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PLUNDER OF TEMPLES BY SELEUKID KINGS THE CASES UNDER THE REIGN OF ANTIOCHOS III, SELEUKOS IV, AND ANTIOCHOS IV

Abstract: The present paper addresses the cases of temple plunder or attempt of plunder in the Seleukid Kingdom during the period 211/0-164/3 BCE by kingly order. The paper aims at shedding some light on the motives of Antiochos III, Seleukos IV, and Antiochos IV, who -as it is attested by the literary sources- ordered the plunder of temples in several regions of their Kingdom. The despoliation of temples by the Seleukids is often connected, according to many modern historians, with the difficult economic conditions of the Empire after the treaty of Apamea with the Romans in 188. It is therefore stressed that the Kings constantly sacked temples in order to be able to fulfill their unbearable financial obligations to Rome. By examining though the socio-political as well as the economic conditions of Seleukid Kingdom during 211/0-164/3, I am arguing in this paper that the motives of these Kings varied, and were not exclusively related to the economic profit temple pillage would offer them, especially in the cases of Seleukos IV and Antiochos IV.

Keywords: *Plunder of temples, Seleukid Kingdom, Antiochos III, Seleukos IV, Antiochos IV, Jerusalem, Elam, Treaty of Apamea*

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I. ANTIOCHOS III. THE GREAT

Antiochos III reigned from 223 to 187² succeeding Seleukos III, also known as “Ceraunos”. After his *Anabasis*, the successful expedition to the upper satrapies of Seleukid Kingdom (212-205), Antiochos received the prosonym “the Great” (ὁ Μέγας)³.

1. PLUNDER IN ECBATANA

Only one year after his expedition in the East and the upper satrapies of the Kingdom⁴, Antiochos, while he was still in Media (211/0), plundered the temple of Ainē in Ecbatana⁵, gaining wealth equal to at least 4000 talents. The description of Polybius⁶ on this plunder underlines the growth of profit for the King:

ὁμοῦς δὲ κατὰ τὴν Ἀντιόχου παρουσίαν ὃ τε ναὸς αὐτὸς ὁ τῆς

¹ All dates given are BCE.

² On the chronology of Antiochos' reign see SCHMITT 1964, 1-3 with references.

³ APPIAN, *Syriaca*, 1. See also MA 1999, 272-273.

⁴ On the course of Antiochos' *Anabasis* cf. WILL 1982, vol. II, 51-69.

⁵ This temple in particular had already been sacked several times in the past; see POLYBIUS 10.27.11.

⁶ 10.27.12-13

Αἴνης προσαγορευόμενος ἔτι τοὺς κίονας εἶχε τοὺς πέριξ κεχρυσωμένους, καὶ κεραμίδες ἀργυραὶ καὶ πλείους ἐν αὐτῷ συνετέθειντο, πλίνθοι δὲ χρυσαὶ τινες ὀλίγαι μὲν ἦσαν, ἀργυραὶ δὲ καὶ πλείους ὑπέμενον. ἐκ δὲ πάντων τῶν προειρημένων τό χαραχθέν εἰς τὸ βασιλικὸν ἠθροίσθη νόμισμα μικρῶ λείπον τετρακισχιλίων ταλάντων⁷.

The motives of Antiochos for this temple plunder in Ecbatana are clearly related to the King's need to continue financing his both ambitious and costly expedition in the East⁸, whose needs were constant, and to some extent unpredictable. This particular plunder consisted undoubtedly of a measure of precaution on behalf of Antiochos to create a sufficient stock in the royal vault in case he needed to cover further expenses that would probably come up during his campaign⁹. It should also be highlighted that there is no indication whatsoever of a possible uprising in the area of Ecbatana, which would partially explain the temple plunder by the King as a form of retaliation to a reaction of local populations against his will to impose his power upon them¹⁰. The aim of Antiochos' decision to despoil the temple of Ainē was undoubtedly related to the great economic benefits a temple plunder entailed, which in this case were going to supply the royal vault during his highly costly and lasting *Anabasis*¹¹.

2. THE TREATY OF APAMEA, AND THE ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF SELEUKID KINGDOM AFTER 188

After the defeat of Antiochos III by the Romans in the battle of Magnesia in Sipylus (190/89)¹², the peace of Apamea soon followed¹³, which was attached to the so-called "Treaty of Apamea" that defined -in short- the following terms for the defeated Seleukids¹⁴:

- The borders of Seleukid Kingdom from now on would be extended no further than the so-called "line of Taurus", which was defined by the river *Tanaïs* (also known today as "Göksu").
- Antiochos should withdraw his troops from the areas beyond Taurus, and he should also not sail beyond the cape Sarpedon. Furthermore, the King should stop breeding war elephants as well as withdraw the existing

ones¹⁵, and have no more than ten battleships in his procession.

- Antiochos should no longer conclude any military or commercial alliance with western powers (meaning the populations beyond Taurus).
- The sum of 15000 attic talents should be paid by the Seleukid Empire to the Romans as war reparations¹⁶.
- Twelve Seleukids should be given to the Romans as hostages, among them the youngest son of Antiochos III, Mithridates (later Antiochos IV Epiphanes).

Even if the treaty of Apamea succeeded to restrict territorially the Seleukids to their Asian possessions (from the line of Taurus to the eastern Iran), forcing them to lose any influence they possessed in the eastern Asia Minor and Europe, and it also affected temporarily the economic welfare of the Kingdom, the Seleukid Empire however did succeed to cope through this treaty, finding gradually its military and economic stability, during the reign of Seleukos IV, and finally to thrive once more during the short reign of Antiochos IV.

Undoubtedly the economic conditions of Seleukid Kingdom soon after the defeat of Antiochos III by the Romans in Magnesia, and the ratification of the Treaty of Apamea¹⁷, must have been affected harshly. The costs of Antiochos' expedition in the East as well as of his war against the Romans were enormous, and we should always bear in mind that the royal vault would have been emptied by that time (188), financing these lasting military activities of Antiochos. In addition, after 188, the war expenses, which the Seleucid Kingdom owned both to the Romans and the Kingdom of Pergamum¹⁸, consisted of a further factor of temporal instability for the royal economy. Antiochos had already been forced to pay immediately 3000 talents (500 + 2500) to the Romans and 400 talents to Eumenes II¹⁹, and perhaps this fact was one of the most decisive reasons because of which the King attempted to plunder the temple of Ba'al in Elam, only one year after the treaty²⁰.

It is moreover an indication of the financial difficulties,

⁷ It is highly possible that the profits from this plunder were even bigger, as the Seleukids, and not only them, maintained great quantities of uncut metal, meaning that usually not all of the metal was used in the coinage. It is also possible that Antiochos sent some of this metal to other mints, beyond Ecbatana, such as to that of Antioch, Nisibis and elsewhere. Cf. RIDER 1993, 58.

⁸ See WILL 1982, vol. II, 55-66; SCHMITT 1964, 101-102; TAYLOR 2014, 228-229.

⁹ Cf. TAYLOR 2014, 228 n. 29. On the size of Seleukid army see JOUSTIN 41.5.7; POLYBIUS 5.79; TITUS-LIVIVS 37.37.9. See also WALBANK 1957, vol. I, 236; BAR-KOCHVA 1976, 10, WILL 1982, vol. II, 55, APERGHIS 2004, 190-197, 201-203. On the wages see again APERGHIS 2004, 203-205.

¹⁰ See KUHRT/SHERWIN-WHITE 1993, 197; TAYLOR 2014, 229.

¹¹ As SCHMITT (1964, 102) explicitly underlines: "...so ist eher zu vermuten, dass der eigentliche Zweck dieser Maßnahmen eine Zwangsanzleihe war, mit der der Herrscher seine leeren Kassen wieder auffüllen wollte- vermutlich ohne die Absicht, sie jemals wieder zurückzuerstatten". Next stops of Antiochos expedition: Parthia (209); Bactrian (208-206), and "India" (206-205).

¹² See APPIAN, *Syriaca*, 32-36; TITUS-LIVIVS 37.40 (on the battle), 59.2 (on the treasures of Antiochos, which L. Cornelius Scipio Asiagenus grabbed after his victory in Magnesia).

¹³ See APPIAN, *Syriaca*, 38-39; POLYBIUS 21.24.1-2, 7-8, 42-43; TITUS-LIVIVS 37.55.1-3, 38.38.

¹⁴ On the terms of the treaty see in detail McDONALD 1967, 1-8; McDONALD/WALBANK 1969, 30-39.

¹⁵ This is a term which was never enforced (cf. BAR-KOCHVA 1976, 75-83), as we are informed by POLYBIUS (30.25.11) of the existence of elephants in the Seleukid military forces during the magnificent parade of the army in Daphne (166). We also know that Antiochos used war elephants at almost every war he conducted. Cf. I *MACCABEES*, 1.17, 6.30, 8.6. On the Seleukid army under the reign of Antiochos IV cf. COUVENHES 2014, 181-208. See also APPIAN, *Syriaca*, 46; POLYBIUS 31.2.11 on the existence of elephants as well as battleships in the Seleukid forces until the reign of Antiochos V (164-162/1). It is therefore evident the fact that the Romans were tolerant enough towards the Seleukids regarding the compliance of all the terms of the treaty.

¹⁶ 500 talents as an immediate repayment, 2500 soon after the ratification of treaty in Rome, and the rest of war expenses (12.000 talents) should be paid in a year basis for the next twelve years (until 177/6). The King should also pay to Eumenes II 400 talents immediately (POLYBIUS 21.17.4-6; TITUS-LIVIVS 37.45.14-15), and the sum of 350 talents in the next five years (meaning until 184/3). On the financial clause of the treaty see APPIAN, *Syriaca*, 39; POLYBIUS 21.42.19-21; TITUS-LIVIVS 38.38.13-14. See also McDONALD 1967; PALTIEL 1979; BURSTEIN 1981; RIDER 1992, 267-277, 1993, 50-52; GERA 1997, 90. The spoils that fell into the hands of Romans consist of a big loss for the Seleukids as well.

¹⁷ On the ratification of the treaty in Rome in the summer of 188 and its engraving on bronze steles see APPIAN, *Syriaca*, 39.

¹⁸ 70 talents per year for the next five years. See POLYBIUS 21.42.19-21; TITUS-LIVIVS 38.38.

¹⁹ POLYBIUS 21.17.4-6; TITUS-LIVIVS 37.45.14-15.

²⁰ SCHMITT 1964, 101-102, and in detail at the following subsection.

the Seleukid Kingdom faced after Apamea²¹, the fact that the last installment of the war expenses to the Romans was not to be paid until 174/3 by Antiochos IV²².

However, it should always be noticed that the size of Seleukid economy was vast, even though it had now lost the incomes from the central and western Asia Minor. The Seleukids not only maintained great trade contacts in the East, but had them also renewed, thanks to the successful *Anabasis* of Antiochos²³. This thriving trading activity in the eastern markets should definitely provide to the Seleukid Kingdom sufficient incomes for the yearly payment of 1000 talents to the Romans for the next twelve years²⁴. Furthermore, it should be stressed that it is not known the extent to which the Romans actually demanded from the Seleukids to comply with all the terms of the treaty within a strictly chronological schedule after the battle of Magnesia²⁵. Finally, the production of Seleukid coinage in general does not seem to be affected dramatically after 188²⁶.

In conclusion, the economic conditions of Seleukid Empire after the treaty of Apamea were surely not, on the one hand, the best ones the Kingdom had ever faced²⁷, on the other hand, they should not also be that bad to such an extent that could completely justify the fact that Antiochos III and Seleukos IV attempted to plunder the temples in Elam (in 187) and in Jerusalem (in ca. 180) respectively soon afterwards, due to purely economic scarcity.

3. PLUNDER IN ELAM

Antiochos, one year after the treaty of Apamea, is in

²¹ On the economic scarcity of Seleukids after the treaty of Apamea, which would impel Antiochos III and Seleukos IV to attempt to plunder temples in Elam and in Jerusalem respectively see BEVAN 1902, vol. II, 120; WILL 1982, vol. II, 55-56, 239-240; GREEN 1993, 372, KUHRT/SHERWIN-WHITE 1993, 215 (“...the regular Seleucid policy...of benefactions to temples and, for obvious reasons, was only resorted to in times of financial crisis”).

²² Cf. TITUS-LIVIVS 42.6-8.

²³ Cf. ROSTOVITZ 1953, vol. II, 695-705 on the abundant incomes of Seleukid Kingdom, as an “enormously wealthy” Empire, even after Apamea, derived from the trading contacts in the East. It should also be taken into account the fact that the treasuries of coins, belonging to this period (2nd century) always contain a great deal of foreign coins (for example from Asia Minor). In general, this seems to indicate that trading funds move from the West to the East (Seleukid Kingdom), apparently for the purchase of mainly exotic products, the trade of which is controlled to a great extent and for quite a long time by the Seleukids. Furthermore, given the economic conditions of Seleukid Kingdom under the reign of following kings, it is easily attested the image of a Kingdom particularly rich, even if it had been limited territorially, by losing Asia Minor. It should therefore be noticed that the Seleukid Kingdom still controlled, after 188, vast possessions, such as Syria, Mesopotamia, Babylon, Susiana, Media, Cilicia, and a part of Pamphylia. See WLL 1982, vol. II, 228-229; SALLES 1987, 75-109; RIDER 1993, 52, 60 with n. 70.

²⁴ Cf. RIDER 1993, 61-62; RIDER/DeCALLATAÏ 2006, 202.

²⁵ See above n. 15, where it is attested by the sources that at least one condition of the treaty, concerning the war elephants and ships in Seleukid Empire, was not enforced. Perhaps the war reparations, which –as it appears– should not be that unbearable for an economy of the size of the Seleukid one, were not necessarily to be paid within a strict chronological framework. Cf. RIDER 1993, 61-62; RIDER/DeCALLATAÏ 2006, 201.

²⁶ See RIDER 1993; HOWGEGO 1995, 37; APERGHIS 2004, 232; RIDER/DeCALLATAÏ 2006, 202. RIDER (1993, 55) explicitly stresses: “En ce qui concerne Séleucos IV, donc, aucune mesure ne traduit la hâte ou l'improvisation. Les grands ateliers demeurent en fonctionnement (Laodicée disparaît, mais Antioche suffisait pour la Séleucide)”.

²⁷ A quick comparison here between the Seleukid economy of the period after 188 with that of 223, the starting year of Antiochos III' reign, confirms undoubtedly this statement.

Elam, where –as it is attested by the sources²⁸– he attempts to plunder the temple of Ba'al. In the end, he fails to, because of great resistance by the locals. This incident would claim his life²⁹.

The causes of this attempt are unclear. Diodorus³⁰ stresses that Antiochos accused the Elamites of uprising, and therefore he attempted to plunder their temple, as a punishment for their disrespectful behavior towards him. On the contrary, Strabo as well as Justin³¹ address that the Elamites upraised only after the King's attempt to despoil their temple.

As it is mentioned above, Antiochos would undoubtedly need immediately a quick reinforcement of the royal vault, as it had already been emptied due to the King's lasting and highly costly wars as well as to the immediate obligatory payment of war reparations to the Romans, equal to 3000 talents. Furthermore, as a year had already passed since the ratification of Apamea treaty, Antiochos was called again to pay immediately 1000 talents³². The King should also ensure that this sum of money would be paid to the Romans for the next eleven years³³. Therefore, given these economic circumstances, Antiochos, passing through Elam³⁴, must have thought that one more temple plunder would offer him a necessary, quick, and above all easily-earned pillage, which would make it easier for the Kingdom to honor the fulfillment of its financial obligations towards both Rome and Pergamum on time³⁵. However, we cannot be sure if an uprising of the Elamites against Antiochos preceded the plunder, but even if it did, it would have probably been only the King's excuse in order to sack this wealthy temple.

Finally, one should always bear in mind that the plunder of temples was a common practice of those times³⁶, and it is highly questionable that this kind of practice indicates in general absolute urgent financial needs, or clearly political aims. To gain quick and easy profit consists of a common practice throughout history, especially when

²⁸ DIODORUS 28.3, 29.15; JUSTIN 32.2.1-2; STRABO 16.1.18.

²⁹ Antiochos the Great dies in Elam in 187. See DIODORUS 28.3.2; JUSTIN 32.2; STRABO 16.1.18.

³⁰ 29.15.

³¹ JUSTIN 32.2.2; STRABO 16.1.18.

³² TAYLOR (2014, 230) explicitly mentions: “The underlying motive was again undoubtedly pecuniary. Following the Treaty of Apamea, the king badly needed coin and bullion to pay the Roman indemnity”. See also SCHMITT (1964, 102), who stresses: “Die verzweifelte finanzielle Lage, in der sich das Seleukidenreich nach dem Frieden von Apameia befand, erklärt das Vorgehen des Königs in der Elymais zur Genüge”.

³³ APPIAN, *Syriaca*, 39; POLYBIUS 21.43.19.

³⁴ Perhaps planning an expedition towards East once more; cf. TAYLOR 2014, 230. In that case, the motive of Antiochos' attempt to plunder the temple in Elam must have been similar to that one concerning the plunder in Ecbatana in 211/0; in other words the pillage would be once more related to his need to finance an expedition of his.

³⁵ The Taylor's explanation (2014, 230) regarding the motives of Antiochos in Elam must have been quite close, as we believe, to the reality of that time: “...the king simply hoped to pilfer enough funds to keep his government running while he cobbled together cash for his next payment to the Romans”.

³⁶ Cf. POLYBIUS 10.27.11-12 on the plunder of temple in Ecbatana during the past by Alexander, Antigonus, and Seleukos. Furthermore, Mithridates I, king of the Parthians, earned a profit by the holy treasures of Elam equal to 10000 talents (cf. STRABO 26.1.18). In addition, Cambyses (see DIODORUS 1.46.4) and Artaxerxes III (see DIODORUS 16.51.2) had pillaged temples in Egypt. See also TAYLOR 2014 on all the cases of despoliation of temples by Seleukid kings before Antiochos III and after Antiochos IV.

the risk taken is admittedly quite low³⁷. In the case of *Ba'al*'s temple in Elam, Antiochos probably miscalculated the risk of earning this quick profit, which would boost immediately the royal economy, and found death.

II. SELEUKOS IV. PHILOPATOR, AND THE HELIODORUS' EPISODE IN JERUSALEM

Seleukos IV succeeded his father, Antiochos III, in the Seleukid throne in 187, and maintained power until 175³⁸. Very few details are attested by the sources concerning Seleukos' personality and life³⁹ as well as the conditions of the Kingdom under his reign⁴⁰. One of the most peculiar incidents during his reign is the so-called "Heliodorus' affair" in Jerusalem, which is perhaps related to a possible Seleukos' attempt to plunder the temple there in ca. 180⁴¹.

The writer of the second book of Maccabees⁴² addresses an attempt of despoliation of Yahweh's temple in Jerusalem by the King's chancellor (ὁ ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων), Heliodorus⁴³. Heliodorus seems to have been sent to Jerusalem because of an internal dispute over the succession in the hierarchy for the administrative matters of the temple⁴⁴. As there was also, according to Bickerman⁴⁵, an accusation for false book-keeping in the handling of the royal cash subventions⁴⁶, the King's envoy should intervene, gaining also perhaps a profit equal to 400 silver as well as 200 golden talents⁴⁷. For reasons of which our only source on the matter raises the whole incident, on purpose, into an imaginary level - in order the episode to be incorporated

³⁷ ROSTOVITZ (1953, vol. II, 695-696) projects as de facto that the cases of temple plunders, especially by Seleukid kings, were connected mainly with the Kings' need for immediate profit; a need that would not necessarily derive from an urgent economic situation of the Kingdom after the treaty of Apamea. He explains that the Seleukids always turned their attention first of all to the treasures of temples of foreign deities, who were worshipped by the local communities within the territory of Seleukid influence, in order to ensure a quick profit for the royal vault.

³⁸ "...Σελεύκου μὲν ἔτεσι δώδεκα, ἀπράκτως ἅμα καὶ ἀσθενῶς διὰ τὴν τοῦ πατρὸς συμφορὰν" (APPIAN, *Syriaca*, 66). See also the severe judgment of BOOK OF DANIEL, 11.20 about Seleukos IV: "*nilhil dignum Syriae et patris gessit imperio et absque ullis praeliis ingloriosus periiit*"; II *MACCABEES*, 3.38. See also BEVAN 1902, vol. II, 120; WILL 1982, vol. II, 303; BARTLETT 1973, 241.

³⁹ Cf. CAH 1989, vol. VIII, 338-341; MILETA 2014, 165-180.

⁴⁰ On the economic policy of Seleukos, we tend to agree with MILETA 2014, 165, who underlines: "dass es Seleukos IV. während seiner zwölfjährigen Regierungszeit gelungen ist, das in politischer und wirtschaftlich-fiskalischer Hinsicht enorm geschwächte Reich zu stabilisieren. Sein Bruder und Nachfolger Antiochos IV. Epiphanes fand es in einem Zustand vor, die ihm eine kraftvolle Innen- und Außenpolitik ermöglichte". On the economic conditions of the Kingdom under his reign see also RIDER 1993, 49-67.

⁴¹ Cf. TCHERIKOVER 1959, 156; GRÜLL 2010, 16-18.

⁴² II *MACCABEES*, 3, 4.1-40. See also FEYEL/GRASLIN-THOMÉ 2014, 12-14.

⁴³ On the economic administration of the sanctuaries in the regions under Seleukid control see APERGHIS 2004, 287-288. On the relations - in an administrative level- between the foreign temples of the Empire and the Seleukid king see CAPDETREY 2007, 167-189; DIGNAS 2008, 36-59; GORRE/HONIGMAN 2013, 105-119, 2014, 316-319.

⁴⁴ Simon, who had been made *prostatēs* of the temple, had a disagreement with the high-priest, Onias III, about the administration of the city market (II *MACCABEES*, 3, 4).

⁴⁵ BICKERMAN 1980, vol. II, 162-166. On the contrary cf. TAYLOR 1979, 73-80; COTTON/WÖRRLE 2007, 202 with n. 90.

⁴⁶ As Simon could not prevail over Onias, he went to Apollonius of Thraseas, who was *stratēgos* (governor) of Koilē Syria and Phoinikē at that time. Then he reported to Apollonius that the treasures of Jerusalem temple were vast, and that a part of this wealth did not belong to the account of the sacrifices (they were the deposits of orphans, widows, and Hyrkanos, an ally of the Ptolemies). Therefore, it would be possible for the Seleukid king to control it.

⁴⁷ II *MACCABEES*, 3.1-13.

into a divine plan of protection of the most holy place of the Jews- the mission of Heliodorus fails⁴⁸, and a few years later, in September of 175, Seleukos will be assassinated⁴⁹.

Given the fact that our only literary source concerning the attempt of temple plunder in Jerusalem by Seleukos IV can hardly be considered historically safe⁵⁰, only assumptions could be given regarding the reasons because of which the King attempted perhaps to take advantage of the holy treasures of Jerusalem. As it is mentioned several times in the present paper, the economic clause of the treaty of Apameia must have not been that unbearable for the vast Seleukid economy, and not that urgent; not at least to such an extent which would justify fully the constant Seleukids' attempt to plunder temples of foreign deities of their Kingdom. We believe that the probable economic difficulties of Seleukid Empire, caused exclusively by the treaty of Apamea, were nothing more than temporal problems, which Seleukos IV successfully faced.

It seems likely that the fact that the last installment of the war expenses to the Romans was not paid twelve years after the ratification of the treaty (in 177/6), but a few years later, with some delay, by Antiochos IV⁵¹, could indicate partially some financial problems in the Seleukid Kingdom during the reign of Seleukos IV⁵². Moreover, the possible reduced number of coins, as it is believed by many historians, the Seleukid kingdom at that time produced⁵³, could also indicate that the royal economy was not thriving. Admittedly, it is impossible for one to claim that the Seleukid economy under Seleukos IV was thriving, as it happened when Antiochos III came to power. Seleukos was still obliged to pay for the expenses of the lasting wars of Antiochos the Great as well as for the fiscal obligations of his Kingdom to the Romans after the defeat in Magnesia in 189⁵⁴. However, he

⁴⁸ On a detailed description of the Heliodorus' incident in Jerusalem see ABEL, vol. I, 105-108; BICKERMAN 1980, vol. II, 156-191; GORRE/HONIGMAN 2014, 330-332. On the solution of this crisis, reached by the Jews and the Seleukid government, covered by the miraculous outcome of the angels' appearance before Heliodorus see FISCHER 1991; GERA 1997, 107; SCHWARTZ 2003; KENNELL 2005; EGO 2007. On the negotiations taking place in the court at Antioch see the hints of II *MACCABEES*, 4.1-6.

⁴⁹ Cf. APPIAN, *Syriaca*, 45; II *MACCABEES*, 3.4-40. See also CAH 1989, vol. VIII, 340 n. 55 with references; MILETA 2014, 179-180 with n. 45.

⁵⁰ Meaning the second book of *MACCABEES*, 3-4. There is also an epigraphical testimony related to the matter, the inscription of Marisha, which is mentioned below.

⁵¹ See TITUS-LIVIUS 42.6-8. The last installment of war expenses to the Romans, paid by Antiochos IV, was 2000 talents or 1000 (according some manuscripts). See BEVAN 1902, vol. II, 133; MØRKHOLM 1963, 41 with n. 57.

⁵² On the other hand, this delay of payment to Rome could indicate that the rest of Seleukids' debt was not urgently to be paid or at least that the Romans did not force them regarding the time of payment; in other words, this delay is not necessarily related to big financial difficulties of the Empire during the reign of Seleukos IV. Cf. RIDER 1993, 60-61. If it is also possible that there was still a small debt of the Seleukids to the Romans until 165 (see II *MACCABEES*, 8,10), as it is believed for example by STARCKY 1961, 269 and WILL 1982, vol. II, 303-304, this fact strongly indicates that Rome did not force the Seleukid Empire to pay the war expenses strictly within twelve years after the ratification of the treaty.

⁵³ See SEYRIG 1958, 194-196; MØRKHOLM 1966, 31-32; BOEHRINGER 1972, 96; GREEN 1993, 422; MILETA 2014, 175-176. On the contrary, on an undisturbed -by the treaty- Seleukid coinage during the reign of Seleukos IV see RIDER 1993, 49-67; RIDER/DeCALLATAÏ 2006, 202. We tend to agree with Rider's point of view; see above n. 26.

⁵⁴ See MILETA 2014, 178-179, who correctly concludes: "...so war Seleukos IV. während seiner Regierungszeit vor allem damit sich beschäftigt, das katastrophale politische und wirtschaftlich-fiskalische Erbe zu bewältigen,

successfully managed to make the Seleukid economy strong again. Therefore, it is highly questionable that the possible attempt of Heliodorus to despoil the temple in Jerusalem⁵⁵ was related to the unbearable economic conditions of the Kingdom after 188⁵⁶.

The most probable reason, because of which Seleukos sent Heliodorus to Judaea, must have been related to the King's attempt to involve himself politically in administrative matters of the temples in Koilē Syria and Phoinikē, which were traditionally controlled by the sanctuaries, as they were considered strictly as entirely independently religious affairs⁵⁷. This assumption derives from the examination of a newly discovered Greek inscription of the Hellenistic polis of Marisha (Bet Guvrin, Israel)⁵⁸, which contains three letters, an order from Seleukos to Heliodorus about some Olympiodorus, who was to be put in charge—as a high-priest-of the sanctuaries of Koilē Syria and Phoinikē, a letter from Heliodorus to Dorymenes (who was probably the *stratēgos* of this region at that time), and a letter from Dorymenes to some Diophanes (probably the Hipparchos of the district of

das sein Vater Antiochos III. hinterlassen hatte". On the other hand, we also agree with RIDER 1993, 60-63, who concludes that Seleukos IV did not have any difficulties to pay the Romans, as it was prescribed in the financial clause of Apamea treaty: "les douze versements, en principe annuel, de 1000 talents aux Romains constituaient certes pour sa trésorerie [de Séleucos IV] une charge irritante, mais nullement aussi insupportable qu'on l'a souvent pensé" (p. 62).

⁵⁵ It is though perhaps better for us not to be certain that this Heliodorus incident did actually happen in Jerusalem or at least that it happened after a royal command. It is highly possible that Heliodorus intruded into the temple in order to control personally the counting of money. The traditionally peaceful relations of the Seleukids with the Jews as well as the generally positive evaluation of Seleukos IV's kingship by the Jews consist of a good reason to question the authenticity of the incident of Heliodorus, at least as far as the plunder part is concerned. See II *MACCABEES*, 3.2, where it is attested that Seleukos IV paid his respect to the Jerusalem temple, and glorified it with the finest gifts. Following the steps of his father, Antiochos III (JOSEPHUS, *Antiquitates*, 12.140), Seleukos had even provided "πάντα τὰ πρὸς τὰς λειτουργίας τῶν θυσιαῶν ἐπιβάλλοντα δαπανήματα" (II *MACCABEES*, 3.3). See also BICKERMAN, vol. II, 1938, 123-124. On the good relations of Antiochos III with the Jews see II *MACCABEES*, 3.5 where it is attested that the Jews offered some help to the King during the fifth Syrian war (cf. also GERA 1997, 25-34). Antiochos, in return, issued an order, according to which the holiness of Jerusalem was recognized (JOSEPHUS, *Antiquitates*, 12.3.3; cf. again GERA 2009, 147).

⁵⁶ On this "empty coffers" of the Seleukid Kingdom mainly during the reign of Seleukos IV see in general BEVAN 1902, vol. II; WILL 1982, vol II; MØRKHOLM 1966, 30-31; FERRARY 1978, 747. On the contrary cf. RIDER 1993, who notices (p. 58): "Au total, le monnayage en tétradrachmes de Séleucos IV n'est pas très différent de celui de son prédécesseur ni de celui de son successeur. Les ateliers semblent avoir conservé dans leur ensemble leur activité habituelle. On a l'impression que l'indemnité due aux Romains n'a pas suscité de frappes exceptionnelles: le roi aurait donc disposé dans sa trésorerie d'assez de monnaies de toute sorte pour être en mesure de prélever chaque année 1000 talents sans avoir à frapper lui-même une plus grande quantité de numéraire", and in p. 60: "Il [Séleucos IV] aurait économisé ainsi une certaine masse de métal, non pas dans le paiement de l'indemnité (les Romains avaient fixé clairement le poids que devaient atteindre les 1000 talents annuels), mais dans les transactions locales, où les monnaies étaient comptées et non pesées. Non seulement Séleucos IV n'agit pas de la sorte, mais ses tétradrachmes paraissent même avoir été un peu plus lourds que ceux d'Antiochos III". However RIDER (1993, 60-61) stresses that a plunder of temple did happen in Jerusalem by order of Seleukos IV, mainly because of political reasons, meaning the fact that Onias III showed too much of a sympathy towards Hyrkanos, an ally of the Ptolemies.

⁵⁷ See BICKERMAN 1980, vol. II, 190-191; SCHWARTZ 2008, 186; GRÜLL 2010, 16; RAPPAPORT 2011, 10-19; GORRE/HONIGMAN 2014, 331-332; TAYLOR 2014, 231.

⁵⁸ On the inscription see COTTON/WÖRRLE 2007, 191-205; GRÜLL 2010, 9-19.

Marisha). The inscription informs us about Seleukos' will to ensure that the temples in all the satrapies of his Kingdom shall receive the honours due to them from ancient times. The King, in his letter to Heliodorus, informed him about his intention to appoint Olympiodorus as a supervisor of the sanctuaries (τασσόμενος ἐπὶ τῶν ἱερῶν), consequently probably of their cultic practices as well. It is therefore clear that Seleukos intended to intervene to the affairs of the temples of Koilē Syria and Phoinikē, in order to impose strict bureaucratic control over them⁵⁹, and succeed an easier fiscal exploitation. This kingly intention must have caused basically the opposition of the people in Jerusalem in ca. 180⁶⁰.

However, as we are not sure whether the Heliodorus' affair happened after Olympiodorus' appointment in Koilē Syria and Phoinikē or before, our only conclusion on this nebulous incident of Heliodorus in Jerusalem could be that Seleukos sent this envoy in Judaea in order to examine in close the conditions of the conflict between Simon and Onias III, as well as the religious and economic conditions of the sanctuary, whether this had already been controlled by Olympiodorus or was still autonomous.

Finally, we cannot be sure about the plunder of the temple, at least not by Seleukos' demand⁶¹. In case though it did happen, it should be taken into account the fact that every kingly order, even this one of Seleukos to send Heliodorus in Jerusalem -which has served mainly political purposes⁶²⁻, could also has been related, to some extent, to the economic profits as well⁶³. The profit from the temple pillage could have undoubtedly helped with a common

⁵⁹ It is highly possible that Seleukos intended mainly to bring this former Ptolemaic possession, the satrapy of Koilē Syria and Phoinikē, into line with the rest of Seleukid Kingdom, which would entail this stricter bureaucratic control over it, as it is mentioned above. See also COTTON/WÖRRLE 2007 in detail.

⁶⁰ It must be though stressed here that, as we are not sure about the chronology of either two events (cf. COTTON/WÖRRLE 2007, 203; GRÜLL 2010, 16-18), it is not at all certain that the Heliodorus' attempt to despoil the temple in Jerusalem happened at the same period, when Seleukos intended to appoint Olympiodorus as high-priest of Koilē Syria and Phoinikē in order to intervene in the administrative matters of the temples of this satrapy (a fact that it is attested only by the inscription of Marisha). However, after a comparative study of II *MACCABEES*, 3-4, and the letter of Seleukos to Heliodorus, we tend to believe these two incidents are strictly connected, as they both indicate intention of the King to intervene to strictly religious affairs, traditionally controlled only by the temples. COTTON/WÖRRLE 2007, 203 conclude that: "the termination of Ptolemaios son of Thraseas' long governorship in Koilē Syria and Phoinikē made Olympiodorus' appointment as the ἐπὶ τῶν ἱερῶν in the satrapy in late summer 178 both possible and necessary. These two events in turn set off the Heliodorus affair...Accordingly the "temple robbery" by Heliodorus [...] should belong to the period between late summer 178 and Seleukos IV' death in early September 175. [...] There is no warrant to turn events around and posit the appointment of Olympiodorus as the consequence of an unsuccessful "temple robbery". It is not though unreasonable to think that Seleukos could have sent at first Heliodorus to Jerusalem in order to examine in close the conditions of Jewish religious autonomy, and then to have appointed Olympiodorus as an overseer of the sanctuaries in the region. In addition, we cannot be sure that the Heliodorus' affair is connected with a kingly order for this temple despoliation; it could have been Heliodorus' initiative, if it actually happened.

⁶¹ See above n. 55 and 60.

⁶² See RIDER/DeCALLATAÏ 2006, 201. On the contrary see GERA 2009, 148, according to whom: "the appointment of Olympiodorus seems to have been part of an effort by Seleukos IV to fulfill his financial obligations to Rome".

⁶³ Cf. MA 2002, 139; COTTON/WÖRRLE 2007, 202-203.

supply of the royal vault⁶⁴. In addition, if the plunder actually happened by Seleukos' order, and did concern the deposits of orphans, widows, and mainly Hyrkanos, to the temple, it would also consist of a political message of the Seleukid king that would show explicitly his displeasure on the sympathy of Onias III to an ally of the Ptolemies.

III. ANTIOCHOS IV. EPIPHANES

*“Antiochos IV. Epiphanes (175-164) war zweifellos eine der rätselhaftesten Herrschergestalten des Hellenismus. Manches «Rätselhafte» verschwindet allerdings, wenn man seine Handlungen, die schon die Zeitgenossen in Erstaunen versetzt haben, als das zu verstehen versucht, was sie im Sinne des Königs zunächst waren, nämlich als Politik”*⁶⁵.

Antiochos IV. “Epiphanes” reigned from 175, succeeding his brother, Seleukos IV⁶⁶, to the Seleukid throne, until 164. Even if he maintained power for just twelve years⁶⁷, the Seleukid Kingdom thrived under his reign both economically⁶⁸ and militarily⁶⁹.

1. THE SITUATION IN JUDAEA BEFORE THE PLUNDER

Even if the incident with Heliodorus did happen in Jerusalem during the reign of Seleukos IV, the relations between the Seleukids and the Jews were traditionally good; the Kings allowed them to live according to their own laws, customs, and religious faith⁷⁰. However, it is attested by the literary sources⁷¹ that a part of the sacerdotal aristocracy of Judaea, who had got, to a great extent, hellenized under the Ptolemies, took the initiative, during the reign of Antiochos IV, to adjust the Jewish nation to the Greek way of life.

In short⁷², in 174, Jason, brother of the conservative high-priest of Jerusalem temple, Onias, presented himself to Antiochos, offering him a respectful sum of money in exchange of receiving the position of his brother in the temple, the high-priesthood. Moreover, he asked Antiochos to be permitted to adapt Jerusalem to the Greek way of organizing a city, renaming it to “Antiochia”, constructing furthermore a gymnasium as well as introducing a clearly

⁶⁴ On a combination of political with economic motives regarding the Seleukos' attempt to plunder the temple in Jerusalem see GRÜLL 2010, 16-18; MILETA 2014, 175-178.

⁶⁵ BUNGE 1976, 53.

⁶⁶ After a short reign of Seleukos IV's son, Antiochos, who was murdered by Antiochos IV, soon after the death of Seleukos IV. On the genealogical tree of the family of Antiochos III see SCHMITT 1964, 297; MITTAG 2006, 32-37.

⁶⁷ On the life and work of Antiochos IV see in detail MØRKHOLM 1966; MITTAG 2006.

⁶⁸ On the economic conditions of Kingdom under his reign as well as the coinage of the period see MØRKHOLM 1963; APERGHIS 2004, 214-238; RIDER/DeCALLATAÏ 2006, 30-35, 40-48, 115-130, 171-208, 218-221; DOYEN 2014, 261-299.

⁶⁹ On the magnificent parade of Seleukid army in Daphne see ATHENAEUS, 5.194c-196a; POLYBIUS 30.25-26. See also MØRKHOLM 1963, 33; BUNGE 1976, 53-71; MITTAG 2006, 282-295; ERSKINE 2013, 37-55, in particular 42-44. It should be though noticed that Antiochos started a serious conflict with the Jews, which would go on long after his reign and would entail nasty consequences for the Seleukid kingdom.

⁷⁰ Even when Antiochos the Great had conquered Palestine, he allowed the Jews to maintain their right to live accordingly to the standards they had set by themselves. Cf. JOSEPHUS, *Antiquitates*, 12.138-144 and 145-146.

⁷¹ I MACCABEES, 1.11-15 and II 4.4-15.

⁷² On the situation in Judaea before the plunder of temple in Jerusalem by Antiochos IV cf. ABEL 1952, vol. I, 109-118.

Greek institution, the *Ephebeia*. Antiochos accepted Jason to replace his brother in the temple of Jerusalem, and within a short period of time the reforms were completed without extensive reactions on behalf of the Jewish people, as it is not attested in the sources that Jason intended to conduct reforms concerning the Jewish religion⁷³.

However, a few years later, some Menelaus offered to Antiochos a bigger bid in comparison to that of Jason, and therefore he received -as an exchange- the position of high-priesthood in the temple of Jerusalem. However, as Menelaus was less moderate than Jason, a conflict between Menelaus' followers and their opponents would soon burst. This stasis would force Antiochos to intervene in order to stabilize politically the situation in Judaea. However, while the king was still in Egypt⁷⁴, he was informed that Jason invaded Jerusalem trying to seize power⁷⁵. This move of Jason was interpreted by Antiochos as an attempt of rebellion of all Jews, who should have taken advantage of the fact that the king was too busy with the affairs in Egypt, in order to make their region autonomous, by doubting and pulling away the influence of Seleukids in Judaea. It is also possible that Antiochos considered this crisis as an attempt of diversion for Jews' part, aiming at distracting him from far more important issues for the Empire, such as of that of Egypt. The reaction of Antiochos was swift and decisive, serving clearly political purposes⁷⁶.

2. PLUNDER IN JERUSALEM

In 168, Antiochos arrived in Judaea in order to intervene, after Jason's invasion in Jerusalem by military forces. It was then, as it is attested by the sources⁷⁷, when Antiochos plundered the temple gaining profit equal to 1800 silver talents. However, it is not known when exactly this plunder happened. According to the first book of Maccabees⁷⁸, Antiochos sacked the temple in the winter of 169. If this date is to be accepted as the right one, then the despoliation must be related to the finance of Antiochos' expedition in Egypt. According though to the second book of Maccabees⁷⁹, the plunder happened after the stasis that had broken out in Judaea between Menelaus and Jason over the position of high-priest in the temple of Jerusalem⁸⁰. In this case, which sounds more possible, the King's motives for the temple plunder were to a great extent political. Antiochos had to intervene in the conflict that had broken out over the leadership of the temple matters in Jerusalem, while he was

⁷³ On the reforms of Jason in Jerusalem cf. ABEL 1952, vol. I, 112-116; GORRE/HONIGMAN 2014, 333-336.

⁷⁴ For the so-called “sixth Syrian war” (170-168), during which Egypt tried to recover south Syria and Palestine, regions that were under Seleukid control since 200, and the reign of Antiochos the Great. On the war of Antiochos IV against Egypt see FISCHER/BOVET 2014, 209-259.

⁷⁵ It seems that Jason thought that the proper moment to invade Judaea was when a rumor had spread, according to which Antiochos had found death in battle against the Egyptians. Cf. II MACCABEES, 5.5.

⁷⁶ Cf. BRINGMANN 1980, 176-190 and 1983. On the sources referring to Antiochos IV and the Jews from 174 until his death in 164 cf. CAH, vol. VIII, 346 n. 77 with references.

⁷⁷ I MACCABEES, 1.21-23; II 5.15-16, 21.

⁷⁸ I 1.19-23.

⁷⁹ II 5.11-15.

⁸⁰ The BOOK OF DANIEL, 11.25-31, mentions that Antiochos visited twice the city; it offers though no further information regarding the sequence of events at that time.

also afraid of the contingency of a possible uprising of all the Jews, which would derive from their doubt over his political will to appoint Menelaus as a high-priest of the temple.

The plunder, however, is related to ideological motives as well. If the plunder did happen after the expedition in Egypt, then it is surely connected with the disgraceful incident of the day in Eleusis⁸¹, when the Roman envoy exposed politically Antiochos, disgracing his prestige before his troop and councillors. Therefore Antiochos, by interfering decisively into the stasis in Judaea, seized the opportunity to show off his military power⁸², but most importantly to confirm his political authority⁸³.

Naturally, it should not be overlooked the fact that the plunder of a temple, as it is stressed constantly in the present paper, consists of a common practice of Antiochos' era, as well as of a quick and enough secure way for a King to reinforce the royal vault. In other words, Antiochos, by intervening militarily into the conflict between Menelaus and Jason in Jerusalem, did not lose the opportunity to sack the temple as well, in order, on the one hand, to punish the Jews for their possible doubt over his political will, on the other hand, because he could do so, and probably did not believe that he was behaving in an unholy way⁸⁴.

It is though unlikely that, when Antiochos plundered the temple in Jerusalem, he was moved by a particularly great economic need⁸⁵. The economic conditions in his Kingdom had been stabilized during the reign of Seleukos IV, therefore this particular plunder of Antiochos IV in Judaea consisted basically of an act of political interference, and demonstration of military power⁸⁶.

Soon afterwards, the religious reform of Antiochos in Jerusalem would follow⁸⁷, which would trigger the so-called "uprising of the Maccabees"⁸⁸ that would officially cease

⁸¹ See POLYBIUS 29.27.4-9. See also MORGAN 1990, 37-39; MITTAG 2006, 224.

⁸² Besides, it is well known that Antiochos was particularly fond of demonstrating the military force of his Kingdom. In 166 a magnificent parade of the Seleukid army took place in Daphne. See above n. 69.

⁸³ See BOOK OF DANIEL 11.30. See also GRUEN 1984, 661; TAYLOR 2014, 233.

⁸⁴ To steal temple property was considered by the Jews as a crime of sacrilege (*hierosylia*); and the author of II *MACCABEES* (9.2) condemns the depredation of Antiochos IV. Antiochos, because of the despoliation of the Jerusalem temple, and of his religious reform in Judaea, would be considered by the Jews as the archetypal oppressor, and later on the Christians would call him the Antichrist. See I *MACCABEES*, 1.10; CYPRIAN, *ad Fortunatum*, 11.115: "immo in Antiocho antichristus expressus".

⁸⁵ Cf. JOSEPHUS, *Contra Apionem* 2.83-84: "quia uero Antiochus neque iustam fecit templi depraedationem, sed egestate pecuniarum ad hoc accessit, cum non esset hostis, et super nos auxiliares suos et amicos adgressus est nec aliquid dignum derisione illic inuenit... omnes dicunt pecuniam indigentem Antiochum transgressum foedera Iudaeorum et spoliasset templum auro argentoque plenum". As it though so vividly stressed by RIDER (1993, 61) : "Il était habituel, dans les expéditions militaires, de compter sur les ressources qu'on trouverait en chemin, et les richesses des temples, malgré leur caractère sacré, n'étaient pas à l'abri d'un coup de force".

⁸⁶ See also MØRKHOLM 1966, 142-143, who relates the plunder of Antiochos in Jerusalem to the Menelaus' weakness to pay the bid he had offered to the King as an exchange for the position of high-priest in Jerusalem. On the difficulties Menelaus faced to gather the money he owed to Antiochos see II *MACCABEES*, 4.27. Furthermore, Antiochos sacked the temple aiming perhaps at receiving delayed taxes from the Jews (see APERGHIS 2004, 249). See also TAYLOR 2014, 234.

⁸⁷ On the religious reform of Antiochos IV in Judaea cf. MØRKHOLM 1966, 145-148; MITTAG 2006, 256-268, and a forthcoming study of mine.

⁸⁸ On the uprising of Maccabees see ABEL 1952, vol. I, 130-147; MITTAG

one year after Antiochos' death, with the purification of the temple by Judah in 163. This uprising would lead to the final loss of Seleukid control in the region of Judaea and the creation of the Hasmonean Kingdom.

3. PLUNDER IN ELAM

While Antiochos IV was still in Elam in 164, it is attested by the sources that he attempted to plunder the temple of Nanaia, conducting a sacred marriage with the Goddess⁸⁹. Facing though rough resistance by the Elamites, the King was forced to withdraw, and died soon afterwards by some disease⁹⁰.

The motives of Antiochos for this pillage are not clear. This attempt though, as we believe, consists above all of one more example of his common practice to plunder temples during all his years as a King of the Seleukid Empire⁹¹. However, the fact that this particular despoliation took place in Elam indicates probably political motives. It is highly likely that Antiochos planned to carry out a new *Anabasis*⁹², following the footsteps of his father, in order to restore the lost political authority of his (especially after the Day in Eleusis) as well as of the Seleukid kingdom, which, after its defeat by the Romans in 189, and the treaty of Apamea, had succeeded no military triumph, worthy to the great expedition of Antiochos III in the East. But now his son, Antiochos IV Epiphanes, being highly ambitious –as far as it is at least indicated by the magnificent parade of Seleukid army in Daphne– was on the verge of conducting a new great expedition towards the upper satrapies (Parthia, Bactria, until perhaps India), in order to restore his Kingdom to the past glorious era before the war against the Romans.

In the spring of 165 Antiochos had already begun his expedition to the East, succeeding to recover the Seleukid control over Armenia, and the next logical step would be the recovery of lost grounds in Persis (protecting at the same time the western Iran from the Parthians and the local uprisings) as well as in Elam⁹³.

However, it is possible that the motives of Antiochos for plundering the temple in Elam were partially economic

2006, 268-277.

⁸⁹ Cf. II *MACCABEES*, 1.14 where it is considered that Antiochos died during an attack against the Elamites. However, it is most probable that the author here confuses Antiochos IV with his father, Antiochos III, who actually died during a clash with the Elamites, when he attempted to plunder the temple there in 187.

⁹⁰ DIODORUS 31.18; POLYBIUS 31.9. See also APPIAN, *Syriaca*, 66 where it is attested that Antiochos did succeed to plunder the temple, but he died soon afterwards by a disease.

⁹¹ See ATHENAEUS 5.195F. See also POLYBIUS 30.26.9 who stresses that Antiochos had also plundered a few temples in Egypt during his expedition there. On the possible plunder of Antiochos IV in Hierapolis-Bambyke, northern Syria, see GRANIUS LICINIANUS 28.6.1, where it is attested, without given a certain chronological framework of the incident, that Antiochos conducted a sacred marriage with the Goddess Artemis of Hierapolis, receiving at the same time the treasure of her temple as a dowry ("...se simulabat Hierapoli Dianam ducere uxorem, et ceteris epulas instrumentibus vasa e sacro protulit et cenatus de mensis ea abstulit in dotem extra annulum quem unum omnium e deae donis reliquit"). See in detail MØRKHOLM 1966, 132; MITTAG 2006, 149-151; TAYLOR 2014, 234-235. See also ASTRONOMICAL DIARIES, no 168 on the controversial plunder case by Antiochos IV of the temple of Nabu in Babylon.

⁹² Cf. TARN 1951, 197; RIDER 1965, 311-321; WILL 1982, vol. II, 345-346, 352-355; MITTAG 2006, 296-331; COUVENHES 2014, 182-183; JOANNÈS 2014, 440.

⁹³ Cf. MITTAG 2006, 296-318; MARTINEZ-SÈVE 2014, 363-393.

as well. Although Antiochos had succeeded to pay off completely the debt of his Kingdom to the Romans⁹⁴, now he would probably need as much money as he could get in order to carry out all his ambitious plans that would undoubtedly give back to Seleukids their lost prestige worldwide. At first, as it is above-mentioned, Antiochos should need the booty of the pillage in Elam in order to finance possibly the continuation of his ambitious expedition in the East. Moreover, he had already begun a great military reform⁹⁵, which must have demanded further funds, and he was also financing the construction of Olympieion in Athens⁹⁶, which would restore the Seleukid influence -in a diplomatic level- in the Mediterranean east.

The ambitious military plan of Antiochos IV in the East⁹⁷ as well as his ambitions to restore the political prestige of Seleukid Empire throughout *Ecumene*, as it had happened under the reign of Antiochos the Great, were going to consist perhaps of the last glorious era of Seleukid kingdom, at least in a political level. This era would end too soon, due to the immature death of Antiochos Epiphanes in 164 in Elam.

CONCLUSIONS

The present paper offered an overview of the cases of temple plunders by Seleukid kings, during the period 211/0-164/3, to which the literary sources referred in some detail. The paper examined the extent to which these plunders by Antiochos III, Seleukos IV, and Antiochos IV were connected with an urgent Seleukid need for fundraising, particularly because of the financial clause of the treaty of Apamea. Until now, a specific historical view had prevailed in the study of Seleukid Empire, according to which the pillage of temples by the Seleukids was mainly related to the desperate need of Kingdom for raising money in order to fulfill its unbearable financial obligations to Rome, after the defeat in Magnesia. By studying though –on a case by case basis- the specific military, economic, and political conditions of the Kingdom during that period, the present paper suggests that the despoliation of temples was a common practice of the Seleukids, and their motives varied, without necessarily being related to compelling economic needs after 188. As it is stressed here, only the temple plunder cases during the reign of Antiochos III seemed to serve mainly economic purposes. On the other hand, the motives of Seleukos IV and Antiochos IV were basically political, as the Seleukid economy under their reign was vast and still powerful, and it should not have been affected to such an extent by the treaty of Apamea, that would force Seleukos IV and Antiochos IV to plunder constantly temples of foreign deities in order to fulfill their economic obligations to the Romans.

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⁹⁴ Even though with some delay in 174/3; see TITUS-LIVIVS 42.6.6.

⁹⁵ Cf. SEKUNDA 2001.

⁹⁶ See GRANIUS LICINIANUS 28.10-13; POLYBIUS 26.1.11; STRABO 9.1.17; TITUS-LIVIVS 41.20.8-9; VITRUVIUS 7.15, 17.

⁹⁷ On the expedition of Antiochos IV in the East in order to confront mainly the Parthians see BEVAN 1902, vol. II, 158; DEBEVOISE 1938, 20. It is though not attested by the sources that Antiochos did plan to recover control in Parthia and Bactria, therefore the whole theory of a new *Anabasis* on behalf of Antiochos towards these regions is highly hypothetical, although yet enough reasonable.

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