To *Hellenikon*: The Chimera of 'Greekness' in the Hellenistic Age-A Brief Survey, from the 5th Century B.C.E

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Introduction

Classical scholars have tended to locate the nucleus of Greek identity in one or more of the three principal themes of nineteenth- and early-twentieth century identity discourse: culture, nationality, or race [1,2]. Of all the elements to influence recent scholarship on Greek identity, however, that which surrounds ethnicity has been the most pervasive [3,4]. And yet it would be an error to see this as a scholarly innovation; for ever since the birth of Greek historiography in the fifth century B.C.E., ethnicity has been a central issue in the debate over Greek identity. That Herodotus' four key criteria of Greekness-blood, language, religion, and customs-closely parallel those identified by modern scholars-descent, 'commensality or the right to share food', and cult-is evidence of the circularity and irresolution of the ongoing discourse [5-7]. Indeed, since the Second World War, scholarship has emphasized ethnicity, favoring at first the anthropological 'instrumentalist' approach which argued that ethnic identity was a guise for political or economic aims. However, a series of ethnic resurgences in the 1970s and 1980s undermined instrumentalism, resulting in the development of more nuanced interpretations which present ethnic identity as unstable and unfixed; as negotiable and situation-specific-conditionality confirmed in this study [8,9].

'Greekness' is chimera: a fluid concept dependent on, and derived from, mutable context and circumstance [8-10]. It was no more crystallized collectively in sixth century B.C.E. Attica, Thessaly and Euboea than it was in the closing moments of the Battle of Actium when Ptolemaic Egypt, the last of the Hellenistic kingdoms, fell to the Romans in 31 B.C.E. [11]. Yet a civilization of Greeks (a term derived from the Latin '*Graeci*' and transmitted via the Romans; for their part the Greeks, as the putative descendants of the mythological figure Hellen, refer to themselves as '*Hellenes*', the people of '*Hellas*') undoubtedly existed in antiquity [12]. One need only borrow Gustave Flaubert's conceptual framework in *Dictionnaire des idees recues* and graft onto its portentous clichés and quotations culled from a conspicuously small body of extant ancient texts to demonstrate the veracity of this statement. The result, rendered here in machine-gun-like staccato in the interests of both brevity and satirical effect, is a compendium of traits which seem to confirm the existence of an *identifiably* Greek civilization: democracy (Athens, *polis*, kingship foreign and alien to Greeks) [13]. Literature (Homeric epics, *Iliad*, *Odyssey*). Drama (Euripides, Sophocles, Aeschylus). Art (naturalistic, idealized human form). Philosophy (Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Pythagoras). Further, it was a Greek-speaking people who, in response to social pressures at home, colonized the region of the Eastern Mediterranean between the eighth and sixth centuries B.C.E. [14]. The epiphenomenal by-product of this diasporic process was the diffusion of cultural artefacts that are widely recognized as quintessentially Greek, a profundity acknowledged by the later Hellene Dio Chrysostom when he wrote that 'Greece lies scattered in many regions' [14].

While none of this is false or blatantly misleading, it nevertheless neglects the complex interplay of internal forces (e.g. ethnicity, language, culture) and externalizing dynamics (e.g. 'othering') which, at various times and to varying degrees, informed Greek identity-that is, the traits which compass Greekness (*to Hellenikon*, 'that which is Greek') [15]. The distinction is critical, for the tension raised by this ambiguity suggests the problematic which lay at the heart of this study: what is Greekness and can it be quantified? So considered, this paper sets out to assess Greekness within the context of the Hellenistic ('Greek-like') age, the temporal bookends of which are marked by the death of Alexander the Great in 323 B.C.E. and the death of Cleopatra VII, the last Macedonian ruler of Egypt, in 30 B.C.E. [16]. The approach adopted is comparative, framed by a parallel examination of Greekness as expressed through the image (coins), text (epigraphy and official correspondence), and social practice (urban planning, government, and religion) of the Hellenistic rulers of Ptolemaic Egypt and Seleucid Asia. The findings of the study support the conclusion that when examining Greekness, to paraphrase the philosopher Heraclitus, the only constant is change [17].

To Hellenikon: Ancient Conceptions of 'Greekness'

To situate it within the continuum of ancient Greek identity, and thus establish its position along a sensible trajectory, an analysis of Hellenistic age Greekness compels a brief ethnographic survey, beginning with the earliest generally perceived articulations of communal Greek identity. In the aggregate, the evidence reveals the instability, equivocality and multivalence of the cardinal elements which the Greeks used to distinguish and define their civilization-in relation to both themselves as well as to non-Greeks-over time. We begin with the Persian Wars of the fifth century B.C.E., for the events surrounding them are widely considered the catalyst for a shared sense of Greek identity [11]. We turn to a famous passage from Herodotus' *Histories* (written before 425 B.C.E.), in which the author gives an account of the conflict between the Greeks and the Persians [18].

'It was most human that the Lacedaemonians should fear our making an agreement with the barbarian.... (But) there are many great reasons why we should not do this…; first and foremost, the burning and destruction of the adornments of temples of our gods, whom we are constrained to avenge to the utmost rather than make pacts with the perpetrator…and next the kinship of all Greeks in blood and speech, and the shrines of gods and the sacrifices that we have in common, and the likeness of our way of life…' (Herodotus, *Histories* 8.144.1-2; trans. A. D. Godley). This speech is attributed to the Athenians, who at the time were being enticed by the Persians (the 'barbarian' mentioned above) shortly after witnessing the virtual destruction of their city. Though courted by the emissaries of the *shahanshah*, who sought an alliance, the Athenians demurred, a restraint explicated to the Lacedaemonians (i.e. the Spartans) through the invocation of 'the Greek thing' (*to Hellenikon*) [19].

Scholars cite this passage as an unambiguous statement of the precise components that constituted Greek identity-that is, common blood, common tongue, common cult foundations and sacrifices, and similar customs [20]. To a certain extent, such a perspective is justifiable: first, it is undoubtedly true that these ethnic and cultural traits were shared by *certain*-though arguably not all-Greeks and thus formed the basis upon which *some* Greeks united against the Persians. Second, as Hall notes, in the 'extant literary corpus there are few statements that define Hellenic identity quite so explicitly' [20]. For many, the implications are tantalizing enough to support bequeathing the passage canonical status in the debate surrounding Greek identity- thus putting paid the question [20].

Such interpretations are, however, fraught with difficulty. Firstly, although the Persian Wars motivated unprecedented levels of intercultural contact, a dynamic enhanced by Athenian efforts to prop up a faltering Greek alliance in a rhetorical effort akin to propagandistic carpet-bombing, Herodotus' view cannot be said to be wholly representative of the majority of the 'Greek' world [8]. The best that can be said for it is that it was strategically 'Athenocentric' view of Greekness, since groups like the Spartans, who considered *everyone* outside Sparta a 'foreigner', certainly possessed no inviolable sense of communal Greek identity [8]. Moreover, Herodotean audiences would undoubtedly have been aware of Athenian efforts to restrict citizenship to those who could prove both patrilineal *and* matrilineal lines of descent, thereby circumscribing the franchise by birth and, by extension, ethnicity [21]. At the same time, the Athenians-who viewed themselves as the 'most Greek of the Greeks'-also promoted myths of autochthony (the idea that, quite literally, the ancestors of the Athenians were born from the land of Attica, rather than through sexual reproduction) over the kinship ties that had hitherto linked Athens to Ionia-efforts meant to distance the Athenians ethnically from the 'lesser' Greeks, the Dorians [20,22] Thus, the grandiose Athenian claim that 'kinship', a 'common language' and shared cultural practices formed the basis of an unbreakable solidarity between Greeks was, at best, insincere rhetoric [8].

It would, however, be a mistake to view the developments of the 'inventive' fifth century as having a genesis in the Persian Wars [8]. Rather, they represent a culmination of Greek sociocultural evolution that stretched at least as far back as the mid-eighth century, when the Greeks embarked on the great colonization of the Eastern Mediterranean [23]. Whatever the impetus behind it, colonization brought the Greek diaspora-already possessed of a sense of communal identity defined by internal criteria such as ethnicity, language, aesthetics (e.g. pottery design) and poetry (e.g. Homeric epics), and religion-into contact with non-Greeks on unparalleled levels [11]. The result of this process was the crystallization of the Greeks' sense of communal identity *in relation to others*; from this point forward, Greekness became defined not just by what the Greeks were, but by what they were not: barbarians [8,11,24].

Yet the tidy 'Greek-barbarian' binary this suggests, as revealed in a programmatic statement in the proem of Book I of *Histories*, is rather more complex than it seems [20,25]. For although there was a tendency amongst some to stereotype non-Greeks with supposedly 'un-Greek' attributes-as, for example, when the Greek tyrant Aristagoras of Miletus represented the Persians as weak, effeminate and decadent to the Spartan king Leonidas-just as often there are Greeks who expressed a more balanced view-as when the dramatist Aeschylus refused to stigmatize the Persians in his play *Persae*, which he produced a mere seven years following the end of the Persian Wars [25,26]. The dialectic surrounding the Greek-barbarian dichotomy reached an apex with the Macedonian conquest of Greece, an event which transformed the geopolitical context of the Eastern Mediterranean world.

By the early fifth century, when Herodotus wrote of the Athenians' invocation of '*to Hellenikon*', the schema of which indicates the primacy of culture as a defining trait of 'Greekness' alongside the archaizing ethnic classification, the Macedonians-viewed by more than a few Hellenes as barbarian- had already claimed Greek ancestry. The *locus classicus* of the Macedonian case can be found in the following passage from *Histories*, in which Herodotus describes the attempt of Alexander I of Macedon to compete in the Olympic Games [27,28].

'That these descendants of Perdiccas are Greeks (as they themselves say) ... and I shall demonstrate that they are indeed Greeks later in my account, but in any case, it is a fact known by those who manage the contest of the Hellenes. For when Alexander chose to compete and came down to enter the contest some of his Greek fellow-competitors were about to bar him, alleging that the contest was not for barbarian athletes but for Greeks. But when Alexander demonstrated that he was an Argive, he was judged to be a Hellene and competed in the footrace where he jointly took the first position'.

The nub of the Macedonian argument rested on Alexander's membership in the Argead *genos*, specifically as a descendant of Temenus of the Peloponnesian Heraclidae-descendants of Herakles, the mythological Panhellenic Greek figure [11,29]. The genealogical (and fictive) path that legitimated Alexander's claims - and, subsequently, his descendants - is a torturous one (complicated by the coupling of Herakles' sexual tenacity with the *wanderlust* obliged by his Labors) and has been covered extensively elsewhere [28-30]. Suffice it to say and given what we know of the malleability of communal Greek identity, the assertion was legitimate *enough*. In time the Macedonian claim became generalized so that every Macedonian, not just the Argead dynasty, could be seen as Greeks *of a kind*. Yet not every Greek was convinced, a bifurcation of opinion that proved decisive in the wake of the Peloponnesian War (431-404 B.C.E.) [31].

The conflict between the *poleis* (city-states) of the Peloponnesian League, led by Sparta, and those of the Athenian Empire was disastrous. As the war ground on indecisively, not only did it coarsen life within the walls of the *poleis*, the inhabitants of which were subjected to deprivation, disease, and death on an unprecedented scale, but it also had the effect of coarsening public debate and discourse [31]. The war was ended ignominiously when the Spartans, determined to break the decades-long deadlock, allied with the Persians, the Greeks' ancient enemy, to defeat the Athenians [31,32]. The Greek world that emerged following the war was riven; its civic discourse polluted by suspicion and mistrust [33].

As tensions festered, the intelligentsia groped for solutions to prevent a recrudescence of all-out war. To this end, the philosopher Isocrates proposed a controversial solution: the Greek world, he argued, should unite in a Panhellenic crusade against the Persians [34]. As uncontentious as this may sound, it was anything but; for Isocrates suggested that the campaign be led by a figure whose Hellenic pedigree was still very much in doubt: Philip II of Macedon, a successor of Alexander I and, as such, a member of the Argead dynasty [29]. Not that any of this mattered to the rhetorician Demosthenes, who vehemently rejected the *bona fides* of Philip's Greekness. Indeed, Demosthenes opposed Isocrates' plan on the basis that the Macedonian king was no more Greek than any other member of the great unwashed horde of non-Greek barbarians [35]. In his *Third Philippic Oration*, Demosthenes damned not only Philip and the Macedonian throng, but castigated the Greeks who supported him:

'But if some superstitious bastard had wasted and squandered what he had no right to, heavens! how much more monstrous and exasperating all would have called it! Yet they have no such qualms about Philip and his present conduct, though he is not only no Greek, nor related to the Greeks, but not even a barbarian from any place that can be named with honor, but a pestilent knave from Macedonia, whence it was never yet possible to buy a decent slave' (Demosthenes, *Third Philip Oration* 9.31; trans. J. H. Vince). Philip's destruction of the combined Athenian and Theban forces at Chaeronea in 338 B.C.E. effectively mooted the debate over Macedonian Greekness [11]. When the Macedonians subsequently levelled Thebes, they left standing only the house of the venerated Greek poet Pindar. It was a deliciously potent symbol of their cultural Greekness [36].

In a way, the Macedonian conquest of the Greek world vindicated Isocrates who, decades earlier (ca. 380 B.C.E.), wrote his *Panegyricus* (a 'discourse bringing all together') [33]. Presented as an address to the Greeks gathered at a national festival, the *Panegyricus* stressed Greek unity by asserting that, '...the name Hellenes suggests no longer a race but an intelligence, and that the title Hellenes is applied rather to those who share our culture than to those who share a common blood' [38]. While this may seem like nothing more than the next step in the continued evolution of communal Greek identity, nothing could be further from the truth. For Isocrates deliberately abandoned not only a criterion of Herodotean Greekness, but also the last vestige of Greekness as defined in the earlier Archaic Period (ca. 750-480 B.C.E.): that is, ethnicity (blood) [29,37,38]. Although it cannot be said that Isocrates intended a lowering of the barriers between Greeks and non-Greeks, or that every Greek agreed with his definition of Greekness, his was nevertheless a potent vision of the new Greek world, and it had particular resonance in the 'cosmopolitan' Hellenistic cultures of Seleucid Asia and Ptolemaic Egypt, where far more ambiguous criteria like education and culture came to dominate the discourse of Greekness [37].

The Dawn of the Hellenistic Age

Philip's overwhelming defeat of the Greek forces at Chaeronea decisively settled Macedonian affairs with the Hellenes. The way was now clear for the monarch's long-gestating crusade against the Persians. Yet Philip did not live long enough to realize his dream; for in 336 B.C.E., he was murdered [39]. The task of prosecuting Philip's campaign of 'liberation' and 'punishment' fell to his son and successor, Alexander the Great who, over the course of a decade-long campaign, not only defeated the Persian Empire, he also forged through conquest a Macedonian kingdom that stretched from the Aegean Sea in the west to the Hindu Kush in the east [40]. This cosmopolitan (albeit loosely-knit) kingdom was one of the largest single political entities the world had yet seen. With the benefit of hindsight, its swift dissolution following the death of the man who forged it seems a foregone conclusion.

The 'funeral games' that followed Alexander's death in 323 B.C.E. consumed his nascent empire, and for the next fifty years its

history was one of violent struggle and shifting alliances between the *diadochoi* (i.e. Alexander's generals) [40]. When the last of these men died in battle in 281 B.C.E., a single unified 'Alexandrine Empire' was nowhere in sight. In its place stood the estranged empires of Seleucid Asia and Ptolemaic Egypt, as well as a varying number of smaller kingdoms [41]. For the next three centuries, these far-flung, polyethnic and polyglot (although the Greek *lingua franca* was *koine*, a dialect of Attic Greek) realms populated by a minority of Greeks served as the *locus* of Hellenistic culture. The remainder of this study surveys the semantics surrounding Greekness during this period, as expressed through the image (coins), text (epigraphy and official correspondence), and social practice (urban planning, government, and religion) of the Hellenistic rulers of Ptolemaic Egypt and Seleucid Asia [29].

Greekness in the Spear-won Kingdoms

'For now, that there was no one to take over the empire, those who ruled peoples or cities could each entertain hopes of kingship and controlled hence-forward the territory under their power as if it were a spear-won kingdom' [41]. As with Alexander before them, the authority of the Seleucid and Ptolemaic kings rested *theoretically* on the right of the victor - that is, the right to exercise sovereignty over lands won through conquest [40]. Yet rulership in these 'spear-won' kingdoms was rather less straight forward than the imposition of monarchical will through brute force [42]. For one thing, the Seleucids, whose vast, heterogeneous realm stretched from Asia Minor to Bactria, constituting the bulk of the now-defunct Achaemenid Empire, had to reckon with numerous existing power centers: not only non-Greek temple-states like Babylonia, but also numerous Greek *poleis*, the foundations of which were in some cases centuries old [43]. These *poleis* were accustomed to a certain degree of internal autonomy, a license which fostered both democracy and political harmony within the confines of the city-state. Naturally, these islets of Greekness in an ocean of indigenous cultures guarded such traditions jealously.

Epigraphic evidence suggests that the Seleucids, acutely aware of their status as minority rulers, acknowledged and likewise protected these ideals of civic Greekness, as shown demonstrably in the following passage from a letter from the Seleucid king (attributed variously to Antiochus I or II) to the city of Erythrai (ca. 261 (?) B.C.E.) [40,44]: 'And since (your envoys) have shown that under Alexander and Antigonus your city was autonomous and free from tribute, while our ancestors were always zealous on its behalf; since we see that their judgment was just, and since we ourselves wish not to lag behind in conferring benefits, we shall help you to maintain your autonomy and we grant you exemption not only from other tribute but even from (the) contributions (to) the Gallic fund. You shall have also (... and) any other benefit which we may think of or (you ask for)' (*OGIS* 223).

The passage also reveals the Seleucids' sense of *realpolitik*, a savviness confirmed by their calculated adoption of *euergetism* (i.e. benefaction) [45]. *Euergetism* was not a Hellenistic innovation; rather, it developed out of a Classical tradition known as

liturgies [46]. Briefly, in the Classical age taxation was anathema; thus, most city-states had very little public revenues from which to draw for things like town improvements or festivals. The funding gap was filled by *liturgies*, a system of reciprocity wherein a wealthy patron undertook to fund tasks for the benefit of the community in exchange for the prestige accrued by virtue of his munificence [47]. In the Hellenistic age, *euergetism* replaced *liturgies*, and kings became the ultimate patrons of their Hellenic populations, embedding themselves more deeply in Greek tradition by funding not only the foundation of new *poleis*, but also such projects as the addition of new *stoa* and *gymnasia* to pre-existing foundations. Even the forgiveness of taxes fell under the rubric of *euergetism*, an excellent example of which can be found in the epigraph below (ca. 242 B.C.E.) [48]. Excavated at Delphi, the inscription asks, on behalf of Seleucus II, 'the kings and the dynasts of the cities and leagues' (of Smyrna and Magnesia-by-Sipylos) to confirm, '...the city of the Smyrnaeans be sacred and inviolable (and whereas) he himself, having obeyed the oracle of the god and having done what he requests of the city, has granted to the Smyrnaeans that their city and land should be free and not subject to tribute, and guarantees to them their existing land and promises to return their fatherland...' (*OGIS* 228).

In return for such largess Greek cities declared the king their saviour (*soter*), as attested, for example, by Ptolemy I and Antiochus I; or their benefactor (*euergetes*), as attested by Ptolemy III; or even a living god (*epiphanes*), attested by Antiochus IV; with the result being the proliferation of Greek-style ruler cults-an institution which had a long tradition in the Hellenic world [49]. Since time immemorial the historical founders of Greek cities received an official cult of the dead. In the early Hellenistic period, the establishment of ruler cults remained a posthumous affair, but by the third century B.C.E. they were increasingly formulated as a way of giving thanks to founders, benefactors, donors, and saviors who were still very much alive [50]. As institutions cults propagated the divine and charismatic nature of kingship and the kings-a process which had the effect of legitimating the Hellenistic rulers in the eyes of the Greeks-and flourished in the Seleucid and Ptolemaic kingdoms on both the state and municipal levels. On the municipal level, a ruler cult dedicated to the Seleucid king Antiochus III and his 'sister' queen Laodike was deliberately woven into the fabric of Teos (ca. 204/3 BCE) and Iasos (ca. 197 B.C.E.), honoring Antiochus' successful liberation of the *poleis* from Attalid rule [51]. At Teos, the king and queen received a cult statue, along with the following dedication: 'In order therefore that we also on every occasion shall appear as returning appropriate thanks to both king and the queen and surpassing ourselves in the honors (given) to them for their benefaction and that the People appear to all as strongly inclined toward the expression of gratitude, with good fortune, it shall set up beside the statue of Dionysus marble statues of the finest (quality) and most religiously appropriate (character) of both King Antiochus and his sister Queen Laodice, in order that, having granted that the city and its land be sacred and inviolable and freed us from tribute...they may be common saviors of our city and jointly confer benefits on us' [52,53].

In addition, and in keeping with ancient Greek custom, the Antiocheia and Laodikeia civic festivals were established at Teos to celebrate the creation of the new deities. Much the same process unfolded in Egypt with the development of the state ruler cult of the Ptolemies. Begun with the efforts of Ptolemy II to posthumously deify his father Ptolemy I Soter, the process not only agglomerated all the trappings of a Greek ruler cult-including a temple foundation and an annual festival with games, the Ptolemaia (which came to rival the Olympic Games in renown)-but also set out to ossify the putative genealogical link between the Ptolemies and Alexander the Great. The process culminated under Ptolemy Philopator (r. 221-204 B.C.E), who caused to be constructed a new, collective sema (i.e. grand tomb or mausoleum) in Alexandria where the mummified remains of the Ptolemaic kings were displayed alongside those of Alexander [19]. The end result was the creation of a true dynastic cult in the Ptolemaic kingdom [19].

Whether establishing Greek-style ruler cults, protecting Greek civic ideals or engaging in ancient forms of Hellenic munificence, the Ptolemaic and Seleucid monarchs virtually swaddled themselves in Classical traditions, of necessity formulating policies and displaying behavior's that bequeathed to them an ineffable sense of Greekness-and, by extension, affirmed their legitimacy. It would be an error, however, to assume that such efforts mark the limit of these programmes; for nothing quite so readily conveyed to their subjects the Greekness of these rulers as the images they propagated on coins. Coupled with the monumentalism of Greek architecture characteristic of the Hellenistic age, these articulations of power asserted the Hellenic pedigree of the Macedonian dynasts.

In the Hellenistic kingdoms the typology of coinage was heavily symbolic. On the one hand, it constituted an essential pivot in the ongoing dialectic between the ruler and the ruled; it was an omnipresent means by which the relationship between the dominant and the dominated was reified, a self-perpetuating dynamic affirmed and strengthened through constant use [54,55]. While on the other hand, the program of representational art signifies active self-definition-that is, the symbols the ruler thought appropriate to display in public (Millar 1993). For example, new tetradrachms struck at Alexandria beginning in 290 B.C.E. were issued bearing the portrait of Ptolemy I on the obverse. The portrait is highly individualized, depicting Ptolemy Soter with scruffy 'Alexander-like' hair, a royal diadem, and a goat-skin *aegis*. On the reverse of the series was an image of the eagle of Zeus [55]. Combined, this motif encoded a message which served to reinforce Ptolemaic Greekness; for according to legend, Ptolemy was the child of Arsinoe, a descendant of Herakles and lover of Alexander the Great's father, Zeus. This meant that Ptolemy was not only the brother of Alexander the Great, but also the son of the chief Olympic deity in the Greek pantheon, a narrative which explains coin's iconography: Ptolemy's carefully disarrayed locks recalled Alexander; the crown evoked Greek kingship; the goat-skin *aegis* was *Zeus's* goat-skin *aegis*; and the image of the eagle clutching a thunderbolt on the reverse married two symbols which represented the Olympian. Thus, the immense narrative elicited by these small silver coins, which were used throughout Egypt for 250 years, confirmed the Greekness of the Ptolemaic line by positioning it along a continuum (arguably *the* continuum) of Hellenic dynastic lineage-one which began with Zeus.

As with the Ptolemies, the coinage of the Seleucids was purely Greek in style, iconography and legend [44]. Unlike the Ptolemies, however, the Seleucids did not possess an absolute monopoly over the types of coins-and hence their concomitant iconography-issued within their realm [54]. Beginning with the reign of Seleucus I (r. 305-281 B.C.E.), a diversity of images (including a head of Dionysus, Athena Nike, and even elephants) populated Seleucid coinage [56]. The range of state-minted coin types (as opposed to those minted locally by Greek city-states) was circumscribed in the third century under Antiochus I, who formulated a new pattern of motifs that remained characteristic of the Seleucid kingdom's state-minted coins at least until Antiochus IV (d. 164 B.C.E. [56]. These tetradrachms tended to depict the monarch under whose reign they were issued (although it must be noted that, as with the Ptolemies, this was not invariably the case; for special issues were minted occasionally). Thus, the portraits found on Seleucid coins are ultra-specific: on the obverse we are presented with the un-bearded image of the reigning Seleucid monarch who, echoing the symbolic typology of Ptolemaic tetradrachms, wears the quintessentially Alexandrine hairstyle tucked casually beneath the band of a royal diadem [56]. On the reverse is found the naked, bow-and-arrow wielding image of Apollo-on-the-Omphalos [56]. As with the Ptolemies, this combined iconography was meant to reinforce Seleucid Greekness by recalling the legend surrounding Seleucus' birth: '...He (Seleucus), too, was illustrious for his bravery and for his miraculous origins. His mother, Laodice, who was married to Antiochus, one of Philip's famous generals, had a dream in which she saw Apollo unite himself with her and, having conceived, she received from the god, as a gift for her favors, a ring with a stone on which was engraved an anchor together with the demand that she give it to the son she would bear. This vision was even more amazing as a ring with the same engraving was found the following day in Laodice's bed, and Seleucus, when he was born, had an anchor marked on his thigh'.

Once again, we are confronted by an immense and complex narrative conveyed simplistically via image and inscription on coinage. Very clearly in both the Ptolemaic and Seleucid contexts, these Hellenistic rulers saw themselves as Greek and wanted their subjects/citizens to as well. If this was insufficient reminder, the Greek settlers in these Hellenistic kingdoms need look no further than the city-states they populated. Indeed, in the various Hellenistic societies, the *polis* was the natural environment for Greeks wherever they lived, just as it had been during the Classical period [40]. Unlike the Seleucids, whose penchant for Greek city-founding is well documented [57,40], the Ptolemies founded virtually no *poleis*, the exception being Ptolemais in Upper Egypt (Ptolemaic Egypt possessed a total of three *poleis*, including Alexandria and Naukritas) [58]. This is explained by Egypt's millennia-long history of pharaonic rulership, which embedded within the pol-

ity as well as its people a predilection toward monarchical rule. Meanwhile the Seleucids found themselves encumbered with a massive realm in which Greek city-states, possessed of long histories of (semi)autonomy, were already present. Moreover, it suited Seleucid political and strategic needs to find their own *poleis* in order to entice Hellenic settlement. To this end, an urban fabric arose based on the so-called Hippodamian plan of classical Greece, a standard and familiar formula which bequeathed to these new foundations such quintessentially Greek elements as *agora*, theatres and *gymnasia*, the pedagogical institution that reinforced Greek identifications [59]. In so doing, Greekness became writ large across the Seleucid landscape.

The foregoing survey of Greekness in the Hellenistic world is by no stretch of the imagination comprehensive; rather, it is meant to be representative-sufficient to confirm through examples found in text, image, and social practice that Greekness was at no point universally fixed across the Greek world (a concept as ill-defined, undefinable, and inconstant as Greekness itself) [60,61]. Clearly, to anticipate congruence rejects the historical reality: in the fifth century, Herodotus' criteria were different from those of the Archaic Greeks, who centuries earlier largely defined Greekness by blood (ethnicity); meanwhile, the Spartans considered all non-Spartans foreigners, a position which excluded the rest of the Greek world; Isocrates, for his part, argued in the fourth century for a set of criteria that not only undermined key principles of the Herodotean view, but also diverged from that of Demosthenes (and, it must be said, most fifth-century Athenians). Thus, to expect convergence across the Hellenistic kingdoms, following the end of Hellenic political hegemony, denies the agency of context and conditionality that informed the earlier debate. That the Athenian perspective should bear the weight and profundity of a canonical view is only by virtue of sheer probability. More, much more evidentiary material (inscriptions, histories, tragedies, poems, treatises, and dialogues) was produced in Athens and by Athenians than by any other Greek *polis*. Statistically, then, those perspectives were much more likely to survive-a reality that has since colored the debate.

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