functioned in combination with colonial settlements, filled their ranks locally. In the discussion, it was cautioned not to talk of „pseudo-ethnics“, but rather to be sensitive to deliberative ethnic constructs with far-reaching implications. Similarly, DAVID ENGELS (Brussels) enquired into the lack of evidence for Babylonian military units in the Seleukid army – despite the fact that Mesopotamia was the least-contested territory of Seleukid rule for nearly two centuries. Either, he concluded, we continue to stick to the mainstream view that the kings refused to arm their closest subjects out of mistrust, or they did not hesitate to recruit Babylonians into their Macedonian phalanx just as Houle suggested for the Syrians, though the prosopographic evidence does not (yet) bolster the latter view.

Last but not least, several papers were interested in the diplomacy with Rome (panel IV). OMAR COLORU (Nanterre) presented a structural analysis of Seleukid and Roman Diplomacy, also shedding light on the broader context of gathering and spreading information. Three presentations discussed the unique evidence for the friendship and alliance between the Jews and the Romans, which convey unique insights into the Roman machinations that potentially destabilized Seleukid rule without interfering physically. And yet views on motivations and impact continue to differ. ROBIN HÄMMERLING (Trier) (panel I) first approached the topic by contextualizing the treaty struck under Judas Maccabee with other diplomatic activities of the Romans. Similarly to EDWARD DĄBROWA (Cracow), who discussed the friendly relations with Rome under John Hyrkanos and the lack thereof under Alexander Jannaios, he pointed out that the Maccabees in fact expected military support, but that the Romans fell short of delivering it. Hyrkanos still approached the Romans, in order to have his territorial expansions sanctioned, but in the face of Roman inactivity, Jannaios decided to pass on this kind

of niceties. Differently, ALTAY COŞKUN (Waterloo ON) explained that all Jewish embassies to Rome from Judas to Hyrkanos had the following conditions in common: the Maccabees had achieved effective independence from the Seleukids, and friendship with Rome was made or renewed mainly to impress their neighbours, occasionally even the Seleukids, if they were weak (e.g. Demetrios II), but most regularly the Jews themselves, among whom many continued to oppose or at least question Maccabean monarchy. The argument was based on a revised chronology of the attested embassies. In the discussion, it was further stressed that the author of 1 Maccabees nowhere expresses dissatisfaction with the Romans, who, on the contrary, are represented as tools of the divine providence.

Only one paper gave a detailed diachronic account of the demise of Seleukid rule: the study of the inner-dynastic problems of the Seleukids by RICHARD WENGHOFER (Nipissing ON) (panel II). That he minimized the impact of Apameia was well in line with the other presentations which pointed to the high potential of Antiochos IV. And the relative stability of Demetrios' rule may give further support to Wenghofer's view that the amount of dynastic strife known to previous generations became unbearable with the successive marriage of Kleopatra Thea to three Seleukid pretenders, resulting in multiple rivaling bloodlines. This narrative formed the basis for the paradoxical claim that Rome's policy of holding potential rivals hostage effectively stabilized rather than weakened Seleukid dynastic rule, at least until 162 BC.

The discussions repeatedly returned to the Treaty of Apameia. Participants could ultimately not agree if it continued being in force after the death of Antiochos III or not. Helpful were the suggestions to differentiate, a) according to its individual rulings (geographical implications, elephants, ships, hostages, indemnity payments), b) the perspective of the Roman senate versus the Seleukid court, and c) between a legal and a political validity.

The proceedings are expected to be published by 2017², when Seleukid Study Day VI will take place at Nipissing, North Bay ON. Given that all previous Study Days paid much attention to strategies designed to create or

enhance legitimacy of Seleukid rule, the next gathering will concentrate on the reception or respectively on the rejection of such designs.

Conference overview:

Marijn S. Visscher (Durham): Antiochos the Great as Hellenistic Poet? Acts of Kingship and the Literary Tradition

DJ Houle (Waterloo / Hamilton ON): Livy's Ethnics and the Soldiers of Antiochos III and IV

Marie-Astrid Buelens (Brussels): Antiochos fuit, Rome aussi ? La bataille des Thermopyles et son issue alternative dans un fragment oraculaire de Phlégon de Tralles (FGrH 257 F 36 III)

Fuad Alidoust (Mainz): Justin's Representation of Demetrios II. Nikator and His View on the Parthians

Robin Hämmerling (Trier): On Hasmonean-Roman Diplomacy from Judas Maccabee to Simon and Its Impact on the Seleukid Empire

Gunnar R. Dumke (Halle): Becoming Roman – Staying Seleukid? The Posthumous Philip Coinage Reconsidered

Chiara Grigolin (Durham): Antioch's Foundation Myth and the Antonine Cultural Milieu

Adrian Dumitru (Bucharest): The Territorial Clause in the Treaty of Apameia

Nicholas Sekunda (Gdansk): The Seleukid Elephant Corps after Apameia

Richard Wenghofer (Nipissing ON): The Failure of Kinship Diplomacy among the Later Seleukid Kings

Christoph Michels (Aachen): From One Hegemon to the Next? The Kingdoms of Anatolia after Apameia

Eran Almagor (Jerusalem): Echoes of the Graeco-Persian Wars in the Roman-Syrian War in Greece (with an Emphasis on Plut. Cat. Mai. 12-14)

²For more detailed summaries, see the conference website <http://www.altaycoskun.com/conferences> (16.12.2015).

David Engels (Brussels): Mais où sont donc passés les soldats babyloniens des Séleucides?

Omar Coloru (Nanterre): Seleukid Diplomacy, the Roman Republic and the Circulation of Information

Altay Coşkun (Waterloo ON): Simon Macabée, Friendship with Rome and Seleukid Disintegration: a Case-Study of Triangular Diplomacy (142/41 BC)

Edward Dąbrowa (Cracow): The Seleukids, Rome and the Jews (134-76 BC)

Gillian Ramsey (Toronto): 'The Four Generals in the Land': Late Seleukid Administration in Babylonia

Benjamin Scolnic (New Haven CT): Reading backwards: Antiochos IV's Relationship with Rome and Its Implications for his Persecution of the Jews

Kyle Erickson (Lampeter, Wales): Antiochos IV and Apollo

Svyatoslav Smirnov (Moscow): Timarchos – Satrap, Rebel and King in the Hellenistic East

Rolf Strootman (Utrecht): Antiochos IV's Procession at Daphne as a Manifestation of the Revival of Seleukid Expansionism

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