

## PTOLEMY IX SOTER II, ANTIOCHUS IX PHILOPATOR (“CYZICENUS”), AND JOHN HYRCANUS I

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### Abstract

This paper argues that Justin’s account of the relations between Ptolemy IX and Cleopatra III should be treated with skepticism. It is possible that the delivery of troops from Cyprus to the Seleucid pretender Antiochus IX was supported by Ptolemy IX, with the aim of increasing his influence in the southern Levant. In that case, his later provision of troops to Antiochus IX for the defense of Samaria was consistent with an existing alliance. However after the deposal of Ptolemy IX from the Egyptian throne, there is no evidence of his further contact with Antiochus IX. His involvement in the War of Sceptres was probably an opportunistic attempt to enlarge his territory, which only coincidentally made him an opponent of Hasmonean expansion.

**Keywords:** Antiochus VIII, Antiochus IX, Cleopatra III, Cleopatra IV, John Hyrcanus I, Samaria, Ptolemy IX.

On two occasions, Ptolemaic interference impacted the career of the Seleucid Antiochus IX Philopator, and on the second of these occasions the interference also affected Hasmonean interests. Justin’s epitome of Pompeius Trogus recounts that after being divorced by Ptolemy IX Soter II, the repudiated queen Cleopatra IV traveled to Cyprus, won the allegiance of part of the soldiery stationed there, and married the aspiring king Antiochus IX in Syria, offering the troops as her dowry.<sup>1</sup> With these reinforcements Antiochus IX was now equal in strength to his half-brother Antiochus VIII and was able to contest the Seleucid kingdom.<sup>2</sup> According to Flavius Josephus, at some later point during his joint reign with Cleopatra III, Ptolemy IX Soter II loaned 6,000 Egyptian troops

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<sup>1</sup> Just. 39.2.3.

<sup>2</sup> Just. 39.2.4.

to Antiochus IX Cyzicenus, without the consent of Cleopatra III, to enable Antiochus to intervene on behalf of Samaria when it was under siege by John Hyrcanus I.<sup>3</sup>

The motives for the involvement of Ptolemy IX are not self-evident. The aim of this essay is to determine when and how the Egyptian king came to ally himself with Antiochus Cyzicenus, to seek possible reasons for the alliance, and to consider its end. We shall also ask whether Ptolemy IX was a particular opponent of expansion of the Hasmonean kingdom. Along the way, we shall attempt to address other historical issues, always citing relevant coinage as a supplement to the literary sources, especially since Josephus is careless and contradictory when it comes to chronology. In addition we shall discuss other problems with the literary sources, especially as they affect our understanding of Ptolemaic history.

## 1. The origins of the conflict in the Seleucid realm

Justin informs us that Antiochus VIII, after assassinating his mother and coregent, Cleopatra Thea, enjoyed eight years of peace until his kingdom was invaded by his half-brother, Antiochus IX.<sup>4</sup> The chronology is confirmed by coinage, which establishes that Cleopatra Thea disappeared in 121 and Antiochus IX claimed the Seleucid kingship in 114/13, a span of eight years.<sup>5</sup> According to Josephus, during these years of peace Antiochus VIII refrained from attacking Judaea because he anticipated the aggression of his half-brother.<sup>6</sup> Still according to Josephus, John Hyrcanus I happily ignored the conflict between the two Seleucids and devoted his energies to enriching himself in Judaea, only turning aggressive after Antiochus Cyzicenus harassed his territory.<sup>7</sup> We shall see below (in § 5) that coinage offers some support for the culpability of Cyzicenus, though it does not pertain to Judaea specifically.

In contrast, our sources do not indicate that Antiochus VIII ever opposed Hyrcanus, even after the latter initiated his policy of territorial expansion. We can well imagine that Antiochus VIII relished the conflicts between Antiochus IX and Hyrcanus, which tended to weaken his two enemies at no cost to himself.

## 2. The alliance of Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II and Antiochus VIII Epiphanes

As we search for the motivation of Ptolemy IX in allying with Antiochus IX, a first question that arises is: was he influenced by the policies of his elders? In 125/4 Ptolemy VIII thoroughly realigned Ptolemaic policy toward the Seleucid kingdom. He abandoned

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<sup>3</sup> Josephus, *AJ* 13.278.

<sup>4</sup> Just. 39.2.9.

<sup>5</sup> For the latest dated coinage of Cleopatra Thea, see *SC* 2267.2, 2268, 2272.3–4, 2276.2, 2277.2. For the earliest dated coinage of Antiochus IX, see *SC* 2364.1, 2387, 2395.1.

<sup>6</sup> Josephus, *AJ* 13.270–271.

<sup>7</sup> Josephus, *AJ* 13.273–274.

his protégé in Syria, the usurper Alexander II Zabinas, and threw his support to Antiochus VIII.<sup>8</sup> The new alliance involved a dynastic marriage between Antiochus VIII and Tryphaena, a daughter of Ptolemy VIII by his second wife and niece, Cleopatra III. These arrangements were negotiated with the Syrian queen Cleopatra Thea, sister of Cleopatra III, niece of Ptolemy VIII, and mother of Antiochus VIII.<sup>9</sup> Also involved in the negotiation was Thea's mother and Ptolemy's estranged sister and wife, Cleopatra II, who had revolted unsuccessfully against her brother-husband in 131 and subsequently took refuge at the court of her daughter in Syria, taking the Egyptian treasury with her.<sup>10</sup> A further aspect of the agreement of 125/4 was the return of Cleopatra II to Alexandria and her resumption of her role as elder wife and consort of Ptolemy VIII.

The reconciliation of Cleopatra II and Ptolemy VIII is difficult to understand. In the early days of her revolt, Ptolemy VIII had murdered their son Ptolemy Memphites, and also an older heir who may have been her son from her previous marriage to Ptolemy VI.<sup>11</sup> Historians have wondered why the offended queen would consent to resume relations with the murderer of at least one of her sons. Werner Huß suggested she may have hoped to exert influence over a son or grandson as successor to Ptolemy VIII.<sup>12</sup> Jacques-Yves Carrez-Maratray developed a controversial hypothesis that Cleopatra II was the biological mother of the future Ptolemy IX, who came of age in 124, and that she negotiated to ensure that he would inherit the throne of Ptolemy VIII.<sup>13</sup> Sylvie Cauville and Didier Devauchelle were the first to propose that Cleopatra II was the mother of Ptolemy IX, citing the Edfu Building inscription.<sup>14</sup> Other Egyptian primary sources point in the same direction.<sup>15</sup> Yet most historians prefer to follow the literary sources, which unanimously identify Cleopatra III as the mother of Ptolemy IX.<sup>16</sup>

Treaties and alliances normally lapsed at the death of one of the kings who negotiated them. But if the succession of Ptolemy IX was intimately connected with the alliance of Ptolemy VIII and Antiochus VIII, as implied by Carrez-Maratray's hypothesis and accepted by Anne Bielman Sánchez and Giuseppina Lenzo,<sup>17</sup> he may have had reason to renew the alliance, or at least not to repudiate it. But at some point he chose an alliance with Antiochus IX, rival to Antiochus VIII, whereas his coregent Cleopatra III

<sup>8</sup> Just. 39.2.1–5, with chronological problems noted by Bielman Sánchez – Lenzo 2015, 343.

<sup>9</sup> On the negotiations, see Bielman Sánchez – Lenzo 2015, 343–345.

<sup>10</sup> On Cleopatra's flight and theft of the treasury, Just. 39.1.4. On the revolt of Cleopatra II generally, see Veisse 2004, 48–60; Bielman Sánchez – Lenzo 2015, 273–340.

<sup>11</sup> Just. 38.8.12–13. On the possible identity of the older heir, Huß 2002.

<sup>12</sup> Huß 2001, 615.

<sup>13</sup> Carrez-Maratray 2000, 70–73.

<sup>14</sup> Cauville – Devauchelle 1984, 41, 47–50.

<sup>15</sup> The phrase "Heir of the Beneficent God and the Mother-Loving Goddess, Savior" also occurs in the Edfu *mammisi* and on the doorpost of the offering hall, and once at Deir el-Medina. In the Egyptian titlature of the first reign of Ptolemy IX in Egypt, his Two Ladies name attributed his accession to his mother, and his throne name used the same formula as the Edfu Building inscription, see Huß 2001, 630; CaBor-Pfeiffer 2008, 27; Ritner 2011, 98–101.

<sup>16</sup> Just. 39.3.1–2, 39.4.1–2; Paus. 1.9.1–3; Por. *FGrHist* 260 F 2, 8 apud Eus. *Chron.* I, 163 (ed. Schoene). An exception to the consensus of historians is Eldamaty 2011.

<sup>17</sup> For the acceptance of the connection, while explicitly rejecting Carrez-Maratray's hypothesis, see Bielman Sánchez – Lenzo 2015, 345.

chose to remain faithful to the alliance with Antiochus VIII negotiated by Ptolemy VIII, or else she entered into a new alliance with her nephew.

### 3. Errors and distortions in literary sources treating Ptolemy IX and Cleopatra III

The literary tradition is hostile to the late Ptolemies, and extraordinarily hostile to Cleopatra III. This obvious bias should arouse our suspicion.<sup>18</sup> But with limited exceptions modern histories repeat as fact most elements of the narrative in Justin's epitome of Pompeius Trogus, without even a *caveat*. They assume that Justin's emphasis on personal relationships reflects historical reality, despite his obvious moralizing purposes. Accordingly they interpret policy as driven by the animosities and favoritism of Cleopatra III, even though the reconciliation of the Ptolemaic house in 124 shows that personal passions could give way to statecraft. The brief account of the travel writer Pausanias supports Justin's claim that Cleopatra III hated Ptolemy IX.<sup>19</sup> But Porphyry of Tyre contradicts Justin, claiming that Cleopatra III favored Soter II until year 10 of their joint reign, when his execution of her courtiers provoked her to depose him.<sup>20</sup> The year of the deposal is accurate, but Porphyry's version of events is rarely cited.

Justin's account of the reign of Ptolemy IX includes several factual errors, some of which have been corrected in modern scholarship. According to Justin, Ptolemy VIII left a will bequeathing Cyrenaica to an illegitimate son, Apion, and left to Cleopatra III the decision which of his legitimate sons should inherit Egypt and Cyprus; Cleopatra, though favoring the younger son Ptolemy Alexander, was compelled by the people of Alexandria to elevate the elder son and associate him in her rule.<sup>21</sup> However a single Egyptian demotic source informs us that the kingdom was initially ruled by a triad, Pharaohess Cleopatra, Pharaohess Cleopatra, and Pharaoh Ptolemy Who Loves His Mother, the Savior.<sup>22</sup> The precedence of the two Cleopatras indicates that they belonged to an elder generation and were, in fact, Cleopatra II and Cleopatra III. The king's *epiklesis* was the masculine, demotic form of the Greek Philometor Soteira, the cult epithet by which Cleopatra II was known during her revolt against Ptolemy VIII; and this choice of nomenclature is consistent with the hypothesis that Cleopatra II was responsible for the succession of Ptolemy IX. The elder Cleopatra apparently died early in the reign, for the next primary sources, dated 6 April 115, no longer mention two Cleopatras.<sup>23</sup> Finally, epigraphic evidence from Cyrenaica as well as coinage proves that Ptolemy IX, not Apion,

<sup>18</sup> Thompson 1989, 698, observes that nothing in the literary sources demands wholesale rejection, but the facts are hardly compelling.

<sup>19</sup> Paus. 1.9.1–3.

<sup>20</sup> Por. *FGrHist* 260 F 2, 8 apud Eus. *Chron.* I, 163 (ed. Schoene).

<sup>21</sup> Just. 39.3.1–2, 39.5.2.

<sup>22</sup> *P. Ryl. Dem.* 20 = *P. Ehebertr.* 39 (TM 135) (29 October 116); cited by Samuel 1962, 148; Pestman 1967, 64 and 66, note a.

<sup>23</sup> *P. Cair.* III 30602 = *UPZ I* 130 (TM 3522) and *P. Cair.* III 30603 = *UPZ I* 131 (TM 3523).

was recognized as king in that province during his first reign in Egypt.<sup>24</sup> Apion may be nothing more than a literary "double" created under Roman influence.<sup>25</sup>

Another claim of Justin is that before permitting the accession of Ptolemy IX, the domineering Cleopatra III compelled him to divorce his wife Cleopatra IV, whom he dearly loved, and to marry a different sister, Cleopatra Selene.<sup>26</sup> As already mentioned, after the divorce Cleopatra IV travelled to Cyprus, gained the allegiance of a part of the soldiery there, and offered herself as wife to the Seleucid pretender Antiochus IX Cyzicenus bringing the Cypriote garrison as her dowry.<sup>27</sup> Cyzicenus had apparently already attacked Syria in response to a plot on his life by his half-brother Antiochus VI-II.<sup>28</sup> But it was this gift of troops from Cleopatra IV that enabled Cyzicenus to match the strength of Antiochus VIII and to contest the kingdom seriously.<sup>29</sup> The coinage of Antiochus IX clearly shows that his reign began in 114/3.<sup>30</sup> Did Cleopatra IV, repudiated in 116 before the accession of Ptolemy IX, wait for two years before attempting to revive her fortunes? Or was her reaction more immediate? Possibly the divorce occurred later, after the death of Cleopatra II, who may have protected the marriage.<sup>31</sup> In that case Justin misrepresented both the date and circumstances of the divorce.

Justin of course does not inform us what powers were employed by Cleopatra III to force the king to divorce against his will. So far as we know, judicial tribunals were not involved in resolving disagreements within the royal family. Did Cleopatra simply enjoy an official authority superior to that of the king, or did she control some part of the royal administration that could compel his obedience?

Virtually all surviving dating formularies in documents from the reign of Cleopatra III and Ptolemy IX give precedence to Cleopatra.<sup>32</sup> In all of preceding Ptolemaic history, precedence in dating protocols corresponded to the actual exercise of power, and the precedence of Cleopatra III is understood in the same sense. Yet Cleopatra III is not mentioned in the Pergamene *psephisma* cited in § 8 below. Apparently in international diplomacy she was not considered the head of the Ptolemaic state; rather Ptolemy, there identified as king of Alexandria, was the head of state. It is worth asking if the significance of precedence in dating protocols had now shifted, so that it reflected seniority in age and history on the throne, rather than superior authority.

<sup>24</sup> *SEG* 9.5, a statue base with an inscription regulating a festival in honor of King Ptolemy, Queen Cleopatra (Selene), and their son; *SEG* 9.62; 209 = Pugliese-Caratelli 1961/1962, no. 209. For the coinage, known since the days of Svoronos, see most recently Asolati 2023, nos. 102–108; *CPE* B798–B806, B808–B809.

<sup>25</sup> Criscuolo 2011, 147–148.

<sup>26</sup> Just. 39.3.2. Bennett 1997, 43–46, argued that the marriage of Ptolemy IX to Cleopatra IV was considered illegitimate by his opponents because it had occurred before he was king, contrary to Ptolemaic tradition. This breach of tradition was cited by Cuenod 2020, 66–67, who questioned the reality of the marriage and thus doubted the divorce.

<sup>27</sup> Just. 39.3.3.

<sup>28</sup> Just. 39.2.10; App. *Syr.* 69; Cohen, in Van 't Dack *et al.* 1989, 16.

<sup>29</sup> Just. 39.3.4.

<sup>30</sup> Dated bronze coinage of Antioch, *SC* 2364.1. The date is also consistent with Justin's statement (39.2.9) that Antiochus VIII enjoyed eight years of peace after eliminating his mother and coregent Cleopatra Thea.

<sup>31</sup> Bennett 1997, 52.

<sup>32</sup> Thompson 1989 collects and analyzes dating protocols, but is chiefly concerned with the lists of deified Ptolemies and with establishing the cultic titles of Cleopatra II and III, which were flexible, so as to refute the hypotheses of Cauville – Devauchelle 1984.

Among the dedications offered by Egyptian subjects on behalf of their rulers was one engraved twice on a lion statue at the temple of Hermonthis at Narmouthis in 116/5, on behalf of King Ptolemy and Queen Cleopatra Theoi Philometores and Soteres.<sup>33</sup> Either Ptolemy IX took precedence over Cleopatra III in this expression of piety and loyalty, or the elder queen was omitted altogether in favor of the king's wife. In either case, it is difficult to reconcile these twin inscriptions with the common view that Cleopatra III was the dominant figure among the rulers, and the true sovereign of the kingdom. Another dedication omitting Cleopatra III was offered in 108 at Cyrene, to King Ptolemy and Queen Cleopatra his sister Theoi Philometores and their son Ptolemy.<sup>34</sup> In this case historians have assumed special circumstances, even including a flight of Ptolemy IX and Cleopatra Selene to Cyrene, in order to explain the omission of Cleopatra III.<sup>35</sup>

A final detail tending to refute the overweening power attributed to Cleopatra III by Justin and modern historians is the omission of her personal priestesses from the dating formulary of the last Egyptian synodal decree, published at Giza in October/November 112.<sup>36</sup> Ludwig Koenen saw in this decree the first evidence of dissension between Cleopatra III and Ptolemy IX.<sup>37</sup>

There is reason to doubt that Cleopatra III had superior authority over the royal administration. Ptolemaic coinage from 115/4 and 114/3 suggests that she did not control the fiscal administration. A brief series of Alexandrian bronze coins, known in current terminology as Series 8, is the first Egyptian bronze coinage to bear regnal dates, year 3 and year 4.<sup>38</sup> Thomas Faucher and Mona Shahin demonstrated that these were regnal years of Cleopatra III and Ptolemy IX.<sup>39</sup> In addition to bearing regnal dates, this innovative coinage bears a *sigma-omega* monogram abbreviating the king's cult title Soter, making it the first Egyptian bronze coinage to identify *which* King Ptolemy was its issuing authority. Contemporary bronze coins of Cyrene also bear the letters *sigma omega*, often paired with *theta epsilon* (for Theos), or even fuller forms of the legend.<sup>40</sup> In contrast to these very specific assertions of the king's authority, Cleopatra III is not named on Series 8 or any other coinage of her coregency with Ptolemy IX. What is more, the obverse type of Demeter (or Isis-Demeter), which had been prominent on Egyptian bronze coinage throughout the second century, disappeared with Series 8 and was never revived, despite the strong cultic association of Ptolemaic queens with Isis. We might reasonably conclude that the fiscal administration, of which mints were a part, was not under the control of Cleopatra III, but rather under that of the king.

A possible piece of contrary evidence is a *prostagma* of year 3, contemporary with Series 8, which recognizes the judicial authority of the *dioikêtês* over complaints against

<sup>33</sup> SEG 59.1767A–B = CPI 275–276 (where Queen Cleopatra is identified as either Cleopatra II or Cleopatra III).

<sup>34</sup> SEG 39.1718.

<sup>35</sup> Van 't Dack, in Van 't Dack *et al.* 1989, 21, with n. 27.

<sup>36</sup> OGIS 739 = CGC 9299.

<sup>37</sup> Koenen 1970, 75 n. 20, 76–77.

<sup>38</sup> CPE B741–B744.

<sup>39</sup> Faucher – Shahin 2006, 148–151. Their dating is confirmed by the Megadim hoards of 1964 (EHI 131–132), see Syon – Lorber – Galili 2013.

<sup>40</sup> Asolati 2023, nos. 102–108; CPE B798–806, 808–809. At Cyrene, the practice of identifying the issuing Ptolemy by his cult *epiklesis* was introduced by Ptolemy VIII as king of Cyrenaica.

agents of the treasury.<sup>41</sup> It was promulgated by the sovereigns, normally assumed to mean Cleopatra III and Ptolemy IX, but the rulers are not named. We cannot infer from this text that Cleopatra III exercised real power over the fiscal administration. We cannot even be sure that she was included in the plural *basileôn prostaxantôn* of the *prostagma* of year 3. Later, in 108/7, Ptolemy Soter issued a *prostagma* to the Cyreneans jointly with his wife Queen Cleopatra.<sup>42</sup>

The ability of Ptolemy IX to dispatch troops to Antiochus IX for the defense of Samaria without the approval of Cleopatra III seems to indicate that he alone commanded the military.

We are left to conclude that if Cleopatra III truly imposed an unwanted divorce on her coregent, she did so through sheer force of personality, perhaps reinforced by other forms of soft power such as the support of courtiers. But such a pressure campaign would have required some time to wear the king down and cannot be reconciled with Justin's claim that the divorce was a condition of his succession.

The total dominance of Cleopatra III is made more credible by a rhetorical trick, use of the derogatory nickname Lathyrus (chickpea) for Ptolemy IX. This unofficial epithet may imply a small stature and may even have been a mark of affection on the part of his Alexandrian contemporaries, but for later readers it certainly implies insignificance. Josephus consistently identifies the ninth Ptolemy as Lathyrus. Justin does not name Ptolemy Lathyrus in his epitome of Pompeius Trogus, presumably reflecting the usage of Trogus himself, though Ptolemy Lathyrus appears in the anonymous prologues to Trogus (39 and 40).

Yet another distortion in Justin is his elision of events from the deposal of Ptolemy IX to the death of Cleopatra III.<sup>43</sup> This passage indicates that Cleopatra III sent Cleopatra Selene to marry Antiochus VIII during her joint reign with Ptolemy X Alexander. Most scholars have dated this marriage alliance during the War of Sceptres, or shortly before.<sup>44</sup> However we shall see below (in § 10) than an earlier context would be more plausible. Racing to the end of the joint rule of Cleopatra III and Ptolemy X, Justin also gives the impression that Cleopatra III was murdered not so long after her deposal of Ptolemy IX (autumn of 107), whereas she only disappears from Egyptian primary sources, including coinage, in 101.<sup>45</sup>

#### 4. The adventure of Cleopatra IV

The agency and daring of Cleopatra IV in suborning troops from Cyprus and using them to secure a new queenship is very appealing to the modern mentality. Let us ask ourselves, however, if the story is plausible. The only previous divorce definitely attested in Ptolemaic

<sup>41</sup> *P. Tebt.* I 7 = *C. Ord. Ptol.* 61 (12 April 114).

<sup>42</sup> *SEG* 9.5 = *C. Ord. Ptol.* 45–46, attributed to Ptolemy VIII and Cleopatra II by Lenger 1980, 107–108.

<sup>43</sup> *Just.* 39.4.1–5.

<sup>44</sup> E.g., Bevan 1968, 330; Cohen in Van't Dack *et al.* 1989, 17; Huß 2001, 649; Ehling 2008, 228; Lorber 2015, 186; Dumitru 2016, 257.

<sup>45</sup> Otto – Bengtson 1938, 134 with n. 3; Samuel 1962, 152; Skeat 1969, 36. For the coinage, Mørkholm 1975, 12–13.

royal history was the repudiation of Arsinoe I by Ptolemy II Philadelphus.<sup>46</sup> In that case the queen was suspected of plotting against the king's life and was exiled to Coptos in Upper Egypt, far from the Alexandrian court. There is a chance that Cleopatra II was also repudiated and subject to internal exile before her revolt against Ptolemy VIII; her name is missing from the dating protocol of a demotic papyrus from Memphis of November 132 (scribal error cannot be ruled out), and the first evidence of her revolt is a demotic-Greek ostrakon from Edfu in Upper Egypt, dated ten months later.<sup>47</sup> Cleopatra IV, after her divorce, was apparently allowed to remain in or near Alexandria, for it was the only place from which she could have voyaged to Cyprus. But how likely is it that a deposed queen on bad terms with the senior ruler could travel to Cyprus and conspire with military leaders there without being detected either by the rulers in Alexandria or by their administration on Cyprus?<sup>48</sup> Historians have attributed her successful courtship of the Cypriote troops to that fact that she was probably already wife to the future Ptolemy IX when he was governor of Cyprus, so that she would have been well known to the officers and have had close ties to them.<sup>49</sup> But surely such circumstances warranted extra vigilance from the authorities, especially if we assume a close bond between Cleopatra III and Ptolemy Alexander, who headed the administration of Cyprus at this point.

To win the allegiance of the Cypriote troops and transfer them to Syria, Cleopatra IV probably would have needed a considerable sum of money. Even if soldiers were willing to follow her without pay, she would have needed funds to hire a fleet of transport ships to convey them to Antiochus Cyzicenus in Syria. It is difficult to believe that the organization of a transport fleet could have been effected in complete secrecy without attracting attention from the royal administration on Cyprus. It may be a mitigating factor that the Cypriote *strategos* did not bear the title *navarch* at this point.<sup>50</sup> The administration was seated at Nea Paphos, near the western end of the island, and Cleopatra probably operated at Salamis on the eastern end, where the military *koina* of the Cretans, Thracians, and others were concentrated.<sup>51</sup> Cleopatra's depletion of the Cypriote military may well be reflected in the pattern of coin production at Salamis; whereas three obverse dies had been employed for the tetradrachms of 116/5 and two for those of 115/4, only one was used in 114/3 and the single die of 113/12 was still in use in the following year.<sup>52</sup> In other

<sup>46</sup> *Schol. Theoc.* 17.128.

<sup>47</sup> *P.dem.Memphis* 5 A-B (TM 45942) (Memphis, 9 or 11 November 132); *O. Edfu* inv. 77bis = *SB XVI* 12767 (TM 4156) (15 September 131).

<sup>48</sup> Question also raised by Olivier (forthcoming). Green 1990, 549 even asserts that Cleopatra IV failed to achieve a marriage with Ptolemy Alexander, with the implication that that was her original goal. If that were true, her presence on the island would have been known to Ptolemy Alexander, and her escape to Syria would have been quite improbable. We should reject this presumed intention of Cleopatra IV.

<sup>49</sup> Bennett 1997, 44; Huß 2001, 637.

<sup>50</sup> Bagnall 1976, 261. The future Ptolemy IX, while serving as *strategos* of the island, was accorded the title of *navarch* in a dedication offered by the *koinon* of Thracians stationed in Cyprus, see *I. Salamine* I 3.80 = *OGIS* 143 (text entirely erased).

<sup>51</sup> On the disposition of the military *koina* under Ptolemy VIII, see Mitford 1953, 148–153. The *koina* are not attested after his reign, but it is fairly unlikely that his deployments were radically changed in the early years of Ptolemy IX. Olivier (forthcoming) suggests Citium as the base from which Cleopatra departed for Syria with her troops.

<sup>52</sup> Olivier 2012, 79–83. Tetradrachm production at Citium was apparently also affected. Three obverse dies were employed for the tetradrachms of 115/4, but one of those dies was retained as the only die of 114/3,

words, silver production fell by half or more after 114/3, the year when Antiochus IX received the troops from Cyprus and claimed the Seleucid kingship.

It was suggested above that the divorce of Cleopatra IV may have occurred later than stated by Justin. It was also suggested that Cleopatra III may not have had sufficient authority or power to compel Ptolemy IX to act against his preference as a condition of his succession. Instead she may have mounted a pressure campaign to persuade him to divorce. For the sake of argument, let us assume that it was probably in 114/3, shortly before the first successful campaigns of Antiochus IX, that Ptolemy either capitulated to the pressure campaign or chose to divorce his wife for his own reasons. The grounds for the divorce—if any were needed—may have been Cleopatra's failure to produce a male heir.<sup>53</sup>

In 114/3 Ptolemy IX was almost certainly aware of the threat posed by Antiochus Cyzicenus against Antiochus VIII. Most likely Cyzicenus requested aid from him, since the Ptolemies had a history of supporting usurpers, pretenders, and other aspirants to Seleucid kingship. And without such diplomatic contact, how would Cleopatra IV have known where in Syria to deliver her gift of troops? Presumably Ptolemy agreed to support Cyzicenus in the hope of increasing his regional power and influence by installing a grateful ally on the Seleucid throne, then sent his ex-wife to Cyprus with money and instructions. The transfer of troops, via Cleopatra IV, in effect formed an alliance between the two kings, even if it was not advertised publicly, as for example by the adoption of Ptolemaic symbols on Cyzicenus' coinage. The marriage of Cleopatra IV and Antiochus IX was probably negotiated in advance and had the advantage of inserting a trusted agent of Soter II into intimate contact with his new protégé.

But why would Ptolemy resort to such an elaborate stratagem to supply troops to Antiochus IX? Presumably he wished to avoid a confrontation with Cleopatra III, whose sympathies can be inferred from the fact that in 112, when Tryphaena, queen of Antiochus VIII, had Cleopatra IV in her power, she reproached her for marrying outside of Egypt contrary to the wishes of their mother.<sup>54</sup> The implication is that Cleopatra III opposed the ambitions of Antiochus IX and supported the kingship of Antiochus VIII, and this was probably true already in 114/3.

Ptolemy may have had a second motive relating to the security of Cyprus. Cypriote coinage shows that in 114/3 a new regnal count began, marking the accession of Ptolemy X Alexander as king on the island.<sup>55</sup> In scholarship Ptolemy X has been understood as usurping the kingship, abetted by Cleopatra III and by his tutor Helenos, former and subsequent governor of Cyprus.<sup>56</sup> The implication is that Ptolemy IX was too weak

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and it was still in use in 113/2, with the implication the production in 114/3 must have been very low. See Olivier 2012, 109–111. This pattern of production at Citium was related to the activities of Cleopatra IV by Olivier 2024 in his Seleucid Lecture Series presentation on 18 December 2024. Olivier (forthcoming) cites production patterns at the Alexandria mint 114/3–112/11 and an increase at Citium in 113/2 as possible evidence of Ptolemaic financial aid to Antiochus IX, approved by Cleopatra III as well as by Ptolemy IX. Cuenod 2020, 65 and Graslin-Thomé – Vaisse 2021, 399–401, previously suggested the approval of all the sovereigns for the adventure of Cleopatra IV.

<sup>53</sup> Bennett 1997, 46–52, argued that she was probably the mother of the future Ptolemy XII and Ptolemy of Cyprus, but also explored alternative possibilities.

<sup>54</sup> Just. 39.3.6.

<sup>55</sup> Mørkholm 1983, 70–74.

<sup>56</sup> Mitford 1959, 119–124.

to mount any serious objection. But if we assume that he was not utterly supine, the lack of an armed response to the usurpation is surprising. A small altar to Ptolemy Alexander and Berenice, Theoi Soteres, erected at Amathus, informs us that Ptolemy Alexander was married to the daughter of Ptolemy IX during his time on Cyprus.<sup>57</sup> This provokes the suspicion that Soter II consented to the partition of his kingdom and sealed it with a dynastic marriage. It is even conceivable that he initiated the partition to appease the ambitions of the younger Ptolemy, just as Ptolemy VI had partitioned his kingdom to blunt the ambitions of *his* younger brother. Whether or not Ptolemy IX was the moving force behind the partition, it would serve his interests to reduce the military resources available to the new king of Cyprus.

## 5. Antiochus IX and Samaria before the siege of Hyrcanus I

Arthur Houghton proposed that the city of Samaria served briefly as a silver mint for Antiochus IX.<sup>58</sup> The coins in question were very small denominations, Attic-weight hemidrachms and obols, undated. The basis for their attribution to Samaria was the fact that virtually all examples with known provenances were either acquired in Sebaste-Samaria or reported to have been found in or near the city by “highly reliable sources” in the numismatic trade.<sup>59</sup> Edward Dąbrowa cited the silver mint as evidence for the strategic importance of Samaria.<sup>60</sup> Houghton also observed that Samaria was an important outpost of resistance to John Hyrcanus I, who threatened Seleucid rule; but Houghton did not relate this to the opening of the mint, whose date he considered still unsettled.<sup>61</sup> The intended purpose of the small-value currency is mysterious.<sup>62</sup>

The operation of such a mint would seem to indicate that Antiochus IX came into possession of Samaria at some point in the course of his campaigns. This would explain why the Samaritans appealed to him, specifically, when besieged by John Hyrcanus I. It is also consistent with Josephus’ claim that Hyrcanus attacked Samaria because the Samaritans had been harassing the Jewish colony at Marisa at the behest of the Seleucid kings (though the plural does not seem justified).<sup>63</sup> Here we can insert a chronological fixed point, for Hyrcanus’ conquest of Marisa and his installation of a garrison in the upper city is reliably dated to 113/12 from the evidence of stamped Rhodian amphora handles.<sup>64</sup> Thus Antiochus IX must have gained possession of Samaria before 113/12, apparently in the campaigns of his first year.

Although the Samaritan coins do not place Cyzicenus in Judaea before 113/12, it is entirely possible that his operations took him beyond Samaria into Hasmonean territory.

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<sup>57</sup> *I. Amathonte XI*; Thély 2016.

<sup>58</sup> Houghton 2000.

<sup>59</sup> Houghton 2000, 108–109.

<sup>60</sup> Dąbrowa 2007, 456.

<sup>61</sup> Houghton 2000, 110–111.

<sup>62</sup> Houghton 2000, 111.

<sup>63</sup> Josephus, *AJ* 13.275.

<sup>64</sup> Finkielsztejn 2019a; Finkielsztejn 2019b; Finkielsztejn 2021, 195, Fig. 11.1.

## 6. A commemorative coinage of Antiochus IX

A major bronze coinage of Antiochus IX, unattributed as to mint, depicts a bust of winged Eros on the obverse, and on the reverse Nike holding wreath.<sup>65</sup> Eros had been used as a Seleucid coin type only once previously, by Cyzicenus' father Antiochus VII, who had issued a copious, annual series of dated bronzes with the types Eros/Isiac crown throughout his reign.<sup>66</sup> The types Eros/Isiac crown are believed to celebrate Antiochus' marriage to the Ptolemaic princess Cleopatra Thea.<sup>67</sup> Cleopatra Thea had been wife to Antiochus' elder brother Demetrius II, who fell captive to the Parthians in his eastern campaign, and her invitation to Antiochus to enter Seleucia in Pieria and to marry her was the basis of his legitimate rule.<sup>68</sup>

Antiochus IX bore the official cult name Philopator. It is not unreasonable to assume that he revived his father's Eros type to celebrate his own marriage. The Nike reverse type would allude to the military aspect of the marriage, i.e., the troops brought from Cyprus as a dowry by Cleopatra IV, which were essential to Cyzicenus' effort to claim the Seleucid kingdom. Despite various proposals to attribute the Eros/Nike coinage to a mint city, it exhibits many irregularities and may well be the product of a military mint traveling with the forces of Antiochus IX.<sup>69</sup> An overwhelming majority of the Eros/Nike bronzes are dated to SE 202, equivalent to 111/10 BCE.<sup>70</sup> The only other dates securely attested are 112/11 and 108/7.<sup>71</sup>

If we seek a major campaign that might be associated with the Eros/Nike issue of 111/10, operations to retake Antioch from Antiochus VIII represent an attractive possibility. Coinage indicates that Cyzicenus had won possession of Antioch in 114/3, but Antiochus VIII recovered the city in 112 and held it until 111/10.<sup>72</sup> The conquest by Antiochus VIII in 112 was the occasion when Cleopatra IV was trapped in Antioch, captured, and put to death on the orders of her sister Tryphaena, queen of Antiochus VIII.<sup>73</sup> Manifestly Antiochus IX commemorated his marriage on the Eros/Nike coinage even after the death of his wife. This is consistent with Justin's statement that Cyzicenus captured Tryphaena and put her to death to appease the shades of his late wife.<sup>74</sup> A campaign against the Syrian capital in 111/10 is credible in light of Cyzicenus' recovery and brief occupation of Antioch in 110/09, again attested by coinage.<sup>75</sup> The primary control

<sup>65</sup> *SC* 2388.

<sup>66</sup> *SC* 2066–2067. The dates actually known for this coinage are 139/8–136/5 and 134/3 to the end of the reign. The lack of an issue dated 135/4 is probably an accident of survival, and we need not assume that production was suspended in that year.

<sup>67</sup> Identified as a marriage coinage by Ehling 2008, 189, and by Llewellyn-Jones – McAuley 2023, 132.

<sup>68</sup> 1 Macc 15:10; Josephus, *AJ* 13.222.

<sup>69</sup> *SC*, 542–543. Their caveat that the hypothesis is not particularly supported by the Eros type no longer seems apt.

<sup>70</sup> *SC*, 542.

<sup>71</sup> *SC* 2388.1 and 2388.4.

<sup>72</sup> *SC* 2364.1, 2307–2308.

<sup>73</sup> Just. 39.3.5–11. For in-depth analysis of this episode, see Bartlett 2016.

<sup>74</sup> Just. 39.3.12.

<sup>75</sup> Just. 39.3.12. For the specific date, *SC* 2368.

of the coinage of this second reign at Antioch also appears on several probably undated Eros/Nike bronzes.<sup>76</sup>

Provenance information for the Eros/Nike bronzes, extending from northern Syria and Mesopotamia to Samaria and Judaea, is ambiguous and may reflect later circulation.<sup>77</sup>

## 7. The siege of Samaria

Josephus' account of the siege of Samaria mentions that Ptolemy IX sent troops to Antiochus IX without the consent of his coruler Cleopatra III, and that she was so angry she nearly dismissed him from his government. Two motives have been suggested for Ptolemy's support of Cyzicenus, both of which reflect scholarly emphasis on personal feelings as the basis for policy (which does not necessarily invalidate the proposed motives): Ptolemy was seeking allies for an anticipated future war with Cleopatra III, or the shared love of both kings for Cleopatra IV.<sup>78</sup>

The causal connection implied by Josephus' passage has inspired many historians to date the loan of troops not long before the actual deposal of Ptolemy IX in autumn of 107.<sup>79</sup>

Based on the evidence of stamped Rhodian amphora handles excavated at Samaria, Gérald Finkielsztejn dated the destruction of the city to late 109 or early 108.<sup>80</sup> The siege of Samaria reportedly occupied an entire year.<sup>81</sup> Thus on Finkielsztejn's chronology the siege would have begun in 110/09. Hyrcanus I constructed the siegeworks before entrusting the siege of Samaria to his sons Antigonus and Aristobulus.<sup>82</sup> The appeal to Antiochus IX went out only after the Samaritans began to suffer from the siege, probably in late 110 or early 109. Cyzicenus attempted to intervene twice, and it was the second of his attempted interventions that involved the troops borrowed from Ptolemy IX.<sup>83</sup> Furthermore, some time must have been required to negotiate and organize the transfer of troops.<sup>84</sup> If we accept Finkielsztejn's chronology, we would have to date the loan of troops to 109.

A relevant date can also be inferred from an analysis of Yitzhak Magen, based mainly on coin finds in the Mount Gerizim excavations. Mount Gerizim was a temple precinct, separate from the fortified city of Samaria. It was destroyed by a vengeful Hyrcanus I after

<sup>76</sup> *SC* 2366–2368 and 2388.6–9.

<sup>77</sup> *SC*, 543.

<sup>78</sup> Dumitru 2016, 257, 259.

<sup>79</sup> Bellinger 1949, 69: c. 108; Bar-Kochva 1989, 162–163: 107 (for fall of Samaria). Cohen, in Van 't Dack *et al.* 1989, 16, 122: between 111 and 107 (for attack of Hyrcanus), probably closer to 107 (for loan of troops). Hölbl 2001, 208: 109/8. Huß 2001, 637: probably at end of 109 or beginning of 108. Schatzman 2012: 108. An exception is Pfeiffer 2017, 173, where the support of Ptolemy IX for Antiochus IX in his conflict with Hyrcanus I is placed after Ptolemy's deposal from the Egyptian throne.

<sup>80</sup> Finkielsztejn 1998, 49.

<sup>81</sup> Josephus, *AJ* 13.281.

<sup>82</sup> Josephus, *AJ* 13.276.

<sup>83</sup> Josephus, *AJ* 13.275–279.

<sup>84</sup> Dąbrowa 2007, 455.

the fall of Samaria, along with the nearby city of Shechem.<sup>85</sup> Only four coins of Antiochus IX were unearthed at Mount Gerizim, the latest in very poor condition and dated a bit doubtfully to SE 203 (110/9 BCE).<sup>86</sup> This coin may date the fall of Mount Gerizim to 110/09.<sup>87</sup> The next latest coin among the Mount Gerizim finds is dated SE 200 (113/12 BCE). Magen also cited the latest coin from excavations at Tel Balatah (ancient Shechem), dated to 112/11.<sup>88</sup> Magen's principal concern was to refute the high chronology for the siege of Samaria that has been inferred from Josephus by various scholars who place it not long after the death of Antiochus VII.<sup>89</sup> After weighing all the numismatic evidence, Magen concluded that 111/10 was the most likely date for the destruction of Mount Gerizim.<sup>90</sup> This would imply that the siege of Samaria began probably in 112/11, in which case the loan of troops to Antiochus IX probably occurred in 111.

We here prefer the chronology of Finkielsztejn, because his evidence is stronger than the numismatic evidence. Also, Magen's date may conflict with Cyzicenus' campaign to recover Antioch, inferred from his Eros/Nike coinage and apparently confirmed by his reoccupation of the city in 110/09. But this is a weaker argument, as we cannot exclude the possibility that Cyzicenus pursued more than a single goal in this campaign season.

## 8. The decree of Pergamum

Josephus records a decree of the city of Pergamum supposedly inspired by a delegation sent by John Hyrcanus II to Rome.<sup>91</sup> The Pergamene *psephisma* refers to a decision by the Roman senate (a *senatus consultum*) prohibiting Antiochus the king, son of Antiochus, from harming the Jews, who were allies of Rome, and requiring him to return any fortresses, harbors, territories, or other things he had taken from the Jews. The Roman senate further ordered that it was licit for the Jews to export goods from their own harbors, but that no king or people might export goods from Judaea or through Judaeian harbors without paying the appropriate taxes, except for Ptolemy the king of Alexandria, a Roman ally and friend. Furthermore the senate acceded to the Jewish request that the garrison in Ioppe should be ejected. The government of Pergamum undertook to effect the instructions of the Roman senate pertaining to the desires of the Jewish embassy.

More than a century ago the decree of Pergamum was redated to the time of John Hyrcanus I.<sup>92</sup> But still it raises numerous questions. In the time of Hyrcanus I, Antiochus the king, son of Antiochus, can only be Antiochus IX, but the locution "Ptolemy the king of Alexandria" is unusual. Theodor Reinach thought it was a corruption of Ptolemy Alexander and therefore dated the Pergamene *psephisma* c. 107–105, i.e., to the early years

<sup>85</sup> Dąbrowa 2007, 449 emphasized religious and strategic motives for the destruction of these sites.

<sup>86</sup> Magen – Bijovsky – Tzionit 2021, 153–154, nos. 344–346.

<sup>87</sup> Magen, in Magen – Bijovsky – Tzionit 2021, 39.

<sup>88</sup> Wright 1957, 27–28.

<sup>89</sup> Magen, in Magen – Bijovsky – Tzionit 2021, 39–42. The basis for the high chronology is Josephus, *AJ* 13.254–255.

<sup>90</sup> Magen, in Magen – Bijovsky – Tzionit 2021, 42.

<sup>91</sup> Josephus, *AJ* 14.247–255.

<sup>92</sup> Reinach 1899, followed by, e.g., Gruen 1984, 750–751; Gauger 1986, 287–288; Huß 2001, 645.

of Ptolemy Alexander as king in Egypt. But by this time the power of Antiochus IX was in severe decline<sup>93</sup> and may not have warranted an international coalition to deal with it. The term “king of Alexandria” could also refer to Ptolemy IX at any point between 114/13 and 107, when Soter II was king in Alexandria while Ptolemy Alexander was king on Cyprus. Tal Ardon Ish Shalom has dated the Pergamene decree to 113/12, when Antiochus Cyzicenus was at the height of his power.<sup>94</sup>

One can only be puzzled by the implication of the Jewish delegation that Antiochus IX had seized harbors rightfully belonging to Judaea.<sup>95</sup> Historically, Judaea was a small, inland district with no outlet on the Mediterranean. Although there were raids against coastal cities in the early Hasmonean period, the only port occupied was Ioppe.<sup>96</sup> According to Jewish literary sources, when Antiochus VII made demands of Simon Thassi concerning Ioppe, Simon refused his request to install a Seleucid garrison and instead made a substantial payment to avoid this investiture.<sup>97</sup> Yet the Fannius decree, preserved in Josephus and usually dated not long after the death of Antiochus VII, indicates that a Jewish delegation sent by Hyrcanus to Rome requested the return of Ioppe and other harbors, Gazara, Pegae, and other places which Antiochus had taken from them against a previous senatorial decree, but the senate declined the request.<sup>98</sup> The Antiochus in question has usually been identified as Antiochus VII, but Getzel Cohen preferred Antiochus IX.<sup>99</sup> Cohen interpreted the Pergamene *psephisma* as implying that Antiochus IX had conquered and garrisoned Ioppe.<sup>100</sup> Given the informational gaps, doubtful chronology, and/or contradiction in the literature, we cannot be entirely certain of the status of Ioppe. Even if it was garrisoned at the time of the Pergamene *psephisma*, we do not know which Seleucid king controlled it. In 113/12, the presumed date of the Pergamene *psephisma*, Hyrcanus may have controlled only one harbor, assuming the 114 acquisition of Azotus (Ashdod), an inland city of the Philistian plain, had brought with it an anchorage on the coast, not a true harbor but a natural bay lined with kurkar.<sup>101</sup> Josephus also reports Hyrcanus’ conquest of Dora in connection with his Idumaeen campaign, implying a date of 113/12.<sup>102</sup> But Dora lay close to Mount Carmel and nowhere near Idumaea, so the information is suspect. Perhaps the embassy to Rome reflected in the Pergamene *psephisma* had advanced unfounded claims, counting on the senate’s ignorance of the actual situation in the southern Levant.

<sup>93</sup> As noted by Shalom 2023, 350.

<sup>94</sup> Shalom 2023, 350.

<sup>95</sup> Cohen, in Van ’t Dack *et al.* 1989, 16, observed that the claims of conquests attributed to Antiochus IX seemed to contradict Josephus, *AJ* 13.279, which reports Cyzicenus’ withdrawal from command after the loss of many men.

<sup>96</sup> Raids against Jamnia (1 Macc 5:55–62), Azotus/Ashdod (1 Macc 5:68; 11:84), Gaza (1 Macc 11:61–62). Capture and fortification of Ioppe (1 Macc 12:33–34; 14:34).

<sup>97</sup> 1 Macc 15:27–36; Josephus, *AJ* 13.246–247.

<sup>98</sup> Josephus, *AJ* 13.259–266.

<sup>99</sup> Cohen, in Van ’t Dack *et al.* 1989, 17 n. 8.

<sup>100</sup> Cohen, in Van ’t Dack *et al.* 1989, 17.

<sup>101</sup> On the date of the capture of Ashdod: Dothan 1971, 64. On the nature of Philistian anchorages: ‘Ad 2021, 94.

<sup>102</sup> Josephus, *AJ* 13.257.

As for Hasmonean fortresses seized by Antiochus IX, at the presumed date of the *psephisma* such fortresses were located mainly in the three Samaritan toparchies transferred to Judaea by Demetrius II in 145, namely Ephraim, Ramathaim, and Lydda, with fortresses specifically at Dok-Dagon, Cypros, Artabba, and Hadid, and other fortified sites at Isanah, Timnah, Pegae (Antipatris), Mazor, and Okef Shoham.<sup>103</sup> Fortresses were also located in the northern Judean hill country, at Gezer and Kefira, with fortified sites at Khirbet Ashu and Khirbet 'Aqed.<sup>104</sup> The implication of the Judaeian delegation that some of these places had been seized by Antiochus IX is credible in light of his possession of Samaria before 113/12. It is also consistent with Josephus' statement that Antiochus Cyzicenus distressed the lands of Hyrcanus before Hyrcanus' campaign against Samaria.<sup>105</sup> However attacks on fortresses in southern Samaria and the Bethel hills might also be attributable to Cyzicenus' second attempt to intervene at Samaria, when he initially used his borrowed Egyptian troops to ravage the land of Hyrcanus in the hope this would persuade him to lift his siege.<sup>106</sup> Cyzicenus' depredations may well have inspired an emergency appeal to Rome and an attempt to organize an international coalition against him. In that case, the Pergamene *psephisma* should be dated slightly later than proposed by Shalom, to 109 BCE.

The attempt to attract Ptolemy IX into a coalition against Antiochus Cyzicenus is another puzzle. Was he included merely because he was a friend of Rome, or because of the history of Ptolemaic meddling in the southern Levant? Did Hyrcanus suspect an alliance between Soter II and Cyzicenus already in 113/12? Or does the mention of Ptolemy support dating the *psephisma* to 109, when the alliance of the two kings was plain to see?

The financial inducements offered to attract Ptolemy IX into the pro-Judaeian alliance do not seem especially enticing. As argued above, Hyrcanus controlled at most two anchorages on the Mediterranean coast. The alternatives were more numerous and included all the most famous ports of the region. Sidon was controlled by Antiochus IX from 113/12 until 111/10, then granted autonomy, either as thanks for some service rendered or in recognition of his inability to defend it.<sup>107</sup> Tyre was autonomous. Ptolemais was held by Cyzicenus from 113/12 until 107/6,<sup>108</sup> though his hold may not have been consistently firm (see § 9 below). Ascalon was in the hands of Antiochus VIII from 113/12 to 104/3,<sup>109</sup> and the port of Gaza was still open. Judaea offered no export products that were not available elsewhere. Perhaps the most valuable were slaves; Ptolemy VIII had apparently patronized the trade in slaves exported via the port of Ascalon.<sup>110</sup> In any case, it seems unlikely that Ptolemy IX was persuaded to join the coalition against Antiochus IX by the inducements mentioned in the Pergamene *psephisma*. We can definitely

<sup>103</sup> On the transfer of the Samaritan toparchies to Jonathan Apphus: 1 Macc 10:38; 11:28; 11:34; 11:57; Josephus, *AJ* 13.145. On the construction and fortification of Adida (Hadid) by Simon Thassi, 1 Macc 12:38. On the location of fortresses and fortified sites generally, Raviv 2021, 68, and see especially 70, fig. 4.7.

<sup>104</sup> Raviv 2021, 70, fig. 4.7.

<sup>105</sup> Josephus, *AJ* 13.274–275.

<sup>106</sup> Josephus, *AJ* 13.278.

<sup>107</sup> *SC* 2382.

<sup>108</sup> *SC* 2391–2392.

<sup>109</sup> Ascalon coined for Antiochus IX in 113/2, but for Antiochus VIII from 113/2 to 104/2, see *SC* 2395–2396 and *SC* 2340.

<sup>110</sup> Raptou 2009, 110.

reject this possibility if the Pergamene decree is correctly dated to 113/2, considering that Ptolemy's provision of reinforcements to Antiochus IX was later according to both of the chronologies considered in § 7.

## 9. The defense of Samaria and the Seleucid civil war

If we are correct in dating the siege of Samaria to 110/09, it occurred during the second reign of Antiochus IX at Antioch, or immediately after he had lost possession of the Syrian capital for the second time. In the first case, Cyzicenus' detour into Samaria and Judaea was probably responsible for his loss of Antioch. In the second case, it is surprising that Cyzicenus should have followed this defeat by abandoning Syria Seleucis for a new campaign in the south instead of immediately counterattacking at Antioch. But his army was apparently depleted, since he had to request reinforcements from Ptolemy IX. Perhaps, in view of his lack of military success against Antiochus VIII, he could not request troops for a new offensive in Syria, or he requested them and was denied. Cyzicenus' resistance to Hasmonean expansion was natural, as it impacted a fortified city under his control—but why did he turn to Ptolemy IX for support? It seems unlikely that he approached Soter II as a known opponent of Hasmonean expansion. More likely an alliance already existed between the two kings, as suggested in § 4 above.

Upon the failure of his Samaritan-Judaean campaign, Antiochus IX retreated to Tripolis.<sup>111</sup> This is surprising. Cyzicenus struck coinage at 'Akko-Ptolemais in 112/11, 111/10, 109/8, and 107/6.<sup>112</sup> This would seem to point to his possession of an important city that was closer than Tripolis, at the time when he retreated from Judaea. But if the lacunae for 110/09 and 108/7 are not merely accidents of survival, they may indicate that his hold on Ptolemais was weak at the time of his retreat.

We may also wonder if a diversion of troops to defend Samaria weakened Cyzicenus' position in other cities he had won in his initial campaigns. His last coinage at Damascus is dated 111/10, and dated coinage of Antiochus VIII resumed in 109/8.<sup>113</sup> No other losses can be suggested specifically, since chronologies are certain only for mint cities.

## 10. Ptolemy IX and Antiochus IX after the siege of Samaria

We have no evidence for further cooperation between Ptolemy IX and Antiochus IX after the loan of troops to help with the defense of Samaria.<sup>114</sup> We have no evidence of a formal alliance between the two kings, but only of a temporary alignment of purposes, which apparently endured for several years. Quite probably the weakening position of the Seleucid

<sup>111</sup> Josephus, *AJ* 13.279.

<sup>112</sup> *SC* 2391–2392.

<sup>113</sup> *SC* 2381.4–5 and 2382 (Antiochus IX); *SC* 2324.1 (Antiochus VIII).

<sup>114</sup> Contra: Van 't Dack, in Van 't Dack *et al.* 1989, 28, who even read Justin as giving the impression that Ptolemy stayed with Antiochus IX after his flight from Cyprus until the outbreak of the War of Sceptres.

made it unattractive to Ptolemy to pursue further joint actions after the Samaritan-Judaean debacle. It is also possible that Ptolemy received reports that painted his erstwhile ally as indolent and frivolous. According to Diodorus, Antiochus IX lacked kingly qualities and was self-indulgent, inclined to alcoholic excess, and overly fascinated by minor entertainments such as mimes, puppetry, and juggling.<sup>115</sup>

When Ptolemy IX was deposed from the Egyptian throne in autumn of 107, he initially took refuge on Cyprus, but when Cleopatra III sent an army to dislodge him, he fled.<sup>116</sup> His next refuge has been assumed to be Seleucia in Pieria on the north Syrian coast, based on a fragment of Diodorus that describes his presence in Seleucia and an unsuccessful attempt on his life.<sup>117</sup> Justin alludes to the fear of Cleopatra III that Ptolemy would receive help from Antiochus IX in an attempt to recover Egypt.<sup>118</sup> Yet Seleucia in Pieria was an odd refuge if Ptolemy's goal was to seek help from Antiochus IX, since Seleucia had been granted autonomy by Antiochus VIII in 109 and was still bound by his treaty obligations, or at least included in the treaty between Antiochus VIII and Ptolemy X Alexander.<sup>119</sup> Nevertheless Werner Huß inferred that Seleucia must have been in the hands of Antiochus IX at the time of Ptolemy's flight.<sup>120</sup> In view of the weakness of both Seleucids after years of civil war, the possibility that Cyzicenus was able to take over Seleucia seems fairly remote. In fact, it was probably just about this time that he was forced to relinquish Ptolemais (see § 11 below). So far as we know Ptolemy IX, after his flight from Cyprus, did not seek out his erstwhile ally at Ptolemais, nor at Tripolis where Cyzicenus had taken refuge after the failure of his Samaritan intervention, and where he struck a tetradrachm emission in 105/4.<sup>121</sup> Possibly Ptolemy IX did not seek either of these destinations because he was uncertain whether Cyzicenus controlled them firmly. He may have placed more trust in the *asylia* of Seleucia in Pieria than in the protection of a king who had been weakened by various reversals.

According to Justin, the fear of Cleopatra III that Ptolemy IX might receive support from Antiochus IX led her to strengthen her ties to Antiochus VIII by sending unspecified aid as well as a new bride in the form of another of her daughters, Cleopatra Selene, former second wife of Soter II.<sup>122</sup> The extreme ellipsis of Justin's account of events after the deposal of Ptolemy IX leaves in question precisely when Cleopatra III took this action. As mentioned previously, most historians have inferred a date during the War of Sceptres. But Cleopatra's fear and her overture to Antiochus VIII are credible in the context of Ptolemy's flight from Cyprus c. 106, when Cleopatra was actively attempting to prevent his survival or at least to block his ambitions in Cyprus.<sup>123</sup> Her overture

<sup>115</sup> Diod. 34/35.34.

<sup>116</sup> Just. 39.4.2.

<sup>117</sup> Diod. 34/35.39a. See Cohen, in Van 't Dack *et al.* 1989, 122; Huß 2001, 636. Bru 2022 suggested the Seleucia in question was not Seleucia in Pieria, but Seleucia-Gaza. Olivier forthcoming, n. 42, proposes Seleucia on the Calycadnus.

<sup>118</sup> Just. 39.4.4.

<sup>119</sup> *I. Paphos* 22 = *OGIS* 257 = *RC* 71–72 = Bagnall – Derow 2004, 101–102, no. 55.

<sup>120</sup> Huß 2001, 636.

<sup>121</sup> *SC* 2383.

<sup>122</sup> Just. 39.4.4.

<sup>123</sup> Hölbl 2001, 209, also dated the marriage of Selene and Antiochus VIII before the outbreak of the War of Sceptres, but did not identify a specific context.

makes less sense in the context of the War of Sceptres, in which neither of the Seleucid rivals took part, presumably due to the exhaustion of their armies.

Despite the efforts of Cleopatra III, Ptolemy IX did eventually succeed in establishing himself on Cyprus. He returned to the island in 106/5.<sup>124</sup> The latest coin issues of Ptolemy Alexander suggest Soter II first gained possession of Paphos, seat of the island's administration, in summer of 105 at the earliest, then took Citium and Salamis after the start of the new year on 17 September 205.<sup>125</sup> Since Cyprus had been partially stripped of troops by Cleopatra IV, we may wonder how Ptolemy managed to win the island. It would seem that he owed his success to the prompt defection of troops sent against him by Cleopatra III.<sup>126</sup> Both Peter Green and Günther Hölbl asserted that he used Syria as a base for his recovery of Cyprus, with the possible implication that he received military support from Antiochus IX.<sup>127</sup> This reconstruction seems somewhat unlikely in view of probable weakness of Cyzicenus and the fact that Ptolemy's appropriation of Cyprus proceeded from west to east.

## 11. Ptolemy IX in the War of Sceptres

In 103 Alexander Jannaeus besieged Ptolemais, and the city appealed for help from Ptolemy IX.<sup>128</sup> As argued by Getzel Cohen and Edmond Van 't Dack, this probably meant that Ptolemais had received a grant of autonomy, since it would hardly have appealed to a Ptolemy if it was still a Seleucid possession.<sup>129</sup> The last Seleucid to coin at Ptolemais was Antiochus IX, and he must have granted the city's autonomy in or shortly after 107/6, the date of his final coin issue at Ptolemais.<sup>130</sup>

The appeal from Ptolemais to Ptolemy IX presented a close parallel to the appeal from Samaria to Antiochus IX, except that Ptolemais was an autonomous city whereas Samaria had been a possession of Cyzicenus. None of our sources indicates that Ptolemy sought to involve his erstwhile ally in the defense of Ptolemais. Nevertheless some modern historians have asserted that their alliance remained alive, while Cleopatra III favored Antiochus VIII, sometimes with the implication that the Seleucids were active participants in the conflict.<sup>131</sup> More cautious, and more convincing, is the reading of Günther

<sup>124</sup> *OGIS* 166; Mitford 1959, 125 n. 108.

<sup>125</sup> Mørkholm 1983, 74.

<sup>126</sup> Josephus, *AJ* 13.287; Strabo, *FGrHist* 91 F 4.287.

<sup>127</sup> Green 1990, 547; Hölbl 2001, 208.

<sup>128</sup> Josephus, *AJ* 13.324, 328–329.

<sup>129</sup> Cohen and Van 't Dack, in Van 't Dack *et al.* 1989, 127.

<sup>130</sup> Last dated coin issue *SC* 2392.

<sup>131</sup> Bevan 1968, 330; Green 1990, 550; Dumitru 2016, 257, 259. A demotic letter of 27 September 103, sent from Ptolemais to colleagues in Pathyris, reports that Pharaoh Ptolemy (Alexander) went to Damascus with troops, see Clarysse – Winnicki, in Van 't Dack *et al.* 1989, 50–61. The purpose of this expedition is uncertain. Three possibilities—conquest for Cleopatra III, delivery of aid to Antiochus VIII, or the ejection of Antiochus IX to the benefit of his rival—were considered by Cohen, in Van 't Dack *et al.* 1989, 122–123. Cohen seemed to favor the first option. Lorber 2015, 186, suggested his purpose was to aid Antiochus VIII, either by restoring the city to him or by bringing reinforcements. This opinion is unpersuasive in light of the non-involvement of the Seleucids in the War of Sceptres. The first alternative implies a late military

Hölbl that the two Antiochi, neutralized by their prolonged civil war, kept their distance despite the fact that the conflict was playing out on territory that had until recently belonged to the Seleucid kingdom.<sup>132</sup> This is consistent with Josephus' insistence on the exhaustion and impotence of the two Seleucid rivals at this point.<sup>133</sup>

In responding to the appeal from Ptolemais, Ptolemy apparently sought to oppose Hasmonean expansion. This could be consistent with his opposition to Hyrcanus' siege of Samaria. However the people of Ptolemais repented of their appeal, in part out of concern that Ptolemy intended conquest rather than rescue.<sup>134</sup> Nevertheless Soter II landed a large army of 30,000 troops near Ptolemais.<sup>135</sup> He did not replicate Cyzicenus' tactic of proactively harassing Judaeian territory to induce a lifting of the siege, perhaps because the people of Ptolemais refused to receive him or his ambassadors. He was relieved from his perplexity by an appeal for help against Jannaeus from Zoilus, tyrant of Strato's Tower and Dora, and from the people of Gaza.<sup>136</sup> Jannaeus then resorted to a stratagem: he lifted his siege of Ptolemais and withdrew his army, feigned an alliance with Ptolemy while secretly calling in Cleopatra III, and then tricked Soter II into eliminating his ally Zoilus.<sup>137</sup> After discovering the ruse Ptolemy besieged Ptolemais and began to ravage the territory of Jannaeus, beginning in the Galilee but ultimately passing over the River Jordan.<sup>138</sup> Elements of this account are confirmed by finds of Cypriote bronze coins of Ptolemy IX, concentrated at Ptolemais and especially at Dora, with smaller numbers found at Galilean sites including Ginnosaur, Iotapata, and Gamla.<sup>139</sup> The finds at Gamla also included three coins from Cyrenaica, evidence that Ptolemy's army included a contingent from Cyrenaica, which must have remained loyal to him after his deposal in Egypt.<sup>140</sup>

After Cleopatra III introduced the Egyptian army into the theatre of war and besieged Ptolemais on her own account, Soter II made an attempt on Egypt.<sup>141</sup> Hoards of the same Cypriote coin issues found at Ptolemais, Dora, and Galilean sites were also found at Karanis in the Fayum and in Alexandria, proving that the invasion of Egypt by Soter II, usually described as abortive, came closer to success than generally appreciated.<sup>142</sup> His presence in the Fayum is also confirmed by a papyrus from Hawara dated

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success by Antiochus IX and is improbable in light of the annual coin emissions of Antiochus VIII from 104/3 through 99/8. Olivier (forthcoming) cites other numismatic evidence to support his contention that Ptolemy Alexander installed a Ptolemaic garrison for the protection of Antiochus VIII.

<sup>132</sup> Hölbl 2001, 208, 209. See also Cohen, in Van 't Dack *et al.* 1989, 17, citing the sympathies of Antiochus IX for Ptolemy and of Antiochus VIII for Jannaeus while admitting that the two Seleucids remained on the sidelines.

<sup>133</sup> Josephus, *AJ* 13.325, 327.

<sup>134</sup> Josephus, *AJ* 13.330–331.

<sup>135</sup> Josephus, *AJ* 13.332–333.

<sup>136</sup> Josephus, *AJ* 13.334.

<sup>137</sup> Josephus, *AJ* 13.334–335.

<sup>138</sup> Josephus, *AJ* 13.336–344.

<sup>139</sup> Gitler – Kushnir-Stein 1999, 50–53.

<sup>140</sup> Syon 2016, 148, nos. 10–12. Hölbl 2001, 208, also recognized that Soter II controlled Cyrenaica until "about the end of the second century."

<sup>141</sup> Josephus, *AJ* 13.348–351.

<sup>142</sup> Karanis, 1924–1925 (*IGCH* 1716); Alexandria, 1933 (*IGCH* 1717).

by his regnal year, meaning that he was recognized as legitimate by at least one local scribe, if not by the provincial administration of the Arsinoites.<sup>143</sup>

Josephus' brief account of Jannaeus' conquests in *The Jewish War* gives the impression that Ptolemy's attempt on Egypt opened the way for Jannaeus in the Transjordan, where he took Gadara and Amathus.<sup>144</sup> But the fuller account in *Jewish Antiquities* places these conquests after the failure of the attempt on Egypt and after the alliance of Jannaeus with Cleopatra III.<sup>145</sup> Subsequently Jannaeus redirected his attention to the Mediterranean coast where he seized Raphia and Anthedon.<sup>146</sup> After Ptolemy returned to Cyprus and Cleopatra to Egypt, Jannaeus punished Gaza for supporting Ptolemy by besieging it for a year before he eventually took it and massacred those inhabitants who had not already taken their own lives to avoid enslavement.<sup>147</sup>

Cleopatra's decision to ally with Jannaeus instead of deposing him is attributed to the persuasion of her Jewish general Ananias, of the Oniad line.<sup>148</sup> For some reason Edmond Van 't Dack inferred a division in Jewish opinion, with the Oniads supporting Cleopatra III and other Jews supporting Soter II.<sup>149</sup> This does not seem to be supported by the passage he cites in Josephus, which describes the defection of Egyptian troops to Ptolemy with the exception of the Oniad Jews, who remained loyal to Cleopatra III.<sup>150</sup> Josephus does indeed describe sectarian divisions among the Jews (in Judaea?).<sup>151</sup> But neither Cleopatra nor Ptolemy is mentioned in connection with these controversies.

## 12. Postscript in Damascus

Around 96, Antiochus VIII was assassinated by his war minister Heracleon.<sup>152</sup> Antiochus IX soon gained control of Antioch for the third time and married the widow of his rival, Cleopatra Selene, another sister and former wife of Ptolemy IX.<sup>153</sup> More-or-less contemporaneously, in 97/6, Ptolemy installed Demetrius III Eucærus, a son of Antiochus VIII, as king in Damascus, forestalling occupation of the city by either Cyzicenus or Alexander Jannaeus.<sup>154</sup> This move was probably driven by lingering personal hostility to Jannaeus after their confrontations in the War of Sceptres, and should not be taken as a new instance of Ptolemy's opposition to Hasmonean expansion. But it is also clear evidence that Soter II no longer took account of the interests of his former Seleucid ally.

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<sup>143</sup> *SB* XXIV 16161 (TM 41474), see Huß 2006.

<sup>144</sup> Josephus, *BJ* 1.86.

<sup>145</sup> Josephus, *AJ* 13.352–356.

<sup>146</sup> Josephus, *AJ* 13.357.

<sup>147</sup> Josephus, *AJ* 13.358–364. Olivier (forthcoming) relates renewed production of tetradrachms on Cyprus in 100/99 to the return of troops left to defend the Levant, but this would not include troops left in Gaza.

<sup>148</sup> Josephus, *AJ* 13.353–355.

<sup>149</sup> Van 't Dack, in Van 't Dack *et al.* 1989, 131.

<sup>150</sup> Josephus, *AJ* 13.287.

<sup>151</sup> Josephus, *AJ* 13.288–298.

<sup>152</sup> Josephus, *AJ* 13.365; Trog. *Prol.* 39.

<sup>153</sup> App. *Syr* 69.

<sup>154</sup> Josephus, *AJ* 13.370–371. For the date, see *SC* 2450.1 and commentary p. 581.

### 13. Conclusions

It is argued in this essay that Justin's account of the reign of Ptolemy IX should not be accepted uncritically. Probably his story of the divorce of Cleopatra IV and her daring actions in suborning troops from Cyprus and offering them as a dowry to Antiochus X Cyzicenus masks a different reality: an appeal from Antiochus IX to Soter II and a negotiated arrangement involving Cleopatra IV and the troops. If this interpretation is correct, the alliance between Ptolemy IX and Antiochus IX began in 114/13, was kept secret, and was motivated by Ptolemy's desire to exercise renewed Lagid influence in the Seleucid kingdom. His loan of additional troops for the defense of Samaria, in 109, represents the last known cooperation between the two kings, whose alignment apparently lapsed after the failure of Cyzicenus' Samarian-Judaeian campaign, probably due to Ptolemy's disappointment in the performance of his erstwhile ally. Ptolemy's later involvement in the War of Sceptres was almost certainly an opportunistic attempt to expand the territory under his control and did not necessarily reflect an enduring policy of opposition to Hasmonean expansion.<sup>155</sup> It was the confrontation between Ptolemy and Alexander Jannaeus that created permanent enmity between the two of them.

#### ABBREVIATIONS

- C. Ord. Ptol.* – M.-T. Lenger, *Corpus des ordonnances des Ptolémées*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Brussels 1980.  
*CGC* – *Catalogue general des antiquités égyptiennes du Musée de Caire*.  
*CPE* – C. C. Lorber, *Coins of the Ptolemaic Empire*, part II: *Ptolemy V through Cleopatra VII*, vol. 3: *Bronze*, New York 2025.  
*CPI* – A. K. Bowman, C. V. Crowther, *The Epigraphy of Ptolemaic Egypt*, Oxford 2020.  
*EH I* – T. Faucher, A. Meadows, C. Lorber (eds.), *Egyptian Hoards I: The Ptolemies*, Cairo 2017.  
*I.Amathonte XI* – L. Thély, Inscriptions d'Amathonte XI: un autel en honneur de Ptolémée X et Bérénice III découvert aux abords Sud-Ouest de l'Agora, *BCH* 139–140, 2016: 464–484.  
*I.Paphos* – J.-B. Cayla, *Les inscriptions de Paphos: La cité chypriote sous la domination lagide et à l'époque impériale*, Lyon 2018.  
*I.Salamine* – J. Pouilloux, P. Roesch, J. Marcillet-Jaubert, *Salamine de Chypre*, vol. XIII: *Testimonia Salamina, 2: Corpus épigraphique*, Paris 1987.  
*IGCH* – M. Thompson, O. Mørkholm, C. Kraay (eds.), *An Inventory of Greek Coin Hoards*, New York 1973.  
*O. Edfou* – J. Manteuffel (ed.), *Fouilles Franco-Polonoises, Rapports I–III*, vol. 1–3, Le Caire 1937–1950.  
*P. dem. Memphis* – C. J. Martin, *Demotic Papyri from the Memphis Necropolis in the Collections of the National Museum of Antiquities in Leiden, the British Museum and the Hermitage Museum*, Turnhout 2009.  
*P. Cair.* – B. P. Grenfell, A. S. Hunt, *Catalogue général des antiquités du musée du Caire: Greek Papyri*, Oxford 1903.  
*P. Ehevertr.* – E. Lüddeckens, *Ägyptische Eheverträge*, Wiesbaden 1960.

<sup>155</sup> In contrast, Olivier (forthcoming) posits a consistent opposition to the emergence of the Hasmonean state.

- P. Ryl. Dem.* – F. L. Griffith (ed.), *Catalogue of the Demotic Papyri in the John Rylands Library, Manchester*, Manchester 1909.
- P. Tebt.* – B. P. Grenfell et al., *The Tebtunis Papyri*, vol. 1–5, London 1902–1976.
- RC* – C. B. Welles, *Royal Correspondence in the Hellenistic Period: A Study in Greek Epigraphy*, New Haven 1934.
- SB* – F. Preisigke et al., *Sammelbuch griechischer Urkunden aus Aegypten*, Strassburg–Berlin–Heidelberg–Wiesbaden 1913–
- SC* – A. Houghton, C. Lorber, O. Hoover, *Seleucid Coins, A Comprehensive Catalogue*, part II: *Seleucus IV through Antiochus XIII*, Lancaster–New York 2008.
- TM* – Trismegistos, the website of Egyptian sources maintained by the Catholic University of Leuven, <https://tmplus.kuleuven.be/trismegistos-portal>.
- UPZ* – U. Wilcken, *Urkunden der Ptolemäerzeit*, vol. 1–2, Berlin–Leipzig 1927–1957.

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