

The Trusted Friends of Antiochus the Great

'Monarchs make many eyes and ears and hands and feet their own, for they adopt persons that are friendly to their rule and to themselves as their fellow-rulers.' (Aristotle, *Politics*.¹)

Antiochus III, known as Antiochus the Great, ruled over the Seleucid Empire for 35 years, from 222/3BC to 187BC, and on his deathbed, despite having lost land to the Romans, he ruled an area which stretched from the Mediterranean all the way to the Indian border. During his long reign he received advice from those members of his inner circle who had earned the title of trusted friends. These friends, known as *philoï*, were of approximately equal status, shared similar goals and retained a reciprocal bond of loyalty.² They were the King's political and military advisers: those who, in Aristotle's words, he trusted enough to dispatch as his 'eyes and ears and hands and feet' across the empire.³ In modern terms, they could be loosely categorised as his government ministers, military commanders, top bureaucrats and diplomats. They were an essential element of the King's long and successful reign - but who were they, where did they come from, and was the King's trust in them justified?

In this essay I shall try and answer these questions by studying our historiographical and epigraphical sources for the reign of Antiochus III. Aided by modern scholarship I hope to use specific examples to discover whether these top positions at court were inherited or earned, and whether the *philoï* were relatives, childhood acquaintances, relative strangers, or even former adversaries. However, there is one important point which needs clarifying first: in the quotation above, Aristotle implies that a king could choose his own friends, but was that actually the case with Antiochus III?

In the unsettled early days of the Seleucid empire, during the fourth and third centuries BC, modern scholars have tended to the opinion that the King's *philoï* obtained positions solely through personal initiative and the will of the King.⁴ In other words, unwavering loyalty and skill counted for more than good birth and a shared heritage. When the king died, then his replacement might dismiss you, but this just gave you an added incentive to keep your king alive. During the second century BC, however, as the Seleucid dynasty became more established, and succession progressed more smoothly, the top positions at court became

¹ Aristotle, *Politics* 3.1287b. Trans. Rackham, 1960

² Strootman, 2011, p.69

³ Aristotle, *Politics* 3.1287b. Trans. Rackham, 1960

⁴ Walbank, 1984, p.70

more secure, and these privileged courtiers soon formed their own hierarchical society which was no longer under the King's direct control.⁵

If this opinion is correct, then Antiochus III, coming to power in 223BC, would have been able to choose his own *philoi* at the beginning of his reign, but by his death, in 187BC, court bureaucracy would have started to overtake him. However, Polybius' narrative of Antiochus' first few years as King suggests that the opposite was true. He tells us that the young King, on first succeeding to the throne, inherited his brother's chief adviser, Hermeias,⁶ and two of his brother's *philoi*, Molon and Alexander, who were the satraps of Media and Persia.⁷ It seems that the King had no control over these appointments, and when Molon and Alexander immediately revolted, and Hermeias continually gave the King bad advice, it was some time before Antiochus was able to assert his authority by beating the two traitors in battle and having Hermeias killed.⁸ Well before the start of the second century BC, therefore, the King had lost his royal prerogative.

However, once the young King had asserted his authority there is no evidence that he ever again relinquished it, and it is possible that his early experience may have taught him a valuable lesson. As his empire grew larger, and he was forced to delegate more power, it is noticeable that positions which involved acting independently away from court were only entrusted to close friends and family, and he did not make the mistake of appointing satraps into far flung territories where they could easily revolt, as Molon and Alexander had done. Instead he permitted newly conquered rulers, such as King Arsaces of Parthia and King Euthydemus of Bactria to remain as vassal kings, providing, of course, that each acknowledged Antiochus' supremacy.⁹ These, surely, are not the actions of a weak king, but of one who, although he may have taken advice from his *philoi*, ultimately made his own decisions. In other words, he chose his own friends.

Returning now to the *philoi* themselves, those we know about were nearly all Greek, which is not surprising if one considers the Hellenocentric nature of our sources.¹⁰ It is difficult to imagine that Antiochus failed to recruit local experts from the areas which he visited, especially on his anabasis to the East, but these newcomers at court may well have either

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Polybius 5.41.2

⁷ Polybius 5.40.6

⁸ Polybius 5.45.6, 54.1, 56.10-13

⁹ Justin 41.5.7; Polybius 11.34.9

¹⁰ Engels, 2017, p.77

changed their name, or acquired dual identity, in order to be made more welcome.¹¹ That apart, the *philoi* mentioned in our sources appear to fall into three main categories: those at court who the King had either inherited or chosen himself; those who had come to him as exiles or had defected from another court; and his close family members.

Looking at the first of these: those inherited or chosen by Antiochus, the *philoi* which he inherited on his succession appear to have been an unmitigated disaster. The actions of Hermeias, Molon and Alexander have already been mentioned above, whilst another, Achaeus, who was also a relative, openly rebelled and proclaimed himself king in Asia Minor in 220BC, and was only eventually defeated and put to death in 213BC.¹² It seems then, that although these people may have been the *philoi* of Seleucid III, they were never truly the *philoi* of Antiochus III and there was never any element of trust between them.

However, those chosen by Antiochus appear to have been more loyal. This may have been because they were relatives or friends he grew up with, and we can sometimes tell this by the way in which they are referred to in the sources. If addressed by the title of *sunthropos* (the King's brother), this actually meant foster-brother or, more literally, a member of the King's childhood circle who had been educated and trained alongside him.¹³ They were all under the supervision of an older person, known as their *tropheus* (father), who was their tutor, guardian, and possibly even the regent if the King was very young.¹⁴ Bearing these titles in mind, I shall now look at three *philoi* chosen by the King: Antipater, Philippos and Zeuxis.

In the case of Antipater and Philippos we know little about their individual exploits, or when they were promoted to *philoi*, but throughout the whole of Antiochus' thirty-five year reign they appear at his side and can be seen faithfully obeying his commands. At the battle of Raphia in 217BC, for instance, we see both men fighting on the prominent right flank. In Polybius' account of the battle Antipater, described as the King's nephew, was in command of the cavalry whilst Philippos, described as the King's foster-brother, was in command of the elephants.¹⁵ Twenty seven years later, at the battle of Magnesia, in Livy's description of the battle the King had placed Antipater, his brother's son, together with his own son Seleucid, in joint command of the left flank, whilst Philippos, the *elephantarchos* (master of the

¹¹ Strootman, 2011, p.82

¹² Polybius 4.48.10; 8.21.2-3

¹³ Strootman, 2011, p.75

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Polybius 5.79.12, 82.8

elephants), had joint command of the centre.¹⁶ Antipater is mentioned once more, when he was involved in the subsequent negotiations for peace with Rome,¹⁷ but it cannot really be said that the sources give us a clear view of either man. However, it seems plain that both had grown up with the King and, unlike those *philoï* which Antiochus inherited, Antiochus' continued trust in them was justified.

We have considerably more information about Zeuxis, although we do not know his background. It is quite possible that he was another of the King's *suntrophoi*, but he is not mentioned as such in our sources. He may even have been Antiochus' *tropheus* because Josephus refers to a letter from Antiochus to Zeuxis in which the King greets Zeuxis as his father.¹⁸ However, whilst this would explain Zeuxis' exceptionably loyalty, it seems unlikely, because it would surely make him too elderly to be fighting at Magnesia towards the end of Antiochus' long reign.

Polybius first mentions him in the campaign against Molon, where he was a junior commander who stopped Molon from laying siege to Seleucia on the Tigris by seizing all the riverboats.¹⁹ Later, when Zeuxis' incompetent commander, Xenoetas, arrived and used the boats to cross the river, Zeuxis was left in charge of the camp, but when Xenoetas and his troops were tricked and beaten, and Xenoetas was killed, Zeuxis fled, abandoning Seleucia to the enemy.²⁰ This is the only account of events which we have, and opinions differ as to what Polybius meant his readers to think of Zeuxis' actions. Early scholars have been critical of Zeuxis, describing him as fleeing without putting up any opposition,²¹ or fleeing incontinently,²² whilst later scholars have been more kind, believing that he loyally resisted with only a small army,²³ and that it was Zeuxis who led the survivors on their long retreat.²⁴

In light of subsequent events I think that the later views of Zeuxis are probably correct because near the end of the campaign Zeuxis, having been promoted to membership of the King's *sunedrion* (war council), disagreed with the bad advice given by Hermeias, and it was Zeuxis' recommendations which were accepted by the King.²⁵ His advice proved successful,

¹⁶ Livy 37.41.1

¹⁷ Livy 37.45.5

¹⁸ Josephus *Jewish Antiquities* 12.148

¹⁹ Polybius 5.45.3-6

²⁰ Polybius 5.46.7 - 48.12

²¹ Mason, 1867, p.1324

²² Bevan, 1902a, p.305

²³ Strootman, 2011, pp.76-7

²⁴ Taylor, 2013

²⁵ Polybius 5.51.2 - 52.1

and Zeuxis was then given command of the King's left wing at the final battle, in which Molon was defeated and committed suicide.²⁶ Zeuxis was still fighting by the King's side at Magnesia thirty years later, where he either commanded the centre of the line with Philippos or was in command of the infantry,²⁷ and it was Zeuxis who, together with Antipater, then negotiated the Peace of Apamea with the Romans and travelled to Rome in order to ratify it.²⁸

There seems little doubt, therefore, that Zeuxis remained the trusted confidant of the King, and the extent of this trust is even clearer in the epigraphical evidence which exists for those years when Antiochus was away on his Eastern Anabasis. A recently found inscription tells us that Zeuxis was 'the official left in charge of affairs on this side of the Taurus'.²⁹ In other words, Asia Minor, an area which had always been of great importance to the Seleucid kings, and one much fought over in recent years. Published texts of inscriptions found in the area show that a continual correspondence was maintained between Zeuxis and Antiochus as the King continued to govern his empire using Zeuxis as his deputy.³⁰ One example, from 209BC, shows Antiochus writing detailed instructions concerning the appointment of his chamberlain Nicanor as the high priest of all sanctuaries in the region beyond the Taurus, and asking Zeuxis to organise the matter with his subordinates.³¹ It is indicative of the King's trust that he felt able to leave this important affair in Zeuxis' capable hands. It is also ironic that the final sign of the King's trust involved the loss of Zeuxis' own province: after losing the war with Rome, Zeuxis was sent back into Asia Minor as a suppliant to negotiate a peace treaty in which he was forced to cede all rights to Asia Minor in perpetuity.³²

Having established that these three old friends were loyal and trustworthy, let us now look at the King's new friends: those who had come to him as exiles or had defected from another court. Antiochus appeared quite willing to welcome them into his entourage, possibly because they were necessarily dependant on him as their new patron, and so were unlikely to turn against him. Their presence at court may also have deterred existing *philoï* from forming their own exclusive powerbase, and there was always a chance that their warm reception might persuade former colleagues to join them.³³ Much of this can only be

²⁶ Polybius 53.6 - 54.4

²⁷ Livy 37.41.1; Cf. Appian *Syrian Wars* 33

²⁸ Polybius 21.16.4, 24.1-3; Livy 37.45.5

²⁹ Ma, 1999, no.29, SEG 36.973

³⁰ Ma, 1999, p.18

³¹ Ma, 1999, no.4, SEG 37.1010

³² Livy 37.45.5-9; Polybius 21.42.5-6

³³ Polybius 5.70.10

conjectured, of course, because we do not know the fine details of life at Antiochus' court, but two of the defectors: Theodotus the Aitolian and Polyxenidas of Rhodes, and one exile, Hannibal Barca the Carthaginian, are well documented in our sources and so they will be examined next.

Our information on Theodotus the Aitolian comes almost entirely from Polybius, although there is a very short passage about him by the third century AD philosopher Porphyrius where Theodotus is said to have committed treachery against Ptolemy Philopator because of his contempt for that king's lifestyle.³⁴ This may have been taken directly from Polybius however, because it sounds suspiciously like his description. Polybius first mentions Theodotus during the 219BC campaign by Antiochus to regain Ptolemy's possessions in Coele-Syria. Serving as a mercenary commander under Ptolemy, Theodotus successfully stopped Antiochus from forcing an important pass at the mouth of the Biqua Valley.³⁵ When subsequently recalled to Alexandria he was surprised and appalled to receive no thanks for risking his life, and this, together with his dislike of the Egyptian King's life style and his mistrust of the King's courtiers, made him decide to defect to Antiochus.³⁶ Once back in Coele-Syria he took possession of Tyre, an important coastal city, and Ptolemais, a city in the Biqua valley, and wrote to Antiochus, inviting him to come and take possession of them.³⁷ When the King arrived he was handed the two cities and forty ships from the Egyptian navy, and this act seems to have persuaded Antiochus to trust Theodotus, because when he left the area Theodotus remained in charge.³⁸

Theodotus, however, still wanted his revenge on Ptolemy. In 217BC, on the eve of the battle of Raphia, he attempted to assassinate the Egyptian king by using his prior knowledge of the Egyptians to gain entry into their camp at dawn without being detected.³⁹ Having previously noted the position of the King's tent he was able to enter it unmolested but, not knowing that the King preferred to sleep outside, he only succeeded in wounding or killing the King's companions who were asleep inside, and so his attempt failed.⁴⁰ This did not seem to effect Antiochus' trust in him, however, because during the following battle he was put in charge of

³⁴ Porphyrius *Against the Christians* 44

³⁵ Polybius 5.46.3-4

³⁶ Polybius 5.40.1-3

³⁷ Polybius 5.61.5

³⁸ Polybius 5.62.2-3, 66.5

³⁹ Polybius 5.81.2-3

⁴⁰ Polybius 5.81.4-6

a force of ten thousand select troops, known as the Silver Shields,⁴¹ and such a prestigious appointment indicates that he may well have become one of the King's *philoi*.

Three years later Theodotus again exhibited courage during the siege of Sardis, where he was one of three officers and fifteen soldiers from Antiochus' besieging army who scaled the walls and opened the gate to the troops, enabling Antiochus to take the city after trying for more than a year.⁴² He was not in charge of this venture but was asked to take part because of his ability and courage,⁴³ which suggests that he was well thought of throughout the Seleucid army, as well as by the King. Unfortunately we hear no more about him, and have no direct evidence that he became one of the King's *philoi*. There is an intriguing passage in Polybius which records negotiations which took place between the envoys of Antiochus and Ptolemy shortly after Theodotus' defection. We are told that it was 'conducted by the common friends of both monarchs',⁴⁴ and so it has been suggested that one of these friends may have been Theodotus.⁴⁵ However, as Theodotus' 'treachery' was a major sticking point in the negotiations, it is surely unlikely that Antiochus would have chosen Theodotus to be one of his envoys. Nevertheless, it does seem likely that Theodotus became a trusted ally of the King and that the King's trust was not misplaced.

Our information on the defection of Polyxenidas of Rhodes is less well recorded. In fact he may have arrived at Antiochus' court as an exile because, according to Appian, he had been banished from his homeland of Rhodes for committing a crime.⁴⁶ He must have joined Antiochus before 209BC though, because we first hear about him when he was commanding a group of Cretan mercenaries during Antiochus' expedition into Parthia.⁴⁷

We next hear about him in 192BC, as the admiral in charge of Antiochus' fleet during the successful conquest of the island of Euboea.⁴⁸ After that he appears to have had a chequered career, winning and losing against the Romans and their allies, frequently being outmanoeuvred by the them, and spending much of his time with his fleet in the harbour at Ephesus.⁴⁹ However, he must have retained favour with the King because he remained in

⁴¹ Polybius 5.79.4

⁴² Polybius 7.17-18

⁴³ Polybius 7.16.1-2

⁴⁴ Polybius 5.67.11. Trans. Paton, 1979

⁴⁵ Herman, 1997, p.210

⁴⁶ Appian *Syriaca* 24

⁴⁷ Polybius 10.29.6

⁴⁸ Livy 35.50.6-8

⁴⁹ Livy 36, 37; Appian *Syriaca* 22, 24, 25, 27

command of Antiochus' fleet until after the Seleucid defeat at the battle of Magnesia.⁵⁰ The following two battles allow us a glimpse of his character and his value to the King.

The first of these was in 191BC, shortly after the Seleucids and the Romans officially declared war. Polyxenidas knew that the Roman fleet, which was comparable in strength to his own, had sailed around the Peloponnese and across to the island of Delos.⁵¹ Hearing from his scouts that adverse winds had stopped the Romans from leaving the island, he advised Antiochus to engage the Romans quickly, before they could join up with the fleet of their ally Eumenes.⁵² Antiochus took Polyxenidas' advice, but they were too late to stop the allies joining up, and the superiority in numbers meant that the Seleucid fleet was eventually forced to flee to Ephesus, having had ten ships sunk and lost thirteen to the enemy.⁵³ Polyxenidas was defeated, but he had tried his best to stop this happening, and the interaction between him and Antiochus shows that he had the King's ear, and that the King trusted his views. In the second battle, however, Polyxenidas did not behave so honourably.

This occurred during the assault on the island of Samos in 190BC, and his enemy was the navy of the Island of Rhodes, an ally of Rome. This made the battle a personal one and caused Polyxenidas to embark upon a somewhat underhanded scheme. Having heard that the Rhodian admiral had been speaking contemptuously about him in public, Polyxenidas sent him letters which falsely promised that he would betray the Seleucid fleet if he was then allowed back into his native land.⁵⁴ Believing that Polyxenidas would not send him letters sealed with his own hand unless he was telling the truth, the Rhodian admiral agreed with all of Polyxenidas' bogus plans and became lulled into a false sense of security, at which point Polyxenidas was able to spring a surprise attack on the Rhodian fleet and achieve a huge victory, killing their admiral and destroying almost all their ships.⁵⁵ Presumably Antiochus would have been overjoyed at this result, but one cannot help but wonder if it coloured his view of Polyxenidas' trustworthiness.

It is, in fact, very difficult to know whether Polyxenidas was one of Antiochus' trusted *philoi* or not. As with Theodotus, the sources give us no direct evidence, but we do know that Polyxenidas was acting as part of the King's *sunedrion* when he advised the King in 191BC,

⁵⁰ Livy 37.45.2

⁵¹ Livy 36.42.8

⁵² Livy 36.43.1-5

⁵³ Livy 36.44 - 45.1-4

⁵⁴ Livy 37.10.1-2; Appian *Syriaca* 24

⁵⁵ Livy 37.10.8 - 11.14; Appian *Syriaca* 24

and we have seen that the King acted on that advice.⁵⁶ Antiochus probably did trust him, and seems always to have regarded him as an asset: a complement which he did not accord to Hannibal, as the following will show.

Hannibal was different in a number of ways. He was not an ethnic Greek, he was already famous throughout the Hellenistic world for his exploits against the Romans, and he almost certainly came to Antiochus' court for a specific purpose: to avenge his country's defeat.⁵⁷ We cannot be completely sure of his intentions towards Antiochus though, because the Romans' recent war with Carthage had made Hannibal their archenemy, and our main sources show a clear Roman bias, which makes it difficult to interpreting them correctly.⁵⁸ However, logic dictates that the King's *philoi* would not have welcomed a non-Greek with whom they had little in common, and would have felt threatened by his reputation as a military tactician. Equally logically, Antiochus, whose long reign suggests that he was an astute political manipulator, would no doubt have seen the advantages of gaining an expert on Roman warfare, whilst at the same time remaining wary of Hannibal's true motives.

His arrival at Antiochus' court in 195BC was opportune because it occurred, so Livy tells us, just as the King was 'wavering in his attitude, and undecided about the war with Rome'.⁵⁹ However, whilst this might sound a good thing, having a sworn enemy of Rome at his side proved to be a mixed blessing. Hannibal had been driven from Carthage by false allegations that he was conspiring with Antiochus to foment war.⁶⁰ He was given a magnificent welcome, although Appian tells us that Antiochus 'kept him near himself',⁶¹ which can mean two entirely different things. Did he mean that Hannibal was already trusted enough by the King to be admitted as a member of his *sunedrion*, or did he mean that Antiochus had remembered the old adage that one should keep your friends close but your enemies closer? ⁶² Possibly both were true, because Antiochus' support for Hannibal was qualified at best, as the following episodes will show.

In 193BC, when a Roman commissioner Publius Villius visited Ephesus and took advantage of Antiochus' absence to have frequent meetings with Hannibal, this made the King

⁵⁶ Livy 36.43

⁵⁷ Bevan 1902b, p.64

⁵⁸ Polybius, although a Greek, had spent years as a hostage in Rome under the patronage of the Scipio family; Livy was a Roman who wrote for the Emperor Augustus; and Appian, although also a Greek, had spent years in Rome working for the Emperors.

⁵⁹ Livy 33.49.7. Trans. Bettenson, 1976

⁶⁰ Livy 33.47.3-20

⁶¹ Appian *Syriaca* 1.4. Trans. White, 2016

⁶² Attributed to Sun Tzu, c.500BC

suspicious of Hannibal and he was excluded from Antiochus' *sunedrion*, only gaining re-admittance after telling the King the story of how his father had made him swear an oath of eternal enmity towards Rome.⁶³

In 192BC, when Hannibal was included in a *sunedrion* which met to decide whether Antiochus should help the Aetolian League to liberate Greece, he made a long and impassioned speech advocating war.⁶⁴ This is described fully by both Livy and Appian, and both show Hannibal haranguing the council for not following his previous advice, and laying out in detail exactly how victory could be accomplished if he was allowed to take part, and if his expert advice was followed.⁶⁵ Livy and Appian may well have intended the speech to denigrate Hannibal in the minds of their readers, and there is discussion as to whether the view of the current situation which Hannibal is purported to have given was actually a false one.⁶⁶ But if he was genuinely offering advice based on his own personal experience, then one imagines that this would have been invaluable to the council. His speech was, indeed, applauded by them, but his advice was not accepted by them or the King, which Appian attributed to jealousy and a disinclination to see Hannibal covered in glory.⁶⁷

In 191BC however, when the King's advisers were reluctant to make preparations for war, Hannibal advised Antiochus that a new Roman fleet was preparing to set sail from Italy to attack them, and that he should immediately prepare for war by land and by sea.⁶⁸ In a rare moment of praise, Livy then records that Antiochus trusted Hannibal, who he realised was the only member of his council who was being entirely honest with him, and ordered Polyxenidas to prepare his fleet and to send out scouts to cruise amongst the islands.⁶⁹ It was due to Hannibal, therefore, that Polyxenidas was prepared, and that his scouts were able to provide him with accurate knowledge of the Roman Navy's movements.⁷⁰ Whilst the eventually outcome was defeat, Hannibal's advice had been good, and the trust which Antiochus had placed in him had proved justified.

In the main, however, the sources show that Hannibal did not have the King's trust. He never again commanded a large land force against the Romans, although he did command one of

⁶³ Polybius 3.11.9; Livy 35.14.1-4; 19.1-7

⁶⁴ Livy 36.7; Cf. Appian *Syriaca* 3.14

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Bevan, 1902b, p.69

⁶⁷ Livy 36.8; Cf. Appian *Syrian Wars* 3.14

⁶⁸ Livy 36.1-5

⁶⁹ Livy 36.41.6-7

⁷⁰ Livy 36.43.1-5

the King's fleets in 190BC at the Battle of Side, which ended up in defeat.⁷¹ Even this command was probably only awarded because many of Antiochus' sailors were Phoenician, and Hannibal spoke the Phoenician dialect, plus there was the added advantage that it placed Hannibal where he could not interfere with military tactics on land, or upstage the King in battle.⁷² When Antiochus was eventually ordered, as part of the Peace of Apamea, to hand him over to the Romans, Hannibal must have believed that Antiochus would comply because he fled,⁷³ and one cannot help thinking that this was the final sign that neither had ever really trusted the other.

But Hannibal was an outsider, whereas my last category concerns close relatives of the King who one might expect him to trust. However, as Antiochus' own uncle, Antiochus Hierax, had rebelled against his older brother, Seleucus II, in 245BC,⁷⁴ Antiochus might well have been wary of even his own family. Nevertheless, it seems that he did trust his heirs, because his first heir, the younger Antiochus (who later died) was trusted to act on behalf of his absent father during negotiations with Magnesia on the Maeander in 208/7BC,⁷⁵ whilst his subsequent heir, Seleucid, was given joint command of the important left wing of his army at Magnesia.⁷⁶ In addition, he seems to have trusted his first wife Laodike, as we shall now see.

Queen Laodike III was the daughter of Mithradates II, the king of Pontus, and was a cousin of the King's. Her expected role in life, as a royal women in the Hellenistic world, would have been to further diplomatic relations with another state by marrying into it and having children, after which her importance would have depended on her being the mother of the King's heir.⁷⁷ However, there is epigraphical evidence which suggests that Laodike played a much bigger role than that during her time as Antiochus' first wife. By involving herself in the welfare of women in the cities of Asia Minor she was able to uphold her traditional role as a wife and mother whilst, at the same time, obtaining prestige as a royal benefactress, and building her own power base within those predominately male based communities.⁷⁸ In so doing, she also enhanced the King's status, and helped him to gain back the support of those cities which had been devastated during his recent campaigns.⁷⁹

⁷¹ Livy 37.23–24

⁷² Taylor, 2013

⁷³ Justin 32.4.3

⁷⁴ Justin 27.2.6–7

⁷⁵ Austin, 2006, no.189b, RC32

⁷⁶ Livy 37.41'1

⁷⁷ Ramsey, 2011, p.517

⁷⁸ Ramsey, 2011, p.510

⁷⁹ Ibid.

The evidence is in the form of letters sent between the cities, Laodike, and the King. Those sent by the cities describe how civic cults were created in her honour, statues set up of her and the King, and, in one case, a fountain dedicated in her name for the benefit of the women in the city.⁸⁰ They frequently address Laodike as the King's sister, and the King, in his letters, also calls Laodike 'our sister', whilst Laodike calls him 'my brother'.⁸¹ It has been suggested that referring to each other as brother and sister was a deliberate ploy to accentuate the closeness of the bond between them, or even to imitate the Ptolemy brother-sister marriages.⁸² However, I believe this could equally well have been done to highlight the fact that, on these occasions at least, Laodike was not only acting as the Queen and a mother, but as the King's trusted deputy.

One letter, in particular, indicates the extent of the King's trust in Laodike. This was sent by her to lasos in 196BC, after the city had been devastated by an earthquake. In it she informed them that she had herself authorised a shipment of wheat to be sent to them every year for ten years, some of which should be sold to provide dowries for the daughters of poor citizens, and then hinted that if they remained loyal she would try and procure them more favours, in accordance with her brother's will.⁸³ There is a definite implication here that she had influence over the King's actions, but more importantly still, as both the King and his heir, the young Antiochus, were away in Ephesus,⁸⁴ the supposition must be that Laodike had been left with authority over the royal treasury, and there can be no greater proof of trust than that.⁸⁵

I conclude, therefore, that after the first few years of his reign Antiochus had full control over those he accepted as his trusted friends. These friends, known as his *philoï*, came either from within his court, from defectors and exiles, or from his close family. From within his court, those inherited from his brother did not prove worthy of the King's trust, but Antipater, Philippos and Zeuxis, who had grown up with him and been promoted by him, were loyal to him throughout, and the King's trust in them was justified. From those who came to his court as defectors or exiles, whilst we have no direct evidence that Theodotus the Aitolian and Polyxenidas of Rhodes were ever amongst the King's *philoï*, they earned his confidence and there is no reason to suppose that his trust in them was not justified. The relationship

⁸⁰ Ma, 1999, no.17, SEG 41.1003; no.18, SEG 41.1003

⁸¹ Ma, 1999, no.2B, SEG 39.1284; no.17, SEG 41.1003; no.18, SEG 41.1003; no.26, SEG 26.1226; no.37, OGIS 224

⁸² Ramsey, 2011, p.519

⁸³ Ma, 1999, no.26, SEG 26.1226

⁸⁴ Livy 35.13.5

⁸⁵ Strootman, 2011, p.80

between Antiochus and Hannibal Barca, however, appears to have been one of mutual self-interest, with little trust shown on either side. From his close family, Antiochus trusted his heirs and also his first wife Laodike, who justified his trust during her time as Queen. To sum up: our sources show that, once Antiochus the Great started making his own decisions, those he chose as his trusted friends served him faithfully and proved worthy of his trust.

4876 (essay) + 336 (footnotes) = 5212 words

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