

Seleukid Royal Women

Creation, Representation and Distortion of
Hellenistic Queenship in the Seleukid Empire

Edited by Altay Coşkun and Alex McAuley

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Cover illustration: Jugate Coin of Kleopatra Thea and Alexander Balas.
Tetradrachm, Ake-Ptolemais; 15.53 g. Numismatik Lanz München, Auction 160, lot 287:
Kleopatra Thea & Antiochos Balas. © Dr. Hubert Lanz

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PREFACE & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

For generations the Seleukid Empire was pushed to the margins of Classical scholarship, thought to be too remote, too diverse, and too detached from the more glamorous traditional centres of the Greco-Roman world to be of any consequence. Even among Hellenistic scholars, the Seleukids stood in the shadows of their more prominent relatives in the Macedonian motherland (the Argeads and Antigonids) and Egypt (the Ptolemies). But as our discipline has shifted its focus to a wider angle, over the past few decades the Seleukids have been buoyed by a wave of interest in the Hellenistic world and its diversity, plurality, and vectors of cultural contact. As fascination with the diversity of the Classical world begins to eclipse the former Eurocentric homogeneity, the Seleukids have become a justifiably desirable object of study among Classicists as well.

The territory controlled by the Greco-Macedonian dynasty was vast: at its height, it spanned some three million square kilometres to encompass modern-day Turkey, Syria, Jordan, Israel, stretching East through the Fertile Crescent into Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan. With the exception of the Achaimenids, in almost no other region or period of the Ancient World was such a vast diversity of peoples, ethnicities, traditions, religions, and languages held under the sway of one family.¹ As the bridge that spanned East and West in the Hellenistic period, and the force through which a much broader Eastern world was brought into contact with the Mediterranean, the Seleukid Empire is now enjoying unprecedented popularity as fertile ground for the analysis of cross-cultural interaction and imperial administration.

While this rebirth of interest in the Seleukid Empire began in sporadic isolation, it has emerged as the primary focus of a growing network of established and up-and-coming scholars throughout Northern America and Europe. A highly productive series of meetings and conferences over the past few years has brought together academics of diverse methods and approaches. First among them is the *Seleukid Dissolution* Conference hosted at the University of Exeter by K. Erickson (now at Trinity St. David, Lampeter, Wales) and G. Ramsey (now at the University of Toronto) in 2008. The edited papers aptly reflect the lucrative potential of a collaborative approach that unites a range of different geographical subspecialisations, language skills, and source types.² Since then, scholars of the Seleukid Empire have been increasingly prominent at broader meetings of Hellenistic historians, most

1 For the growing awareness that the eastern dominions were as important as the Mediterranean ones for at least the earlier Seleukids, see, e.g., Sherwin-White & Kuhrt 1993; Capdetrey 2007; Engels 2011; Kosmin 2014a; Grainger 2014.

2 Erickson & Ramsey 2011.

notably at the three Edinburgh conferences *Creating a Hellenistic World*, *Hellenistic Court and Society*, and *Persepolis: 40 Years on*.³

A panel at the workshop *Opportunities for Interdisciplinarity in Hellenistic Scholarship*, hosted by the *Waterloo Institute for Hellenistic Studies* in 2010, reunited K. Erickson, D. Engels and A. Coşkun for the first time after the *Seleukid Dissolution* Conference. Over the course of this meeting a collaborative agenda was forged, leading to an attempt to shed more light on the (still formative) period of the Empire under Antiochos I (294/281–261). The idea was to study major synchronous developments such as the Galatian invasions in the West, temple foundations in Babylonian Borsippa and conflicts in the Iranian satrapies, and to integrate them into a complex picture of the construction and development of Seleukid Kingship.

The first results of this project were presented and further contextualized at *Seleukid Study Day I* at the University of Exeter in August 2011, which A. Coşkun co-organized as a visiting fellow together with S. Mitchell. M. D’Agostini, M. Widmer, A. McAuley, and G. Ramsey introduced a new interest in the early royal family and its female members in particular, whereas D. Engels, K. Erickson, and G. Ramsay pointed out the importance of an Eastern focus. A common interest in the ruling practices and policies of the Seleukids, and the mechanisms by which the Macedonian dynasty held sway over the disparate cultures of the empire, began to be realised. A. McAuley then first introduced his ongoing Genealogy website and research project, which has since become the web platform of the research group. These various approaches intersected very productively with the re-appraisal of King Antiochos I. Perhaps most importantly, the event fomented a sense of collegiality and warm collaboration amongst advanced students and established professors alike.⁴

Next, on *Seleukid Study Day II* (Waterloo, November 2011), a more unified research agenda was formulated: the reign of Antiochos II and his offspring was revisited (A. Coşkun, K. Erickson), with a particular focus on the roles of royal women (M. D’Agostini, A. McAuley, G. Ramsey, S. Ager). The presentations were complemented by the input of ‘outside’ panel chairs (R. Faber, H. Beck).⁵

The chronological focus on the mid- and later 3rd century, when the Empire was first shaken by rebellions in the eastern satrapies and then vexed by domestic strife, was further pursued by a panel at the *Celtic Conference in Classics* (Université de Bordeaux, 5–8 September 2012). As *Seleukid Study Day III*, it was broadly devoted to the history from Antiochos II to Seleukos II, and many papers argued to abandon the old paradigm of Seleukid decline and instead focus more on the surprising degree of Seleukid resilience, a topic that was pursued further at *Seleukid Study V* (Université libre de Bruxelles, August 2015: *Rome and the Later Seleukids*).⁶

3 Erskine & Llewellyn-Jones 2011; Erskine et al. ca. 2016; *Persepolis*-Website.

4 See Coşkun 2011b for a report, as well as Erickson 2011, Coşkun 2012a and Engels 2013 for preliminary results. Previous plans for one collaborative monograph have now been developed further into three independent book projects.

5 See Coşkun 2012b for a report.

6 See Coşkun 2012c for a report and Erickson ca. 2016 for the proceedings. And see the report on SSD V (expected to be published on H-Soz-Kult in the fall 2015).

The present volume assembles selected papers from the workshop *Seleukid Royal Women: Roles, Representations, and Expectations*, which comprised the fourth iteration of the *Seleukid Study Day* series. With generous support from the Social Sciences and Humanities Council of Canada (SSHRC), the University of Waterloo and the John MacNaughton Chair of Classics at McGill University, the event took place in Montreal in February 2013. The topic had been chosen because we had sensed the limitations of our understanding of the stakes held by queens and princesses in the power games of the Hellenistic world. Our principal aim at the conference was to better understand the character of their influence, as well as the effects they had on the creation of a cultural *koine* and, more particularly, in shaping Seleukid royalty.⁷

Eleven of the full chapters included in this volume have been developed from the talks presented at McGill (A.-C. Harders, E. Almagor, G. Ramsey, A. Coşkun, B. Bartlett, S. Ager & C. Hardiman, A. McAuley, R. Wenghofer & D.J. Houle, R. Strootman, J. Wilker, A. Dumitru). The papers by M. D'Agostini on Laodike, Wife of Achaïos the Younger, by F. Muccioli on the queenly virtues as reflected in their divine epithets, and R. Walsh on Galatian royal women have appeared or will appear elsewhere.⁸ K. Erickson's study on the limited visibility of the queens in cultic spheres overlapped significantly with the investigation of S. Ager & C. Hardiman; accordingly we were happy to accept instead a collaborative study on Apama and Stratonike (D. Engels & K. Erickson). In addition, the original introductory remarks have been maintained or even developed further (A. Coşkun, A. McAuley, H. Beck).

Seleukid Royal Women boasts to be the most comprehensive and interdisciplinary approach not only to a subtopic of Seleukid History, but also to female royalty in antiquity, thus elaborating on an important aspect of gender roles in the Classical world. A variety of methodological approaches, such as Classical and Near Eastern Philology, Greek Epigraphy, Numismatics, Art History and Gender Studies have left their imprints on the arguments presented here. How the legacy of these women has been elaborated, embellished, twisted, or perverted to serve a variety of purposes is, to us, equally important as their biographical careers themselves, and thus we feel justified in paying both equal attention.

Seeing this volume coming together, we feel deeply indebted to all of the aforementioned institutions and colleagues for their contributions as co-organizers, participants and/or co-authors that made this project possible. We would like to single out in particular S. Mitchell and H. Beck for their institutional support and ongoing sympathies with our initiative, E.D. Carney for her generous and pertinent feedback to the conference papers, as well as D. Engels and K. Erickson for their enthusiasm and expertise with which they have fostered the collaboration of the Seleukid Study Group since its beginnings. Our gratitude further extends to Chloe Bigio, Katrina van Amsterdam and Emma Bardes for their help with the organization of the conference at McGill University, as well as to Brigitte Schneebeli for her

7 See Coşkun & McAuley 2013 for a report.

8 See Muccioli 2013; D'Agostini 2014; Walsh ca. 2017.

relentless support with the financial management of the project. We would also like to cordially thank Gunnar Dumke, Arthur Houghton and Kyle Erickson for generously supporting us when we were gathering the copyright permissions for the illustrations of this volume. Last but not least we would like to express our gratitude for the swiftness, precision and kindness with which our book was handled by the editor-in-chief of *Historia Einzelschriften*, Kai Brodersen, and the representatives of the Steiner Verlag, Katharina Stüdemann, Sarah Schäfer and Albrecht Franz. To them, along with the contributors to this volume, whom we are privileged to call colleagues, we offer our heartfelt thanks.

October 2015

Altay Coşkun
Waterloo ON

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Montreal & Vancouver

NOBLE WOMEN IN CHINA, ROME, AND IN-BETWEEN – A PROLOGUE

Hans Beck
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In Republican Rome noble women were not supposed to drink alcohol. Romulus himself, so the story went, had issued a piece of legislation that prohibited the consumption of alcohol by women. If a husband found his wife acting in violation of the law, he had the right to kill her. There was of course also a widely acknowledged *exemplum* that lent authenticity to this tradition. A certain Egnatius Maetennus had beaten his wife to death because she was drunk, but due to Romulus' intervention all charges against him were dropped. In the later-3rd century BC, when more reliable information on the earliest pieces of Roman sumptuary legislation is available, women were denied access to the wine cellar. Around the same time, Cato the Elder recorded that male relatives would check on their female family members and see if they had an alcoholic breath. This was the primary reason why men and women exchanged a kiss when greeting each other – or so Cato said.

At around the same time as Rome's sumptuary legislation, some 8,000 km further East, Chinese noble women were not meant to indulge in the pleasures of alcohol either. From the Qin to the early Han period – that is from the late-3rd to 1st centuries BC – many legendary tales of the 'good wife' survive. What derives from these tales is again the axiomatic observation that women were greatly confined by men in their actions. In the *Nü Jie*, or *Lessons for Women*, Ban Zhao writes in c. 100 CE:

Decidedly nothing is better (to gain the heart of a husband) than whole-hearted devotion and correct manners. In accordance with the rites and proper modes of conduct, (let a woman) live a pure life. Let her have ears that hear not licentiousness; and eyes that see not depravity. When she goes outside her own home, let her not be conspicuous in dress and manners. When at home let her not neglect her dress. Women should not assemble in groups, nor gather together (for gossip and silly laughter). They should not stand watching in the gateways. (If a woman follows) these rules, she may be said to have whole-hearted devotion and correct manners.

There is no need here to dwell on how the male desire to wield control over female behavior translates into societal norms in these stories. It is easy to strip these traditions of their gender assumptions and expose their inherently male mindset. By extension, such suspicion about the chauvinistic encodings of our sources applies to the vast majority of what is called the ancient tradition. What is more challenging, and maybe also more interesting from the social historian's perspective today, is the societal discourse that revolved around such traditions. The questions of how the gendered mindset related to societal practice and how it corresponded to what

Michel Foucault has labelled its “regime of truth” leads to the very core of those political cultures of the ancient world.

In Rome’s culture of public display, the gender discourse extended to regulations of the appearance of women in the public sphere. The issue was precarious because it was tied to the volatile equilibrium between the ruling elite and the common people. Just as the male members of the senatorial elite were anxious to follow an implicit protocol in their everyday interactions with ordinary citizens, so the women of this elite were subject to expectations regarding their public behavior. But while male behaviour was governed by good practice, female action was confined by law. The sumptuary laws are a good example. The need for such laws was felt in the late-3rd and then in the 2nd centuries BC, when Rome had begun to conquer the Hellenistic monarchies of the East one by one. According to many contemporary observers in the senate, this conquest caused a rush towards decadence. Women were perceived as particularly prone to showing off with their luxury items; hence the stipulation of a series of laws that limited the ostentatious display of wealth in the public sphere.

Modern scholarship on women in antiquity has had its difficulties with looking behind the façade of stereotyped accounts of the sources. Textbooks on ancient Rome, for instance, usually highlight the image of the role model *matrona* and her confinement to the domestic space. Consequently, it has become axiomatic to think of late-Republican aristocratic women as masters, or mistresses, of the confined household. When they crossed into the public sphere, where the eye of the masculine tradition captured them, they are often portrayed in the sources as opportunistic, if not ruthless, individuals who navigate around the affairs of men, outsmarting the restrictions that were imposed on them. Subsequent wrongdoing – anything from sexual transgression to the evil plotting of their husband’s murder – implicitly justifies the original confinement. Tacitus bears witness to many literary *topoi* of this pattern.

In light of the restricted body of sources at hand, it is challenging to project a picture that is immune to the shortcomings of stereotyping. One of the few breakthrough moments in scholarship was the publication of Ann-Cathrin’s Harders’ book *Suavissima Soror* (2008). Based on anthropological family models, Harders argues that Roman aristocratic families were not just vertically layered units that were governed by the authority of age. Instead, in her analysis she fleshes out the horizontal intersection among families, and she demonstrates how the idea of horizontal interconnectivity became a defining moment in the constitution of a noble family. It has often been argued that the families of the Roman nobility entertained all sorts of marriage alliances to maintain their social status and enhance their prestige. But in Harders’ account, the utilitarian advantage a marriage strategy secures in any given moment is complemented by a much more permanent force of familial relations. The horizontal bond between families is established, however, not by men, but women, who were true agents in shaping families – i. e., and not just passive tokens or trophies in the exchange between men.

In one of his recent books, *The Early Chinese Empires. Qin and Han* (2007), Mark Edward Lewis characterizes the role of women as inferiors and outsiders,

“necessary for reproduction but otherwise aliens within the husband’s family” (156). Lewis refers to the *Record on Ritual*, or *Li ji*, published with commentaries and annotations between the 4th and 1st centuries BC. The *Li ji* advocated three forms of obedience for a woman, that is: a woman first had to obey her father, then her husband, and, when widowed, her son. So just like at Rome, the male discourse in imperial China placed women under the control of multiple layers of patriarchy, with reserved spheres of action and governed forms of behavior. But unlike their Roman counterparts, Chinese women actually commanded their sons, as the authority of age trumped the authority of gender; filial piety to both parents was a son’s highest obligation. In this sense, then, we find a similar tension between male moralizing tales and normative traditions on the one hand, and the actual role of women in society on the other. It is difficult to disentangle these strands because so little survives, and whatever is available falls in the category of gender normativity as construed by men. But interestingly enough, Lewis acknowledges this gap between a woman’s place in text and everyday life, and, in passing, he entertains the role of women in the process of securing political alliances and accumulating family fortunes. The look behind the brick wall of masculine source narratives and their stereotyped extension into scholarship promises to offer an all-new understanding of women in ancient China.

Chinese and Roman women had no knowledge of each other, just as their civilizations were worlds apart from one another. Their mutual awareness was fuzzy at all times. While the Han Chinese sources refer to Rome as the realm of the Da Qin – some sort of ‘Counter China’ at the other end of the world – Roman sources speak of trade relations with the *Seres* people who, according to Pliny the Elder, were “famous for the woolen substance obtained from their forests”. The exciting thing about this substance was that it allowed the *matrona*, according to Pliny, “to flaunt transparent clothing in public”. The cultural advancement of silk production is measured here against the excitement this sparked in the eyes of the male observer. At the same time, the moralistic tenor of the passage is unmistakable. As so often, then, the assessment in the source is inspired by the idea of male authority over the female body in the public sphere.

The political cultures of the two Eurasian flanks were unrelated, but at different times different intermediate empires fed into the realms of both Rome and China. The largest power to do so was the Seleukid Empire, spanning at its peak from the coast of Asia Minor into Baktria or, in the words of Susan Sherwin-White and Amélie Kuhrt, *From Samarkhand to Sardis* (1993). The Seleukids clawed the greatest part of the Persian Royal Road System, which would become the future Silk Road. This alone made them cultural intermediaries of an unprecedented magnitude. At the same time, their realm was a huge cultural tapestry in itself, embracing a very high volume of diverse local political and social organizations, regional ethnicities, economic circumstances, and religious traditions.

The study of this patchwork empire has regained significant momentum in recent years, thanks also to the inspiring work carried out by the Seleukid Study Days (SSD) and their associated group of researchers. The present volume adds to this inspiration. It offers a unique attempt to delve into the political culture of the

Seleukids. Maybe more than the women of any other royal era in antiquity, the noble women of the Seleukid Empire are almost entirely subject to the drawback of masculine source narratives and their thoughtless repetition in scholarship. As the editors discuss in their introduction, for the longest time the best that researchers could say about Seleukid women would be summarized in one way or another under the labels of romance, affectionate love, or sexual ecstasy, spiced up with scenes of cruelty and, to be sure, a heavy dose of 'orientalism'. The subsequent contributions to this book refer to these gendered stereotypes throughout, yet more importantly, they disclose the multiple ways and means in which they can be overcome. By making women the lead actors of the script, the authors unearth a layer of the historical narrative that has been buried underneath male perspectives and understandings. In this vein of inquiry, the advanced approach in gender studies allows them not only to research the noble women of the Seleukids in their own right, but also present exciting new discoveries in the fields of, for instance, alliance building, cultural transfer, and the integration of ethnic groups from a perceived periphery. The gap between Rome and China is closing once again.

THE STUDY OF SELEUKID ROYAL WOMEN: AN INTRODUCTION

*Altay Coşkun, University of Waterloo &
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Over the past two and a half decades, the study of royal women has been one of the most dynamic fields of inquiry into the Hellenistic era, and one that has profoundly shifted our perceptions of gender, status, influence, and ability within the broader ancient world. Royal women in general were once dismissed as powerless pawns in a political game that was an exclusively masculine domain,¹ but thanks to the efforts of S. Pomeroy, E. D. Carney, and a great many others the trend has turned towards recognising that such women also had their own roles to play, both active and passive. This body of research has tended to focus primarily on Macedonian and Ptolemaic women, giving rise to an analytical construct in which the fiery involvement of Adea-Eurydike and Olympias set an enduring precedent for the later influence of the Ptolemaic Kleopatras on their dynasty and beyond.² But in the eyes of contemporary commentators Ptolemaic women were equally empowered by their kingdom's unique Pharaonic ideology mixed with their own clever resourcefulness.

Seleukid women, much like their dynasty itself, have all too often been marginalised as a result of the scarcity of our sources or the vagaries of scholarly preference. In fact, they have an unhappy or sinister place in contemporary historiography. To the earliest modern historians of the Hellenistic world, Seleukid women fell into one of two camps: they were either consigned to humble obscurity and existed as passive scions of their family's prestige, or, when they took matters into their own hands, they preyed on the interest and affection of their male counterparts in the ruthless pursuit of their own agenda.³ To E. R. Bevan in particular, as the dynasty's path brought it into ever closer relation with the Ptolemies and women from both dynasties crossed into either, "destiny was introducing the Erinyes of the house of Seleucus".⁴ Elsewhere, he sums up the old *opinio communis* with almost priestly conviction as he writes of late Seleukid women that "it was in the political sphere,

1 See, e.g., Bevan 1902; Bouché-Leclercq 1913/14; Bickerman 1938.

2 Carney 1991; 1995; 2006; 2011; cf. also Pomeroy 1990; Whitehorne 2001; Ogden 1999; Lightman 2000; Bielman Sánchez 2000; 2003; Nourse 2002; O'Neil 2002; Savalli-Lestrade 2003b; Müller 2011; 2013a; 2013b; Ramsey 2011; Harders 2013; 2014. For an important study on Laodike I, see Martínez-Sève 2002/3.

3 Bevan 1902, 2.16–53 for examples of such analysis, as well as 2.555–70. Bickerman 1938, 27 is particularly dismissive of Seleukid women when he writes 'la reine séleucide n'apparaît jamais sur la scène politique comme les épouses des Lagides'.

4 Bevan 1902, 2.212.

rather than just that of sensual indulgence, that their passions lay and their crimes found a motive".⁵

The tide turned somewhat, but not entirely with G. H. Macurdy's 1932 study of Hellenistic Queens. Ahead of her time she certainly was, and an invaluable precursor to more recent treatments to be sure, but as she approached Seleukid women with an eye to their empowerment and influence she oddly agrees with some of her predecessor's more dismissive conclusions. Even in this period which she describes as "the era of super women", she nevertheless concludes that in Macedon and in the Seleukid realm royal women seldom exercised any real power.⁶ Such a minimalist view proceeds naturally from her criteria, as she was neither the first nor the last to gauge the power of royal women by comparing them exclusively to their male counterparts. In such a construct, female influence will always pale. But on the moral plane, Macurdy – perhaps rightly – put forward the apology that we need not expect royal women to have been of higher moral standards than their kings.⁷

In the near century of scholarship that has followed, when compared to their contemporaries in Macedon and Egypt, Seleukid queens and princesses had hardly begun to fall under the gaze of scholarly scrutiny. This was generally the case, at least, prior to the workshop *Seleukid Royal Women*. This scholarly neglect should not be taken as indicative of their import. From the late 4th to the early 1st centuries BC, these women were born or married into the family at the head of an empire that spanned dozens of cultures, languages, and traditions encompassing territory that spanned from western Asia Minor to the Indus River. Imbued with an ideological prominence, they became scions of their family's legitimacy and prestige. But under certain circumstances, they could become bearers of political power in their own right: as advisers to their royal husbands, as representatives of their birth houses, or as mediators between subjects and king. Effective monarchical rule was nevertheless limited: for the most part, this had to wait to the times after their husband's death and lasted only as long as they managed to control a co-ruling son. They seldom ruled in precisely the same manner as their husbands or sons, but this does not mean that they were never in power.

Yet at the same time the symbolic meaning represented by Seleukid royal women or the political power wielded by some of them cannot be studied in isolation. To garner a deeper understanding, among other things, a systematic investigation into ancient narratives of powerful royal women is required. Those about whom we learn in the literary tradition were spectacular characters, starting, in fact, not with Apama (who only received passing remarks in historiography), but with the – at least in the Graeco-Macedonian perspective – much more prominent daughter of King Demetrios Poliorketes, Stratonike. However, her renown was mainly based on the extraordinary fact that her first husband Seleukos I decided to pass her on to his son Antiochos in 294 BC. At any rate, for the most part, Seleukid queens figuring prominently in Classical literature were 'evil queens', anti-models for a

5 Bevan 1902, 2.280.

6 Macurdy 1932, i for the minimalist view of female influence. The derivative, contingent power of women is best captured in her account the reign of Laodike III at pp. 91–2.

7 Macurdy 1932, esp. 1–12.

‘good’ royal wife, if not for any ‘decent’ woman who lived up to the moral expectations of their contemporaries. Prominence and ‘bad press’ mostly went hand-in-hand in a society that valued invisibility of women in the public sphere. Within the Greek historiographical tradition at least, the ‘good queen’ tends to remain a shady figure, only to be mentioned in the context of her royal wedding or as the mother of legitimate offspring to the king.

The papers assembled in this volume try to balance the various factors that have yielded the diverse images of Seleukid royal women which we can glimpse in our literary, epigraphic and numismatic evidence. They do so in full awareness of the construed nature of such representations, and try to bring to light the structures under which those royal personae were educated, represented, honoured and remembered. The four papers on Apama and Stratonike, especially the one by A.-C. Harders, draw the readers’ attention to the sheer novelty of the *basilissa* as a figure. Not only had her symbolic value and particular agency yet to be defined, but the same is likewise true for the creation of the Hellenistic *basileus*. These new types of monarchs, in turn, were Macedonian warriors of non-royal descent who ended up as rulers of vast territories most of which extended far beyond the Graeco-Macedonian world. Readers should be alerted to the fact that not every wife of a king bore the title of *basilissa*, hence the predilection for terms such as ‘royal wives’, ‘consorts’, ‘mothers’ or ‘daughters’ throughout this volume. We have, however, abstained from imposing strict terminological consistency and do occasionally allow royal women to be called ‘queens’ even without positive evidence for the title, when there is still reason to assume that they may have been *basilissai* at least at some point of their lives, or that they managed to establish effective monarchical rule.⁸

At any rate, Harder’s chapter neatly serves as an introduction to Hellenistic queenship as such, and thus allows this introduction to be short. While her focus is particularly on the communication between the king and his new subjects, G. Ramsey concentrates on the queen’s diplomatic functions, which are also addressed by D. Engels & K. Erickson (as well as further down by A. McAuley for Apama of Kyrene). How multi-layered the representations of Apama and Stratonike are has further been demonstrated by E. Almagor: he screened the romantic story of Stratonike’s remarriage to Antiochos I against the background of Achaimenid succession rituals, near-Eastern folklore and Greek philosophical teachings. Engels & Erickson complemented this endeavour by explaining elements of the narratives within the broad context of Persian legends surrounding the royal court. These literary studies teach us a lot about the ancients’ imaginations of court life, and still something about possible patterns of interactions between the king, his wife and other members of the royal family or the court. At the same time, they caution us to take even the very few biographical details about the first two Seleukid queens that have come down to us as historically reliable facts.

8 On this problem, see also the chapter by Coşkun, in this volume, with n. 44 for further discussion.

The notion of literary constructs also underlies subsequent chapters. A. Coşkun tries to disentangle the traditions that blackened the reputation of Laodike I, wife of Antiochos II: the unique survival of documentary evidence has allowed him to check the literary tradition against contemporary voices. While the importance of polygamy at Hellenistic royal courts had been noted also in the preceding chapters on the first Seleukid queens, its potentially pernicious results at the political and military levels has never seemed so manifest as after Antiochos II's second marriage with Berenike, the daughter of Ptolemy Philadelphos. This said, Coşkun argues that the polygamous situation was less dramatic for the affected wives, who had grown up in polygamous environments; this condition rather impressed Greek and Roman historiographers, for whom monogamy was the norm. Given their general disdain for the mixing of females and politics, they were thus twice at unease, as Carney pointed out long before.⁹ In addition, Ptolemaic court propaganda and pro-Ptolemaic sentiments especially in the work of Phylarchos caused further harm to the recollection of Seleukid rule in general and to the reputation of Laodike in particular.¹⁰

A much better idea of how the Seleukid court wanted its female members to be viewed by the subjects could be gained from their visual representations – unless this path of research were impaired by the scarceness of the remaining evidence: only few queens, starting with Laodike IV, ever appeared depicted on coins, and no surviving sculpture can safely be attributed to any Seleukid *basilissa*. That such did exist though is sufficiently implied by the references to divine cults for Seleukid royal women. Based on a complete collection of the evidence for the first one-and-a-half centuries of Seleukid rule, S. Ager and C. Hardiman systematically explore the implications of our evidence, or the lack thereof. They cautiously ponder personal predilections of the royal husbands, effective influence displayed by certain queens, and a growing influence of Ptolemaic traditions since the days of Antiochos III.

Not included in this volume are the workshop contributions by M. D'Agostini and R. Walsh, both of which dealt with highly positive depictions of royal wives, and this in somewhat surprising contexts. The former discussed Polybios' representation of Laodike, the wife of the usurper Achaios the Younger, the latter three virtuous wives of Galatian kings, Chiomara, Kamma and Stratonike. At a first glance, one might think of 'inversions of the inversion' in all of these cases: while the good queen at a Graeco-Macedonian court was expected to keep a low profile to avoid her hostile representation as transgressor of gender roles, the wife of a usurper or barbarian king might in turn appear in a more positive light, if only as a contrast foil to her negative male counterpart. But upon closer inspection, all four royal consorts have in common that their bold actions were inspired by loyalty to their husbands: when those had failed to protect their rules, lives or wives, the latter were apparently permitted to take action either to defend or avenge their consorts

9 Carney 1992, 188–9, quoted by Coşkun, in this volume, n. 110.

10 See also Primo 2009.

and thus display the virtue of *philandria*.¹¹ After all, these are exceptions that ultimately confirm the paradigm.

B. Bartlett has dedicated a case study to Kleopatra Tryphaina, wife of Antiochos Grypos, while A. McAuley has scrutinized the biography of Apama, daughter of Antiochos I and wife of Magas of Kyrene. Our knowledge of these two royal wives has so far entirely depended on the highly distorting accounts of the moralizing Roman epitomizer Justin. Bartlett carefully deconstructs the composition by a subtle literary analysis, McAuley questions the dramatic plot by recontextualizing the family scandal of the Kyrenean rulers within its political environment: this was defined by social pressure groups in the Pentapolis and diplomatic loyalties or tensions among the dynastic houses of the time.

McAuley's is the first paper to focus on Seleukid women married into outside dynasties. It is followed by an investigation of genealogical links first with the Diodotids of Baktria and Sandrokottos of India, and second with the Orontids of Kommagene (also including probably fictitious links with the Achaimenids). Beyond detecting hitherto overlooked intermarriage connections (or at least the claims thereof), R. Wenghofer & D. J. Houle and R. Strootman respectively scrutinize the political contexts of those marriages as well as their symbolic meaning among future generations. J. Wilker's study on the Hasmoneans has been included partly for comparative purposes, partly also with a view to the influence that Seleukid court propaganda wielded on the emerging dynasties on the margins of its empire, even if religious conditions forbade the Jewish family to establish marital links with the former superpower. However, ancient sources tell us very little about Hasmonaean royal women, which demonstrates that the court of Judaea was much more effective in keeping their females 'invisible' than the later Seleukids. At the same time, Wilker is able to specify incidents which allowed the consorts of the Hasmoneans to become kingmakers or once even a ruling queen.

The last chapter by A. Dumitru rehearses the crucial stages in the life of the latest Seleukid queen we know of, Kleopatra Selene. Married to no less than two kings of Egypt and three of Syria, she left all her competitors from the Houses of the Ptolemies and Seleukids behind, at least in numerical terms. When it comes to active political choices, she has so far stood in the long shadow of her infamous predecessor Kleopatra Thea, but Dumitru has been able to point to several instances where we should reconsider the impact of her queenly agency.

On balance, the studies assembled in this volume make clear cases that the investigation of queenly role models and biographies need to be studied on the basis of all kinds of available primary sources as well as against a broad social, political and cultural context. Actions attested for individual royal wives, widows and daughters cannot simply be taken at face value, but need to be reviewed behind the background of the experimental design of the new roles of the Hellenistic *basileus* and *basilissa* in the age of the Diadochs, understood within the dynamic interplay of inter-dynastic loyalties or tensions, as well as contextualized before the ethic

11 See Coşkun and McAuley 2013 for abstracts and D'Agostini 2014 (on Polyb. 8.15.1–21.11) and Walsh ca. 2017 (on Plut. *Mor.* 257e–258a) for the papers.

horizon of Greek moralizing historiography and Near Eastern folkloric narrative traditions. Both of the latter were as much catering a sensationalist audience as they were trying to convey moral role- and anti-role-models, not only for royal wives, but for all 'decent' women in Near Eastern, Hellenistic and finally Roman societies. Drastic illustrations of the pernicious outcomes of transgressing established gender norms formed part of the historiographic and anecdotal repertoire of our ancient authors.

Last but not least, many of the studies presented here sufficiently document that modern audiences – 'critical' as they consider themselves to be – have too often been inclined to accept accounts that have heavily been distorted by gender-stereotypes, and occasionally even added to the ill reputation of Hellenistic 'queens'.

I. EXPERIMENTING WITH THE ROLE OF THE ROYAL
CONSORT: THE FIRST TWO *BASILISSAI* OF THE SELEUKIDS

THE MAKING OF A QUEEN – SELEUKOS NIKATOR AND HIS WIVES

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ABSTRACT

A king does not need a queen to rule successfully; yet after the death of Alexander not only did a new type of king emerge, the Hellenistic *basileus*, but also at the same time the Hellenistic *basilissa*. The manner in which Seleukos Nikator presented his two wives Apama and Stratonike as queens at his side, the way they were perceived by his subjects, and how they represented themselves are treated in this paper. By analyzing the constellation of king and queen as part of the representation of the ruler, the difficulties as well as the new possibilities for the legitimization of monocratic rule after Alexander are highlighted.

I. “AT HIS SIDE” – KINGS AND QUEENS

When thinking of kings and queens, we imagine modern fairy tale weddings, beautiful couples waving to their subjects and chubby-faced babies with their proud royal parents. Yet in order to illustrate the structural possibilities that are inherent in the constellation of king and queen, and to ask what exactly it may do for a ruler to have a woman at his side, let us turn to a dynasty that usually stands in the shadow of its more glamorous European counterparts: the Kim dynasty of North Korea. On December 29th, 2011, Kim Jong Un stepped into the position previously held by his father Kim Jong Il and his grandfather Kim Il Sung before him, and was announced as the “Great Successor”. Information from the last Stalinist state is notoriously sparse, and precious little about the new “Dear Leader”, his life and his character is known. Every one of his appearances, speeches, and moves was therefore discussed and analyzed by curious outside spectators in order to assess his political agenda.

In July 2012, Kim Jong Un did something completely new and unexpected: he stepped out into the public eye with a female companion. The rest of the world was puzzled and speculated about the identity of the mysterious lady. It was argued that she might be a lover scorned by his late father who was finally presented to the public; this seemingly private matter of a newly unrestricted love life for the ‘Dear Leader’ was interpreted as a sign of political change. To understand the confusion caused by a young woman, one has to look back at the self-representation of North

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Korean rulers. The last public appearance of a woman of the Kim dynasty dates to the 1970s, and thereafter the ruler was a ‘king’ who was markedly without a queen. The ruler cult surrounding the Kims focused on the current ruler and – at one point – his successor, and though Kim Jong Il was married four times, none of his wives were ever seen in public. When Ri Sol Ju was announced as Kim Jong Un’s wife on July 25th, 2012, this unsurprisingly caused a political sensation.¹ Pictures were broadcast that showed the young couple laughing, listening to musical performances and visiting a kindergarten in Pyongyang. These rare appearances were interpreted as a way to demonstrate to the North Korean people and to the world that Kim Jong Un was no longer just a child and an heir, but a man, a husband and – given the rumors of a pregnancy and birth of a daughter² – a father. Through the young wife, dubbed by English media as “the Communist Kate Middleton”,³ the “Dear Ruler” presented himself as rather modern, and, unlike his father, affable. The ruler’s wife changed the perception of the ruler – and therefore of his rule. The wife alone, however, does not define the ruler. Ri Sol Ju has disappeared from the public eye again and Kim Jong Un’s *persona* has most recently been defined by nuclear threats, sham trials and cyber-attacks that align more neatly with the tradition of his predecessors.

How does the modern example of North Korea help us understand ancient rulership better – and how does this relate specifically to Seleukos Nikator and his wives? The episode points out certain interesting aspects when it comes to considering ancient rulers and their affiliated female counterparts. This paper will discuss aspects of Seleukos’ dynastic politics in order to answer the question of how to make a queen in the Hellenistic world.

First of all, a ruler does not need a woman at his side in order to rule successfully; kingship does not necessarily rely on the presence of a queen. Even when it comes to the question of succession, the position of a queen is not necessary in order to secure the dynasty as she might not be the mother of the future ruler, and different mechanisms for organizing succession – e. g., by adoption or by election – have to be kept in mind.

Secondly, the woman next to the ruler, even if she is heralded and addressed as queen, does not automatically wield power or influence due to this position. Accordingly I will not focus on the character of this type of power.⁴ The political

1 Cf. Choe Sang-hun: “That Mystery Woman in North Korea? Turns out She’s the First Lady”, The New York Times, 25.7.2012 (http://www.nytimes.com/2012/07/26/world/asia/north-korean-leader-marries-reports-say.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0 [last access: 12.11.2013]).

2 P. Boehler: “Another Lil’ Kim? Wife of North Korea’s Kim Jong Un Appears ‘Heavily Pregnant’”, TIME.com, 17.12.2012 (<http://newsfeed.time.com/2012/12/17/another-lil-kim-wife-of-north-koreas-kim-jong-un-appears-heavily-pregnant/#ixzz2nVGyFkD> [last access 12/11/2013]). The birth of a daughter named Kim Ju-ae was confirmed by former NBA player Dennis Rodman (cf. “Dennis Rodman lets the world know Kim Jong Un has a daughter”; The National Post, 19.3.2013; <http://sports.nationalpost.com/2013/03/19/dennis-rodman-seems-to-let-it-slip-that-kim-jong-un-has-a-daughter/> [last access 13.12.2013]).

3 “Ri Sol-ju: pass notes No 3,273”, The Guardian, 30.10.2012 (<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/oct/30/ri-sol-ju-pass-notes> [last access 13.12.2013]).

4 Cf. Savalli-Lestrade 2003a, 64f., who describes the *basilissa*’s agency as a “pouvoir d’influ-

possibilities of a woman who is close to the ruler do not necessarily depend on her position and the title of a queen. To come back to the introductory example: we do not know whether Ri Sol Ju has any say in the political matters of her husband. What has been suggested, though, is that the younger sister of the 'Dear Leader', Kim Yo Jong, has to be reckoned with as the force behind the scene.⁵

By looking at the queen, I will really be looking at the figure of the king and asking what does it do to a king's *persona*, and how does it change the foundations of his rule, when he has a queen at his side? Examining the constellation of king and queen might be illustrative in order to better understand Hellenistic kingship, and the age of the Diadochs is rather striking in this respect since we can analyze kingship *in statu nascendi* as Alexander's generals fought for this new kind of rule and had not yet fully come into their royal roles. In the emerging kingdoms, the new kings as well as their entourages and subjects also experimented with and established the new form of the *basilissa*. As I will argue, this intentional maneuver of the new kings of representing themselves via a queen who served as a gatekeeper to the king on the one hand proved to be very successful and was accepted by their subjects. On the other hand, however, they also ran some risks in elevating the woman at one's side as part of the royal *persona* because the queen did not always necessarily act on behalf of the king and his interests. The manner in which Seleukos Nikator treated and presented his wives, the Sogdian Apama and the Macedonian Stratonike, the daughter of Demetrios Poliorketes, will testify to both aspects. Yet before turning to Seleukos, some short remarks on kingship after Alexander and the emergence of the *basilissa* are in order to set the scene in its specifically Seleukid context.

II. RULING AFTER ALEXANDER – THE EMERGENCE OF KINGS AND QUEENS

When Alexander the Great died in Babylon in June 323 BC, his succession was far from settled. His generals finally agreed on a dynastic solution with both his half-brother and his then-unborn son as kings, but it seemed only a matter of time until the last Argeads' rule would be put into question as both Philip Arrhidaios and Alexander IV were not able to act as sovereigns due to their mental disposition and age, respectively.⁶ So the question of who would step into the role vacated by Alexander in turn bounced back to his *philoí*. Even though Argead women, such as

ence dans le domaine du politique". On the political activities of Apama and Stratonike, see the paper by Ramsey in this volume.

5 Cf. Kang Mi Jin: "Will Kim Jong-un's Sister Become North Korea's Most Powerful Woman?", *The Guardian*, 1.5.2014 (<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/may/01/kim-jong-un-younger-sister-north-korea-most-powerful-woman> [last access 14.2.2015]).

6 On the situation in Babylon, s. Meeus 2008. In the context of the murder of Alexander IV, his half-brother Herakles born by Barsine was murdered as well after he had been brought up as a possible contender by Polyperchon (Diod. 20.28.3; Just. 15.2). On Philip III and Alexander IV, see Heckel 2006, 18 f.; 52 f.

Alexander's mother Olympias and sister Kleopatra, as well as his niece Adea-Eurydike, were able to briefly play an important role in the 'Game of Thrones' after Alexander's death, they were not able to transform the dynastic prestige of the Argead dynasty into a stable and independent position of power within Alexander's realm.⁷ It also became clear that the ambitions of Alexander's generals were not curbed by their lack of dynastic prestige. To compound the issue, they would not rule like the Argeads had over Macedon alone, but over an empire that had only very recently been conquered and was in every possible way – geographically, politically, culturally – an inconsistent and heterogeneous formation. In this mixture of innovation and tradition, a new type of ruler emerged: the Hellenistic *basileus*.

Antigonos Monophthalmos was the first to be acclaimed king in 307/6 BC, and the first to take the diadem as the new symbol of his royal dignity. He then sent messengers to his son Demetrios, proclaiming him *basileus* as well and also sending him a diadem. After that, the surviving Diadochs followed suit: Ptolemy, Lysimachos, Seleukos, and Kassandros took on the title as well, though the exact dates of their acclamations are not known.⁸ These new forms of kingship, emerging between 306 to 302 BC, were of a specific character: though the Diadochs politely respected each other as kings, this did not mean that the new rulers accepted territorial borders or gave up their claim to Alexander's empire as a whole. This *basileia* did not correspond to any clear-cut political or territorial realm, although in short order the Diadochs' respective rules were centered in certain regions. Their reigns extended as far as their spears could conquer – and this meant ever-shifting spheres of power and domination. The legitimacy of the new powers was precarious, as only Kassandros could claim a link with the Argeads through his marriage with Philip's daughter Thessalonike.⁹ Although his rivals also tried to propagate special ties to Alexander and the Argead dynasty, e.g., by rather inventive genealogies,¹⁰ the Diadochs could not ground their rule solely on acclamation and traditional dynastic elements; they had to prove again and again their ability to rule, conquer and defend in order to gain acceptance and recognition of their kingship.

7 See Carney 1991, 154; Carney 1994b, 358–60; Carney 2006, 60–88; Jacquemin 2007, 282–7; Carney 2011, 200f. The Diadochs' wooing of Kleopatra is instructive in this regard: Although she was highly attractive as Alexander III's sister and Philipp II's daughter, she remained unmarried before being killed. The Diadochs eventually did not need the Argead link to foster their claims to power. On Kleopatra, see Meeus 2009a. On the female Argeads' prestige, see Müller 2011 and 2013a.

8 On the assumption of the title *basileus* and the diadem: Plut. *Demetr.* 17.2–18.1; Diod. 20.53.2–3; *FGrH* 523 Zenon of Rhodes = P.Köln VI no. 247; *FGrH* 155 (Heidelberger Epitome) F 1.7. See Haake 2012, 299–302; it is debated whether Kassandros accepted the diadem (see Haake 2012, 301 n. 70).

9 On Kassandros' marriage to Thessalonike, see Diod. 19.51.6; Just. 14.6.13; *FGrH* 155 (Heidelberger Epitome) F 2.4; see Landucci Gattinoni 2009.

10 On the Diadochs' treatment of Alexander, s. Meeus 2009b. Ptolemy claimed to be an illegitimate son of Philip II (Paus. 1.6.2; Curt. 9.8.22); Seleukos claimed Apollo for his father and thereby echoed the myth that Olympias had been visited by Zeus in form of a snake (Just. 12.6 vs. 15.4); see also Engels & Erickson in this volume.

Hans-Joachim Gehrke has shown that the rule of these new kings cannot be described in legalistic-constitutional terms. Following Max Weber's definition of power and his ideal types of legitimation thereof, Gehrke switched the perspective from the ruler to the subjects and analyzed patterns of seeking legitimacy. He describes Hellenistic *basileia* in Weberian terms as charismatic rule: the Diadochs and their successors were continuously forced to prove their worth as "victorious kings" in order to gain acceptance from their subjects and thus legitimacy for their rule.¹¹ The first decades after Alexander's death in particular can be seen as a phase of experimentation: next to military victory, ostentatious splendor and largesse as a benefactor to cities and other communities proved to be valuable assets in generating acceptance for the new royal positions. This was much needed in the Greek world, which – unlike Egypt and the Near East – traditionally did not cope well with monarchies.¹² As I shall argue on the following pages, the establishment of the role of *basilissa* should be understood within this larger development. Indeed, dynasties were created rather early and, following the Diadochs, their successors had a claim to power that was based initially on their dynastic prestige; nonetheless, the charismatic aspect that legitimized the Diadochs' rule was never completely overcome by more traditional aspects (to further use Weberian terms). Thus every king was a king on probation, so to speak, whose reign could easily be contested by more able candidates. Hellenistic kingship, understood in this way, was not a certain or inflexible concept, but rather was quite precarious, and responsive to different needs at different times.

The *basileis* had to cope with the diverse expectations of their various subjects and struggle for their acceptance – often through trial-and-error, particularly in the early decades of the period.¹³ They likewise had to fight off their rivals and former comrades; maintaining the position of king was no easy endeavor. Alliances were made and broken in turn, and in this game of power women became an important vehicle for the establishment and perpetuation of diplomatic alliances. This role can be clearly seen even before the 'long year of the kings' in the three daughters of the *prostates* Antipatros: his eldest Phila was first married off to Krateros and then after his death in 321 BC to the much younger Demetrios as his father Antigonos Monophthalmos sought an alliance with Antipatros. Perdikkas was wooed by Alexander's sister Kleopatra, but decided to marry Antipatros' second daughter Nikaia instead – a clear sign as to which alliance he deemed more prestigious and powerful. After his death, Nikaia in turn married Lysimachos. The youngest

11 Gehrke 1982 = Gehrke 2013 referring to the definition of Hellenistic *basileia* in the Suda (s. v. *basileia*); see also Gehrke 2008, 170 ff. and Gotter 2008, 176 ff.

12 See Gotter 2008, 185–6 and Luraghi 2013, 11–22 on the interplay between kings and *poleis* and the general antimonarchical ideology of the Greek *poleis*.

13 See Ma 2003, who emphasizes the communicative efforts of the kings to interact and negotiate with their various subjects: "seen at this level, the Hellenistic kings exist merely as a bundle of local commitments, a series of roles assigned by the subjects, an endless and ubiquitous process of exchange and negotiation to achieve acceptance by different constituencies." (183).

Eurydike was finally married to Ptolemy – which made Antipatros father-in-law to every relevant power player after Alexander's death.¹⁴

But as mentioned above, simply being married to a king did not readily equate to being queen, as demonstrated by the marriages of the very first successor king. As Antigonos Monophthalmos assumed the title and dignity of a *basileus*, he did not at the same time establish his wife Stratonike as a *basilissa* at his side. His son Demetrios, on the other hand, practiced polygamy and would marry five times, but only in the case of his first wife Phila, the daughter of Antipatros, is there clear evidence that she bore the title *basilissa*: in a Samian honorary decree (ca. 306), the Lykian Demarchos is mentioned as head of the guard of the *basilissa* Phila.¹⁵ According to this decree, Phila was not only distinguished by her own guard, but also by a special title that is not attested for any other wife of Demetrios. The title *basilissa* was an innovation without precedent in the Macedonian kingdom.¹⁶ Yet neither the context nor the agency behind Phila's elevation to queen are known to any degree. This gives room for speculation about whether Demetrios and Antigonos thereby aimed to stress their Antipatrid relation, or if someone else close to Phila propagated her new dignity and Demetrios only afterwards accepted this new title which was associated with his own *basileia*. In the same period Phila was associated with Aphrodite in Athens and received cultic honors in Lampsakos;¹⁷ this demonstrates that, in a period when ruler cult was becoming established, this cultic mode of interaction between *polis* and ruler was also extended to the wife (and later potentially also to a daughter) of the king.

Phila might have been the first royal woman to be addressed as *basilissa* due to her ancestry and personal charisma, but she was not the last:¹⁸ the other Diadochs as well as the Greek *poleis* quickly recognized the potential that was inherent to the position of *basilissa* to (re)configure royal rule and communicate with the king. Consequently, some other wives of kings who were less prominent than Phila were also addressed as *basilissa*: the second royal woman to carry the title was Apama, the first wife of Seleukos Nikator. Nonetheless, strict patterns or conventions regarding how to fill this position, or the precise protocol regarding how to interact with a queen, had not yet solidified. The position of *basilissa* rather opened up a range of possibilities to the king and his subjects, as we shall see in the following early Seleukid examples.

14 On the ever changing political alliances made through marriages, see still Seibert 1967; on Antipatros' daughters see *ibid.*, 11–19.

15 *IG XII 6.1.30*. See also *IEphesos* 2003, an honorary decree for a certain Melesippos who was in company of the *basilissa* Phila. On Demetrios's polygamy, see Harders 2013 (on Phila 46 f.); on Phila, see Wehrli 1964; Nourse 2002, 191–207; on the identity of Demarchos, see Billows 1990, 379, no. 28.

16 On the title *basilissa*, see Carney 1991.

17 *Ath.* 6.254a; see also *Ath.* 6.255c. Cf. Carney 2000, 31–2 on Phila and 36–40 on the association of royal women with Aphrodite in particular.

18 See *Diod.* 19.59.5 and *Plut. Demetr.* 14.1 on Phila's character. After her death in 287, it seems that no other wife of Demetrios was given that title and lifted into her position before Demetrios was captured by Seleukos in 286.

III. SELEUKOS AND HIS SOGDIAN WIFE APAMA

Not much is known about Apama: she was the daughter of the Sogdian Spitamenes who played a major part in the Sogdian resistance against Alexander by occupying the region's capital, Marakanda. Although Spitamenes finally lost support and his severed head was presented to Alexander, his daughter was one of the Iranian brides at the mass wedding at Susa in 324, and Alexander instigated her marriage to Seleukos.¹⁹ Her rare name has prompted scholarly consideration of whether this might be a hint that she could claim relation to the Achaimenids on her mother's side – an issue that has been a subject of debate since W. W. Tarn.

This royal pedigree has often been taken for granted and interpreted as the main reason why Seleukos did not divorce her after Alexander's death. Apama and her Persian background have also been factored into Seleukos' success in the Near East, especially in the capture of Babylon. We must bear in mind, however, that we have neither literary nor epigraphic evidence that indicates the extent to which Seleukos relied on his wife's agency, the prestige of her natal family, or any of her connections.²⁰ Though Seleukos very well may have relied on whatever links that might have existed with his Sogdian wife's family during his campaign in Baktria in 308, on the whole we can only speculate about whether Apama herself took an active part in her husband's dealings with the local élites. The "Apama-factor"²¹ which John Grainger holds as decisive for Seleukos' confident claim on Baktria cannot be assessed with any degree of certainty, as we do not even know where she stayed during her husband's campaigns.²² In order to understand Seleukos' success in Baktria, Laurent Capdetrey, for example, takes a different tack that does not rely on Apama's influence, but instead emphasizes the expansion of the Mauryan Empire to the north – thereby explaining the feeble resistance against Seleukos as he was deemed the lesser of two evils.²³

19 Arr. *Anab.* 7.4.6; Plut. *Demetr.* 31.3. Strab. 15.8.15 confuses Apama with the daughter of Artabazos. On Apama, see Shahbazi 1987, 150; O'Neil 2002, 161–4; Nourse 2002, 238–44; Heckel 2006, 39; Müller 2013b, 206–9, as well as other papers in this part of the volume (Almagor, Engels and Erickson, Ramsey).

20 On Apama's name and connections to the Achaimenids: Tarn 1929, 140; Ogden 1999, 119; Heckel 2006, 39; Müller 2013b, 206 and Ramsey in this volume; on Apama and Seleukos' campaign in Baktria: Holt 1988, 100 f.; Grainger 1990, 106; Nourse 2002, 239; Biemann 2003, 45 f.; Müller 2013b; Olbrycht 2013, 170 f. Much more cautious: Mehl 1986, 18 f. as well as Engels and Erickson in this volume.

21 Grainger 1990, 152.

22 A Milesian honorary decree (*IDidyma* 480; see below) mentions Apama's goodwill and support towards Milesian soldiers who were campaigning with Seleukos; the honors were moved by one Demodamas son of Aristeides who also proposed honors for Seleukos and Antiochos (*IDidyma* 479). This Demodamas was identified as *strategos* of the king during his campaigns in Baktria 306/4 (Plin. *NH* 6.49; see Robert 1984; Sherwin White and Kuhrt 1993, 26 f.); thus Apama's support to his soldiers may have taken place in Baktria as well; see Ramsey in this volume.

23 Capdetrey 2007, 39–43.

Many other recent assessments of Apama's role in regards to Seleukos' actions in the Near or Middle East or as to his rise to kingship²⁴ lack foundations in the positive evidence. I would like to suggest a more cautious approach. First, we cannot know for certain the nature of Apama's possible connections to Persian royalty. Of all the Susan brides, only in the cases of the brides for Alexander and Hephaistion, Stateira, Parysatis and Drypetis, as well as for the bride of Krateros, Amastris, are a close relationship to the Achaimenids attested in our literary sources. But this is not the case for Apama – even outside the context of the Susan mass wedding.²⁵

The fact that Seleukos remained married to Apama after Susa and did not choose any further brides has puzzled modern scholars, who surmise that this was the product of simple romantic attachment and see no other possible reason to explain this seemingly odd move.²⁶ But Seleukos might have postponed his decision regarding what to do with his Sogdian bride as he was not forced to separate from her due to political reasons – as was the case with Krateros, who publicly dissolved his Susan marriage. In the ensuing struggle for power after Alexander's death, Krateros deemed an alliance with Antipatros more valuable, and he divorced his Persian wife Amastris in order to marry Phila. Beforehand, however, he had arranged an advantageous marriage between Dionysios, the tyrant of Herakleia Pontike, and his ex-wife, which befitted her position as niece of the last Achaimenid king.²⁷ It has been argued that polygamy was not an option for Krateros as he was not a king – unlike Philip and Alexander.²⁸ While Philip used his many marriages to forge various political alliances, Krateros' choice to be married to only one woman at a time emphasized the value and exclusivity he gave to this alliance with Antipatros. Perhaps his monogamy was not so much the product of an unwritten Macedonian marriage rule for commoners as it was a conscious choice that was as strategic as Philip's polygamous marriages.²⁹

Instead of trying to fit the Diadochs' nuptial strategies into certain patterns or traditions, I would rather argue that we ought to emphasize the structural possibilities that are inherent to polygamy and monogamy. Louis Gernet has treated the many marriages of the Sicilian tyrants in such a fashion,³⁰ and in a similar manner

24 See also the contribution of Ramsey in this volume. – Based on the genealogical claims of Antiochos I of Kommagene and Alexander of Megalopolis, Tarn 1929, 140f. speculates about a legend developed in the 2nd century BC that identifies Apama as a daughter of Alexander. Ogden 1999, 119 even takes this as factual, regarding Seleukos as the initiator of the story. However, there is no evidence that supports the existence of this legend. On Antiochos I of Kommagene, see also the contribution of Strootman in this volume.

25 Arr. *Anab.* 7.4.6.

26 Grainger 1990, 12; Müller 2013b, 206.

27 On Amastris, see Nourse 2002, 171–82.

28 See O'Neil 2002, 172. See Carney 2000, 23–7 on royal polygamy with the Argeads; on Philipp's marriages, see Satyros F 25 Schorn = Ath. 13.557B–E = *FHG* III 161 F 5.

29 Perdikkas found himself in a similar situation when he had to choose between Antipatros' daughter Nikaia and Alexander's sister Kleopatra. In this case, polygamy was clearly not a third option, as a marriage with the one would automatically have triggered a confrontation with the other (or her father respectively).

30 Gernet 1953.