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RELIGIOUS SUPPORT AND POLITICAL GAIN: THE SELEUCIDS, MILETUS, AND DIDYMA, 301-281 BC

Reinier Meijering

At least from the turn of the third century BC onwards, and presumably already from before 300 BC, members of the house of Seleucus had supported the polis *of Miletus and its extramural sanctuary of Apollo in Didyma, which was administered by people from Miletus. Seleucid support of Didyma was, therefore, no coincidence, but keen diplomacy from the part of Seleucus I* Nicator *and his descendants, aimed to establish political liaisons and expand their influence in this important Greek* polis.

Introduction

It was not until 281 that the Seleucids became the military masters of Ionia for a short period[1]. Nevertheless, at least from the turn of the third century onwards, and presumably before 300, members of the house of Seleucus had supported Miletus and its extramural sanctuary of Apollo in Didyma[2]. This article's main hypothesis is that because the Milesian people administered Didyma, Seleucid support of Didyma was no coincidence, but keen diplomacy in order to expand influence in this important Greek *polis*. Why and how did the Seleucids sustain such intensive relations with the Milesian people?

At first sight, Seleucid attendance in Miletus and Didyma in the early third century is paradoxical, and the scale of Seleucid activity in Miletus striking. Seleucus' empire was centred in modern day Syria, Iraq, and Iran. Only in 281 he brought Miletus within his direct sphere of influence by defeating and killing Lysimachus in the Battle of Koroupeidion. Why, then, supporting Miletus with its rebuilding program of an important temple on such a scale, while the *polis* was not part of Seleucid territory?

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[1] Henceforth, all years are BC/BCE.

[2] Antiochus (Seleucus' son, who became co-ruler in 291 and reigned from 281 as Antiochus I) in 300/299 (*I Didyma 479*), Apame (the wife of Seleucus I) in 300/299 (*I Didyma 480*), Seleucus I Nikator in 288/287 (*I Didyma 424*). See for the transcription: Bringman/von Steuben 1995, 334-344.

Three inscriptions are important in answering this question[3]. Milesian decrees concerning Seleucus, his wife Apame, and his son Antiochus shed new light on the relationship between kings and cities in the early Hellenistic period. More importantly, as I will clarify, the inscriptions show that religion played a crucial role in opening and maintaining diplomatic contact between king and city.
The three inscriptions touch several facets of the relationship between kings and cities. The autonomy of a city-state, both in its internal and external politics, and the role religion played in the creation of a liaison of the house of Seleucus with Miletus shine through these decrees[4]. More importantly, the inscriptions testify that in spite of not having military dominance in Ionia, the Seleucids yet maintained far-going diplomatic contact with Miletus. This implies that more kings (i.e. Lysimachus, Demetrius, Ptolemy) could be present in the same city at the same time, due to the personal networks of friends of the king.
I will show that Seleucid support of Didyma resulted in political gain for both the Seleucids and Miletus. In other words, Didyma was a means of fruitful diplomatic contact between the Seleucid court and Miletus in the early Hellenistic period. New, religious aspects of an already expressed opinion about the autonomous and democratic condition of the Greek *polis* in the first decades of the Hellenistic era will be given[5].

City-states and Macedonian empires (334-281)
What can we say about the connection between king and city-state in the early Hellenistic period when examining the Milesian-Seleucid relationship in the first two decades of the third century? In order to answer this question, we first have to clarify what we have on both sides of the bond. On the one side stands Miletus, a Greek city-state with a democratic constitution. City-states were to a large extent autonomous and self-governing entities. They had their own laws, served their own gods, and were, as the word city-*state* makes clear, *de facto* small states. During the presence of the Persians in Ionia in the fourth century Miletus was subjected to the Persian King. The Persians had supported an oligarchic government in Miletus and maintained a garrison (Greaves 2002, 134). When Alexander drove out the Persians in 334 he installed a democratic institution in most of the Greek cities he liberated[6]. By supporting a democracy and leaving the Milesians autonomous and self-governing, it was assumable that Miletus would support Alexander's cause. A king like Alexander had something

[3] For the inscriptions, see Bringman/von Steuben 1995, 334-344.
[4] Orth 1977, 12-32 on the Seleucids and Miletus; on kings and cities: Strootman 2011, 141-153.
[5] Baker 2003, 376: "this phenomenon [sc. the *polis*' control over political life, justice, and community administration] was most striking in the Greek city-states of Western Asia Minor […] and many of them entered a significant phase of political, economic and cultural development".
[6] Also in Ephesos and on the Aegean island of Chios democracies were installed.

to gain from a free and autonomous city-state as well. The city would be loyal to him, which would result in financial (tribute) and military support. Moreover, the *poleis* were the infrastructural, agrarian, and economic centers of the Ancient World (Strootman 2007, 56-7). Lastly, cities functioned as legitimizing actors of royal power, making them influential negotiators in diplomatic contact with kings.
Summarising, one could say that the bond between king and city was most fruitful when the city-state was autonomous and a king sustained that situation. This is one of the main reasons why kings approached cities as they did. They tried to win their support, for example by financing public and religious buildings and maintaining good contacts with the city by levying courtiers from the city-states.
On the other side of the bond stand the Seleucids. They were members of a mighty royal family who stood at the head of a huge empire that stretched from the Indus in the east to the Mediterranean basin in the west. Carla M. Sinopoli's general definition of an empire is as follows:

> "a territorial expansive and incorporative kind of state, involving relationships in which one state exercises control over other socio-political entities. The diverse polities and communities that constitute an empire typically retain some degree of autonomy – in self- and centrally-defined cultural identity, and in some dimensions of political and economic decision making" (Sinopoli 1994, 160).

Key elements of her definition can be traced back in what Goldstone and Haldon say about the subject in their contribution to *The Dynamics of Ancient Empires*, namely that "an [ancient] empire is a territory ruled from a distinct center", in which "there may be partial integration of local elites" (Goldstone/Haldon 2009, 19). The vast area that Seleucus had conquered was the imperial territory, while Miletus as a city-state was one of the socio-political entities the Seleucids wanted a relationship with, thereby trying to involve it into their empire. Court members from Miletus, like the Demodamas who turns up in the three inscriptions (see below: *Cities, diplomats, soldiers, and courts*), must be seen as an example of the partial integration of local elites in the imperial structure. They were invited to the Seleucid distinct centre, and they served as the intermediaries and negotiators between court and city-state (Herman 1987, 208).
As a result, the attitude of the Seleucids and their behaviour towards Miletus and Didyma has to be placed in the light of their imperial policy. It clarifies how the Macedonian empires came to be and were constructed in the early Hellenistic period. As legitimising factors city-states took a prominent place in this process.

Miletus and Didyma during the Wars of the Successors
What was the interest of kings of being influential in Miletus in the early Hellenistic period? Miletus was situated at the frontline of the Wars of the Successors between Antigonus, Demetrius, Lysimachus, Ptolemy, and Seleucus.

As a port city with excellent access to the Aegean, the strategic significance of Miletus cannot be ignored. Last but not least, Miletus was a Greek city, a *polis* with a long and rich history. So, being in sway of Miletus, a king increased his military potential as well as his status. The presence of different monarchs during half a century makes Miletus therefore a fertile case study about the relationship between *polis* and king(s) in the early Hellenistic period[7].

As far as Ionia is concerned, two battles serve as watersheds in the early Hellenistic period: Ipsos in 301 and Koroupeidion in 281. These had been decisive for the political situation in the western part of Alexander's former realm, Miletus and Didyma included. After Ipsos, the victors of Antigonus the One-eyed, Lysimachus and Seleucus, took over control in Asia Minor. The former had first to get rid of Antigonus' son Demetrius the Besieger, before he became able to strengthen his grip on the western part in 294, while the latter built his powerbase around his newly founded Antioch on the Orontes in the eastern corner of Asia Minor. Twenty years later, at Koroupeidion in Lydia, the former allies clashed. Seleucus was victorious over Lysimachus and, as the last of Alexander's Successors, he had almost successfully reunited Alexander's realm. A few months later, however, Seleucus was dead as well, murdered at the age of 82, after he just had landed in Thrace. The Seleucid military presence in western Asia Minor crumbled and direct control over the area became highly contested (Ager 2003, 35).

During the first three quarters of the fourth century the Persians had been dominant in the eastern Aegean. Miletus had been in Persian hands as well. Alexander the Great had captured Miletus in 334. After his victory, he visited the former sanctuary and oracle of Apollo. Didyma, located some 10 miles south of Miletus, had been destroyed by the Persians in 494 during the Ionian revolt. It was only in the year of Alexander's arrival the Didymeian oracle of Apollo started to speak again. That year, the rebuilding of the temple started too (Greaves 2002, 134). From 323 onwards, many power brokers became active in Ionia. Antigonus the One-eyed, Demetrius, Lysimachus, Seleucus, Ptolemy, and Cassander, all were more or less active and influential in the strategically important region. But it was the house of Seleucus that in the last decade of the fourth and first decades of the third century initiated and supported the reconstruction of Didyma. As a matter of fact, the Seleucids created a special bond with this Ionian *polis* and its sanctuary. Three inscriptions from the beginning of the third century are exemplifying.

The Seleucid inscriptions

In 300/299 Seleucus' son Antiochus received special thanks after he had done a

[7] Antigonus the One-eyed held power there from 313 until his death in 301. His son Demetrius 'the Besieger' tried to maintain Antigonid power in the 290's and early 280's, but ultimately had to accept Lysimachus' superiority in the first two decades of the third century. See for Antigonus: Billows 1990.

favour to the city and its sanctuary. Antiochus' decree was set up after the crown prince had announced to build a *stoa* in Miletus. It was in fact an offering to the sanctuary of Didyma, according to lines 9-13 of the inscription *I Dydima 479*:

> ἐ]π[αγγ]έλ[λε]ται στοὰν οἰκοδο[μήσειν στα]-
> [διαίαν τῶι θε]ῶι κατὰ πόλιν, ἀφ' ἧς ἔσονται κα[θ' ἔτος?]
> [πρόσοδοι, ἃς] οἴεται δεῖν δαπανᾶσθαι εἰς τὰ κατα-
> [σκευαζόμε]να ἐν τῶι ἱερῶι τῶι ἐν Διδύμοις
>
> […] and he [Antiochos] has announced that he will build for [the god a stade-long] stoa in the city, from which there will be [annual revenues that] he thinks ought to be spend on the construction of the temple at Didyma (translation: Ilse Jelidi-van der Zanden).

The *stoa* and the honorary decree had to be erected on the *agora* (Günther 1971, 31). The *stoa* functioned as a market hall. The money it thus would generate should be invested in the rebuilding programme of the temple of Apollo in Didyma (lines 9 and 10 of *I Didyma 479)*. It was this money that would ultimately serve as Antiochus' gift to the Didymeian Apollo.
An intriguing phrase in the inscription can be found in lines 3 and 4: by dedicating his *stoa* to Apollo of Didyma, Antiochus followed the example of his father, *basileus* Seleucus, who had sustained the temple for many years. It only can be speculated when Seleucus had set this example. An interesting guess might be 313, when Seleucus was commander of the Ptolemaic fleet in the Aegean. That year, the Carian satrap called for his aid; Miletus was under threat by the forces of Antigonus the One-eyed. Mythological evidence for Seleucus' bond with Didyma is available as well[8]. It is therefore presumable that the roots of active Seleucid support of Miletus and Didyma lie in the period before the turn of the century.
In response to his generosity, Antiochus received religious privileges as a gift from the Milesian citizen body, which controlled the temple of Apollo. Antiochus would be seated at the front row when visiting the religious festivals of Didyma, the *Dionysia* and the *Didymeia*. He also would get the best parts of the sacrificial meat. Lastly, if he wanted to consult the oracle, he could do so without any delay: he received the right of *promanteia*, which means that he controlled the sanctuary and could consult the oracle in person. Moreover, Antiochus' offspring would automatically have the same privileges as he had.
The state of affairs of the bond between king and city becomes clear through Antiochus' dedication and how the Milesians responded. Each party offered the

[8] The Didymeian Apollo is said to have given the following oracles to Seleucus: "Do not haste to Europe, Asia is far much better to you" and "By avoiding Argos you will arrive at your fated end. But if you approach Argos, than you may perish untimely". Both oracles point to Seleucus' death if he should land in Europe. See Parke 1985, 44-45.

other something that suited its status. Because a member of a royal family was supposed to be more powerful than a city, his gift ought to be more prestigious as well. That is why Antiochus dedicated his *stoa*. Likewise, the citizens presented the king gifts that matched with their identity as being more or less lower in rank than a king. The fact that they offered Antiochus religious privileges not only shows that they administered the cults. It also illuminates that religion played a central role in the contact between king and city.

The second inscription, *I Didyma 480*, is an honorary decree for Antiochus' mother Apame, the Iranian wife of Seleucus. According to the decree, she had taken care of Milesian soldiers in her husband's army, as well as of Milesian diplomats visiting the Seleucid court[9]. The Milesian people and city council decided[10] that Apame should be thanked for her service towards Miletus and its citizens. That is why this decree was inscribed on a stone *stele* that would be set up in the sanctuary of Artemis in Didyma[11].

The Milesians would honour the Seleucid queen also by erecting a statue, funded by the Milesian people. The Milesian decree for Apame mentions Antiochus and his *stoa* (lines 12-13). It also refers to king Seleucus. The king had invited members of the Milesian community, presumably from the elite, to his court to talk about the reconstruction of Didyma (lines 8-10)[12]. The presence of Milesian soldiers and visitors at the Seleucid court this inscription speaks of is crucial if we want to understand how the relationship between the Seleucids and Miletus in the early Hellenistic period looked like.

The third Seleucid inscription (*I Dydima 424*) is from 287. It is the copy of an annunciation of king Seleucus to the Milesian *demos* of the sending of a huge amount of silver and golden gifts, exotic spices, and sacrificial animals. These offerings should be dedicated to Apollo of Didyma, while the Milesians as supervisors of the sanctuary had to pray the god for Seleucid wellbeing[13].

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[9] Lines 5-6 of *I Didyma 480*: "εὔνοιαν καὶ προ[θυμίαν] | παρείχετο περὶ Μιλησίων τοὺς στρατευομένου[ς ": "She [Apame] showed willingness and kindness to those of the Milesians who undertook a campaign" (translation: Ilse Jelidi-van der Zanden).

[10] ἔδοξε τῆι βουλῆι καὶ τῶι δήμωι ('Council and people decided'): *I Didyma 480*, line 1, line 4 with slightly different form.

[11] It is illustrating that a male member of the Seleucids, Antiochus, received religious privileges in cults of male gods, Apollo and Dionysus, while the gratitude towards a female member, Apame, is associated with a female goddess, Artemis (Apollo's sister).

[12] The ones who set up the decrees were mostly members of the *ekklesia*. Volker Grieb shows that these were men from the elite, who had privileges and held the political positions in the *polis*. See Grieb 2008, 210.

[13] *I Didyma 428.* Apollo ultimately became the Seleucid patron god. He is depicted on many Seleucid coins. According to a famous legend, Apollo was the father of Seleucus (Justinian 15.4.5). When exactly this divine association materialised, is not known. See Parke 1985, 47.

The importance of cities

Through the inscriptions, it is exemplified how stark the bond between politics – from *politeia*, the things concerning the *polis* – and religion in the Greek world was. A religious move had political consequences and vice versa. It is exactly this intertwining of these two aspects that forms the key in examining the way Miletus and the Seleucids behaved. All three the inscriptions prove that the house of Seleucus Nikator had a strong interest in Miletus and its sanctuary. Three reasons should be mentioned. In the first place, the explanation of Seleucid support can be found in the presence of Milesians in the inner circle of Seleucid power. Secondly, the nature of the Seleucid Empire and the place of religion – and of Didymeian Apollo in particular – lies at the heart of the bond between the Seleucid court and this Ionian city-state. Thirdly, the nature of empire in general, and the place Greek city-states had in these empires, clarifies why Seleucus and his family were active in Miletus and Didyma. It is the first of these three aspects we will focus on now.

The period between the sudden death of Alexander in 323 and the murder of Seleucus in 281 was a turbulent one. Across the eastern Mediterranean world Alexander's successors struggled for his greatest heritage: the vast area he had conquered. At the top of the political pyramid the Successors used several means to strive for one goal: to create an empire. Marriages, coalitions, and (most of all) warfare, these were the ways to outmanoeuvre your rivals. But to win on the battlefield did not immediately imply to win an empire. Cities had to be persuaded to join one's side. This could be done either by brute force or through negotiation. The former was far more expensive in time and money than the latter[14]. That is why kings favoured the way of diplomacy above a siege when trying to bring cities into their sphere of influence.

A clear example is Antigonus' proclamation of the Freedom of the Greeks in 314, known as the Declaration of Tyre (D.S. 19.61.3-4). By offering autonomy Antigonus granted the cities two things most city-states *de facto* already possessed. Nevertheless, with his declaration the *poleis* could become autonomous *de iure* as well.

In the Hellenistic period, cities depended on kings for their safety and maintaining their autonomy. Only people like Alexander, Antigonus, and Seleucus could provide cities with protection and would be able and willing to safeguard their autonomous status[15]. Why? Cities were a key factor in forging an empire. The Hellenistic monarchs could only be head of an empire if their power was accepted and legitimised as such. The Greek city-states were one of the most powerful legitimising actors of a king. In that way, the city-states served as the corner-

[14] For example, in 305/304 Demetrius laid siege to the city of Rhodes. After one year he gave up, only left with his nickname 'The Besieger'.

[15] On democracy, autonomy, and freedom in Miletus in the Hellenistic age: Grieb 2008, 238-242.

stones a king could build his empire with[16]. Moreover, cities were the centres of economy, agriculture, and infrastructure of the Greek world (Strootman 2007, 27-28). That made them valuable partners as well.

Cities, diplomats, soldiers, and courts

In the early Hellenistic period both kings and cities needed each other. Kings were as dependent on cities as cities were on them. If a king wanted the support of a city or if a city wanted to receive help from a king they had to make contact. This was possible via courtiers from the cities, such as the Milesians who were invited by Seleucus to visit his court. These Hellenistic diplomats were citizens as well as members of the court (Herman 1980, 103-109). In the case of the Milesian decrees honouring Antiochus and Apame we know something about the identity of one of those courtiers. In both inscriptions Demodamas the son of Aristeides is mentioned as the one who proposed to honour both members of the Seleucid dynasty. As a citizen of Miletus Demodamas was allowed to speak in the city council (Grieb 2008, 230). At the same time, he was an important Seleucid courtier. We know that Demodamas commanded Seleucus' and Antiochus' troops during a campaign in Sogdia and Bactria. Pliny the Elder writes in his *Natural History* that it was Demodamas who, at the banks of the river Jaxartes, erected some shrines of the Apollo of Didyma when fighting there (Plin. *Nat.* 6.18.49).

As a member of the Seleucid court Demodamas could negotiate for the sake of his home city. Because of his position in Seleucus' inner circle, it is possible to regard Demodamas as one of the friends or *philoi* of Seleucus. *Philoi* were the unpaid ambassadors and generals at the Macedonian courts. Levied from the upper Greek and Macedonian classes in the cities, these men served as members of the court and as diplomats acting on behalf of a king as well as of their home city. Because *philoi* were prominent persons in their city, they had a network of clients and supporters behind them. By relying on *philoi* and their influence kings could to a large extent control internal politics (Herman 1997, 208). That made Demodamas an interesting person for the Seleucids to keep in contact with.

Was Demodamas the only example of a Milesian *philos*? Probably not. Could it be that other Milesian citizens were *philoi* of other Macedonian kings, for instance Lysimachus or Ptolemy? Probably yes. Evidence and names, however, lack. Yet it still is assumable that more than one king had personal networks within the same city, simply because communication between city and court went through personal networks[17]. In theory, every king could have his clients in Miletus. It was up to these *philoi* to persuade the governmental bodies which kings should be honored and supported and to what extent, and which not.

Now we have seen how Miletus and the Seleucids made contact, namely through

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[16] See for autonomy and democracy of the Greek city-states and the propaganda of autonomy and democracy of the Successors: Koehn 2007, 45-54.

[17] On networks and imperial communication: Smith 2008, 832-849.

the presence of Milesian officials at the Seleucid court, we also have to pay attention to the Milesian soldiers in the army of Seleucus of which the decree of Apame speaks of. These soldiers had been the main reason why queen Apame was honoured by the Milesians.

An army was a vital element of a king's power. Being a king meant first and foremost being a (successful) military commander. "Monarchal power is given […] to those who are able of commanding troops"[18]. Success on the battlefield was from time to time necessary in order to maintain a king's position, to prove that he was indeed the most powerful man in the field (Chaniotis 2004, 57). Without an army, a king was powerless. Military power was also a means to claim a certain authority, to gain royal or imperial status (Hekster/Fowler 2005, 13).

Because of the significance of a strong army another thing automatically became remarkable as well: money. It made Plutarch say that "money is the sinew of war" (Plu. *Cleom.* 27.1). With an army a king could gather booty, and bring other centres of power – like city-states – into his domain. The money a monarch could generate by means of his military powers made it possible to hold his soldiers in the field by paying them their salary. A coercion-extraction cycle could be developed: no money, no soldiers; no soldiers, no power; no power, no money[19]. The Milesians in the Seleucid army were part of the coercion-extraction machinery of the Seleucids. It was to them that Apame paid attention when they were fighting for the glory of the Seleucids.

What we must not forget, however, is that the decrees are from the hands of the Milesians. That means that we must treat the epigraphic evidence from a Milesian perspective, too. A city-state like Miletus had much to gain from a good relationship with a powerful dynasty. By honouring members of a royal house a *polis* could try to win the favor of them and in that way secure their protection, financial support, and a good name in the Hellenistic world. The presence of Milesian soldiers and diplomats at the heart of the Seleucid power could have been the key-motive for Miletus to try to profit as much as possible from the position of some of its citizens. A fruitful relationship implies love from both sides. The affection from the side of Seleucus, Antiochus, and Apame can be seen in their favourable treatment of Miletus and Didyma, whereas Miletus' friendliness towards the Seleucids can be seen in the honorary decrees, the Seleucid statues erected in their city-centre, and the religious privileges they offered to them. But, what had the Seleucids to gain from such an intensive bond with Miletus and Didyma? And, more importantly, why?

The Seleucid religious approach

At first sight it seems strange that the Seleucids supported Miletus and Didyma in the opening of the third century. It may be even stranger that they could do so

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[18] *Suda*, *s.v. basileia*, quoted by Chaniotis 2004, 57.

[19] This cycle is in the context of the rise of the European nation-states defined by Charles Tilly as the "coercion-extraction-cycle". See Tilly 1994, 1-27.

at a time when Demetrius and Lysimachus were the military masters of Ionia. However, the fact that the contact between Miletus and the Seleucids was there tells us in the first place something about the relatively limited power of the Successors in the city-states. Secondly, it also proves that several kings could be active and present in the same city at the same time. Thirdly, the Hellenistic period was not the end of the Greek city-state, but, conversely, *poleis* were crucial parts of the Hellenistic empires in the post-Alexandrian period.

After a king or satrap had left the field, the conditions between a city and the new power had to be redefined[20]. Since Alexander, Antigonus, and the other Macedonians being active in Ionia were unable and unwilling to stay for a long time at the same place, they were also unable to control every part of a city's politics. Autonomous city-states, therefore, were not only in the interest of the citizens, but of kings, too.

The spheres of influence in the early Hellenistic period changed with every military move. Concerning Ionia, this was the case after Ipsos, when Antigonid power was crumbling rapidly. The contact between Miletus and the Seleucid court exemplifies the autonomous position a Greek city-state could have. Peter Burke, writing on the city-state, says that a city-state's political playground and autonomy rose when central authority was weak or even absent (Burke 1986, 150). In the turbulent period after the arrival of Alexander central authority was weak, enlarging the political playground of city-states and of the Successors simultaneously. That explains why in the first two decades of the third century Lysimachus, Demetrius, the Ptolemies, and the Seleucids could be present in Miletus at the same time (for Ptolemaic presence, see Burstein 1984, 61).

The Seleucid approach towards Miletus and its sanctuary of Apollo at Didyma has been explained as a political move: from 300 onwards, the Seleucids aimed at getting a foothold in Ionia before starting a campaign against Lysimachus. However, this is not the strongest argument when examining the available epigraphic evidence. The presence of Milesians at the heart of the Seleucid power is the direct cause. As can be seen in all three decrees, Milesians had prominent positions in the Seleucid circle of power. Milesian soldiers were active in the army of Seleucus, while Demodamas maintained a prominent position at the Seleucid court. This created a bond between Miletus and the Seleucids. At the same time, the Milesians around the Seleucids served as a network through which the dynasty could be influential in the *polis* in order to win its support (Morris 2009, 12). Another argument for Seleucid support could be given. As becomes clear from *I Didyma 424* Seleucus sent pepper, cinnamon, and other

[20] This was the case when Alexander drove the Persian power out of Miletus; the oligarchic regime disappeared, a democratic government took its place. Alexander offered the Milesians freedom and autonomy, whereas the Persians had maintained a garrison. When Antigonus the One-eyed captured Miletus in 312 after a period of satrap rule in Ionia, he again had to come to terms with the Milesians. He fell back on the Alexandrian policy, thereby bringing his Declaration of Tyre (see above) into practice in Miletus.

exotic spices from the eastern territories of his domain to a prestigious temple site in the western part of the Hellenistic world. This could be a clear sign of Seleucid potential, that the Seleucids had been able to lay their hands on such luxuries. In other words, by sending these exotic gifts from India to Didyma, Seleucus showed how far his power reached.

Most importantly, however, is the religious aspect of the bond between Miletus and the Seleucids. Religion could serve as an imperial binding factor. Morris writes that "rulers were generally quite aware of the process of religious-political manipulation necessary to the maintenance of their power" and therefore aimed to "invest in this ritual system on a grand scale in order to continually legitimate their position" (Morris 2009, 13).

The three Seleucid inscriptions make clear that religion played a central role in forging diplomatic, political, and religious contact between a Hellenistic monarch and a Greek city-state. Why? It is obvious that with financing the activities concerning Didyma (rebuilding, sacrifices) the Seleucids could increase their political status in Miletus. In all three of the decrees Didyma is mentioned.

Sustaining the sanctuary went through the controllers of the temple site, the Milesian *demos*. Moreover, religion and politics cannot be seen as two loose aspects, but as intertwined. The wellbeing of a *polis* depended on a good relationship with the gods. This relationship could only be maintained by means of cults and religious activities. Taking care of the gods was a communal affair[21]. This is a crucial factor. It means that by financing the rebuilding of the temple the Seleucids maintained intensive contacts with the Milesians concurrently. Their religious approach towards Didyma resulted in diplomatic and political profit in Miletus[22]. That a diplomatic delegation visited the Seleucid court to talk about the reconstruction of the sanctuary at Didyma is another example of the close connection between religion and politics. By accepting the Milesians at his court, Seleucus made clear that he was interested in Didyma and Miletus. But listening to the delegation also implied that the bond between court and city was once more underlined. Members of the *polis* visited the court, thereby legitimising the status of the ruler, while the ruler accepted and listened to the delegation, thus showing his standing towards Miletus (Bosworth 2002, 257-258).

Conclusion

The way the Seleucids and Miletus interacted in the early Hellenistic period shows that religion played a pivotal role in the construction and maintenance of diplomatic contact between court and city. Moreover, it demonstrates that in a period Demetrius and Lysimachus interfered militarily and politically in Miletus, the Seleucids still could act in religious and diplomatic ways at the same time.

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[21] Blok 2003, 10 on how politics and religion in Athens were intertwined.

[22] How close religion and politics were connected in Hellenistic Miletus becomes clear in chapter 3.1 of Grieb's *Hellenistische Demokratie*. Every political decision became only reality after divine approval. See Grieb 2008, 221-224.

Seleucid religious support of the important Milesian sanctuary in Didyma resulted in political gain. Due to the interactive character of the bond both the Seleucids and Miletus profited from it. As a Greek city-state on the Aegean coast Miletus was a legitimising factor of imperial power, an economic centre and a strategic bridgehead. That made the city a highly valuable partner for Macedonian kings in the turbulent decades after Alexander's death. Through Didyma the Seleucids and the Milesians came closer to each other. In spite of the fact that the Seleucids did not have military dominance in Ionia, they could maintain contact with the Milesian elite through Milesian courtiers. The presence of Milesians at the Seleucid court and in the Seleucid army made negotiations between city and court possible. This resulted in rapprochement between the two, as can be seen in the Milesian decrees concerning Antiochus, Apame, and Seleucus. Because of the presence and importance of Milesian court members and soldiers, combined with Miletus' control over Didyma and the entanglement of politics and religion, the Seleucids could make use of these circumstances and thus increase their influence in Miletus.

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Reinier Meijering
Wortmanstraat 25
NL-8265 AA Kampen
The Netherlands
rmeijering@ichthuskampen.nl