Chapter 4
Seleukos and the Typology of Herakles

This paper reviews the typological role of the figure of Herakles in the Seleukos tradition. We will look at: (1) the myth of Herakles’ siring as a typological anticipation of the myth of Seleukos’ siring; (2) the Labours of Herakles with the Cretan Bull and the Mares of Diomedes as typological anticipations of Seleukos’ taming of Alexander’s sacrificial bull; (3) the myth of the settlement of Ione-Ionopolis by Heraclids as a typological anticipation of Seleukos’ foundation of Antioch; (4) the myth of Herakles’ holding of games at Daphne, and of his planting of the place with trees, as a typological anticipation of Seleukos’ foundation of his Olympic games there; (5) Herakles’ Hesperid Labour as a typological anticipation of Seleukos’ foundation of Apollo’s shrine at Daphne; and finally (6) the myth of Herakles’ battle against the Orontes as a typological anticipation of Seleukos’ foundation of Apamea. It will be apparent that a third term sometimes lurks in the background to these typologies, namely the precedent of a similarly Heraclean Alexander.¹

What is “typology”?

What is “typology”? The term was originally developed to describe a form of Biblical exegesis in which individuals and events of the Old Testament are taken to prefigure ones from the New Testament in significant ways: for example, Jonah’s emergence from the sea-monster is held to prefigure Christ’s resurrection. Its best-known use in a Classical context is to describe the principal technique Virgil exploits in the Aeneid to legitimate Augustus and to give teleological justification to his reign. Aeneas’ story across the Aeneid as a whole is manipulated to project this great figure from Rome’s mythical past as a destiny-affirming analogue of Augustus, as an Augustus avant la lettre. But Virgil plays the game in more elaborate ways too. In the eighth book of the poem in particular he develops multiple layers of prefiguring analogues for Augustus in his specific role as (re-)founder of the city of Rome: as Augustus walks in the footsteps of his distinguished predecessors, in reverse order Romulus, Aeneas again, Evander, Herakles and even the god Saturn, so his rule is shown to be right, to be inevitable, to conform with a recurring pattern of destiny, and to be

¹ I do not have space to return here to the intriguing “Ἡρακλῆς κάρρων” tale preserved at Memnon of Heraclea FGH / BNJ 434 F7 and discussed at Ogden 2017, 52, but I now direct readers to the interesting note on it at Kosmin 2018, 229–230.

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determined by something rather greater in the universe than his own contingent ambition and opportunism.¹

**Typology 1: The siring of Seleukos; the siring of Herakles**

In the course of his formal introduction of Seleukos into his histories, Justin, after the Augustan Trogus, supplies us with the fullest extant account of his birth myth. This tells how Seleukos’ mother Laodice has a vision as she slept of being impregnated by Apollo. In exchange for the sex the god gives her a ring engraved with an anchor symbol, and commands her to give to the son she is destined to bear. The next morning, she discovers the ring in the bed. When Seleukos is born, he is found to bear a similar anchor-shaped mark on his thigh. As the grown Seleukos departs on the Persian campaign with Alexander, she gives him the ring and explains the circumstances of his birth to him. In due course Seleukos’ descendants also bear the same anchor mark. Appian adds the details that Laodice is told in her dream that Seleukos will become king in the place where he drops the ring, and that in due course he loses the ring in the Euphrates (Babylon indeed being the historical starting point of his empire).²

There was a well-established Greek belief that when supernatural powers visited mortal women to sleep with them, they would leave behind a circular token of some sort, and this is what we already find in the myth of Zeus’ siring of Herakles with Alcmene.³ In the mid fifth century BCE Phercydes told that Zeus disguised himself as Alcmene’s husband Amphitrion to have sex with her and that in exchange for the sex he left behind with her a cup, a *karchéson*, a kind of *kantharos*, that he pretended that he, as Amphitrion, had taken as spoils from the Teleboans.⁴ Before Phercydes the mid sixth-century BCE chest of Cypselus, Pausanias Periegetes tells us,

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⁴ Two further examples may be given. First, Hes. *Cat.* F14 M–W and Pherce. F89 Fowler tell how Zeus gave Europa a necklace fashioned by Hephaestus, after he had carried her away disguised a bull. Secondly, Hdt. 6.69 tells how the Spartan daemon or hero Astrabacus slept with the mother of king De- maratus by the ruse of disguising himself as her husband Ariston, leaving with her with some gar- lands that had been dedicated at his nearby shrine.
⁵ Pherce. F13a–c Fowler (F13a = Herodorus F16 Fowler, *apud* Ath. *Deipn.* 474f); cf. Gantz 1993, 375–376 (over-complicating the apparent inconincities between the fragments) and Fowler 2000–13, i.263–264. Cf. also Anaximander F1 Fowler (fourth century BCE). Herakles is often shown with the *karchéson* on vases: Boardman 1979, 151.
had shown Zeus disguised as Amphitryon giving Alcmene both the cup and another round object too, a necklace.⁶

The precedent of Alexander is important here too. In the version of his birth myth that is well known from the series of them preserved by Plutarch but tied already to Euphorus (by Tertullian), and therefore to Alexander’s own lifetime, Philip dreams that he himself is sealing Olympia’s womb with a signet-ring bearing a lion-seal. Here we have a fundamentally different story-type in relation to a divine siring, but the motif of the circular object, indeed actually a ring, is present here too, and it may also be that the motif of Herakles too is present, if the lion can be imagined alluding to the Nemean Lion and to Herakles’ attribute-lionskin.⁷

There is a sense in which Seleukos’ birth myth not only salutes Herakles’ birth-myth, but also salutes Alexander’s birth myth’s saluting of Herakles’ birth-myth. One could consider the development of the Seleukos tale an act of multi-layered typology, such as is found in the eighth book of the Aeneid. But one could also consider it an act of meta-typology: a typology of typologies, a relationship between relationships. Thus:

EITHER:

Seleukos = Alexander = Herakles

OR:

(Seleukos = Herakles) = (Alexander = Herakles)

Typology 2: The sacrificial bull; Herakles’ Labours of the Cretan bull and the mares of Diomedé

In the Syriake Appian telegraphs a deracinated story in which Alexander was sacrificing a wild bull; the creature bucketed out of its bonds, but Seleukos held it fast, alone and with only his bare hands, and this was, supposedly, the reason that horns were subsequently added to his statues.⁸ We are reminded at once of Herakles’ seventh Labour, that of his overpowering of the marauding Cretan Bull, which he duly delivers to Eurystheus.⁹

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⁶ Paus. 5.18.3.
⁷ Plut. Alex. 2; Tert. De anim.46, incorporating Euphorus FGrH 70 F217.
⁸ App. Syn. 57.294; cf. Suda s.v. Διάμνως, where it is specified that Seleukos grappled the bull by its horns. Cf. lossif 2012, 45–68. I am less confident than Brodersen 1989, 144 that the Suda’s material could not have derived ultimately from Appian.
⁹ The literary sources for the myth, which are generally jejune, include: Acusilaus FGrH / BJ 2 F29 (= Fowler); Diod. 4.13.4, 4.59.6; Paus.1.289 – 10; Hyg. Fab. 30.8; [Claud.] Laus Herculis 118 – 137 (this last
The figure of Alexander is already directly incorporated into the story of Seleukos’ bull: it is at a sacrifice over which he presides that the episode takes place. But striking correlations obtain also between the story of Seleukos’ bull and the *Alexander Romance*’s account of Alexander’s own taming of his steed-to-be Bucephalas. Here the lad Alexander alone is able to master the massive, berserk, man-eating stallion Bucephalas, whose name declares him actually to be “Bull-headed”, and who becomes tame at Alexander’s approach (just as the Daphne dragon does when it comes into proximity with Seleukos, of which more anon). It is of particular interest here that the *Romance* (in the Armenian version) links Alexander’s mastery of Bucephalas to a prophecy of future rule: Delphi tells Philip that whoever masters Bucephalas and rides him through the middle of Hellas (recte Pella?) will rule the entirety of the known world and bring all men under his spear. We may well imagine that a fuller account of the Seleukos’ tale would have made the same motif explicit.

The tale of the taming of Bucephalas (if not necessarily the motif of his man-eating nature) perhaps became established shortly after Alexander’s own lifetime, if not during it. We know that the horse was mentioned at least in the writings of two of Alexander’s associates in life, his chamberlain, Chares of Mytilene, and his chief helmsman in India, Onesicritus. Both told, as it seems, that the animal died shortly after the battle of the Hydaspes, almost certainly in the context of their recording of Alexander’s foundation of the city named for him, Bucephala, on the banks of the river. Chares’ Bucephalas had a quasi-human temperament (*quasi cum sensus humani solacio*, “an almost human sense of relief”, as Gellius renders his words in Latin); perhaps Chares also explained the origin of this temperament.

But then the precedent of Herakles lurks here too, for Alexander’s taming of the man-eating Bucephalas signally salutes Herakles’ eighth Labour, that of the taming of the man-eating mares of the Thracian Diomede, before, again, taking them to Eurytheus. Intriguingly, Diodorus appends to his telling of this Labour the observation...
that the descendants of Diomede’s mares endured until the reign of Alexander: the claim must entail the notion that Bucephalus was actually descended from them.

So, once again, we perhaps have a typology of typologies, with the Seleukos tradition calquing its typology of Seleukos’ mastery of the sacrificial bull and Herakles’ mastery of the Cretan Bull on the typology of Alexander’s taming of Bucephalas and Herakles’ taming of the mares of Diomede.

**Typology 3: The foundation of Antioch; its proto-foundation by Heraclidae**

We now turn to a number of ways in which the Seleukid Empire was presented as a Heraclean landscape. Before returning to the realm of myth and projection, let us begin with five important and tangible, albeit vestigial, facts. Unidentifiable Seleukid kings are attributed with five feats of interest:

1) The building of a temple to Herakles in Antioch, as is vouchsafed to us by Libanius.  
2) The building of a city named Heraclea “in Syria”, as is vouchsafed to us by Stephanus of Byzantium.  
3) The building of a second city named Heraclea “in Pieria”, as is also vouchsafed to us by Stephanus of Byzantium.  
4) The building of third city named Heraclea “in Phoenicia”, as is again vouchsafed to us by Stephanus of Byzantium.  
5) The building of fourth city named Heraclea in Media, as is vouchsafed to us by Strabo.

One of the cities “in Syria” and “in Pieria” – it is not clear which – will have been Heraclea-by-the-Sea, which, according to Cohen, was probably located at Bourg es-Sleyb (an epigraphic find suggests so). The other of them may have been located near Apamea, for reasons that will become apparent.

Some Heraclidae, if not Herakles himself, had anticipated Seleukos’ foundation of his own Antioch. Libanius tells that these Heraclidae, exiled by Eurystheus, came

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18 Str. C514; cf. Cohen 2013, 215. A fifth Heraclea, Plin. *HN* 6.48 tells us, was built by Alexander in Aria, but was then refounded by Antiochos (?) as Achais.

19 It is referred to at: *IGLS* 1252 (108/7 BCE); Plin. *HN* 5.79; Str. C651, 753, etc.; cf. Cohen 2006, 108–110.
to the region of Mt Kasios with some Elean colleagues and founded a Heraclea as a supplement to the city of Ione-Iopolis on Mt Kasios, and that these Heraclidae subsequently came to live in Ione alongside its original Argives and Cretans. And then, when Seleukos founded Antioch, these Heraclidae came down the mountainside to join it too. It was no doubt in honour of the supposed Heraclidae of Ione that the aforementioned temple of Herakles was built in Antioch by an unspecified Seleukid king. We cannot know whether the four (or more?) actual Seleukid Heracles also claimed to have been proto-founded or populated by pre-existing populations of Heraclidae — or indeed to have been proto-founded by Herakles himself.

**Typology 4: Seleukos’ planting of Daphne and his Olympics; Herakles’ planting of Daphne and his foundation of games there**

The grove of Daphne, home to Seleukos’ great oracle of Apollo, was as famous for its cypress as it was for its laurels, cypresses which Libanius celebrates in his *Anti-ochicus* for their number, their thickness and their height. These too were a source of typology for Seleukos. John Malalas specifies that Seleukos planted the ‘city’ of Daphne with cypress, just as Herakles had done before him, when he had initially founded the place, calling it *Heracleis* after himself. Libanius too mentions an Anti-ochene suburb of *Heracleis*, adjacent to but slightly distinct from Daphne, as still surviving in his own day. It should be said that Libanius does seem to differentiate this *Heracleis* from the *Heraclaea* founded by Heraclidae as a supplementary quarter of Ione-Iopolis. It is a complication, however, that Eustathiius of Thessalonica calls the settlement adjacent to Daphne *Heraclaea* as opposed to *Heracleis*: most probably he has confused the two places. But a similar thought-pattern seems to underlie the accounts of both foundations: Heracleis is just outside Daphne-to-be, just as the Mt Kasios Heraclea was just outside Ione-Iopolis, which in turn was just outside Anti-

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21 Lib. Or. 11.125.
22 Lib. Or. 11.236a, 238; so too Sozom. IE 5.19 Bidez-Hansen = PG 67, 1273; cf. Downey 1961, 84. A fragment of Arrian’s Bithynica. F60 Roos and Wirth, speaks of a sacred grove that contained the very laurel into which the fleeing Daphne was transformed.
23 John Mal. Chron. 204.
24 Lib. Or. 11.233–236.
25 Eustath. on Dionysius Periegetes 916 – GGM ii, 379. For the problems of the relationship between Heraclaea, Heracleis, and Daphne see Downey 1961, 82–83; Norris 1990, 2350; and Cohen 2006, 88–89 n.16 (the distinctions between *Heraclaeis* and *Heraclaea* are not always observed in these discussions).
och-to-be. Anyway, both in the founding of Daphne and in the planting of trees there, Seleukos can be seen to follow in the footsteps of his ancestral hero.

Likewise Seleukos trod in Herakles’ footsteps also in instituting the games at Daphne (as he must have done, though no source credits him explicitly with their creation), the games that were later to blossom into the (other) famous “Olympics”. These games had also supposedly once been known as the “Heraclea”. Whilst such a title need only mean that they had been held in honour of Herakles, it almost certainly implies a tradition that they, or an antecedent of them, had actually been created by Herakles too. Such an assumption explains why, in a curious non sequitur, John Malalas tells us, after speaking of Herakles’ construction and planting of Daphne, that he also invented wrestling.

**Typology 5: The golden treasure and the dragon of Daphne; Herakles’ Hesperid Labour**

After speaking of the foundation of Antioch itself in his *Antiochicus*, Libanius immediately proceeds to tell the story of Seleukos’ foundation of his shrine of Apollo at Daphne. As Seleukos rides to hounds he enters a grove (alsos) and comes to the tree into which the eponymous maiden Daphne had been transformed when pursued by Apollo. Here his horse stalls and paws the ground, whereupon the earth sends up a golden arrowhead inscribed “Phoebus”. This is one of the arrows that Apollo had either poured from his quiver or shot off in frustration as the girl had escaped his clutches with her metamorphosis. The arrowhead had been preserved in the earth precisely so as to give Seleukos the message that this was the appropriate place to build a shrine for the god. As soon as Seleukos picks the arrowhead up, he sees a dragon (drakon) darting straight at him, rampant and hissing. However, as it comes near, it changes its expression to a gentle one and disappears. Evidently,

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29 Lib. Or. 11.94–100. Seleukos is given as the founder of Daphne and its temple to Apollo also at Just. *Epit.* 15.4.8 and Sozom. *HE* 5.19 Bidez/Hansen = PG 67, 1273–1276. Seleukos is linked to the foundation of Daphne additionally by the fact that Apollo’s colossal cult image there was the work of Bryaxis (George Cedrenus 1.536.11), who was also distinguished for his portrait of Seleukos (Plin. *HN* 34.73). See, in general, Downey 1961, 82–85; Fatouros and Krischer 1992, 131–137; Cabouret 1997, 1014–1015.
the dragon had ever been guarding the arrowhead until the day its long-destined discoverer should find it. As Seleukos encounters a *drakōn* that guards a golden treasure we feel that once again appeal is being made to the Labours of Herakles. We are reminded, of course, of Herakles’ taking of the golden apples of the grove of the Hesperides from their guardian serpent, Ladon, in his Eleventh Labour.\(^{31}\)

**Typology 6: Seleukos’ foundation of Apamea; Herakles’ proto-foundation of it**

The thunderstorms that today break over the Jebel Aqra, the former Mt Kasios, ever did so, and the mountain was long recognised by the native peoples that dwelled around it as the site of a primeval battle between a thunderbolt-wielding storm-god and a dragon.\(^{32}\) Graeco-Macedonian tradition avidly embraced this notion: the storm-god became Zeus, and the dragon became Typhon.\(^{33}\) As the storm-god was based on the mountain-top itself, so the dragon came to be identified with the serpentine river Oronetes at the mountain’s foot: it had been transformed into the river at the point of defeat. The Greeks then elaborated this basic myth with a suite of analogue and sequel narratives. It was found that no less than three of Zeus’ sons, Perseus, Dionysus and of course our own Herakles, had also enjoyed battles with the river, its serpentine affinities manifest still. And there were further stories of thunderbolts striking down Giants in the region, these too perhaps being partly serpentine in form.\(^{34}\) Thus was constructed a rich typological context for the tales of Seleukos’ foundations of the cities of the Syrian Tetrapolis, Seleucia-in-Pieria, Antioch, Apa-

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32 Accordingly, the thunderbolt-related cults of Seleucia-in-Pieria and Antioch almost certainly continued, directly or indirectly, pre-Greek forebears. *Marasco* 1982, 98–99 (building on *Seyrig* 1939, 296–297; *Rostovtzeff* 1941, 437–438) and *Brodersen* 1989, 163–165 plausibly contend that the thunderbolt appearing on the coins of Seleucia-in-Pieria reflected a local cult that already existed prior to the founding of the city.


34 At least from the fourth century BCE onwards Giants were often conceived as anguipedes, their two legs each terminating in a dragon-head: *LIMC* Gigantes passim.
mea and Laodicea-by-the-Sea. All of these, except for the last, were directly associated with the Orontes itself, and all were founded by Seleukos either with the aid of Zeus’ thunderbolts or with that of Zeus’ thunderbolt eagles, who snatched the flaming meat from the sacrifices the king was making to Zeus Kasios and dropped it, thunderbolt-like, at the sites the god had chosen for his new foundations.\(^{35}\) I present the details of these various narratives in tabular form (there is no space for any more):

Table 1: Battles between thunder-wielding storm-gods and their opponents at Mt Kasios (chronological order of attestation)\(^{36}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Protagonist: storm-god, his son, his weapon</th>
<th>Antagonist: the dragon, the giant, the river</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>fourteenth century BCE</td>
<td>Ugaritic-Canaanite myth: (KTU 1.1 \text{–} 2 (= CTA 1 \text{–} 2), (KTU 1.3 (= CTA 3) \text{ i} 35 \text{–} 52 \text{ and } 1.5 (= CTA 5) \text{ i} 2*), 3.)</td>
<td>Baal-Sapon, with throwing clubs = thunderbolts</td>
<td>Yam and and Litan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>thirteenth century BCE and before</td>
<td>Hurrian myth (preserved in Hittite): (CTH 348, \text{ esp. } F11.1 \text{–} 3, F12.1 \text{–} 2, F14, F16.1 \text{–} 3.)</td>
<td>Teshub</td>
<td>Hedammu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>thirteenth century BCE</td>
<td>Hittite myth: (CTH 321)</td>
<td>Tarhunna</td>
<td>Illuyanka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ca. 24 CE</td>
<td>Strabo (C750 \text{–} 1)</td>
<td>Zeus</td>
<td>The drakon Typhon (becoming the Orontes river)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second century CE</td>
<td>Pausanias Periegetes 8.29; cf. Nonnus Dionysiaca 17.133 \text{–} 314, 40.109 \text{–} 57 (ca. 400 CE).</td>
<td>Dionysus, son of Zeus</td>
<td>11-cubit tall Indian Orontes (perhaps partial rationalisation of angulpede?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>198 – 211 CE</td>
<td>Oppian of Apamea Cynegetica 2.100 \text{–} 45 (ca. 200 CE)</td>
<td>Herakles, son of Zeus, with his club</td>
<td>Orontes river (endowed with humanoid/ animalian qualities?)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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\(^{35}\) The analogy between the thunderbolts and the flaming meat is well made by a pair of closely similar Syrian coin-types produced under Marcus Aurelius. On one the Zeus-eagle carries the thunderbolt, depicted as a clutch of rods in the usual way (Dieudonné 1929 plate ii [iv] no. 18, reverse); on the other a similar eagle carries what at first appears to be a giant chicken drumstick – but it is in fact an ox-thigh, a most appropriately shaped piece of meat to stand as proxy for a thunderbolt (Dieudonné 1929 plate ii [iv] no. 16).

\(^{36}\) This table is taken over from Ogden 2017, 119. Whereas the Heraclean typologies that constitute our prime focus must have been aimed primarily at Greek audiences, the alignments here may also have spoken to indigenous ones: see further Ogden 2017, 133–134.
Table 1:

<table>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mid-fourth century CE</td>
<td>John Malalas Chronicle 202 (cf. 7–8) (vi CE) = Pausanias of Antioch FGrH /BNJ 854 F10 (iv CE)</td>
<td>Thunderbolt</td>
<td>(anguipes?) Giant Pagras</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sixth century CE</td>
<td>Stephanus of Byzantium s.v. Λαοδίκεια</td>
<td>Thunderbolt from a god on high</td>
<td>‘A shepherd’ at the site of Laodicea-by-the-Sea</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Let us look more closely at the Herakles episode here. The (effectively) unique source for it is Oppian of Apamea’s Cyneggetica, which was dedicated to Caracalla (r. 198–211 CE). Oppian narrates, in contorted fashion, a myth local to his own Apamea, which was supposedly once known as Pella. According to this, the river Orontes, as he flowed through the plain of Amyce (now Amuk), fell in love with the Oceanid nymph Meliboea, who was embodied in the plain’s lake, the subsequent Apameitis limne, and so he tarried there, refusing to flow on, flooding the plain and its city of Pella-Apamea. The city’s ruler, Archippus, called upon the aid of his companion Herakles, who is explicitly introduced as the son of Zeus. Herakles wielded his club to break a broader channel through between the two mountains, Emblonus and Diocleum, that closed the northern end of the plain, and so compelled the river to flow onwards, despite himself, into the Seleucis plain and thence into the sea. The hero thereby relieved the city and the plain of the flooding, with the latter becoming


38 See Str. C752 for an ancient description of the topography of Apamea, which for the Seleukids was above all a military centre, where they based their horses and elephants. Discussion of the site at Grainger 1990b, 72–73; J. Balzy 2003, 215–220; and Di Giordi 2016, 66–96.
known henceforth as “the plain of Herakles”. In this battle Orontes is not explicitly given any physical form beyond that of a huge unstoppable torrent of water, but it is difficult to read Oppian’s tale without temporarily visualising him as something at least partly humanoid or animalian, given his love for Meliboea. At any rate here again Herakles, in taming and civilising the Orontes at the future site of Apamea, presents himself as a Seleukos avant la lettre.

The sixth-century CE Antiochene chronicler John Malalas offers an account of Seleukos’ foundation of Apamea (alongside accounts of the foundations of the other cities of the Tetrapolis). It is somewhat mulled in its details and in the order of its narrative:

Seleukos Nicator again founded another great city in Syria, naming it for his daughter Apama, after coming across a village that was previously called Pharmace. Seleukos fortified it, declared it a city, called it Apamea, and made a sacrifice. He changed its name to Pella because the Tyche of the city of Apamea had this name. For Seleukos was from the city of Pella in Macedonia. He sacrificed a bull and a goat. The eagle came again and took up the heads of the bull and the goat. It marked out the circuit of the walls with the blood.

This passage is largely based, as Malalas himself tells us, on another Antiochene chronicle, that of Pausanias of Antioch, who may have written at some point in the second century CE or in the fourth century CE, before 358/9.42

This scene finds splendid illustration in a fourth century CE Apamean mosaic exposed, photographed and presumably lifted (in both senses of the word) by a bunch of robbers in 2011 (Fig. 1). The photograph was published with a brief commentary by Olszewski and Saad in Archéologia in 2017. Five figures in superb colours, and with beautifully clear legends, cluster around an altar, from which a Zeus-eagle has just lifted the ox’s head. Red projections from the back of the ox’s head may represent spurting blood, or just possibly flames. There are four figures in the front row. At the centre, on either side of the altar stand Antiocchos and Seleukos himself, both librating on the altar (and both sporting diadems too, together with distinctively Roman dress, a tunica musculata, in Seleukos’ case). Seleukos also has a tiny pair of bull horns. The men are flanked by a balancing pair of female figures. On the left is Ktisis, the act of foundation personified. The name of the figure on the right has, frustrat-

40 No, he was from Europus, probably the one by the Axios: Arr. Successors, FGrH 156 F13; Steph. Byz. s.v. Ορόντιος, Suda s.v. Ζέλεικους. John Malalas or (before him) Pausanias of Antioch has simply defaulted to the obvious.
42 For translations of and commentaries on the fragments of Pausanias of Antioch, see Garstang 2011 (laid out in an unhelpful manner) and Asvintham at BNJ 854. See also Chuvín 1988; Primo 2009, 275–282.
ingly, been completely obliterated by a hole, the mosaic’s only significant blemish. Olziewski and Saad identify her as “probably” the Muse Calliope. They do not explain themselves, but their considerations are presumably as follows: (1) one would expect to see here a Tyche, in parallel with the Bourg es-Sleyb relief discussed below; (2) the figure adopts a pose – she leans pensively on a half-column – characteristic of a Muse; (3) in this Late Antique period the Muse Calliope was often identified with the Tyche of Antioch. This may be why Olziewski and Saad think that the scene actually represents not the foundation of Apamea but that of Antioch itself. However, whilst the figure’s pose is indeed characteristic of a Muse, it is characteristic of the wrong Muse! This is the pose well attested not for Calliope, but rather for her sister Polymnia. The obvious conclusion is that, just as the Tyche of Antioch was identified with Calliope, the Tyche of Antioch’s sister-city of Apamea was identified with Calliope’s sister-Muse, Polymnia. On the assumption that the figure’s name was laid out in lettering roughly commensurate in size with that given to the other figures, it must be conceded that “Polymnia” (ΠΟΛΥΜΝΙΑ), would not have fitted in the hole – any more than “Calliope” (ΚΑΛΛΙΟΠΗ) would have done, for that matter. “Tyche” (ΤΥΧΗ), by contrast, would have fitted well. The city’s Tyche might also have been given the name of the city itself: “Apameia” (ΑΠΑΜΕΙΑ) would also have fitted at a pinch; as indeed, more easily, would Malalas’ “Pella” (ΠΕΛΑΔΑ).

But the immediate interest for us in all this is the fifth figure, a bearded one, standing behind Seleukos and Tyche (let us call her), and clearly marked “Heraclès”. Why does he stand behind? There are aesthetic reasons, no doubt: his deferment preserves the symmetry of the female-male-male-female figures of the front row. But it is tempting to read meaning into the deferment too. Does he stand behind as an indication that his work in the region constituted a prior foundation, or at any rate prepared the way for the current foundation: are we looking back in time as we gaze through the picture’s planes? Or does the artist wish to tell us rather that the spirit of Heraclès, still present in the area, is discretely attending the foundation ceremony to confer a gentle blessing upon it? I would like to think both considerations apply. In

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44 However, the mosaic is one of a pair plundered together. The second one, with a more elaborate and complex set of images, also and manifestly represents aspects of the foundation of Apamea, incorporating a most interesting series of figures: Seleukos (bull-horned again and holding an architect’s rule), Antiochos and Apama (NB); Oppian’s own Archippus, gratifyingly; and (oddly and unexpectedly) Antipater and Cassander. For this second mosaic see Olszewski and Saad 2017b and 2018, who accordingly propose that it attests an otherwise lost tradition that Pella-Apamea was initially founded by Antipater and Cassander.

45 See Centani 2006 and Talamo 2006, with copious illustrations; for the iconography of the Muses more generally see Queyrel 1992 (less helpful for this particular issue). I thank my colleague Barbara Borg for advice on Polymnia.
standing behind Seleukos, and facing the same way as him, he perhaps tells us that he is an anticipation of him: typology, in other words, in pictorial form. One final point on Herakles here: he appears to be wearing a wreath: a token, surely, of a foundational athletic victory (in wrestling?) at Daphne/Heraclis.

As indicated, the scene-type is not completely unknown. It has affinities with the cruder image carved onto a third or fourth century CE column-capital discovered in Bourg es-Sleýb, 20 km north of Laodicea-by-the-Sea, which was published by Seyrig in 1940 and is now in the Beirut museum.\footnote{Seyrig 1940, with plate 1; Grainger 1990b, 56; Ogden 2011, 90–92, with fig. 4.6.} In the centre again is a flaming altar, and above it the barely recognisable remains of the Zeus-eagle flying off with its, we presume again, ox-head. The altar is flanked on the left by Seleukos, again libating on the altar and looking much as he does in the mosaic. In an act of narrative compression, he is still leading the bull to the altar for its sacrifice; perhaps there is an allusion here too to his mastery of the bull at Alexander’s sacrifice.\footnote{App. Syr. 52.294. See above.} His figure is balanced on the right by a female figure, a Tyche indeed. Behind the altar and dominating the centre of the scene is a winged Nike, Victory, and, compatibly with this, behind Seleukos stands a battle-trophy: the battle in question is doubtless Ipsus. To what city does the Tyche belong? It used to be thought that the scene illustrated the foundation of the greatest city of them all, Antioch. But if the foundation of Apamea could get its own illustration, then why not also the city of Laodicea-by-the-Sea, 20 km to the south? After all, John Malalas preserves a similar story foundation for that city too, immediately preceding that of his account of the foundation of Apamea, quoted above:

> And Seleukos Nicator also founded another seaboard city in Syria by the name of Laodicea, after the name of his daughter. Previously it had been a village named Mazabda.\footnote{For the physical site of Laodicea, see Grainger 1990b, 71–72; Cohen 2006, 111–116.} As was his custom, he made sacrifice to Zeus and asked where to found the city. An eagle came again and snatched something from the sacrifice. As he was following after the eagle a huge wild boar came out of the reeds to confront him.\footnote{There is a superb image of a boar emerging from the reeds to attack Adonis in Antioch’s marvelous fifth century CE Yakto mosaic: Lassus 1934, 125 fig. 9.} He killed it with the spear he brandished. After sacrificing the boar, he dragged its carcass about to mark out the line of the walls with its blood, and took no more interest in the eagle. And so, he built the city on the blood of the boar, and he sacrificed an innocent girl by the name of Agave, setting up a bronze statue to her to serve as the Tyche of the city.\footnote{John Mal. Chron. 202–203 Dindorf = Pausanias of Antioch FGrH 854 F10.}

But then, why should we confine ourselves to the foundation stories of the four cities of the Tetrapolis described by Malalas? Could not the settlement at Bourg es-Sleýb be illustrating its own parallel foundation story? Cohen conjectures that the ancient city’s identity may have been that of one of Stephanus of Byzantium’s two mysterious
Heracleas, no less. But it would be a shame if Herakles could achieve representation in a scene of the foundation of Apamea, for all his good work in the region, but not in a scene of the foundation of a city actually named for him.\footnote{Cohen 2006, 86 n.6 speculates that the site of the discovery may have been the ancient Heraclea by the Sea.}

The origin-point of this imagery

By way of conclusion let us think briefly about the possible origin-point of this imagery. The bulk of the evidence for the legend of Seleukos is only attested after the fall – in many cases long after the fall (which is interesting in itself) – of the dynasty, and so it is generally difficult to divine the stages of its development over the course of it. We just offer a few notes here.

1. One thing we can be sure of is that Seleukos himself was strongly devoted to Herakles.\footnote{See Mehl 1986, 6–12, who contends (9) that Seleukos claimed descent from Herakles in his own lifetime.} The young Herakles is one the most prolific images on his coins. Indeed, he appears on the very earliest group of them, those issued probably at Babylon itself in 315 BCE (i.e., immediately before Seleukos’ expulsion from the city by Antigonus).\footnote{Houghton and Lorber 2002–8 no. 79 (perhaps Babylon).} From 311 BCE onwards, after Seleukos’ recovery of the city, he is found pervasively on issues throughout his expanding empire.\footnote{Houghton and Lorber 2002–8 passim. In the background, Herakles’ image had been prominent on Argead coinage for many generations, from at least that of Alexander I, in fact: see Hammond and Griffith 1979, 110, 138, 663–669, etc.}

2. The Seleukids were claiming Temenid – i.e., Heraclean – descent from at least 206/5 BC, the date (in the reign of Antiochos III, 223–187 BC, therefore) of an inscription referring to it from Xanthus in Lycia.\footnote{Bousquet 1988, lines 75–76. See more generally Mehl 1986, 6–12.}

3. The earliest indication that Seleukos’ distinctive Heraclean-style birth narrative had been developed (as opposed to the simpler and more nebulous notion that Seleukos was somehow the son of Apollo) comes in a valuable fragment of Euphorion of Chalcis, in later life Librarian of the great royal library in Antioch, also in the reign of Antiochos III.\footnote{The place of first resort for Euphorion is now Lightfoot 2009.} The fragment in question, from work unknown, reads as follows:

Laodice, Seleukos’ mother, foresaw a kingdom in Asia for him before she had even given birth to him: Euphorion bruited this abroad.\footnote{Euphorion Fl19 Lightfoot = Tert. an. 46.6 p.63.25 Waszink.}
Without making mention of Apollo or the anchor-ring, the fragment links a pre-parturition vision of Laodice’s to Seleukos’ future kingdom in Asia. In doing so it encapsulates the fundamental points of the birth narratives of both Justin and Appian, and so strongly suggests that their fuller tales were already expressed in Euphorion’s work – or at least known by him.

4. Furthermore, Hollis, Bernard and Primo have contended that Oppian of Apamea’s narrative of Herakles’ battle against the lovesick Orontes – the typological re-projection of Seleukos’ foundation of Apamea – is also derived from the work of Euphorion, the best support for this being the (contested) ancient tradition that Euphorion died at Apamea.

Perhaps we have here the beginnings of a case that Seleukos’ Heraclean typology came to flourish in the reign of Antiochos III, whether or not this was also the point of its initial development. At any rate, it would take a considerable leap of faith to hold that all this Heraclean typology originated with Seleukos himself. However, with just such a leap of faith, I have been asked whether it is possible, in theory, that the historical Seleukos invented mythological episodes for Herakles in order to manufacture a context for own achievements, or even that he actually deliberately acted in such a way as to project himself into Herakles’ established footsteps. My answer to both questions is a somewhat reluctant “yes, in theory”.

Let us think about the more extreme possibility first. For Seleukos to have consciously and ostentatiously placed himself in the footsteps of Herakles in any one of these cases, two conditions would have to be met. First, we would have to be sure that the relevant Heraclean episode existed prior to Seleukos’ own age. Secondly, we would have to be sure that the historical Seleukos had the motive and the wherewithal to stage what we might term the re-enactment. On the basis of these criteria, we may make a three-way distinction between our six typologies.

Typologies (1) and (2) meet the first criterion but fail the second. The difficulty of its supposedly fantastical aspects aside, Seleukos was hardly in a position to control or stage the circumstances of his own birth, let alone to have a motive to do so. Nor, probably, was he in a position to stage the escape and mastery of the sacrificial bull. The issue in the latter case is less the availability of suitably phlegmatic bulls than the fact that at the point of the supposed episode Seleukos was no king, just a minor a courtier of Alexander, and the fact that as such he can have had no conception of the destiny that awaited him. Even if he had the wherewithal to interfere with the King’s sacrifice in such a way (and an annoyed Alexander was surely more dangerous than any bull...), it is hard to imagine that he could have had the motive to do so.

By contrast, typologies (3), (4) and (6), those bearing on the foundations of Antioch, Apamea and Daphne, together with the latter’s games, meet the second criterion easily, but fail the first. It is almost inconceivable that the corresponding Herakles

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59 Suda s.v. Εὐφορίον, also reporting the counter-tradition that he died at Antioch.
episodes should have had a prior and independent existence. What would have been
their context? What would have been their point? Rather, they must be considered
back-formations from Seleukos’ achievements.⁶⁰ It is, indeed, theoretically possible
that Seleukos was himself responsible for these supplements to Herakles’ career –
hence my “yes” above – but we will never be able to know that.

The one case that could, theoretically, meet both criteria is Typology (5), that of
Seleukos’ discovery of the golden arrowhead at the site of Daphne, with drakôn in
attendance – an episode which, as we have contended, makes a diffracted appeal
to Herakles’ long-established Hesperid Labour, with its own golden prize and
drákon. In this case alone we can be sure both that the relevant Heraclean episode
thrived in myth first, and that Seleukos – King indeed now – would have been in a
position to organise the corresponding bit of mummery, should he have been in-
clined to do so.

![Mosaic plucked from Apamea. Reproduced from Olszewski and Saad 2017, with
perspective corrected. The copyright presumably resides with the robbers!]

⁶⁰ It is, I suppose, a possibility that the episodes in question, or versions of them, had a prior ex-
istence in indigenous legend, in connection with figures that were now syncretised with Herakles.
List of Figures

Fig. 1: Mosaic plundered from Apamea. Reproduced from Olszewski and Saad 2017, with perspective corrected. The copyright presumably resides with the robbers!

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