

ANOTHER CENTURY OF GODS? A RE-EVALUATION OF SELEUCID RULER CULT¹

This paper proposes that living Seleucid kings were recognized as divine by the royal court before the reign of Antiochus III despite lacking an established centralized ruler cult like their fellow kings, the Ptolemies.² Owing to the nature of the surviving evidence, we are forced to rely heavily on numismatics to construct a view of Seleucid royal ideology.³ Regrettably, it seems that up until now much of the numismatic evidence for the divinity of living Seleucid rulers has not been fully considered.⁴ I argue that the evidence from silver coinage produced in the name of the Seleucid kings presents a version of the official image of the reigning king and that images which portray the king as divine reflect central acceptance of the king's divinity. This is clear from the epithets on the coinage of Antiochus IV and his successors, but I will argue that the same principle holds for all earlier Seleucid kings. Thus coinage with divine images of Seleucid kings provided one of the mechanisms through which the royal court transmitted the divine nature of the kings to the population. As we will see, in the case of Antiochus Hierax, local considerations

¹ I would like to thank Professors Coşkun, Edwards and Ogden, Dr Hanesworth, Dr McAuley, Catherine Lorber, my father, the reviewers and the editors for *CQ* for their help and corrections, as well as the audiences in Lampeter, Durham and Exeter who heard early versions of this paper and made many useful suggestions. Special thanks to Catherine Lorber for the provision of the images. All remaining inaccuracies, inconsistencies and errors are, of course, my own.

² For the Ptolemaic system, see S. Pfeiffer, *Herrscher- und Dynastiekulte im Ptolemäerreich: Systematik und Einordnung der Kultformen* (Munich, 2008).

³ See, for example, O. Mørkholm, *Antiochus IV of Syria (Classica et Mediaevalia Dissertationes VIII)* (Copenhagen, 1966); P.P. Iossif, 'Les monnaies de Suse frappées par Séleucos Ier: une nouvelle approche', *Numismatica e Antichità Classiche* 33 (2004), 249–71; O.D. Hoover, 'Never mind the bullocks: taurine imagery as a multicultural expression of royal and divine power under Seleukos I Nikator', in P.P. Iossif, A.S. Chankowski and C. Lorber (edd.), *More than Men, Less than Gods: Studies on Royal Cult and Imperial Worship: Proceedings of the International Colloquium Organized by the Belgian School at Athens (November 1–2, 2007)* (Leuven, 2011), 197–228; K. Erickson, 'Seleucus I, Zeus and Alexander', in L. Mitchell and C. Melville (edd.), *Every Inch a King: Comparative Studies in Kings and Kingship in the Ancient and Medieval Worlds* (Leiden, 2012), 109–28.

⁴ The evidence for cults of the Ptolemaic kings is so extensive that investigations into the links between the numismatic representations and the cults are often ignored in favour of the more documentary evidence; see, for example, S.G. Caneva, 'Queens and ruler cults in early Hellenism', *Kernos* 25 (2012), 75–101, who does not discuss the numismatic portraits of Arsinoë II. P. van Nuffelen, 'Le culte royal de l'empire des Séleucides: une réinterprétation', *Historia* 53 (2004), 278–301 goes the furthest in combining the epigraphic and the numismatic materials for the Seleucid royal cult, but maintains that Antiochus III was responsible for the organization of the Seleucid dynastic cult. The colloquium which was entitled 'More than Men, Less than Gods: Studies on Royal Cult and Imperial Worship', and was organized by the Belgian School at Athens, and its subsequent proceedings (see Iossif, Chankowski and Lorber [n. 3]) have further continued the combination of epigraphic and literary materials without challenging the prevailing views.

also influenced the numismatic representation of the king. This blurring of boundaries between the local veneration of the king, which has long been accepted as normal civic practice in the Greek city-states and in non-Greek temples, and the royal images of the divine king calls into question the strict division between civic and centralized ruler cults.⁵ The reflection of local cults within royal ideology can be seen as a manifestation of a negotiating model of Seleucid power that relied heavily on a dialogue with a wide range of interested groups.⁶ This article argues that the inconsistencies in the development of an iconography of divine kingship before the reign of Antiochus IV is a manifestation of the same phenomenon.

Following Habicht's work on the divinity of the Hellenistic kings, scholars have tended to divide ruler cults into civic and royal categories.⁷ The traditional view of Seleucid cult marks central imposition and control as the dividing line between civic and central cults.⁸ Since for the Seleucid kings the epigraphic evidence for a royal cult is limited before the reign of Antiochus III, this has led to the argument that the Seleucids did not have a centralized cult until his reign,⁹ well after a similar introduction in the Ptolemaic kingdom.¹⁰ This view had been questioned already by E. Gruen in

⁵ The clearest proponent of this view is C. Habicht, *Gottmenschen und griechische Städte* (Munich, 1970²).

⁶ See J. Ma, *Antiochus III and the Cities of Western Asia Minor* (Oxford, 2000); L. Capdetrey, *Le pouvoir séleucide: territoire, administration, finances d'un royaume hellénistique, 312–129 avant J.-C.* (Rennes, 2007); D. Engels, 'Middle Eastern "feudalism" and Seleucid dissolution', in K. Erickson and G. Ramsey (edd.), *Seleucid Dissolution: The Sinking of the Anchor* (Wiesbaden, 2011); R. Strootman, 'Hellenistic court society: the Seleucid Imperial court under Antiochus the Great, 223–187 B.C.E.', in J. Duindam, T. Artan and M. Kunt (edd.), *Royal Courts in Dynastic States and Empires: A Global Perspective* (Leiden, 2011), 63–89.

⁷ For some tempering of this view, see P. van Nuffelen, 'Le culte des souverains Hellenistiques', *Ancient Society* 29 (1999), 298–300; P. Debord, 'Le culte royal chez les Séleucides', in F. Prost (ed.), *L'Orient méditerranéen de la mort d'Alexandre aux campagnes de Pompée* (Toulouse, 2003), 281–308; B. Dreyer, *Die römische Nobilitätsherrschaft und Antiochus III. (205 bis 188 v.Chr.)* (Hennef, 2007), 315–17.

⁸ See Habicht (n. 5); Ma (n. 6), 374; A. Chaniotis, 'The divinity of Hellenistic rulers', in A. Erskine (ed.), *A Companion to the Hellenistic World* (Oxford, 2003), 431–45, at 435–8; A. Chaniotis, 'La divinité mortelle d'Antiochus III à Téos', *Kernos* 20 (2007), 153–71, at 157.

⁹ S. Sherwin-White and A. Kuhrt, *From Samarkhand to Sardis: A New Approach to the Seleucid Empire* (London, 1993), 203; Ma (n. 6), 64; Chaniotis (n. 8 [2003]), 436–7; Debord (n. 7); B. Virgilio, 'Epigrafia e culti dei re Seleucidi', in P. Xella and J.A. Zamora (edd.), *Atti dell'Incontro di studio sul tema: epigrafia e storia delle religioni: dal documento epigrafico al problema storico-religioso: Roma, Escuela Española de Historia y Arqueología en Roma, 28 Maggio 2002* (Verona, 2003), 39–50; van Nuffelen (n. 4), 278–9. For Seleucid ruler cult in general, see the following studies, all of which prefer a late date for the creation of the royal cult: E.R. Bevan, 'The deification of kings in the Greek cities', *The English Historical Review* 16 (1901), 625–39; C. Lattey, 'The diadochi and the rise of king-worship', *The English Historical Review* 32 (1917), 321–34; A.D. Nock, 'Notes on ruler-cult, I–IV', *JHS* 48 (1928), 21–43; K. Scott, 'The deification of Demetrius Poliorcetes: Part II', *AJPh* 49 (1928), 217–39; A.D. Nock, 'SUNNAOS THEOS', *HSPh* 41 (1930), 1–62; E. Bickerman, *Institutions des Séleucides* (Paris, 1938); Habicht (n. 5); S.R.F. Price, 'Between man and god', *JRS* 70 (1980), 28–43; S.R.F. Price, *Ritual and Power: The Roman Imperial Cult in Asia Minor* (Cambridge, 1984[a]); S.R.F. Price, 'Gods and emperors: the Greek language of the Roman Imperial cult', *JHS* 104 (1984[b]), 79–95; B. Bosworth, 'Augustus, the *Res Gestae* and Hellenistic theories of apotheosis', *JRS* 89 (1999), 1–18; van Nuffelen (n. 7); E. Carney, 'The initiation of cult for royal Macedonian women', *CPh* 95 (2000), 21–43; R.A. Hazzard, *Imagination of a Monarchy: Studies in Ptolemaic Propaganda* (Toronto, 2000); Ma (n. 6); S. Le Bohec-Bouhet, 'The kings of Macedon and the cult of Zeus in the Hellenistic period', in D. Ogden (ed.), *The Hellenistic World: New Perspectives* (London, 2002), 41–57; van Nuffelen (n. 4).

¹⁰ Chaniotis (n. 8 [2003]), 436–7. For the Ptolemies, see Hazzard (n. 9), 3–17; Pfeiffer (n. 2). For the Antigonids, the cult remained *polis*-oriented; see C. Habicht, 'Divine honours for King Antigonos

1999, when he suggested that the Seleucid cult may have developed at the same time as the Ptolemaic cult.¹¹ This paper attempts to support Gruen's questioning of the traditional view of Seleucid ruler cult by arguing that the numismatic evidence does not support the claim that Antiochus III presented his own divinity on coinage in a way that was significantly different from that of his predecessors. Instead, it was not until the reign of Antiochus IV that the living king was unequivocally portrayed as divine through the legend on his coinage.¹² The major implication of this is that Antiochus III does not appear to be a distinctive marker in the numismatic representation of Seleucid divinity, and that both before and after his reign (and through the reign of his son, Seleucus IV) the representation of Seleucid kings as divine on coinage did not significantly alter. The recognition of living Seleucid kings as divine on royal coinage prior to the reign of Antiochus III, even if limited in scope, opens the door to a future discussion on the potential for royal cult arising earlier in the Seleucid empire.

While Seleucid coinage does not provide direct evidence of cult for the living king, some images of the kings strongly suggest their divinity and therefore may well reflect a royal cult. The reflection of cults within coinage is far from universal, but early in the Hellenistic period it is clear that particular claims to divinity by kings and queens who received cult were also reflected on their coinage. The two most prominent examples are that of Demetrius Poliorcetes and Arsinoë II of Egypt, both of whom were deified both in cults and on their coinage. Portraits of Demetrius invariably include bull horns. These horns have long been interpreted as a sign of his divinity, although the precise god to which they refer has never been established.¹³ These horns have been assigned as aspects of both Dionysus and Poseidon, both of them gods whom the Athenians in the Ithyphallic hymn connect with Demetrius.¹⁴

Demetrius' deification, alongside that of Alexander by his successors,¹⁵ appears to have formed a model of interaction for the other successors to further develop. The clearest example of this is in the sister-wife of Ptolemy Philadelphus, Arsinoë II. She

Gonatas in Athens', *SCI* 15 (1996), 131–4; M.M. Mari, 'The ruler cult in Macedonia', in B. Virgilio (ed.), *Studi ellenistici XX* (Pisa and Rome, 2008), 219–68.

¹¹ E. Gruen, 'Seleucid royal ideology', *Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers* 38 (1999), 24–53, at 33: 'there is no reason to believe that this [ruler cult] first saw the light of day in the time of Antiochus III. It seems unlikely that the Seleucids would have lacked a centrally organized cult when the Ptolemies had long had one. The origins may go back to Antiochus I who erected a temple at Seleukeia to honour his deceased father.' For the importance of the dynastic cult at Seleucia-in-Pieria, see now N.L. Wright, 'Seleukos, Zeus and the dynastic cult at Seleukeia in Pieria', in K. Erickson (ed.), *War within the Family: The Seleukid Empire, 281–222 BC* (Swansea, forthcoming in 2018).

¹² Mørkholm (n. 3). See P.P. Iossif and C. Lorber, 'Celestial imagery on the eastern coinage of Antiochus IV', *Mesopotamia* 44 (2009), 129–46 for the development of celestial imagery and its connection to Antiochus IV's divinity.

¹³ See already Scott (n. 9), who comments on the interpretations of Newell and Eckhel on whether the reference is to Poseidon or to Dionysus; more recently, see K. Ehling, 'Stierdionysos oder Sohn des Poseidon: zu den Hörnern des Demetrios Poliorketes', *GFA* 3 (2000), 153–60. I follow Scott in his suggestion that the precise deity is unknowable but that the divine attribute is significant; see below for a discussion on the nature of horned portraits, and see also Erickson (n. 3).

¹⁴ Scott (n. 9); Ehling (n. 13); Chaniotis (n. 8 [2003]); J.R. Holton, 'Demetrios Poliorketes, son of Poseidon and Aphrodite. Cosmic and memorial significance in the Athenian Ithyphallic hymn', *Mnemosyne* 67 (2014), 370–90.

¹⁵ K. Dahmen, *The Legend of Alexander the Great on Greek and Roman Coins* (London, 2007), 42–4.

was probably first deified as one of the *Theoi Adelphoi* with her brother/husband.¹⁶ The creation of the cult for the *Theoi Adelphoi* was paralleled by the introduction of the famous *Theoi/Adelphoi* coinage which featured the deified Ptolemy I and Berenice with the legend *Theoi* on the obverse and Ptolemy II and Arsinoë II on the reverse with the legend *Adelphoi*. Given the simultaneous appearance 'of priests of Alexander and the *theoi adelphoi* in official documents',¹⁷ it seems unnecessary to doubt the explicit connection between this coinage and the newly established cult for the royal family, even if some hesitancy is expressed in using the title *theos*.¹⁸ Following Arsinoë's death¹⁹ and the establishment of an individual cult for her, Ptolemy II issued a series of coinage in her name. This coinage also features divine attributes as was fitting for the newly established goddess, including a small horn behind her ear and a sceptre that may be connected with Isis.²⁰ Later Ptolemaic kings also continued to promote their divinity on their coinage, as may be seen, for example, in the gold octadrachms studied by Johnson for Ptolemy III.²¹ Therefore, there is strong evidence that the presentation of the king or the queen as divine on coinage can be linked to the establishment of a cult.

In order to limit the scope to images that were produced by the court, this study is limited to mints that produced coinage for the Seleucid kings rather than exclusively civic mints. Furthermore, to limit the scope of the study to royal iconography rather than to potentially limited local iconography, silver coinage with its potential for larger patterns of circulation is preferred, although some bronze coinage is also considered.

Complicating any attempt to verify the existence of a cult for the Seleucid kings numismatically is the fact that Seleucid coinage does not depict images of temples or altars for the kings; indeed, it does not depict any buildings or monuments, nor like its Ptolemaic counterpart does it include divine titles in the legends.²² While this

¹⁶ The bibliography on the *Theoi Adelphoi* and on the establishment of the cult for Arsinoë is extensive. See Caneva (n. 3), 82 n. 11.

¹⁷ S. von Reden, *Money in Ptolemaic Egypt: From the Macedonian Conquest to the End of the Third Century BC* (Cambridge, 2007), 51.

¹⁸ von Reden (n. 17), 15 connects the coinage with the cult but only in a broad and implicit way, as she refers to the notions of potential rejection of the cult of the living king and of the separation of the title *theoi* from the title *adelphoi*.

¹⁹ See now B.F. van Oppen de Ruiter, 'The death of Arsinoë II Philadelphus: the evidence reconsidered', *ZPE* 174 (2010), 139–50.

²⁰ See W. Cheshire, 'Zur Deutung eines Szepters der Arsinoë II. Philadelphos', *ZPE* 48 (1982), 105–11 for the sceptre.

²¹ C.G. Johnson, 'The divinization of the Ptolemies and the gold octadrachms honoring Ptolemy III', *Phoenix* 53 (1999), 50–6.

²² The one notable exception is the fire-altar coinage from Persis: see E. Haerinck and B. Overlaet, 'Altar shrines and fire altars? Architectural representations on Frataraka coinage', *Iranica Antiqua* 43 (2008), 207–33. Consult also M.R. Shayegan, *Arsacids and Sasanians: Political Ideology in Post-Hellenistic and Late Antique Persia* (Cambridge, 2011). However, this coinage is produced by a particular group (the *fratarakā*) for their own purposes and—it seems—without following the normal Seleucid conventions. There is considerable debate concerning the independence of the issuers of the *fratarakā* coinage from Seleucid rule, and there is an increasing trend towards seeing the *fratarakā* as subsidiary rulers under Seleucid overlords, or as even having been given the title by the Seleucids. See now D. Engels, 'A new *fratarakā* chronology', *Latomus* 72 (2013), 28–80; cf. J. Wiesehöfer, *Die "dunklen Jahrhunderte" der Persis. Untersuchungen zu Geschichte und Kultur des Färs in frühhellenistischer Zeit (339–140 v.Chr.)* (Munich, 1994), 101–38; J. Wiesehöfer, *Ancient Persia from 550 BC to 650 AD* (London, 1996), 110; C. Tuplin, 'The Seleucids and their Achaemenid predecessors: a Persian inheritance?', in S.M.R. Darbandi and A. Zournatizi (edd.), *Ancient Greece and Ancient Iran: Cross-Cultural Encounters. First International Conference (Athens 11–13 November 2006)*, (Athens, 2008), 109–36, at 114. There

contrasts greatly with the depictions of the Roman Imperial cult on Roman coinage or on Roman provincial coinage,²³ it appears that monuments and buildings were not an iconographic category that was employed by the Seleucids for use on royal coinage even after the establishment of a royal cult. The only evidence for royal promotion of a cult of the living king found on Seleucid coinage are images that presented the king as divine (or with attributes of divinity), as it is the case for the coinage of the Ptolemaic royal family.²⁴

There are two possible methods to present a king as divine on coinage: epithets which clearly mark the king as a god or divine iconography, such as horns or wings. As a point of methodology, this paper does not attempt to link a divine attribute with any particular deity, but rather follows Smith and sees these as features that associate the king with the divine.²⁵ Divine images of the kings, therefore, follow a similar pattern of conscious ambiguity that I have elsewhere argued typifies the Seleucid Apollo type.²⁶

Like the Ptolemies before the reign of Ptolemy V, the Seleucids before the reign of Antiochus IV eschewed the use of divine titles for the living king (and in fact for all kings with the exceptions of the Antiochus Sotēr coinage and the *Theoi Adelphoi* coinage).²⁷ This may reflect a reluctance to overtly advertise an unambiguous claim to divinity to the broader Greek world and all of their subjects, even when cults for the living ruler existed. Johnson proposes a clear rationale for this reluctance within the Ptolemaic context: 'Participation in the royal cults and use of divine titulature were optional, and it was up to the individual subject to choose the terms in which he might interpret the king.'²⁸ The lack of divine titles in the Seleucid realm suggests that similar rationale appears to have operated perhaps as a concession to Greek sentiments within some of the Greek cities of Asia Minor. An interesting parallel may be adduced in that within Egypt we have cults, particularly for Ptolemaic queens, for whom we do not have coinage with divine attributes,²⁹ but we do not have coinage with divine attributes for an individual for whom we do not otherwise have evidence for a cult.

This raises the obvious question: what constitutes the divine image of a king? There are several features of Seleucid coinage that may point to an earlier divinity of the kings.

is also a separate debate on the date of the *fratarakā*; both J. Wiesehöfer, 'Fars under Seleucid and Parthian rule', in V.S. Curtis and S. Stewart (edd.), *The Age of the Parthians* (London, 2007), 37–49 and J. Wiesehöfer, 'Fratarakā rule in early Seleucid Persia: a new appraisal', in A. Erskine and L. Llewellyn-Jones (edd.), *Creating a Hellenistic World* (Swansea, 2011), 107–21 follow M. Alam, *Nomina Propria Iranica in Nummis. 4. Iranisches Personennamenbuch. Band IV.* (Wien, 1986), 163 and prefer a date after the revolt of Molon. In contrast, D.O.A. Klose and W. Müsseler, *Stathalter, Rebellen, Könige. Die Münzen aus Persepolis von Alexander dem Großen zu den Sasaniden* (Munich, 2008), 15–21 and 33–4 argue convincingly for a date either in the reign of Seleucus I or shortly after his death.

²³ See Price (n. 9 [1980(a)]), 180, Plates 2–3; A. Coşkun, 'Der ankyraner Kaiserkult und die Transformation galatischer und phrygisch-galatischer Identitäten in Zentralanatolien im Spiegel der Münzquellen', in H. Heinen and S. Pfeiffer (edd.), *Repräsentation von Identität und Zugehörigkeit im Osten der griechisch-römischen Welt* (Frankfurt, 2009), 173–211.

²⁴ See Johnson (n. 21) for a summary of Ptolemaic practice.

²⁵ R.R.R. Smith, *Hellenistic Royal Portraits* (Oxford, 1988), 41–2.

²⁶ K. Erickson, 'Apollo-Nabû: the Babylonian policy of Antiochus I', in K. Erickson and G. Ramsey (edd.), *Seleucid Dissolution: The Sinking of the Anchor* (Wiesbaden, 2011), 51–66.

²⁷ G. Le Rider, *Antioche de Syrie sous les Séleucides. Corpus des monnaies d'or et d'argent, I: de Séleucos I à Antiochus V, c.300–161* (Paris, 1999), 74–96.

²⁸ Johnson (n. 21), 54.

²⁹ For example, Berenice, daughter of Ptolemy III, who receives a cult at Canopus but never appears on coinage. For the cult, see *OGIS* 56 lines 47 and 57, and von Reden (n. 17), 53.

However, the two following possible representations of the king as divine will not be considered, as they are too subjective to draw any firm conclusions. A significant, but often overlooked, change in Seleucid coinage is the placement of the portrait of the living king on the obverse, which occurs in the reign of Antiochus I.³⁰ This placement traditionally had been reserved only for gods, a convention followed even by Alexander. In fact, as Kroll shows, Antiochus I appears to be the first of the Hellenistic kings consistently to place his own portrait on coinage without other clear symbols of divinity.³¹ It seems probable that this was done only when Antiochus I was already deified by some of the cities in Asia Minor³² and thus did not break the convention as radically as it appears. As there are other, far clearer, representations of divine Seleucid monarchs than coin portraits, and since the practice of placing the king's portrait on coinage quickly becomes standard, it does not appear to be a suitable criterion for assessing the central acceptance of the divinity of the king. For the same reasons and for the subjectivity involved, it seems necessary to exclude any attempt to identify the king in the portraits of a god. While it is possible that this may have occurred, its value as an advertisement of the link between the king and the god is limited owing to the fact that few of the royal subjects would have personally seen the king closely enough to recognize a resemblance between him and the god on the coinage.³³ On the other hand, images of the king with horns do represent a deified version of the king.³⁴ The most important antecedent for this image was the image of

³⁰ See Iossif (n. 3); and Erickson (n. 3) for the argument that Seleucus I's portrait occurs on coinage from Susa during his lifetime.

³¹ J.H. Kroll, 'The emergence of ruler portraiture on early Hellenistic coins: the importance of being divine', in P. Schultz (ed.), *Early Hellenistic Portraiture: Image, Style, Context* (Cambridge, 2007), 113–22. The Hellenistic successors who place their own portrait on coinage do so with some other attribute of divinity, for example the bull horns on the coinage of Demetrius and Seleucus I.

³² See, for example, the hymn from Erythrai: *I.Erythrai* 205 lines 74–5: ὕμνεϊτε ἐπὶ σπονδαῖς Ἀπόλλωνος κυανοπολόκιμου | παῖδα Σέλευκον. ὃν αὐτὸς γείνατο χρυ[σ]ολύρας ...; see M. Klinghardt, 'Prayer formularies for public recitation. Their use and function in ancient religion', *Numen* 46 (1999), 1–52, at 9; Habicht (n. 5), 85 dates the decree to 274, although a date closer to Seleucus' death is suggested by the recent discovery of the decree from Aegae in Aiolis (H. Malay and M. Riel, 'Two new Hellenistic decrees from Aigai in Aiolis', *Epigraphica Anatolica* 42 [2009], 39–47). P.P. Iossif, 'Apollo Toxotes and the Seleucids: comme un air de famille', in Iossif, Chankowsky and Lorber (n. 3), 229–91, at 246–7 follows P. Goukowsky, 'Sur une épigramme de Thespies', in J. Dion (ed.), *L'épigramme d'antiquité au XVIIe siècle ou du ciseau à la pointe* (Paris, 2002), 218–19 in translating παῖδα as 'servant' rather than 'son', and suggests Seleucus II rather than Seleucus I. Both of these scholars seemingly ignore the statement that the god bore Seleucus in the following line. See also *OGIS* 212 = *I.Ilion* 31; compare also Habicht (n. 5), 82–3 for the cult in Ilion. See Habicht (n. 5), 90 for the possibly later cult of Seleucus and Antiochus at Lemnos as preserved in Phylarchus.

³³ Smith (n. 25), 39 rightly points out that we should not assume that these similarities were necessarily deliberate, nor should we interpret them in the same clearly deifying manner as specific divine attributes. Furthermore, in most cases these portraits for the most part simply represent gods.

³⁴ The use of horns as divine motif seems apparent not only in Greek but also in Egyptian and Mesopotamian sources. Divine figures in Mesopotamian art are often horned and the bull holds specific divine and royal connotations in Egypt: cf. M. Rice, *The Power of the Bull* (London, 1998), 116. For Seleucus I, in particular, see Hoover (n. 3). In the Greek world horns appear on a limited number of deities, who are mostly associated with water: E.M.M. Aston, 'Mixanthropoi: animal/human composite deities in Greek religion' (Diss., University of Exeter, 2007), 347–8; M.S. Smith, 'Ugaritic studies and Israelite religion: a retrospective view', *Near Eastern Archaeology* 65 (2002), 17–29, at 21; for a more extensive regional view encompassing the ancient (through the medieval) world, see R. Mellinkoff, *The Horned Moses in Medieval Art and Thought* (Berkeley, 1970), 37–57; D. Svenson, *Darstellungen hellenistischer Könige mit Götterattributen*

Alexander. The addition of ram horns to his portrait associated him with Ammon but is also believed to have reaffirmed his divinity.³⁵ It was not only Alexander who gained horns which linked him to divine beings: a similar process explains the appearance of the ram's horn behind the ear of Arsinoë II which appears to be linked to her association with the ram god of Mendes,³⁶ while Demetrius Poliorcetes' horns have often been associated with Poseidon and Dionysus.³⁷ A similar process seems to have taken place with the posthumous image of Seleucus. The images of horned Seleucid kings fall into three separate categories: first, images of a deceased king with bull horns sprouting from his head; second, images of the living king with bull horns sprouting from his head; and third, images of the living king with horn-like hair. There is one further set of images that is related but unique; these are the images of Seleucus in a horned helmet.³⁸

The first divinized images of Seleucus I appeared on coins issued at Sardis which featured his horned diademed portrait on the obverse. The reverse of these coins displays either the horned horse-head or Apollo-on-the-omphalos, and in both cases the legend reads ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΑΝΤΙΟΧΟΥ. These types clearly depict Seleucus as divine, in the same way as the posthumous portraits of Alexander with the horns of Ammon represented his close relationship to that god and emphasized Alexander's divine status. According to the dating of Houghton and Lorber,³⁹ these two types were introduced during Antiochus I's stay at Sardis before the First Syrian War (276–274 B.C.). They may therefore shed some light on the existence of a centralized royal cult for Seleucus I. The horned portraits of Seleucus issued at Sardis clearly reflect royal acceptance of the deceased king as a god of the royal house. The production of these portraits should be related to Antiochus I's contemporary establishment of a cult for Seleucus at Seleucia-in-Pieria:

Philetaerus, the prince of Pergamus, bought the body of Seleucus from Ceraunus for a large sum of money, burned it and sent the ashes to his son, Antiochus. The latter deposited them at Seleucia-by-the-Sea, where he erected a temple to his father on consecrated ground, to which ground he gave the name of Nicatoreum.⁴⁰

(*Archäologische Studien* 10) (Bern, 1995), 58; R. Thomas, *Eine posthume Statuette Ptolemaios' IV. und ihr historischer Kontext. Zur Götterangleichung hellenistischer Herrscher* (Trierer Winckelmannsprogramme 18) (Mainz am Rhein, 2002). This view goes beyond that of A. Stewart, *Faces of Power: Alexander's Image and Hellenistic Politics* (Berkeley, 1993), 197: 'To some Greeks and Romans, paraphernalia of this kind was indeed a visible sign of apotheosis and signified that the ruler was literally a god on earth: *theos epiphanēs* or *deus praesens*. To others, it remained on the level of metaphor, continuing to signal that the ruler's power was *like* that of the divinity whose attribute he wore, but not that he was himself a god, and still less that he merited a formal cult. Yet, when all was said and done, attributes of this kind were special: they were the specific symbols of the Olympians, who were divine. These images oscillate between two worlds, partaking fully of neither, and for the fastidious and the critical their iconic and symbolic aspects continued to contradict each other, defying reconciliation.'

³⁵ Smith (n. 25), 40; J.J. Pollitt, *Art in the Hellenistic Age* (Cambridge, 1986), 32.

³⁶ B.F. van Oppen, *Berenice II Euergetis: Essays in Early Hellenistic Queenship* (London, 2015), 49–50. For the complex associations with the crowns associated with Arsinoë II, see now M. Nilsson, 'The crown of Arsinoë II: the creation and development of an imagery of authority' (Diss., Gothenburg, 2010).

³⁷ Ehling (n. 13).

³⁸ Erickson (n. 3); Iossif (n. 3); R.A. Hadley, 'Seleucus, Dionysus, or Alexander?', *The Numismatic Chronicle* 14 (1974), 9–13.

³⁹ A. Houghton and C.C. Lorber, *Seleucid Coins. A Comprehensive Catalogue. Part I, Seleucus I through Antiochus III* (New York, Lancaster, PA and London, 2002), 123–4.

⁴⁰ App. Syr. 63. καὶ Σέλευκον μὲν ἔκαμε Φυλέταρος ὁ Περγάμου δυναστεύσας, πολλῶν χρημάτων τὸ σῶμα τὸν κεραυνὸν αἰτήσας, καὶ τὰ λείψανα ἔπεμπεν Ἀντιόχῳ τῷ παιδί αὐτοῦ. ὁ

This demonstrates that Antiochus actively deified Seleucus outside of, or in correlation with, the cult at Seleucia-in-Pieria.⁴¹

Antiochus also produced bronze coinage with horned portraits of Seleucus in several cities outside Asia Minor. At Dura-Europus, a diademed horned portrait appears paired with a horned horse-head⁴² and with an anchor.⁴³ At Houghton and Lorber's 'Uncertain Mint 26' in Bactria,⁴⁴ Seleucus is portrayed diademed with bull horns sprouting from his head on gold and silver coinage, and in all cases he is paired with a horned horse on the reverse. The evidence for horned images of Seleucus is not limited to numismatics. Libanius also places bull horns on a statue of Seleucus, this time at Antioch. According to him, Seleucus' horns are associated with respect for the local cult of Io.⁴⁵ While Libanius may be incorrect in his reasoning behind the horns, we should not doubt that the statue existed in Antioch in the fourth century A.D. and that his version represented part of the broad array of potential interpretations for the bull horns. Additionally, a horned statue of Seleucus in the Antakya Museum likewise confirms that Seleucus' horned representations were not confined to coins.⁴⁶ The broad chronological and geographic range does not suggest a regionally specific acceptance of Seleucus as divine. As the temple dedicated to Seleucus in Seleucia-in-Pieria is a royal foundation, it seems evident that Antiochus both established a cult of his father and promoted his divinity widely across the empire.

The first appearance of a living Seleucid with horns occurred during the reign of Seleucus II;⁴⁷ his son Antiochus III also produced horned portraits of himself. Bronzes were issued at Seleucia-on-the-Tigris, which featured a three-quarter facing bust of Seleucus II adorned with bull horns.⁴⁸ Additionally, on bronzes from Susa, Seleucus II was again depicted in three-quarter profile with bull horns sprouting from his head (see [Image 1](#)).⁴⁹ The reverse images of these coins clearly relate the image to martial victory and connect Seleucus II to his ancestor, Seleucus I, through the

δ' ἐν Σελευκείᾳ τῇ πρὸς θαλάσῃ ἀπέθετο, καὶ νεὼν αὐτῷ ἐπέστησε καὶ τέμενος περιέθηκε· καὶ τὸ τέμενος Νικοτόρειον ἐπικλήζεται. The English translation cited above is by H. White, *Appian. The Foreign Wars* (New York, 1899).

⁴¹ See Erickson (n. 3) for discussion of the divine myths surrounding Seleucus. See L. Hannestad and D. Potts, 'Temple architecture in the Seleucid kingdom', in P. Bilde et al. (edd.), *Religion and Religious Practice in the Seleucid Kingdom* (Aarhus, 1990), 91–124 for the identification of the temple.

⁴² Houghton and Lorber (n. 39), no. 363.

⁴³ Houghton and Lorber (n. 39), no. 364.

⁴⁴ Houghton and Lorber (n. 39), nos. 469–72.

⁴⁵ *Lib. Or.* 11.92; *App. Syr.* 57; there is also the strange mention of Seleucus' statues bearing horns on the walls of Alexandria [*sic*] in the γ recension of the Alexander Romance (*Historia Alexandri Magni* 2.28), which must derive from a similar tradition. See R. Fleischer, *Studien zur Seleukidischen Kunst I: Herrscherbildnisse* (Mainz am Rhein, 1991), 91–6; Hoover (n. 3).

⁴⁶ A. Houghton, 'A colossal head in Antakya and the portraits of Seleucus I', *Antike Kunst* 29 (1986), 52–62.

⁴⁷ It may be possible to connect the divine images of Seleucus II to the cult for the Seleucid kings at Seleucia-on-the-Tigris. This cult, identified by P. van Nuffelen, 'Un culte royal municipal de Séleucie du Tigre à l'époque Séleucide', *Epigraphica Anatolica* 33 (2001), 85–7 as a municipal cult, is fragmentary and has been dated to the reigns of various kings. He argues for a date after Antiochus III, but, if this paper's view of the nature of Seleucid ruler cult is correct, the dating of cult documents need not be restricted to this period. In this case, the proposition either of M. Rostovzeff, 'ΠΡΟΓΟΝΟΙ', *JHS* 55 (1935), 56–66, at 66 as dating to Antiochus II or of R.H. MacDowell, *Stamped and Inscribed Objects from Seleucia on the Tigris* (Ann Arbor, 1935), 258–9 as dating to Seleucus II would be possible.

⁴⁸ Houghton and Lorber (n. 39), nos. 767–8.

⁴⁹ Houghton and Lorber (n. 39), nos. 800–1.



IMAGE 1: Image 1a: Obverse of Houghton and Lober (2002), no. 800
Image 1b: Reverse of Houghton and Lober (2002), no. 800

repetition of Seleucus I's coin types.⁵⁰ Seleucus II's assertion of his own divinity was limited by the choice of more locally circumscribed bronze issues for these images. As most of the cults established for the earlier Seleucids were the result of benefactions or military protection,⁵¹ Seleucus may have seen it necessary to link his own divine claims with a victory, in this case his Parthian campaign. Seleucus II's claim to divinity may have also been linked to the dedications for the life of the king given by Anu-uballit (Kephalon), as they occurred in the same limited geographical region.⁵² Furthermore, Seleucus II's horned image should be contrasted with the 'horned lock' of hair on his brother's coinage. Together these images suggest that this generation of Seleucid monarchs was willing to present themselves as divine.

My third category of 'divine' images (images of the living king with horn-like locks of hair) appears nearly concurrently with the appearance of Seleucus II's horned portraits at Seleucia-on-the-Tigris and Susa. Under Hierax,⁵³ the mint at Ilion produced two types of coinage, both of them featuring what may be idealized portraits of Antiochus I. These feature small locks of hair that curl over the diadem in a manner reminiscent of horns (see Image 2).⁵⁴ This feature, combined with the idealized nature of the portraits on the coinage of Hierax, suggests a deification of Antiochus I and possibly of Antiochus II. This is, at most, a subtle hint towards divinity, although it is a striking feature given the care in which the diadem is normally depicted. The diadem is normally depicted on top of the hair, with no hair on top of the diadem. The only objects which cross over the diadem are the horns of Seleucus I and the wings from Antiochus Hierax's coinage, discussed below. Both of these images have a connection to divinity: the bull horns signify the divinity of the figure depicted and the wings tie the

⁵⁰ Houghton and Lorber (n. 39), nos. 710, 716, 767, 768, 800, 801.

⁵¹ For a comparison with the creation of the cult for Alexander and other early Hellenistic monarchs, see Chaniotis (n. 8 [2003]), 431–7.

⁵² G.J.P. McEwan, *Priest and Temple in Hellenistic Babylon* (Freiburger *Altorientalische Studien* 4) (Wiesbaden, 1981), 125; cf. L.T. Doty, 'Nikarchos and Kephalon', in E. Leichty, M.D. Ellis and P. Gerardi (edd.), *A Scientific Humanist: Studies in Memory of Abraham Sachs* (Philadelphia, 1988), 95–6.

⁵³ See B. Chrubasik, *Kings and Usurpers in the Seleucid Empire: The Men Who Would Be King* (Oxford, 2016), 72–81 for the representation of Hierax's self-representation as a legitimate Seleucid ruler in the context of his usurpation.

⁵⁴ Houghton and Lorber (n. 39), nos. 866–7.



IMAGE 2: Image 2a: Obverse of Houghton and Lober (2002), no. 867.2

Image 2b: Reverse of Houghton and Lober (2002), no. 867.2

king into the tradition of his ancestor Perseus. There also appears to be a difference of iconography based on the metal in which the coin is minted. At Susa and Seleucia-on-the-Tigris the images of the living king with horns were produced on low-value bronze coinage. The images which feature the horn-like hair occur on higher-value silver coinage (as well as on the images of the deified Seleucus). This may be a symptom of the slow development of divine mortals in the Greek world, since Chaniotis argues that the kings were at least initially reluctant to propose their own divinity without the sanction of a Greek city or sanctuary.⁵⁵

After this extremely timid introduction Seleucus III extended the use of this distinctive style. It was first utilized at a temporary subsidiary mint to Antioch-on-the-Orontes⁵⁶ and then moved eastward and was produced at Nisibis (see Image 3).⁵⁷ This trend continued under the first part of Antiochus III's reign, where he initially



IMAGE 3: Image 3a: Obverse of Houghton and Lober (2002), no. 942.1

Image 3b: Reverse of Houghton and Lober (2002), no. 942.1

⁵⁵ Chaniotis (n. 8 [2003]), 433.

⁵⁶ Houghton and Lorber (n. 39), no. 925.

⁵⁷ Houghton and Lorber (n. 39), no. 942.

adopted features of divinity on his bronze coinage, at the same mints, only later adding horns to his silver portraits. Similarly, a lock of hair also extends over the diadem on Seleucus IV's principal silver coinage.⁵⁸ The use of this lock of hair over three generations of Seleucid rulers (and four kings) suggests that this became an important Seleucid iconographic feature.

The final 'divine' type, the winged diadem, first appeared on the coinage of Antiochus II at Alexandria in Troas (see [Image 4](#)).⁵⁹ The type was a recutting of an original die from Abydus or Ilion so as to include the wing. The first suggestion for the origin of this type comes from the numismatist Babelon,⁶⁰ who concludes that the device was originally adopted by Antiochus II in order to advertise the Antigonid claims of his mother and therefore his descent from Perseus.⁶¹ On the other hand, MacDonald concluded that the device was local and reflected the links between the Seleucid monarchs and some local deity who was worshipped with wings on his head.⁶² The mint produced three types under Antiochus II: the first type portrayed a rejuvenated and idealized Antiochus I with a winged diadem; the second portrayed Antiochus II with a winged diadem; and the third portrayed an idealized young king with the winged diadem.⁶³ The final portrait may have been produced under Antiochus Hierax, as unidentifiable heads of young kings seem to be a distinctive feature of his reign.⁶⁴ We, therefore, have a series of coins that represent Antiochus I and Antiochus II as clearly linked to a divinity, either to a local god or to Perseus.

While the initial image of the winged-diademed king may have been related to a local cult, the image did spread on coinage produced under Hierax to other mints. These included Lampsacus (one type, from a recut die),⁶⁵ Ilion (two types, similar in type to those from Alexandria Troas),⁶⁶ Alexandria Troas (twelve types)⁶⁷ and one type that may have come from Abydus (see [Image 5](#)).⁶⁸

⁵⁸ A. Houghton, C.C. Lorber and O.D. Hoover, *Seleucid Coins: A Comprehensive Catalogue. Part 2, Seleucus IV through Antiochus XIII* (New York, 2008), 4: e.g. Antioch: no. 1313; Tarsus: no. 1306, 1308; Cilician mint: no. 1311; 'Wreath mint': no. 1328; Seleucia-on-the-Tigris: no. 1334; Ecbatana: no. 1352.

⁵⁹ Houghton and Lorber (n. 39), no. 491.

⁶⁰ E. Babelon, *Les rois de Syrie d'Arménie et de Commagène* (Paris, 1890), lv–lvi.

⁶¹ Perseus is an intriguing figure for the Seleucids, as he would have conjured connections to the Persian kings for many of the Greeks (Hdt. 7.150, 7.61.2–3, 7.61.150, 7.61.220; Aesch. *Pers.* 79–80; Hellanicus, *FGrHist* 4 F 59; Hes. F 35 M.–W. There are also connections between Perseus and the foundation of Antioch: Malalas, *Chronicle* 198–200 Dindorf; Pausanias of Antioch, *FHG* 4.467–8, F 3 = John Malalas, *Chronicle* 37–8 Dindorf; cf. D. Ogden, *Perseus* (London, 2008), 116–21; D. Ogden, *Alexander the Great: Myth, Genesis and Sexuality* (Exeter, 2011), 95–6. However, the Seleucids make much less use of the potentially potent dual connection of Macedonian and Persian descent than would otherwise be expected.

⁶² G. MacDonald, 'Early Seleucid portraits', *JHS* 23 (1903), 92–116, at 101–2. As D. Kaptan, 'Perseus, Ketos, Andromeda and the Persians', in C. Işık (ed.), *Studien zur Religion und Kultur Kleinasien und des ägäischen Bereiches. Festschrift für Baki Ögün zum 75. Geburtstag* (Bonn, 2000), 135–44 has shown, Perseus became significant in the process of identity creation for many Antiochian *poleis* in the Hellenistic period; therefore, the local significance of the wings may in fact still refer to Perseus.

⁶³ Houghton and Lorber (n. 39), nos. 490–2.

⁶⁴ Houghton and Lorber (n. 39), nos. 293–4.

⁶⁵ Houghton and Lorber (n. 39), no. 850.

⁶⁶ Houghton and Lorber (n. 39), nos. 871–2.

⁶⁷ Houghton and Lorber (n. 39), no. 874–86.

⁶⁸ Houghton and Lorber (n. 39), no. 843.



IMAGE 4: Image 4a: Obverse of Houghton and Lober (2002), no. 941.1

Image 4b: Reverse of Houghton and Lober (2002), no. 941.1

As all of these cities are in the same region, we should not exclude the possibility that the cult established at Alexandria Troas, with its own particular image of the king, expanded to the other cities. Although we have no evidence for such a cult beyond this coinage, the Ptolemaic parallels are suggestive of its existence. Additionally, the winged-diadem coinage is one of the major products of mints linked to Hierax, and as a consequence this divine image was also used by the court. This may have been the mechanism through which the supposed cult may have spread.

If this is evidence for a local cult, that identity of the kings becomes important. As Antiochus II appears with the winged diadem during his lifetime, he must have already been deified (this does not rule out the idea that Antiochus I was also deified during his lifetime, only that the evidence does not demonstrate this). Given the type's first appearance at Alexandria Troas, it seems suitable to locate the cult's genesis there. The adoption of the image by the local mint for coinage of the royal type suggests official acceptance of the image. This interaction between the local cult and the royal presentation of the king on his coinage is likely the result of the same types of influence which led the kings and the cities to use the same divine titles. As this shows official recognition of the kings as linked with a divinity, the inclusion of the young king on the coinage of Antiochus II raises the interesting question of whom it is meant to represent.



IMAGE 5: Image 5a: Obverse of Houghton and Lober (2002), no. 843

Image 5b: Reverse of Houghton and Lober (2002), no. 843

Given that portraits of Hierax are difficult to identify,⁶⁹ the young king who is portrayed on Hierax's coinage is normally taken to be Hierax himself. Additionally, the portrait of a young king very similar to the portrait that appears on Hierax's coinage also appears on the coinage of Antiochus II. It therefore stands to reason that Hierax is the young king on the coinage of Antiochus II. However, this is problematic for several reasons. This would require, for example, that the son of the living king should have been placed on the obverse of his father's coinage without also being co-ruler. This is unparalleled elsewhere in the kingdom. Furthermore, Antiochus Hierax did not seem to be considered the first option for succession. That prospect fell either to his older brother, the future Seleucus II, or less likely, except in Ptolemaic propaganda, to his younger half-brother, the son of Berenice.⁷⁰ The problem may be resolved by assigning the production of the young king portraits to Hierax's reign rather than to the reign of his father.

During the reign of Hierax only two kings are depicted wearing the diadem, Antiochus I and the young king. The young king may represent either Hierax or an idealized youth or a fully rejuvenated Antiochus I or Antiochus II. Nevertheless, Hierax is the most likely candidate. In the unlikely event that all of the portraits of the mint represent Antiochus I, then his increasingly youthful appearance may suggest a closer connection with the ever-youthful Apollo and a more extensive linkage between Antiochus and Apollo. However, from the perspective of Seleucid ideology, and according to the parallel of all other Seleucid practice, it makes the most sense to conclude that the portrait represents Hierax, since all other Seleucid monarchs (or later claimants to the throne) placed their portrait on the obverse of their coinage. Thus, when examining the winged-diadem coinage with portraits of the young king, we are looking at portraits of Hierax rather than at posthumous images of deified versions of either Antiochus I or Antiochus II.

Perhaps most interestingly, at Alexandria Troas during the reign of Antiochus Hierax, portraits of Antiochus II wearing the winged diadem were noticeably absent, although his non-winged portrait continued to appear at other mints during Hierax's reign. If there was indeed a cult of the kings who were depicted wearing the winged diadem at Alexandria Troas as is suggested by this coinage, does the lack of a portrait of Antiochus II suggest that he was removed from the cult, while Hierax and Antiochus I remained? This proposition seems difficult to accept, especially as, according to Appian (*Syr.* 65), Antiochus II was generally popular in Asia Minor and received cult elsewhere. Perhaps Hierax chose only to represent himself and his deified grandfather owing to his personal importance to Hierax, but the local cult continued to honour all the kings. The winged-diadem coinage suggests that Antiochus II and Antiochus Hierax adopted some of the iconography of a local cult and used it to present themselves as associated with a divinity. Another option would be to view this coinage as the expression of Hierax's own claims to divinity and connection to his grandfather, rather than as a continued

⁶⁹ O. Mørkholm, *Early Hellenistic Coinage: From the Accession of Alexander to the Peace of Apamea (336–188 B.C.)* (Cambridge, 1991), 124.

⁷⁰ See L. Martinez-Sève, 'Laodice, femme d'Antiochus II: du roman à la reconstruction historique', *REG* 106 (2004), 690–706 for Seleucus II as the designated heir of Antiochus II. See also A. Coşkun, 'The war of the brothers, the Third Syrian War, and the battle of Ancyra: a reappraisal', in K. Erickson (ed.), *War within the Family: The Seleucid Empire, 281–222 BC* (Swansea, forthcoming in 2018) for a new chronology of the Third Syrian War.

representation of the local cult. Under this view the local cult would have been fully internalized by Hierax's court.

The final category of divine markers on coinage is the inclusion of divine epithets on coinage. Outside the posthumous Antiochus Sotēr coinage,⁷¹ none of the Seleucid kings until Antiochus IV issues coinage with a divine epithet. Antiochus IV changes this practice when he expands the coin legends to include the epithets. After about 173–172 B.C. at Antioch, Antiochus IV issued a new series of tetradrachms that more clearly reflected his divine nature.⁷² The obverse of this type featured the diademed portrait of Antiochus IV, with the diadem ends adorned with stars which may have associated the king with a solar deity, possibly Apollo-Helios. Elsewhere, as Iossif and Lorber have clearly shown,⁷³ he linked himself to a solar deity by the introduction of a radiate crown onto his portraits. The reverse type featured the reintroduction of Seleucus I's Zeus Nikēphoros type alongside a new legend. Rather than the normal ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΑΝΤΙΟΧΟΥ, the legend reads ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΑΝΤΙΟΧΟΥ ΘΕΟΥ ΕΠΙΦΑΝΟΥΣ. Antiochus IV introduced three different connected epithets on his coinage: ΘΕΟΣ; ΘΕΟΣ ΕΠΙΦΑΝΗΣ; and ΘΕΟΣ ΕΠΙΦΑΝΗΣ ΝΙΚΗΦΟΡΟΣ.⁷⁴ Following Antiochus IV's reign, the use of clearly divine epithets became on coinage issued by Seleucid kings and queens.⁷⁵ Therefore, from a numismatic perspective there is a clear break in the tradition during the reign of Antiochus IV.

As can be seen from the numismatic evidence, there was a significant amount of coinage issued from a range of royal mints across the empire that depicted the living king as either divine or partially divine. The pattern of Seleucid coinage suggests that the recognition of the Seleucid kings as divine varied both in location and in form. Contrary to what would be expected, if it was not until the reign of Antiochus III that a centralized cult of king and his family was established, there are portraits of divine kings with similar iconography both before and after his reign. Furthermore, it is not until the reign of his son, Antiochus IV, that unambiguous symbols of divinity (either in the legend or in the iconography) become common on Seleucid coinage. This suggests that Antiochus' reforms had relatively little impact on the presentation of ruler cult across the empire.

This paper has argued that there was a significant amount of coinage issued from a series of royal mints across the empire that depicted the living king as divine or with divine attributes. Furthermore, the variation in the types of images fits with the pattern of royal engagement with local cults, as is particularly clear from the winged-diadem coinage. As such, the recognition of the Seleucid kings as divine varied both in location and in form, and could, if necessary, be ignored by a sceptical or hostile Greek audience in the same way as similar iconography could be viewed on Ptolemaic coinage.

⁷¹ G. Le Rider, *Antioche de Syrie sous les Séleucides. Corpus des monnaies d'or et d'argent, I: de Séleucos I à Antiochos V, c.300–161* (Paris, 2001), 74–96.

⁷² P.F. Mittag, *Antiochos IV. Epiphanes: eine politische Biographie* (Berlin, 2006), 118–27.

⁷³ Iossif and Lorber (n. 12).

⁷⁴ Houghton, Lorber and Hoover (n. 58): Antioch: nos. 1396–7, 1403–6, 1408–15; Syria: nos. 1435–9; Dura Europos: no. 1434; Seleucia: nos. 1513–15; Ecbatana: no. 1549; *Theos*: Ecbatana: nos. 1539–42, 1547; *Theos Epiphanēs Nikēphoros*: Antioch: nos. 1400–1; Ptolemais: nos. 1474–6.

⁷⁵ F. Muccicoli, *Gli epiteti ufficiali dei re ellenistici* (Stuttgart, 2013) now provides the standard analysis of royal epithets. It should be noted that not only epithets that are clearly divine (e.g. *Theos*) now appear on Seleucid coinage, but also Antiochus V uses the epithet *Eupator* (Houghton, Lorber and Hoover [n. 58], 128–9) on his coinage. For a contextualization of this phenomenon across the Hellenistic world, see F. de Callatay and C. Lorber, 'The pattern of royal epithets on Hellenistic coinages', in Iossif, Chanowski and Lorber (n. 3), 417–56.

Therefore, we can draw a few conclusions with certainty and then proceed to reassess the nature of Seleucid ruler cult. Before the reign of Antiochus III it is clear that:

- The Seleucid kings certainly received civic cults from the cities of Asia Minor (as Habicht had already made clear).⁷⁶
- Seleucus I and Antiochus I were portrayed as divine on the coinage of their successors.
- The Seleucid kings beginning with Antiochus Hierax and Seleucus II portrayed themselves with divine attributes on their coinage.

Finally, it is also clear that the situation persists after the reign of Antiochus III and it is not until the reign of Antiochus IV that fundamental changes occur. This clearly does not provide evidence for a cult of the Seleucid kings, but it does demonstrate significant interest by the Seleucid kings for the divinity of the ruling kings from at the least the reigns of Antiochus Hierax and Seleucus II onwards. These cults may also have been linked to local circumstances, as the winged-diadem coinage suggests, but they were reflected in the royal prerogative of silver coinage. These conclusions open the door to further re-evaluations of the development of Seleucid ruler cult. Antiochus III was in fact participating in a more complex and gradual process of development rather than in radical reform.

University of Wales Trinity Saint David

KYLE ERICKSON
k.erickson@uwtsd.ac.uk

⁷⁶ Habicht (n. 5).