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ACHAEUS, THE PTOLEMIES AND THE FOURTH SYRIAN WAR

The second half of the 3rd century saw the Seleucid monarchy weaken considerably. The reign of Seleucus II brought difficult battles against Ptolemy III Euergetes (the Third Syrian War) and attempts to overcome massive internal problems. During the war against Egypt, he ultimately managed to recapture northern Syria but Ptolemy III held on to the port of Seleucia Pieria, which was key for the Seleucids, and captured a number of places in Asia Minor. It was there that the Seleucids suffered their greatest territorial losses – they lost almost all their footholds on the coasts of Cilicia, Lycia, Caria and Ionia. The Egyptian king even seized Ainos and Maronea on the Thracian coast.¹ What also had an impact on Seleucus II losing his influences in Asia Minor was his fratricidal war against Antiochus Hierax, backed by the kings of Pergamon, Capadocia and Bithynia. The defeated Seleucus had to reconcile himself with his brother's independence in Asia Minor; the latter, however, subsequently suffered a defeat in his war against Pergamon, which ultimately led to the Seleucids losing their Asian Minor territories.² The dynasty also faced enormous challenges in the East, where Bactria and Sogdiana seceded, and Parthia was seized by the Parni.³

The state's situation did not improve during the short reign of Seleucus III Keraunos, Seleucus II's son and heir. His assassination in 223 during a campaign against Attalus I, the king of Pergamon, became another destabilising factor. At this critical moment, the army offered the royal diadem to Achaeus. However, the experienced general, a close relative of the assassinated Seleucus, remained loyal and rejected the offer.⁴ As a result, Antiochus III, brother of the murdered Seleucus III, came into power at less than twenty years of age. He inherited a state whose territory was diminished and economy

¹ *OGIS* 54, 14–15; P.Haun. 6, frg. 1.1–13; Plb 5.34.8; cf. Schmitt 1964: 37–45; Bagnall 1976: 80–116; Huss 1976: 188–213; Bosquet 1986; Kirsten/Opelt 1989; Jones/Habicht 1989; Huss 2001: 427–436.

² For the Antiochus Hierax see Ma 2000: 45–47.

³ On that topic and chronology see Wolski 1974: 154–199; Musti 1984: 213–214, 219–220; Wolski 2003: 23–34; Assar 2006: 62–72; Gaslain 2009: 39–66.

⁴ Plb. 4.48.10. The nature of kinship between Antiochus III and Achaeus is uncertain. He might have been a cousin (Plb. 4.51.4) or an uncle (Beloch 1927: 205–206; Meloni 1949: 536–537; Schmitt 1964: 30–31; Billows 1995: 96–99). Achaeus had been Seleucus II's general during the war against Antiochus Hierax (Polyaen. 4.17) and taken part in Seleucus III's campaign (Plb. 4.48.7).

weakened after losing a considerable portion of lands in Asia Minor and Iran. Achaeus, meanwhile, was appointed to govern the dynasty's dominions in Asia Minor.

The complicated situation did not allow the young king to take over immediate and full control of what his brother had left him. In Asia Minor, he left the concern for the dynasty's interests to Achaeus. Polybius, describing Achaeus' scope of power, writes that he was in command of the countries west of the Taurus Mountains. This naturally does not reflect the official terminology of the Seleucid monarchy, and determining his precise position in the power structure is made difficult by a lack of relevant sources.⁵ In any event, the arrangement at the time was nothing new in the history of the dynasty; such a division of duties had been applied before – due to the sheer size of the monarchy it had been virtually necessary. Now such a solution seemed to be appropriate again; the relative remained loyal and carried out an efficient fight with Attalus I, gradually rebuilding the dynasty's reign in Asia Minor. The situation in the east was more difficult, with the satrap of Media, Molon, who had been given extensive authority as the governor of the so called 'upper satrapies' by Antiochus, starting a rebellion.⁶ Although sources seem to indicate that the reason for his revolt against the young king was a conflict with the grey eminence on Antiochus' court, the chief minister Hermeias, Molon also had suitable examples in the shape of Bactria and Parthia. It is therefore entirely possible that Hermeias' efforts (if he did indeed make such efforts) to exert more stringent control over satraps only hastened Molon's rebellion. In Polybius' account, Hermeias is presented in unequivocally negative light, which incidentally leads us to suspect that for the Seleucid court historiography (from which Polybius likely borrowed his description of the minister) he had become a scapegoat that had to be found on the Antioch court following some political failures.⁷

It was Hermeias who was supposedly responsible for underestimating the threat posed by Molon and for encouraging the king to attack Coele-Syria, which ended in defeat. It was only in the autumn of 221 that Antiochus III went east and defeated the rebel in a major battle, and the following year forced Artabazanes, the king of Media Atropatene who had supported Molon, into submission.⁸ Soon afterwards, during the return to Antioch, Hermeias' fate was sealed when he was put to death with the king's consent.⁹

It was at that time that Achaeus' usurpation took place, which was surprising considering his hitherto loyalty to the king, in particular the fact that he had refused to accept the diadem after the death of Seleucus II. In 220, Achaeus left his residence in Sardes and marched towards Syria, assuming the title of king in the Phrygian Laodicea on the Lycus River.¹⁰

Until then, Achaeus – using his extraordinary authority – had efficiently represented the dynasty's interests in the complex Asian Minor region. He had recaptured a number of cities: Teos, Kolophon, Myrina, Temnos, Aigai, Aeolis, Phocaea. He had managed to

⁵ Plb. 4.2.6, cf. Schmitt 1964: 158–160.

⁶ Plb. 5.41–42. For Molon's usurpation see Schmitt 1964: 116–129; Will 1982: 17–23; Fischer 1988.

⁷ Cf. Schmitt 1964: 130–157; for Hermias, cf. Schmitt 1964: 150–158; for possible Polybius' sources, cf. Schmitt 1964: 175–178; Lehmann 1967: 357–360; Walbank 1967: 570–571; Huss 1976: 8–20; Primo 2009: 136–138.

⁸ Plb. 5.53–55.

⁹ Plb. 5.56.

¹⁰ Plb. 5.57.

largely re-establish the Seleucids' influences in Mysia and, presumably, also in Lydia, Phrygia and Lycaonia.¹¹

What, then, made Achaeus turn against the rightful king, for whom he had willingly refused the diadem in the critical moments after the previous ruler had died? Polybius (4.48.11) attributes this decision to Achaeus' exaggerated ambition; he had supposedly become audacious following his successes in the war against Pergamon. Scholars have tried to explain the decision in various ways. It has been suggested that perhaps Achaeus borrowed the idea from Antiochus Hierax, who had had the royal title and had also resided in Sardes. It has also been pointed out that – as is indicated e.g. by the coins minted in Sardes even before the usurpation, which bore dynastic symbols – Achaeus might have truly believed in his right to the throne. The hypothesis that his fear of Hermeias' intrigues or other unfriendly people surrounding Antiochus drove Achaeus to do such a thing is another guess.¹² Further, it cannot be excluded that Achaeus received false news of the king's death in the eastern provinces. The inspiration has also been thought to have come from the Ptolemaic diplomacy¹³ and this idea is worth reconsidering. The possible benefits that the Egyptians could have gained by winning over Achaeus seem quite clear and have been pointed out in research. However, Achaeus also could have made tangible profits by allying with the Ptolemies. His attempt to invade Syria, although failed, indicates that he had much greater ambitions than just to rule Asia Minor independently.¹⁴ His goal was to dethrone Antiochus III. When embarking on such an ambitious plan, it was worth finding allies. Although Antiochus III was in the east at the time, he had just quelled Molon's revolt, which had considerably improved his prestige and made him a dangerous enemy. Even though Achaeus still had more experience than his younger relative, he was no longer facing an enemy completely unacquainted with war. However, establishing cooperation would have been particularly valuable for the Egyptian rulers, not only in the light of their Asian Minor policy at the time, but first and foremost because of the threat posed by Antiochus III in Coele-Syria – a land that had been the bone of contention between the two dynasties for several decades.

We do not know when the plan to recapture Coele-Syria was devised on the court in Antioch. According to some scholars, such a scheme had already been born under the rule of Seleucus III; others believe it was only Antiochus III who undertook this task.¹⁵ In fact, though, the question for these rulers based on the Orontes River was not 'whether' but 'when' to start a war. The territory was too important for the Seleucids to ever reconcile themselves with its loss, particularly after the humiliation they suffered in the Laodicean War. Even disregarding Coele-Syria, the Ptolemies' mere presence in

¹¹ Plb. 4.48.2; 5.77–78; Robert 1937: 194–196; Holleaux 1938: 33–34; Ma 2000: 55–56. The case of the *poleis* of the Troad is more contentious: *OGIS* 219; Hansen 1947: 40; Meloni 1949: 536; Piejko 1991: 33. However, it follows from Polybius' account (5.78) that in 218 Ilion, Lampsakos and Alexandria in the Troad were under the influence of Attalus, which indicates that he had not lost them prior to that.

¹² Schmitt 1964: 171–173; Will 1982: 23–26; Ma 2000: 57.

¹³ Scholars usually reject the possibility of Ptolemy cooperating with Achaeus at the very beginning of the rebellion, cf. e.g. Schmitt 1964: 166–167; Hölbl 2001: 129. Holleaux (1942: 132) and Huss (1976: 35–36) subscribed to the theory of Ptolemy's inspiration as one of the reasons for Achaeus' usurpation.

¹⁴ Plb. 5.57.

¹⁵ Bevan (1902: 204–205) and Schmitt (1964: 152–153) were in favour of the former theory. According to Huss (1976: 26–27) the plan was only conceived under Antiochus III.

Seleucia Pieria was a thorn in the monarchy's side. The Ptolemies must have realised that another war was unavoidable. Antiochus III had started war preparations when Ptolemy III Euergetes was the king of Egypt. Molon's rebellion did not alter Antiochus' plans. Initially, two generals and part of the troops were sent against the governor of the upper satrapies. The king himself still found the time to wed Laodice, a daughter of the king of Pontus; then – despite worrying news from the east, following the advice of Hermeias, who was a great supporter of the Syrian campaign – in the early summer of 221 he entered Coele-Syria with an army collected in Apamea.¹⁶ The Fourth Syrian War began. In the meantime, the throne in Alexandria had been taken over by Ptolemy IV Philopator. This, however, could only have served to encourage Antiochus to take action, since changes on the throne often cause temporary disorder in the state. However, both Polybius (5.34.10–11) and Justin (30.1.1–4) are wrong when they ascribe the decision to start the war to the situation in Alexandria and Ptolemy IV's character. His unrestrained lifestyle and disregard for state affairs could not have had an influence on the Seleucid's decision. Firstly, the war preparations had begun before Philopator took over the throne; secondly, it is doubtful whether Antioch had a clear idea of the new order in Alexandrian palaces.¹⁷

Antiochus' attack on Coele-Syria ended, however, in defeat. The Ptolemaic intelligence probably did a good job, allowing Theodotus of Aetolia, the Ptolemaic strategus of Coele-Syria, to prepare for the arrival of the enemy forces. He correctly assumed that the Seleucid king would not choose the coastal route, since local cities manned by Ptolemaic garrisons would slow down his march, and the coast was under the complete control of the Egyptian fleet.¹⁸ Antiochus led his army through the Massyas Valley (Bekaa), probably intending to follow the rivers Leontes and Jordan after crossing the valley. However, Theodotus skilfully used the lay of the land. The line of defence was prepared in the narrowest part of the valley, which is covered with marshes and lakes filled with thick reed. The key points of defence were the fortresses of Brochoi and Gerrha, towering over this part of the valley, with embankments and trenches, which Theodotus used to fortify the space between them. Attempts to cross the Ptolemaic defensive lines failed and the Seleucids' forces suffered considerable losses.¹⁹ Theodotus' small units managed to stop the whole army of enemies. A discouraged Antiochus, who also received bad news about Molon's rebellion spreading, decided to retreat.

That attack, although unsuccessful, must have been the final warning for Ptolemy IV and his advisors. Even though afterwards Antiochus was engaged in the east, the kings of Egypt must have realised that another war was merely a question of time. It would have, therefore, been natural for Ptolemy (or Sosibios, who in fact conducted state affairs) to become more politically active in Asia Minor and attempt to find another ally there. Achaeus – if the Egyptian notables had managed to enlist his help – would have

¹⁶ Plb. 5.45.7–10.

¹⁷ Ancient writers (Plb. 5.34; 15.25.1–2; Plut. *Cleom.* 33.1; Athen. 13.577a; Iust. 30.1) left a very negative – and certainly too one-sided – picture of affairs on Ptolemy's court and the king's character, cf. Huss 1976: 239–255; Hölbl 2001: 133–134.

¹⁸ From the 240s to 219 there is no information about the existence of a Seleucid fleet. Theoretically, the Seleucids could have used the ships of Arados, but after the severe punishment inflicted on the city by Seleucus II this seems doubtful: Grainger 1991: 90–91.

¹⁹ Plb. 5.46.1–4.

been a dangerous rival to Antiochus and could have forced the king to postpone a possible second invasion against Coele-Syria.²⁰

The Ptolemies could have reaped great benefits from their cooperation with Achaeus also in the Asian Minor region. Egyptian dominions there could have turned out to be very important during another possible war for Coele-Syria. The cities of Asia Minor were a significant place for recruiting mercenaries, and as the history of the Fourth Syrian War shows, men recruited from there to Egypt during the frantic preparations in the winter of 218/217 played an important part in Ptolemy IV's victory.²¹ An agreement with Achaeus, the most powerful man in Asia Minor at the time, would have been a valuable security for Ptolemaic dominions in the area. The situation in the region was very delicate and the protection of Egyptian influences required both military forces and efficient diplomacy. How very volatile the situation there could be was shown during the Second and Third Syrian Wars; although the latter brought the Ptolemies considerable success, the former saw them incur painful losses.²² A few years prior, in 227, the third power in the Hellenistic world, Macedonia, had signalled their interest in this area, although Antigonos Doson's Carian campaign was not necessarily aimed against the Ptolemies.²³ The Aegean region was always in the centre of attention of Egyptian kings, who strove to expand and protect their lands on the one hand, and to support the local smaller states against the Seleucids on the other. The Ptolemaic policy of backing Seleucids' enemies in Asia Minor was an additional factor that could have made Antiochus III reignite the conflict with Egypt. The Ptolemaic diplomacy was keenly interested in every king and city that might limit the enemy's influence in the region. In turn, for these smaller Asian Minor rulers the Ptolemies were a dream partner that could balance the Seleucids' influence; e.g. there had been ties of friendship between the Ptolemies and Ziaelas, the king of Bithynia, from the 240s onwards.²⁴ However, the Egyptians' highest hopes rested with the Seleucids' most active enemy, Attalus I of Pergamon. Alexandria essentially limited their backing to financial support, but Magas' expedition showed that it was also capable of conducting direct military operations.

Towards the very end of his rule, Ptolemy III supported Attalus I in his fight against Antiochus Hierax – successfully enough for the ally to take over the lion's share of the Seleucids' dominions in Asia Minor. Hierax was detained in Egypt and an attempt to es-

²⁰ Similarly Huss (1976: 30), who also surmises that the price Achaeus might have paid for his cooperation with Ptolemy was giving up Coele-Syria. This is possible, although in the light of the *chora doriktetos* principle such an agreement could not have been very important in the future. What is very likely is Huss' hypothesis that Egypt was hoping for a more permanent disruption of the Seleucid monarchy, since it was doubtful that Molon would offer submission to Achaeus after the latter's possible victory. The Seleucids descending into internal conflict was the best defence for Coele-Syria.

²¹ Plb. 5.63.8.

²² During the Second Syrian War, Antiochus II managed to capture a number of footholds in Ionia and take over numerous cities in Cilicia and Pamfilia. Another warning for the Ptolemies in the Aegean region was the fleet's defeat at Andros in ca. 245, even if it did not considerably weaken Egyptian influences in the Aegean Sea basin. Cf. P.Haun. 6, frg. 1.11.8–9; Pomp. Trog. *prol.* 26–27; Plut. *Arat.* 12.2; Plut. *Mor.* 183 C.545; App. *Syr.* 65; Orth 1977: 153–156; Buraselis 1982: 160–170; Hölbl 2001: 43–45; Huss 2001: 271–286.

²³ Crampa 1969, no. 7; Plb. 20.5.11. cf. Bengtson 1971; Will 1979: 334–335.

²⁴ SIG I, 456. The letter, preserved in an inscription, is most commonly dated to ca. 246–242; Heinen 1984: 425. For the Ptolemies' policy in Asia Minor at that time, cf. Huss 1976: 88–102; Beyer Rotthoff 1993: 68–83.

cape ended in his death.²⁵ However, Hierax was replaced by Achaeus, who was a much more difficult opponent. Around 223–222 Ptolemy III sent Attalus reinforcements under the command of his younger son, Magas, but to no avail – Achaeus was quickly driving the Pergamon king out of the newly captured territories.²⁶ Magas' campaign ended swiftly but it was likely one of the reasons for the outbreak of the Fourth Syrian War.²⁷ Antiochus could not idly watch events that were threatening his state's interests. On the other hand, the 221 campaign to Coele-Syria launched by the Seleucid king must have activated the new rulers in Egypt. An expert diplomat like Sosibios knew that there are no eternal enemies in politics and enlisting the help of Achaeus could have been beneficial. It cannot, therefore, be excluded, that Alexandria inspired his usurpation to some extent.

One of the reasons to believe this is Polybius' account (5.57.2) mentioning a letter Antiochus III sent to Achaeus, in which the king informed him that he was aware of the rebel's secret collaboration with Ptolemy. It follows from another fragment of *The Histories* (5.42.7) that Hermeias forged Achaeus' letter to Antiochus in which the former supposedly informed the ruler that Ptolemy III promised him financial and military support if he turned against the rightful king. Hermeias supposedly did so to persuade Antiochus to attack Coele-Syria. However, keeping in mind the hostility that the author of Polybius' source felt towards Hermeias, it is very likely that such a letter did indeed exist, and Ptolemy's contacts with Achaeus did occur.²⁸ Besides, it would be odd if – faced with Antiochus' preparations for a war for Coele-Syria – Alexandria made no attempt to hold the enemy in check elsewhere. The fiasco of Magas' expedition could have activated Ptolemy even further. Sosibios had another trump in his hands – Andromachus, Achaeus' father, who had been kept prisoner in Egypt for several years.²⁹ Andromachus was soon released. According to Polybius, the Alexandrians considered using the prisoner against Antiochus, but following insistent requests from the Rhodians (who were friendly with the Ptolemies), involved in a conflict with Byzantium and trying to establish friendly relations with Achaeus, he was sent back to his son. This whole passage would indicate that Ptolemy and Sosibios, dragged through mud and mire by Polybius, were capable of very noble gestures! Such a version of events does not sound realistic: in high politics gestures are important but it is actions that count. What is also doubtful is emphasising the Rhodian initiative in the matter. Polybius probably gathered his information about the endeavours to free Andromachus from Rhodian

²⁵ Just. 27.3.9–11.

²⁶ P.Haun. 6, frg. 1.11.19; 28–31; Plb. 4.48.2–11.

²⁷ Huss 1976. According to him, the *Seleucus who had just died* (P.Haun. 6, frg. 1.11.19; 28–31) was Seleucus III, so he places Magas' mission in this context, *contra*: Habicht 1980.

²⁸ Meloni (1949: 542), Brown (1961: 193–195), Will (1962: 91) believe that the letter did not exist but was invented by historians who worked on the court in Antioch. Schmitt (1964: 161–163) rightly observed that fabricating such a letter was not in Hermeias' best interest, since planting the seed of doubt about Achaeus in the king's mind could have ruined the plans for the Syrian war. Besides, it follows clearly from the letter that Achaeus at the time was loyal to the king. Holleaux (1942: 132 n. 3), Walbank (1967: 502, 573), and Huss (1976: 28) also voiced their doubts about Polybius' account on this matter.

²⁹ Plb. 4.51.1–4. The time and circumstances of Andromachus becoming an Egyptian prisoner are only hypothetical. Walbank (1967: 505) and Will (1979: 313–314) believe that he was captured by Attalus during the war with Seleucus III and passed over to the Lagids. It could also have occurred during Magas' Asian Minor campaign: Huss 2001: 390 n. 27.

sources, as evidenced e.g. by the way he described the conflict between the Rhodians and the Byzantines, clearly showing much more sympathy towards the former.³⁰

They were supposedly acting in the interest of almost all peoples negatively affected by the duty imposed by Byzantium on all those crossing the Hellespont. The way the negotiations regarding Andromachus were described, with praise heaped on the Rhodians' cleverness, also supports this belief. Naturally, the Rhodians' mediation is not impossible – they were interested in winning over Achaeus – but it is impossible for Ptolemy and his advisor to let their most important bargaining chip to leave their hands like this. Setting Andromachus free should not, therefore, be necessarily believed to be the beginning of Ptolemy's cooperation with Achaeus. It could have been a gesture that was only supposed to strengthen closer relationship between the two parties.³¹ The fact that Ptolemy detained Andromachus for while after Achaeus' usurpation does not necessarily mean that he had not started cooperation with the Egyptian king. Ptolemy and Sosibios might have made letting Achaeus' father go dependent on Achaeus' actions. His usurpation was undoubtedly heavily distorted by authors connected to Antiochus III, and who knows – perhaps the account of Achaeus' campaign to Syria to eliminate Antiochus III is the most explicit example of such manipulations. In Lycaonia, soldiers reportedly rebelled against the usurper when they realised he was leading them against the rightful king. Pisidia fell victim to the confusion. Wanting to save face, Achaeus declared that he had no intention whatsoever to start a war against Antiochus and it was this mountainous land that was the target of his campaign. As a result, Pisidia was severely plundered, the general regained his prestige, and the content soldiers, laden with spoils, returned to Lydia.³² In the eyes of the author from whom Polybius borrowed his information, such a description of the events was to leave no doubt as to which side was in the right and had the army's support. However, considering the problems that the inhabitants of the mountainous Pisidia posed to everyone who tried to control them, their resistance could just as well have been used to explain Achaeus aborting the expedition to Syria. The pacification of Pisidia must have taken Achaeus a while, so he could have concluded that he should wait for the next suitable moment to attack – e.g. the moment when Antiochus would have attacked Egyptian dominions in Syria. He also could have reckoned that it would be better to meet the rival on his own territory, behind the Taurus Mountains, where – as Antiochus was later to found out – Achaeus was an exceptionally difficult opponent.³³

Thus, the Ptolemies and Achaeus had a mutual enemy – Antiochus III. However, it is difficult to determine whether the ties they entered into had a more formal nature. As has been rightly noted, the course of events during the Fourth Syrian War allows us to put forward the hypothesis that there was a formal agreement.³⁴ First and foremost,

³⁰ Plb. 4.47.

³¹ Similarly Huss 1976: 36.

³² Plb. 5.57.6.

³³ Plb. 7.15–18; 8.15–23. It took Antiochus three long years to defeat the rebel.

³⁴ Huss 1976: 37, *contra* Schmitt 1964: 170.

the Ptolemaic side demanding that Achaëus be included in the peace treaty during the negotiations in the winter of 219/218 seems to support this theory.³⁵

Achaëus' contacts with Egypt in turn forced Antiochus III to react quickly. He had to act fast to break the alliance that was dangerous for him, since his opponents could always attack from two sides. He decided to recapture Seleucia Pieria, a sea port key for the dynasty.³⁶ His attack on the city in the spring of 219 meant a renewal of the war with Egypt.³⁷ It follows from Polybius' account that after capturing Seleucia, instead of immediately marching to Coele-Syria, Antiochus intended to set off against Achaëus. He had sent troops under the command of Theodotus Heliolios to Coele-Syria, but the general's job was to man the key points and protect the border.³⁸ In this way, instead of continuing military operations, Antiochus deliberately gave Ptolemy additional time to prepare. It was only the news of the treason committed by the Ptolemaic general Theodotus that persuaded the Seleucid king to change his plans and continue his attack against the Lagids' dominions. Polybius gives no comment as to the Seleucid king's quandary. The only possible explanation would be some sort of offensive action undertaken by Achaëus. The historian from Megalopolis mentions no such explanation, but we do know that when the truce was negotiated later, in the autumn of 219, Antiochus gathered his army in winter quarters in Seleucia Pieria since Achaëus, cooperating with Ptolemy, was plotting against him.³⁹ It is entirely possible that the Lagids' ally had started his scheme earlier. Researchers often minimize the extent of cooperation between Philopator and Achaëus. Rejecting the possibility of Achaëus undertaking offensive steps, or at least a limited diversion against Antiochus, they believe that Antiochus fell victim to disinformation initiated by the Egyptian side.⁴⁰ However, firstly this underestimates the Seleucid king's secret service and secondly, some information cited by Polybius indicates good cooperation between Alexandria and Sardes. During the 219/218 negotiations, Ptolemy brought mercenaries stationed in *foreign cities* to Alexandria⁴¹ and this term probably also, or maybe firstly, refers to Asian Minor cities, i.e. cities in the sphere where Achaëus was active.

Ultimately, however, Achaëus' participation in the Fourth Syrian War was negligible, perhaps mainly due to the fact that he had to grapple Attalus I in Asia Minor.⁴² It is entirely possible that although sources are silent on the matter, the king of Pergamon was driven to war by Antiochus III, since Achaëus' cooperation with Egypt changed the political situation in the region. Pergamon, up until then often acting in concurrence with the Ptolemies, had to revise its strategy. Achaëus, after all, was Attalus' main op-

³⁵ Plb. 5.67.12–14. Errington (2008: 174–175) believes that at the time Antiochus considered Achaëus his co-ruler, and Achaëus was given the stigma of rebel after the Ptolemaic-Seleucid negotiations during the Fourth Syrian War. According to him, otherwise Sosibios would not have demanded for the rebel to be included in the treaty. In this way, however, he does not appreciate the fact that Achaëus cooperated with Egypt or the place he occupied in the Ptolemaic policy.

³⁶ Cf. Jähne 1974: 509–513 for the significance of the port.

³⁷ Plb. 5.60–61.

³⁸ Plb. 5.59.2; 5.61.3.

³⁹ Plb. 5.66.3.

⁴⁰ Schmitt 1964: 167–171; Will 1982: 25–26; 30–31, *contra* Huss 1976: 41–42.

⁴¹ Plb. 5.63.8.

⁴² Plb. 5.75–78; Robert 1937: 185–198; Holleaux 1938: 17–42; Schmitt 1964: 262–264; Ma 2000: 58–60.

ponent. This should naturally have led to closer relations between the king of Pergamon and Antiochus III. The outcome of the Fourth Syrian War was ultimately decided at Raphia, and this time the victorious Ptolemy IV did not motion to include Achaeus in the peace talks.⁴³ We are inclined to agree with the researchers who conclude that after Antiochus' defeat it was not in Ptolemy's interest to solve internal arguments in the Seleucids' state or to protect Achaeus' position. On the contrary, it was beneficial for him if Antiochus had an opponent who would engage his forces.⁴⁴ It is also worth noting that it was not in Ptolemy's best interest to weaken Antiochus excessively due to the dynasty's interests in Asia Minor. Achaeus gaining too much strength could have proved unfavourable in time. The Alexandrians fully realised that too often political alliances were very volatile. The Ptolemies themselves had conducted such policy in Greece or Asia Minor, as Cleomenes III and the Achaean League had found out to their detriment.

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⁴³ Sources say nothing on the matter but it would be the most logical to assume that he was overlooked, because Antiochus started preparations for a war against him almost immediately (Plb. 5.107.4).

⁴⁴ Schmitt 1964: 169; Huss 2001: 402.

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