APPENDIX I: SELEUCID ROYAL WOMEN

The Seleucids have only recently begun to be buoyed by the wave of scholarly attention on the status and role of royal women during the Hellenistic period. As the glamorous and better-documented Argead and Ptolemaic women have become understood to somewhere near satisfaction, the more mysterious and shadowy women of the Seleucids have stepped into the academic limelight. These women, like the dynasty which they perpetuated, have often been marginalised because of either the dearth or ambiguity of our sources, or perhaps more simply because of the currents of scholarly interest have pushed the Seleucids to the periphery of the Hellenistic world until only recently. The wealth of research on Macedonian and Ptolemaic women has given rise to the general impression that fiery Argead women like Olympias and Adea-Eurydice set the precedent for greater female involvement in dynastic politics, while the infamous Cleopatrae of the Ptolemies owed their near-equal status and influence to an odd combination of Pharaonic ideology and their own resourcefulness (or ruthlessness). With the Argeads as the precedent, and the Ptolemies as something of an exceptional case, the Seleucids have strangely become paradigmatic of Hellenistic dynasty as a general concept – and by implication the role of Seleucid women has become the de facto Hellenistic norm.¹ As always the Seleucids have been juxtaposed against the extreme tendencies of their Egyptian relatives as a more moderate example, yet again I would argue that such opposition is too conveniently simplistic and glosses over the interrelation of the two antagonists beginning with Antiochus II and ending with the collapse of both Houses. But despite my own methodological qualms the prevailing sentiment is nonetheless prevalent, and every author to discuss Seleucid women agrees on their importance to the dynasty – though how Seleucid women are important to the dynasty gives rise to contention.

What has been most striking to me about the growing swathe of literature on Seleucid women is how infrequently questions of genealogy are posed or answered. Any consideration of what a royal woman did, of what was her place in the dynasty, or even the implications of her marriages and relations must arise from the identification of who she was. The perceived role of

¹ A sentiment most explicitly communicated by Carney (2011), 196.
women within the dynasty revolves almost completely around their genealogical identification, yet all who have tackled the topic have not been on the same genealogical page. As I have mentioned in preceding chapters, it is frequently the case that the marriages or relations that are most often hailed as paradigmatic or as typifying Seleucid ideology happen to be the most ambiguous or contested. Because different authors have been guided by different hereditary assumptions their conclusions have been correspondingly divergent: a scholar who assumes that Laodice IV, for instance, was the sister of Antiochus Neos, Seleucus IV, and Antiochus IV will have a vastly different impression of her than one who presumes she was unrelated. The same is true of sundry other cases in the dynasty’s history, which brings us back to the systemic problem of Seleucid genealogy: because of the ambiguity of the evidence, such divergent models and interpretations are, on the surface, equally plausible. To continue using the same example, one identification leads to one generalization regarding brother-sister marriage, which leads to another generalization regarding the privileged status of royal sisters, and with that comes the assumption of consanguinity as a prerequisite for royal marriage, whereby royal women are seen as privileged for their descent and as bearers of hereditary legitimacy. This is of course only one example based on one assumption, but I hope that the mechanism and ramifications of such assumptions are apparent.

The generalizations, however, do not end there. There is an odd duality to analyses of Seleucid women – which I shall discuss in greater detail shortly – in which they are presumed either to be coldly rational, calculating, and manipulative, or passionately and emotionally impulsive, with little room in the middle. Scholars seem only able to see them as coolly detached players in the political game or as hot-headed interlopers. The same duality is true of the attribution of agency: some authors describe royal women as ‘pawns,’ or as being given and taken away ‘as if they were furniture,’ while others grant them choice, preference, even independence. Above all, however, the most prevalent tendency in historiography of Seleucid royal women – and the one that I consider most detrimental – is the sweeping generalization of the role and status of women across the entire dynasty. Nearly every scholar who has written

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2 For this particular line of reasoning: Bielman-Sánchez (2003), 46-52.
3 The furniture simile is expressed by Whitehorne (2001) in the context of Cleopatra Thea, 150-1.
about Seleucid women has attempted to fit all of them into a single conceptual and ideological framework that fails to account for the sheer diversity of female characters and their contributions to the dynasty. Seleucid queens have been taken as representative of all Seleucid females, while sisters, daughters, and even concubines seem generally excluded from the model or consigned to the passive role of diplomatic token. All women within the dynasty were not equal, neither were their abilities, expectations, or contributions, and I would argue that this diversity of femininity amongst the Seleucids ought to be the subject of our consideration. We tend to privilege royal females simply by virtue of their frequency of appearance in our source record, so that we take the queen with the most inscriptions to be the most influential, the most literary mentions to be the most infamous, or the most coinage to be the most involved in dynastic politics. Yet if we look more closely at those who appear only fleetingly and intermittently perhaps we can see amongst these Apamas, Antiochises, and Stratonices the multifaceted, nuanced nature of Seleucid regal femininity in all of its diversity, instead of in its artificially narrowed simplicity.

It is neither my intention nor my ability with this appendix to provide a complete analysis of Seleucid females or to correct completely the misdirection of scholarly focus that I believe is present. Rather it is my aim to provide a brief chronological overview of the thematic developments in our understanding of Seleucid royal women followed by a concise reconsideration of possible alternative directions of inquiry. While none of the questions may be fully resolved, at the very least the debate will be better situated and contextualized by the effort.

The early modern historians of the Seleucids by and large adopted the bias and focus of their ancient predecessors by only briefly mentioning the majority of women in passing and then denigrating in greater detail the influence of those on whom they choose to focus. Women are either invisible and passive, or visible and sinister. Edwyn Bevan describes the majority of princesses and daughters as diplomatic tokens passed off by their fathers or brothers to various houses in marriage, who only occasionally act as agents of their male

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4 Bikerman is especially dismissive of royal women when he writes ‘la reine séleucide n’apparaît jamais sur la scène politique comme les épouses des Lagides.’ Bikerman (1938), 27.
relatives’ machinations.\textsuperscript{5} In general they have very little agency, and their principal value is as a symbol of the dynasty as a whole; they derive their prestige only from their pedigree. A woman who does wield her sway over the dynasty is almost inherently untrustworthy, and little good comes of their intervention.\textsuperscript{6} Events like marriage of Cleopatra Thea are described with not-so-subtle disdain: with the advent of her and other Ptolemaic women, ‘destiny was introducing the Erinyes of the house of Seleucus.’\textsuperscript{7} In the generations that follow, an uncontrollable and vengeful female presence brings the empire to its knees, and the idea of these furies wreaking havoc on the dynasty brings an almost apocalyptic quality to female influence. Women like Cleopatra IV and Cleopatra Tryphaena draw an entire kingdom into their sisterly feuds and pit Seleucid men against one another in the resolution thereof.\textsuperscript{8} The kingdom, more than anything else, suffers from the combination of their rivalry and influence. This is not to say that they were merely concerned with personal matters, as according to Bevan ‘it was in the political sphere, rather than just that of sensual indulgence, that their passions lay and their crimes found a motive.’\textsuperscript{9} The picture that emerges is one in which female dynastic potentates will stop at nothing in the realization of their political and dynastic ambitions. The presence of female players in the game of politics reduced it to a ruthless, criminal affair that deprived male Seleucids of their influence and accelerated the decay of their power.\textsuperscript{10} In spite of their sinister potential, in Bevan’s eyes the more docile and complacent women who were contented with their diplomatic nuptial roles were nevertheless valuable tools in imperial administration. It was when they tried to step out of such a passive role that they became a threat.

Bevan, for all of his eloquence, was never one to try to separate emotion from history, nor was he one to restrain from casting almost priestly judgements on the characters under his scrutiny. Oddly enough Grace Macurdy, approaching Seleucid women from the angle of female empowerment and influence, agrees with some of Bevan’s more dismissive conclusions. Despite

\textsuperscript{5} Bevan (1902), 2.16-53 for examples of such analysis.
\textsuperscript{6} This implicit line of reasoning becomes apparent from the reign of Alexander Balas onwards in Bevan (1902), 2.210-80.
\textsuperscript{7} Bevan (1902), 2.212.
\textsuperscript{8} Bevan (1902), 2.255.
\textsuperscript{9} Bevan (1902), 2.280.
\textsuperscript{10} Bevan (1902), 2.255-70.
a stark comparison between the pawn status of women in early to mid Argead Macedonia and the third century – which she describes as ‘the era of super-women,’ – she nevertheless advances something of a minimalist view of female power.\(^{11}\) Very few women in Syria and Macedonia, she argues, ever possessed any ‘real’ political power, and it was only in Egypt that women gradually became the equals of male rulers.\(^{12}\) Echoing Bevan, she views Seleucid women as valuable to their male relations only as a means of alliance, as an asset in diplomatic manoeuvring.\(^{13}\) She extends this observation somewhat further: the utilitarian value of royal daughters, she argues, might account for the rarity of brother-sister marriage in the dynasty because such princesses were so politically valuable that none remained in the family to marry their brothers.\(^{14}\) Female power in the dynasty was, at least at first, entirely derivative from marriage and relation to various royal males; they could not, either dynastically or politically, stand on their own two feet.\(^{15}\) The advent of the Ptolemies, in Macurdy’s schema, seems to represent the importation of female influence into the Seleucid dynasty by marriage. When the power and visibility of Ptolemaic females come to the dynasty, suddenly Seleucid women emerge as independent political actors, with drastic ramifications for the dynasty.\(^{16}\) Those women who seem to fascinate her the most are the select few who stepped into the position of king, and it is in these rare instances that she sees the emergence of true female empowerment.\(^{17}\) The generally minimalist view she has of Seleucid female power, I believe, emerges from the criteria by which she gauges influence: Macurdy considers female power almost exclusively in the same terms as male influence, considering them less influential if their power does not match that of male royals. I find such consideration of feminine influence \textit{vis-à-vis} male influence to be ultimately misleading because it undermines the vastly different expectations and spheres of influence of both genders, making for a paradigm whose equality was neither present nor possible. If we gauge female royal power using the same criteria as

\(^{11}\) Macurdy (1927), 212-3.
\(^{12}\) Macurdy (1932), i. for the minimalist view of female power.
\(^{13}\) Macurdy (1932), 6-7.
\(^{14}\) Macurdy (1932), 6.
\(^{15}\) This seems especially the case with Laodice III: Macurdy (1932), 91-2.
\(^{16}\) Macurdy (1932) 99.
\(^{17}\) Macurdy (1932), 94-102.
male royal power, royal females will always be found powerless by comparison. Such is the nature of the Hellenistic world.

After the brief flurry of interest in the topic that was roused by Macurdy, Seleucid women by and large fell out of scholarly focus for nearly a half-century until Hellenistic female regality gradually resurfaced as an area of interest. Different approaches were taken to explain female influence in the Hellenistic period, with authors such as Greenwalt seeing late marriageability ages and even polygamy as underpinning the prevalence of female leverage.\textsuperscript{18} To Pomeroy, writing about the Hellenistic world in general, royal women rose to intermittent prominence by jumping into the breach vacated by royal men when they were absent or preoccupied – a phenomenon that became more and more common amongst the later Seleucids.\textsuperscript{19} Elizabeth Carney elaborated this by putting forward the astute notion in a 1991 article that power did not automatically come with a woman’s status: ‘being a basilissa did not in itself convey any specific power, but it did offer a potential which might be realized by royal women bold enough to try.’\textsuperscript{20} Power is thus not institutional but highly personal, determined more by the gumption and charisma of a particular royal woman than by her status. Royal status becomes a prerequisite for influence, but not a guarantee thereof. While such a description of royal femininity almost borders on the emancipatory, it allows for a disparity of power amongst royal females that forces us to consider each on their own terms.

Daniel Ogden at once perpetuates the interpretations of Macurdy and Bevan while also introducing some room for variable agency amongst royal women. In the model of amphimetric strife he presents, the abiding impression left on the reader is that it was competition amongst royal women that, perhaps more than anything, led to the demise of the dynasty.\textsuperscript{21} Quick to acknowledge the role of many royal women as simple marital items and little else, he also echoes Macurdy in associating the arrival of Ptolemaic women into the dynasty with the importation of Ptolemaic traditions of supreme female legitimation and influence.\textsuperscript{22} Ogden, as

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\textsuperscript{18} Greenwalt (1988), 96-7.  
\textsuperscript{19} Pomeroy (1990), 9.  
\textsuperscript{20} Carney (1991), 164.  
\textsuperscript{21} Ogden (1999), 125-30.  
\textsuperscript{22} Ogden (1999), 117.
with all of the aforementioned authors, presumes that the Seleucids at least occasionally employed brother-sister marriage in the exclusive perpetuation of the dynastic line. With such a presumption it becomes easy to see intermarriage of the Ptolemies as a watershed moment in which outside custom was introduced along with outside blood, but if one takes a more conservative genealogical approach then such intermarriage is far from a novel or groundbreaking occurrence. While Ogden describes Ptolemaic princesses as transferrable legitimating tokens, he nevertheless recognises their ability to transfer themselves between princes and essentially choose whom they want to legitimate. Such active agency manifests itself in the phenomenon of polyandry amongst the later Seleucids, as royal women became increasingly preferential in their nuptial choices. Even in his chapter on the Seleucids, however, Ptolemaic women seem to dominate most of his discussion and the sheer depth of their involvement brings into question the degree to which we can continue to distinguish between the two.

John Whitehorne’s 2001 monograph Cleopatras takes the radically new approach of not distinguishing between later Seleucid and Ptolemaic women but treating them as one unified subject of inquiry. Women, especially in the era under consideration, were far more able to bridge the divide between the two houses than their male counterparts, and doing away with the dynastic distinction grants him a much broader scope. The Ptolemaic/Seleucid women, in his analysis, fill in the gaps between misjoined male reigns and rise to prominence at moments of dynastic breakdown. For lack of any other intelligible authority, royal women take affairs into their own hands almost as a sort of dynastic fail-safe or backup. In line with Macurdy and Carney, such women rise to particularly distraught occasions and it is only then that their potential for influence is realized, making their power responsive and inconsistent. In the midst of his erudite descriptions of political machinations and dynastic politics, Whitehorne quite usefully leaves a great deal of room for his Cleopatras to be human: as calculating as they

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23 Ogden (1999), 71-2, and 150-5.
24 Ogden (1999), 155.
25 Especially with Cleopatra I and Cleopatra Selene at Whitehorne (2001), 83-8, and 183-5, though this is mainly a prevailing sentiment throughout the entire work.
26 Cleopatra Thea and Cleopatra Selene, for instance, at Whitehorne (2001), 150-63, and 164-74, respectively.
are, they can still be inspired to act out of bitterness, resentment at being passed over, jilted jealousy, or any other number of understandable sentiments.\(^{27}\) With this they cease to be either coldly calculating or impulsively passionate, and find a more believable – and I would argue realistic – middle ground between the two extremes. In his analysis we gain a more complete picture of all of the diverse elements that characterise regal femininity: the conjoined Seleucid and Ptolemaic backdrop, the mix of institutional prestige and episodic exertion of extraordinary influence, and above the complex but deeply human interplay between emotion and political ambition.

The only scholarly work solely dedicated to the analysis of Seleucid royal women that has yet been composed is Kyra Nourse’s 2002 doctoral thesis discussing women and the emergence of royal power in the early Hellenistic East. In the midst of her conclusion she introduces a point that I consider as insightful as Whitehorne’s joint consideration of the two dynasties: although, she concedes, Seleucid women could not rule in their own right, she argues that political independence is neither the sole nor most effective criterion by which to understand the political significance of Seleucid queens.\(^{28}\) A vast departure from Macurdy’s criteria for female power, Nourse writes that their influence ‘was no less real or significant for having been derived from the authority of a king or dynasty as a whole.’\(^{29}\) In this light the role she gives to Seleucid women as representatives of the dynasty, intercessors with the king, and bearers of legitimacy is no longer a subordinate concession but a completely different form of empowerment.\(^{30}\) That their influence was not the same as that of male royals does not render it null, rather they exercised very different forms of power in different arenas. Women, in this augmented sense, could and did intervene in military and political affairs not as stand-ins for male figures but in their own unique capacity.\(^{31}\) Such standing was actively promoted by male Seleucids who recognized the value of their female counterparts to the perception of dynastic

\(^{27}\) Especially in the cases of Cleopatra IV and Cleopatra Tryphaena: Whitehorne (2001), 165-7.
\(^{28}\) Nourse (2002), 272-3.
\(^{29}\) Nourse (2002), 273.
\(^{30}\) Nourse (2002), 3-6, and 283-4.
\(^{31}\) Nourse (2002), 260-3.
stability, harmony, and legitimacy, as well their representative and ambassadorial utility.\textsuperscript{32} The subordinate nature of their partnership cannot be denied, but this subordination still ‘carried with it the potential for considerable influence and political authority.’\textsuperscript{33} Such authority, it seems, had been extant since the dynasty’s inception, scholars had merely been searching for it in the wrong places.

This notion of separate spheres, for lack of a better appellation, underlies Bielman-Sanchez’s 2003 analysis of Seleucid queens as the female equivalent of Hellenistic kings. His article provides perhaps the best example of how genealogical presumptions inform much broader conclusions: presuming the prevalence – or at least presence – of brother-sister marriage in the dynasty he draws a distinction between females in consanguineous marriages and those in exogamous marriages.\textsuperscript{34} Consanguinity gave Seleucid females a double legitimacy that none of their potential counterparts could possess, entitling them to a primacy of status that was inaccessible to their siblings. Exogamous women were relegated to the role of ambassadors and symbols of union with external dynasties, while their endogamous counterparts had the much more public renown as pillars of dynastic stability and legitimacy, the very embodiment of their lineage.\textsuperscript{35} The principal queens of the dynasty, in his view, are given almost a domestic role: generally solicited for humanitarian issues of a sort and concerned with such benevolent issues as providing dowries for poor women in Iasos, they are entrusted to negotiate issues that fall out of the purview of the king.\textsuperscript{36} But for all of their gender-differentiated influence, Bielman-Sánchez is careful to remind us of its inherently derivative character, especially with the sweepingly disenfranchising assertion that ‘les homes demeuraient les maîtres d’un jeu dont les femmes étaient les pions passifs.’\textsuperscript{37} Female power, in whatever form it took, was still predicated on their relationship with a man. Completely independent female power was essentially non-existent amongst the Hellenistic dynasties.\textsuperscript{38}

\textsuperscript{32} Especially with Apama and Seleucus I: Nourse (2002), 227-8.
\textsuperscript{33} Nourse (2002), 286.
\textsuperscript{34} Bielman-Sanchez (2003), 46-7.
\textsuperscript{35} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{36} Bielman-Sanchez (2003), 56.
\textsuperscript{37} Bielman-Sanchez (2003), 47.
\textsuperscript{38} Bielman-Sanchez (2003), 61.
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The most recent indirect analysis of Seleucid royal females (to my knowledge) is Elizabeth Carney’s 2011 article ‘Being Royal and Being Female in the Early Hellenistic Period.’ Largely treading the line of Nourse and Bielman-Sánchez, but highlights the importance of cultural context in shaping the role of women. As with Nourse, Homeric, Hecatomnid, Argead, and Pharaonic precedents all come into play and manifest themselves with varying frequency in each dynasty.\(^{39}\) Taking the notion of separate gendered spheres of royal influence one step further, she argues that royal women were meant to encapsulate their clans in a way that royal men simply could not, and that their symbolic and representative weight was exclusively female.\(^{40}\) In the Seleucid context, women have a much greater role in public events and in the display of dynastic power, with eponymous cities, statues, temples, and inscriptions all contributing to the perception of dynastic harmony.\(^{41}\) Although she mentions it only in passing, her observation that Seleucid women did not cease to be Seleucids upon marriage into another dynasty begins to pull scholarly attention in what I believe is a highly promising direction.\(^{42}\)

The common thread that runs through the past century of historiography on Seleucid women is the near-exclusive focus on the reigning queen (wife of the king) as somehow paradigmatic of Seleucid royal femininity. From Bevan to Carney, nearly all authors look only to the most visible and prominent Seleucid women as representative of their entire gender’s place in the dynastic model. Royalty, however, is a much larger group than simply the king and queen. The brothers, sisters, sons, daughters, and cousins that fill the ranks of any dynasty are just as much a part of the royal tradition as their more prominent relatives. Being royal and being female has been equated to being a queen, or to being the principal female in a dynasty, at the expense of the myriad other women whose thoughts and actions had just as formative an effect on their dynasty. Because a Seleucid woman was married to a foreign dynast does not mean that she somehow fell out of Seleucid royal ideology, if anything her diplomatic import heightened her prestige as the female embodiment of her lineage.

\(^{41}\) Carney (2011), 205.
\(^{42}\) Carney (2011), 200.
The frequency with which such ‘secondary’ Seleucids attempted to align the interests of their nuptial houses with those of the reigning Seleucids demonstrates they had an equally important, albeit markedly different, part to play as royal females. Not only how prominently they figure in Seleucid self-representation, but in the self-representation of the dynasties into which they married, is only one of many indications of their significance. The role of these Antiochises in Laodices in the development of a dynastic tradition in Pontus, Cappadocia, Armenia, even Cyrene, and their place in the Hellenization of such dynasties and the kingdoms over which they held sway, fundamentally changed the geography of the Hellenistic world. Their privileged status as Seleucid royal females impacted even the naming traditions of each house, accounting for the abundance of Laodices and Stratonices throughout former Seleucid domains. They represent what I consider to be a glaring omission from our contemporary discussion of Seleucid royal women; without them we are only looking at part of a much larger picture and presuming it represents the rest.

To exemplify this depth of involvement, I shall briefly discuss the ‘careers,’ as it were, of a few such women. Apama of Cyrene, daughter of Antiochus I and Stratonice, is amongst the most unsung Hellenistic women in the third century. Betrothed to Magas of Cyrene in confirmation of his alliance with Antiochus I against his half-brother Ptolemy II, her marriage coincided with – and doubtless provided Seleucid acknowledgement of – his claim to kingship. This in and of itself is of momentous import: no longer an appointed official of the early Ptolemies, with his assumption of the diadem Magas elevated his domain to the status of a Hellenistic kingdom. From then on, there would be kings (or queens) of Cyrene who had at the very least titular independence from the Alexandrian throne. The almost viceregal position of King of Cyrene was later given to Ptolemaic relatives who were either being groomed for the throne or sent to Libya as recompense for their exclusion from primary succession. While not ‘hellenized’ per se, Cyrene was nonetheless thrust into the arena of royal Hellenistic politics with the arrival of Apama. The failed revolt of Magas of course profoundly altered the balance of power within Egypt and without, and while he was ultimately reconciled with Philadelphus.

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43 Paus.1.7.3, Porphyry F.32.5, Eus.Chron.1.40.5.
his marriage alliance still forced his half-brother to readjust his strategic disposition. After his death, Apama came to centre stage as the queen mother who sought to realign Cyrene with the Seleucids, in violation of the marriage pact between Magas and Ptolemy II for Berenice and Ptolemy III. Her importation of Demetrius Kalos as a replacement groom for her daughter divulges her attunement to the contemporary politics of her native house, as well as her residual (and perhaps primary) loyalty to her brother even over three decades of marriage.

While we might discard Justin’s adulterous account of her illicit affair with her son-in-law, her activity and agency in the entire episode are undeniable. Given the youth and inexperience of her daughter Berenice, I suspect that Apama was instrumental in re-securing royal dominion over Cyrene after the troubles that ensued after the death of Magas. With Apama we can see a royal woman married outside the dynasty but still very much a part of it, acting independently but in accordance with the interests of the main house. Privileged for her heredity, she confirmed Cyrene’s status as an emergent kingdom, realigned the balance of power between Antiochus and Philadelphus, and then profoundly steered the course of events after her husband’s death. Far from being a simple legitimating token, she was influential in a capacity that her more prominent female relatives simply could not be. It is particularly interesting in her case to see such independent agency being exercised in accordance with the family’s interests, rather than the more personally-motivated sort of agency we see amongst the later Cleopatrace.

Stratonice, daughter of Antiochus II, played a similar legitimating role in the emergence of the Hellenistic kingdom of Cappadocia with her marriage to Ariarathes III. Secondary Seleucid women seem to be recurrent king-makers, and such is certainly the case here: Ariarathes, having led the kingdom to recovery after the Galatian storm, felt entitled to recognition as a king and was given Stratonice as indication of Seleucid approval. With this one

44 Justin 26.3.5-7.
45 Justin also mistakenly refers to her as ‘Arsinoe,’ and given the absence of any other attested wife for Magas along with the distinctly Seleucid flavour of her actions, I see no reason why Arsinoe and Apama ought to be thought of as one and the same. Just.26.3.1-4.
46 Grainger (2010), 146-7.
47 Diod.31.19.6, Porphyry F.32.6, also mentioned in RE 2.816-7. Grainger (1997), 640.
of the most influential client kingdoms in the empire emerged, and what would become a rival
dynasty was first legitimated. In the process, what was previously an Iranian satrapy began to
hellenize and emerge as a Hellenistic kingdom in its own right, changing even the basic
geography of the Hellenistic world. Stratonice, for her part, gave her name to her female
descendants, and it seems that the legitimating strength of her presence greatly outlasted her
reign. While I shall not go into the tangled episode in any great detail, the saga of another
Stratonice, this one married to Demetrius II of Macedon, which saw dynastic alliance,
repudiation, rejection, and even a civic uprising in the capital of the kingdom revolve around the
figure of such a ‘secondary’ woman provides fitting testament to not only their own importance,
but the importance attached to them.49

In the same vein as Stratonice of Cappadocia, Nysa’s marriage to Pharnaces of Pontus
played a pivotal role on the hellenization of the emergent Pontic kingdom, and the formation
of its own dynastic tradition. In Nysa, Pharnaces was given a link to the wider Greek world, and the
appearance of the pair in an Athenian inscription suggests not only their depth of involvement
in Greek affairs but also the prominence of Nysa.50 Women such as Nysa not only bore with
them royal Seleucid prestige, but access to the ruling elite of the Hellenistic world, a dynastic
precedent, and a renown that only stood to benefit those whom they married. Antiochis, wife
of Ariarathes IV of Cappadocia, provides another illustrious example of a Seleucid royal woman
married to a dynastic ally who became quite powerful in her nuptial milieu.51 Diodorus’ account
of how she manipulated the strands of succession is perhaps unreliable in some of its more
scandalous details, but even the most conservative reading makes the she her part in steering
the succession of the Cappadocian kingdom readily apparent.52 That her chosen heir was given a
Greek education and won wide commendation throughout the Greek worl, I suspect, is no
coincidence. Diplomatic marriage, in nearly all of the above cases, did not amount to the simple
transfer of a passive legitimating token but rather introduced another woman who had the

49 Grainger (2010), 177 provides the best analysis of the event, mentioned at Justin 28.1.2-4. Nourse (2002), 272
also provides an erudite account of her perceived status.
50 Reinach (1906), 46-8, and Ma (2000), 195.
52 Diod.31.19.7.
same prestige and spirit of her more prominent siblings, but employed them to very different ends.

Finally, another Antiochis, this one a sister of Antiochus III who was married to Xerxes of Armenia in 212 BC, provides another example of the power and role of these Seleucid women who are generally glossed over.\textsuperscript{53} Her career and action in many ways echo that of Apama of Cyrene: given to the vanquished Xerxes of Armenia as an indication of his subordination to the throne of Syria and his return to the Seleucid fold, the Seleucid bride was not meant to be a passive symbol of Seleucid prestige, but an active advocate of Seleucid interests. In retrospect it becomes evident that she was sent as much to watch over the previously-rebellious Xerxes as much as she was to marry him: as soon as Antiochus began to hear the first rumblings of another uprising by Xerxes, his sister was quickly ordered to do away with her troublesome husband.\textsuperscript{54} Even after marriage she remained attuned and loyal to her dynasty, and while her assassination of Xerxes essentially severed any Armenian attachment to the Seleucids, her influence in the matter is striking all the same.

While the brief comments above were neither meant to be exhaustive nor comprehensive, I hope that they at the very least illustrate the multifaceted character of Seleucid royal women. Such ‘secondary’ women, set aside from the immediate path of succession, did not vanish into dynastic obscurity but rather had quite a different part to play in the promotion of Seleucid renown, prestige, and above all interests. Be they catalysts for hellenization, a means for the recognition of independence, a source of legitimacy for a new dynasty, the pilots of succession, or even assassins, such women allow us to see another side of what it meant to be royal and be female in the Seleucid context that has not received the scholarly attention that it likely deserves. It is not my intention to discard the quite fruitful research on Seleucid queenship of the authors I have mentioned above but rather to add this other group of women into the mix. They figured as prominently in the royal ideology and mechanisms of the Seleucids as they did in their nuptial dynasties, at times outshining the more prominent females of the dynasty with their degree of agency and involvement, and perhaps

\textsuperscript{53} Bevan (1902), 2.15-6, John of Antioch FGrH 4.557.
\textsuperscript{54} Pol.8.23.5.
above all they provide us with fertile ground on which to explore royal femininity in all of its diversity. Speculation and suggestion to be sure, but doubtless a topic that merits further consideration.