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THE EARLY SELEUCIDS, THEIR GODS AND THEIR  
COINS

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Volume 1 of 2

Submitted by Kyle Glenn Erickson, to the University of Exeter as a thesis for the degree  
of Doctor of Philosophy in Classics and Ancient History, December 2009.

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# ABSTRACT

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This thesis argues that the iconography on Seleucid coins was created in order to appeal to the various ethnic groups within the empire and thereby reinforced the legitimacy of the dynasty. It first examines the iconography of Seleucus I and argues that as Seleucus became more secure in his rule he began to develop a new iconography that was a blend of Alexander's and his own. This pattern changed under Antiochus I. He replaced the Zeus of Alexander and of Seleucus with Apollo-on-the-omphalos. At approximately the same time, a dynastic myth of descent from Apollo was created and promulgated. It is argued that in addition to the traditional view that Apollo was readily identifiable to the Greco-Macedonians within the empire he was also accessible to the Babylonians through the god Nabû and to the Persians as a Greek (or Macedonian) version of the reigning king. This ambiguity made Apollo an ideal figure to represent the multi-ethnic ruling house. This also explains the dynasty's reluctance to deviate from the iconography established by Antiochus I. This thesis continues to explore the role of Apollo and other gods in creating an iconography which represented Seleucid power ending with the reign of Antiochus III. This thesis also incorporates the numismatic representations of the king as divine into the debate on ruler cult. This evidence suggests that the Seleucids may have had some form of ruler cult before the reign of Antiochus III.

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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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I would like to thank my supervisors Professor Daniel Ogden and Professor Stephen Mitchell for their helpful and insightful comments and discussion as well as their constant support. I would also like to thank my family, particularly my father, mother and Jennifer Ao for their love, support and criticism of my arguments. I could not have completed my thesis without the support of the postgraduates in the department of Classics and Ancient history, especially Steve Kennedy, Kiu Yue, Sharon Marshall, Rowan Fraser, Claude Kananack, Shane Brennan, Pauline Hanesworth and Gillian Ramsey. They have listened to countless papers on Seleucid coinage and given me both constant encouragement and helpful suggestions besides keeping me sane. I would also like to thank the faculty in the department as well as Claire Turner and Kerensa Pearson who have always been available when I have needed help with anything. I would also like to thank Lynette Mitchell, Martin Pitts, and Lutgarde Vandeput. Finally, I would like to thank Professor Altay Coşkun, Nicholas Wright, Peter van Nuffelen and Vesta Curtis who have all read various parts of my thesis and provided invaluable commentary. All errors and misinterpretations remain my own.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

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- BCHP* Finkel, I. and R.J. van der Spek (Forthcoming). *Babylonian Chronicles of the Hellenistic Period*.  
@ <http://www.livius.org/cg-cm/chronicles/chron00.html>
- CIG* *Corpus Inscriptionum Graecarum*. (1825-1877). Berlin.
- Erythrai* Engelmann, H. and Merkelbach, R. (1972-1973). *Die Inschriften von Erythrai und Klazomenai, Teil I und II. Inschriften griechischer Städte aus Kleinasien*. Band 1-2. Bonn.
- ESM* Newell, E.T. and O. Mørkholm (1978). *The coinage of the eastern Seleucid mints, from Seleucus I to Antiochus III*. New York.
- FGrH* Jacoby, Felix. (1923-1962). *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker*. Berlin.
- I. Delos* Durrbach, F. (1926-1937). *Inscriptions de Délos*. Paris.
- I. Didyma* Rehm, A. (1941). *Didyma, ii: Die Inschriften*. Berlin.
- I. Labraunda I* Crampa, J. (1969-1972). *Labraunda. Swedish Excavations and Researches. I. The Greek Inscriptions. Part 1: 1-12*. Lund.
- I. Smyrna* Petzel, G. (1982-1990). *Die Inschriften von Smyrna*. Bonn.
- I. Ilion* Frisch, P. (1975). *Die Inschriften von Ilion. Inschriften griechischer Städte aus Kleinasien*. Band 3. Bonn.
- IG* *Inscriptiones Graecae*. (1873-). Berlin.
- IGLS* Jalabert, L. Mouterde, R. and J.P. Rey-Coquais. (1929-1970). *Inscriptions grecques et latines de la syrie*. Tome 1-7. Paris.
- IMT Skam/NebTaeler* Matthias Barth and Josef Stauber. (1996). *Troas, "Skamander und Nebentäler"*. München.
- LIMC* *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae (1981-1999)*. 8 vols. Zurich.

- Milet I, 3* Rehm, A. (1914). *Das Delphinon in Milet*. Berlin.
- OGIS* Dittenberger, W. (1903-1905). *Orientalis Graeci Inscriptiones Selectae*. 1-2. Leipzig.
- PFS* seals in Hallock, R.T. *Persepolis Fortification Tablets, Oriental Institute Publications 92*, Chicago, 1969.
- RC* Welles, C.B. (1934). *Royal Correspondence in the Hellenistic Period: A study in Greek Epigraphy*. New Haven.
- SEG* *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum* (1923-). Leiden and Amsterdam.
- SNG Spencer* *Sylloge Nummorum Graecorum, Great Britain, Volume I, Part I. The Collection of Capt. E.G. Spencer-Churchill, M.C., of Northwick Park*. (1931). London.
- Syll.*<sup>3</sup> Dittenberger, W. (1915-1924). *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*. 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. Leipzig.
- Teos* McCabe, Donald F. (1985). *Teos Inscriptions. Texts and List*. Princeton.
- WSM* Newell, E.T. and O. Mørkholm (1977). *The coinage of the western Seleucid mints from Seleucus I to Antiochus III*. Numismatic studies, no. 4, New York.