

II

Palaces

*The sacred is a fine hiding-place for the profane:
they are always so similar.*

David Mitchell, *Cloud Atlas*

2.1 Hellenistic palaces: where and why

Hellenistic palaces were built inside or adjacent to cities. This amounts to a paradox: cities in general cherished their autonomy—within the imperial framework they were *de iure* and also normally *de facto* self-governing states—while Hellenistic were fiercely autocratic. Their rule was characterised by an absolutist ideology that made even Louis XIV look like a constitutional monarch. In this chapter we will see how royal palaces were incorporated in cities, and by what (architectural) means civic and royal space were distinguished and connected. The principal question is: what can the use of space tell us about the relationship between the royal and the civic in Hellenistic cities? To answer this question, first the principal residences of the Hellenistic monarchies will be discussed. This rather broad outline will be followed by an overview of the structure, architecture and decoration of palaces. Finally, the implications for the relationship between kingship and city will be discussed.¹

¹ Parts of the present chapter were presented at the first session of the *Sacred and Profane* workshop in Utrecht, January 19, 2001, and at the ESSHC international congress in The Hague, February 28, 2002. I am grateful to Karl-Joachim Hölkeskamp and Amélie Kuhrt for useful comments on earlier versions of the text.

The Antigonids resided mainly in Pella, Aigai, and Demetrias. The Seleukids disposed of numerous ‘capitals’ containing royal palaces, including Seleukeia on the Tigris, Seleukeia in Pieria, Antioch, Daphne, Apameia, Sardis, Tarsos, Mopsuestia, Tambrax in Hyrkania and probably Baktra, besides using former Achaimenid residences, notably Susa and Ekbatana. The Ptolemies resided first of all in Alexandria, but also maintained smaller palaces in Memphis, Naukratis and Pelousion.²

Palace and *polis*

The genesis of the Hellenistic palace was linked to the founding of cities. The aims of establishing new cities was to boost and control the economy, and to military control territory. Cities were founded on sites that were both commercially attractive and strategically important, so that they became economic and military centres at the same time. Strategic considerations, however, normally prevailed over economic ones in the choice of sites. Thus, Demetrios Poliorketes abandoned the city of Pagasai in favour of the more easily defensible city of Demetrias, and relocated Sikyon on a more strategic site.³ Likewise, Seleukos Nikator’s heavily fortified city of Antioch defended an important stone bridge over the Orontes predating the city’s foundation.⁴ Several of such fortified cities, combined with purely military outposts at mountain passes, river crossings and junctions, linked up to become a strategic network commanding the roads. Controlling the roads was the essential prerequisite of imperial rule. The strategic and economic functions of cities were separate

² With the exception of the Antigonid palaces at Pella, Vergina and Demetrias, none of the large palaces of the three main dynasties have yet been excavated; additional archaeological is provided by the royal buildings on the akropolis of Pergamon, Hasmonean and Herodian palaces in Judea, and the Greco-Baktrian palace of Aī Khanoum in Afghanistan. The principal studies modern studies of Hellenistic palace architecture are V. Heerman, *Studien zur makedonischen Palastarchitektur* (Nürnberg 1986); I. Nielsen, *Hellenistic Palaces. Tradition and Renewal* (Aarhus 1994); G. Brands and W. Hoepfner eds., *Basileia. Die Paläste der hellenistischen Könige* (Mainz am Rhein 1996); B.L. Kutbay, *Palaces and Large Residences of the Hellenistic Age* (Lewiston, Queenston, Lampeter 1998); E. Netzer, *Die Paläste der Hasmonäer und Herodes’ des Grossen* (Mainz am Rhein 1999); I. Nielsen ed., *The Royal Palace Institution in the First Millennium BC* (Athens 2001). In 1999, thanks to a grant from the Philologisch Studiefonds, I was given the opportunity to visit the principal Seleukid cities in Turkey and Syria, as well as several sites in Jordan, Israel and Palestine.

³ A.W. Lawrence, *Greek Aims in Fortification* (Oxford 1979) 114.

⁴ *Ibidem* 41.

spheres. Direct and structural royal involvement in civic life was mainly restricted to military matters. Royal building policy within the new cities, too, fell into two categories, one being the building activity for the king's own purpose, *i.e.* palaces and fortifications, the other public buildings. The latter category, which was part of royal benefactions policy, was not restricted to new foundations, nor even to regions actually under the command of kings. Offering public buildings and monuments to *poleis* or to panhellenic sanctuaries like Delphi beyond direct political control was a form of propaganda, presenting kings as philhellenes, protectors and benefactors of Hellenism anywhere in the world.⁵

The cities of the Hellenistic age, the old as well as the new, were, generally speaking, fiercely independent, the non-Greek ones no less than the Greek. Most cities were autonomous in theory and actuality. Even Alexandria, Antioch and Pergamon had a *boulē* and *ekklesia*.⁶ Most cities were ungarrisoned. Kings demanded only three things from cities: the formal acknowledgement of their divine suzerainty, loyalty or aid in war, and payment of tribute (though not all this was demanded by all kings of all cities at the same time). Securing a city's loyalty sometimes induced kings to drastic measures like installing garrisons or burden urban government with a royalist *gerousia*. There often was an *epistatēs* in a city – perhaps a royal official who had full power of attorney, but more probably a *philoxenos* of the king who acted as intermediary, taking care of the interests of the city as well. Levying taxation worked best when economic life flourished, and economic life flourished when cities were free to conduct their own business. In return for the king's protection of civic

⁵ Thus, the Antigonids built on Delos, the Seleukids in Miletos, and the Attalids and Ptolemies in Athens: H. Lauter, *Die Architektur des Hellenismus* (Darmstadt 1986) 15-6. Antiochos IV ordered building projects in mainland Greece even though the Treaty of Apameia precluded Seleukid rule west of the Tauros Mountains. Lauter's hypothesis (p. 17) that Antiochos' building activities in relatively obscure cities such as Tegea on the Peloponnese and Lebadia in Boiotia was due to the fact that he was not *allowed* to build in *poleis* that mattered is incorrect; Antiochos IV, who was an exponent of renewed Seleukid confidence rather than of decline, more plausibly wished to show that his long and powerful arm still reached even the smallest of towns in Roman occupied Greece; besides, he also built Athens, the city in Greece that mattered most. In a like manner, though with the exception of Baylon and Jerusalem less well documented, the Seleukids acted as benefactors of non-Greek cities in the east.

⁶ For the 'democratic machinery' of Ptolemaic Alexandria see Fraser 1972, 93-115. Also Macedonian cities under the Antigonids were administered by an *ekklēsia*, a *boulē* and civic magistrates: Hatzopoulos 2001, 190-1; for the evidence see Hatzopoulos 1996 I, 1270-65 and II, 54-110.

independence—of *autonomia*, *eleutheria* and *dēmokratia* in the case of Greek cities—cities recognised the king’s overlordship.⁷ Paradoxically, there was much to gain from subjugation to imperial protection in terms of civic autonomy. First, kings were obliged to actually offer the protection they promised to cities in return for tribute and allegiance. Moreover, cities maintaining direct relations with a king became, to borrow a word from the Late Medieval Holy Roman Empire, *Reichsunmittelbar*, that is, safeguarded against the territorial ambitions of nearby principalities and rival cities exactly because of their subjugation the (absent) imperial ruler.

Some of these new cities were designated to become royal residences. A residence may be defined as a city in which a king or a dynasty repeatedly held court in a royal palace. In residential cities, the palace (*basileion*; Latin *regia*) or an entire royal district (*basileia*) was build inside the city walls, but adjacent to what may be called the civic part of the city.⁸ Residential cities normally also harboured a royal mint. The evolution of the Hellenistic palace followed, and in all probability influenced, the tendency in Hellenistic architecture of linking together the most important buildings according to a preconceived design. The *basileia* often consisted of numerous structures, of which the king’s private house was only one.⁹ One would therefore expect some concept, visible in the architecture, that set the two ‘antithetical societies’¹⁰ of court and city in apart and visualised the king’s otherness *vis-à-vis* the citizens. Below we will see how this was achieved by a careful choice of location and by the use of elements from religious architecture to shape the royal part of a city like a sacred *temenos*.

The origins of Hellenistic palace architecture can be traced back to a variety of Greek, Macedonian, and Oriental sources.¹¹ Oriental influences were most strong in the Seleukid

⁷ On this central paradox of Hellenistic kings’ relation with cities see above, chapter 1.3.

⁸ *Basileion*: e.g. Ath. 654; Diod. 34.15; Plut., *Luc.* 29.8, Jos., *AJ* 13.36; *basileia*: Polyb. 10.31.5; 1 *Macc.* 11.45; Strabo 17.1.9. Although usage is not consistent, *aulē* (‘open courtyard’ or ‘forecourt’) may by extension also connote ‘palace’ (see above, chapter 1.2).

⁹ Lauter 1986, 85-8; Nielsen 1994, 25-6.

¹⁰ Nielsen 1994, 208.

¹¹ For the various precedents consult Nielsen 1994, 27-80, though perhaps overestimating somewhat Persian influence, cf. E. Kosmetatou in *AJA* 104.4 (2000) 809-11; R. Etienne, ‘Basileia’, *Topoi* 8 (1998) 347-55. On the problem of (dating) the influence of Greek architecture in pre-Hellenistic Macedonia see R.A. Tomlison, ‘Southern Greek influences on Macedonian architecture’, in: *Ancient Macedonia* 3 (Thessaloniki 1983) 285-9.

empire and least in the kingdom of the Antigonids. Notwithstanding the important oriental *c.q.* Iranian and Mesopotamian influences on Hellenistic palace architecture, the royal palaces of the ‘motherland’ Macedonia provide the natural point of departure for any examination of the antecedents Hellenistic palaces. Royal palaces in pre-Hellenistic Macedonia probably resembled the fortified farmsteads in which the Macedonian landed aristocracy dwelled, except in size.¹² One important legacy of these original noble farmsteads, returning in Hellenistic palace architecture, is their fortified character.¹³ By the addition of arcades and loggias, Hellenistic palaces, though fortified, also presented an ‘open’ outlook. Inside, the basic form of the palace was an open courtyard surrounded by rooms – hence the designation ‘court’ (*aulē*). Naturally there were also oriental and (mainland) Greek models for Hellenistic palaces. One of the most influential precedents, was the palace of Mausolos at Halikarnassos.

Halikarnassos

The city of Halikarnassos was the residence of the Karian dynast Mausolos, benefactor and protector of Hellenic culture. At least since 367 Halikarnassos was Mausolos’ residence and, as a naval base, the centre of a short-lived maritime empire. With its enormous size, its straight hippodamian outline, and the involvement of the king in its building, Halikarnassos may be regarded a ‘proto-Hellenistic’ city, a model for city foundations of later kings, and for the positioning of the palace *vis-à-vis* the city.¹⁴

Mausolos’ palace was situated on Zephyrion, a promontory directly adjacent to the port and the harbour fortress.¹⁵ Vitruvius informs us that the palace was covered with gleaming marble and that its outer walls were superbly decorated.¹⁶ The style in which the palace was built may have been Greek, Anatolian, or Persian (as Mausolos was also an Achaimenid satrap), or a

¹² Macedonian landlords’ farmsteads resemble the manor houses of Attic landowners from the fifth and fourth centuries BCE (Nielsen 1994, 93, with n. 197; cf. 81 nn. 176 and 177); whether these influenced Macedonian architecture, however, is uncertain. Bronze Age palaces—of which the centre was the typical *megaron*, a structure that played no role in Hellenistic palace architecture—did not provide a model.

¹³ The basic form is the *tetrapyrgion*, a rectangular house with four corner-towers, also known from pre-Hellenistic Asia Minor and Syria (Nielsen 1994, 65 and 115); this model returns in the palaces at Demetrias (below) and Antioch (Jos. *AJ* 13.36).

¹⁴ Lauter 1986, 85; Hoepfner & Schwandner 1994, 226.

¹⁵ For the location: Nielsen 1994, 63 with n. 138; cf Hoepfner and Schwandner 1994, 228.

¹⁶ Vitr. 2.8.10; Plin., *Nat.* 36.47.

mixture of this. According to Nielsen, its style was Greek rather than Oriental because of the overall Hellenic character of Halikarnassos.¹⁷ But given the Karian-style lion sculptures excavated elsewhere in the city, a mixture of Greek and non-Greek elements—both of them ‘indigenous’ in this part of the world—may be envisaged. Mausolos’ tomb, the famed Mausoleum, was in the heart of the city. It stood on an artificial terrace of gigantic proportions, along the main road connecting the eastern and western gates. The terrace presumably supported also several other structures, including perhaps a hippodrome or stadium.¹⁸ The tomb of Mausolos prefigures the Hellenistic habit of burying kings in a monumental tomb (*heroon*) in or near a city as *heros ktistēs*, deified city founder, thus creating a special bond between the dynasty and a specific city.¹⁹ Alexander laid siege to Halikarnassos in 334, and although the city fell soon enough, he was not able to take the palace-fortress on the Zephyrion peninsula. It is probably no coincidence that Alexander founded one of his own capitals, Alexandria by Egypt, on a resembling site resembling Halikarnassos, and ordered a palace to build there on the Lochias peninsula, adjacent the military harbour.

Several peculiarities of Mausolos’ royal city return in Hellenistic residences. First, the fact that the palace was set apart from the rest of the city by its location on a peninsula. Second, that the palace was positioned adjacent to a fortress and a military harbour. Third, that the precinct of the royal tomb contained a structure to accommodate large crowds, *i.e.* a stadion or hippodrome. Fourth, that the king’s tomb was placed in the centre of the town, but was also raised above it.

Antigonid palaces

The Antigonids maintained residences at Pella, Aigai, Demetrias, Thessalonike, Kassandreia, Pydna, and Miēza.²⁰ The palaces of Demetrias, Pella and Aigai have been excavated. The first

¹⁷ Nielsen 1994, 65.

¹⁸ P. Pedersen, *The Mausolleion Terrace and Accessory Structures* (Aarhus 1991); Nielsen 1994, 139; Hoepfner & Schwandner 1994, 230.

¹⁹ In Classical times, city founders were known as *oikist* (οἰκιστής) and worshipped as heroes; in the Hellenistic Age *ktistēs* became the preferred term, cf. Lauter 1986, 86; Hoepfner & Schwandner 1994, 230. There was *i.a.* *heroon* of Demetrios Poliorketes in Demetrias and of Seleukos Nikator in Seleukeia in Pieria.

²⁰ Of Hellenistic Thessalonike, Kassandros’ residence, only a heavily damaged temple of Sarapis has remained, cf. D. Müller, ‘Thessalonike’, in S. Lauffer ed., *Griechenland. Lexikon der historischen*

of these was an Antigonid foundation, the latter two were early Hellenistic rebuildings of former Argead palaces. The cities of Antigonid Macedon were mostly independent political entities with civic institutions combining Greek and Macedonian traditions.²¹ Royal palaces, therefore, could be connected with, but not incorporated in these *poleis*.

The best known Antigonid palace is the palace of Pella. Lying at one of the main roads of Macedon, Pella had been a royal residence at least since the reign of Archelaos (413-399), though not earlier than the reign of Amyntas III (393-369).²² Philippos II received Demosthenes and Aischines there, and it was the birthplace of Alexander.²³ Under the Antigonid dynasty the importance of Pella increased, although the also used other residences.

The palace of Pella was situated on a hill some distance from the actual city. Excavation have revealed a large palace with exceptionally massive outer walls, built mainly in the second half of the third century BCE, especially by Philippos II and Demetrios I.²⁴ The palace consisted of multiple rooms and halls for residence, reception, administration, service and storage. The ceremonial part of the complex was located at the front of the palace, behind a monumental façade on a high terrace, facing the city. Between this façade and the city ran a broad ramp to create an impressive approach to the main entrance and vestibule. Against the slope of the hill, adjoining the palace, was a theatre.²⁵ In the Hellenistic kingdoms, theatres were the principal stages for the enactment of royal rituals, as we will see later (chapter 5). This explains why theatres were so often attached to palaces (as we will see in the present chapter). Finally, a game park (*paradeisos*) was located in the vicinity of Pella.²⁶ In the city proper, smaller palaces were excavated, presumably the private *palazzi* of the king's friends.²⁷

Stätten (Munich 1989) 676-82; Miëza, one of the royal cities of Macedonia, is often identified with modern Levkadia, where a two-storeyed monumental grave was found but no palace, cf. D. Müller, 'Levkadia', in Lauffer 1989, 392.

²¹ Hammond and Walbank 1988, 475-6.

²² M.B. Hatzopoulos, 'Macedonian palaces: Where king and city meet', in: I. Nielsen ed., *The Royal Palace Institution in the First Millennium BC* (Athens 2001) 189-99, at 189.

²³ D. Müller, 'Pella', in: Lauffer 1989, 524-5.

²⁴ Nielsen 1994, 89-93; M. Siganiidou, 'Die basileia von Pella', in: Brands & Hoepfner 1996, 144-7. Hammond and Walbank 1998, 479; Hatzopoulos 2001, 191 and 194.

²⁵ Lauter 1986, 86; Nielsen 1994, 88.

²⁶ Polyb. 31.29.1-8. Cf. Nielsen, 1994, 88.

²⁷ Nielsen 1994, 84.

The palace at Aigai, present-day Vergina, resembled the palace at Pella, but was smaller.²⁸ Before the Hellenistic Age, Aigai had been the place where the kings of the Argead line were buried.²⁹ In Hellenistic times Aigai was a residence of Kassandros and later the Antigonids. The excavated Antigonid palace was situated on a high terrace, halfway city and akropolis. Both Kassandros and Antigonos Gonatas probably built there; Gonatas restored or rebuilt the palace after the Celts had sacked it in 279.³⁰ As in Pella, the palace was reached via a broad ramp leading, leading to a monumental, two storeyed façade behind a large artificial terrace. A second terrace commanded a superb view over the plain – looking down upon the city, the road leading from it, and the theatre against the slope of the hill.³¹ The relatively modest proportions of the palace at Aigai may indicate that the palace served mainly ceremonial and representational purposes, and was not an administrative centre.

A third Antigonid residence of importance was located in the city of Demetrias in southern Thessaly.³² Demetrias, one of the Fetters of Greece, was the southernmost residence of the Antigonid dynasty. The city had been founded by Demetrios Poliorketes shortly after gaining control of Macedonia (294 BCE), and was populated by means *synoikismos* of nearly all towns in the district of Magnesia.³³ Due to the city's favourable location at the Bay of Iolkos, as well as the commercial privileges granted to its *politai*, Demetrias soon became an *urbs valida et ad omnia opportuna*, its population rising to approximately 25,000 in the third

²⁸ M. Andronikos, *Vergina. The Royal Tombs and the Ancient City* (Thessaloniki 1984); C. Saatsoglou-Paliadeli, 'The palace of Vergina-Aegae and its surroundings', in: I. Nielsen ed., *The Royal Palace Institution in the First Millennium BC* (Athens 2001) 201-13. For the identification of Vergina with Aigai: N.G.L Hammond, 'The Archaeological background to the Macedonian kingdom', in: *Ancient Macedonia* (Thessaloniki 1970) 53-67; Andronikos 1984, 65-7; M.B. Hatzopoulos, 'Aigéai: la localisation de la premier capitale macédonienne', *REG* 109 (1996) 264-69.

²⁹ The site of Aigai was inhabited since ca. 1000 BCE; it became a royal residence since the beginning of the Macedonian monarchy around 700 : Hatzopoulos 2001, 189 with n 6 at p. 195; Saatsoglou-Paliadeli 2001, 207.

³⁰ D. Müller, 'Vergina', in: Lauffer 1989, 702-3; Nielsen 1994, 81; Hammond and Walbank 1988, 477; M. Errington, 'Aigai', in: *RE*² I, 313.

³¹ Nielsen 1994, 81-2. The theatre, the scene of Philippos II's murder during a royal spectacle in 336, has been dated to the fourth century BCE.

³² H. Kramolisch, 'Demetrias', in: Lauffer 1989, 190-1; P. Marzoff, 'Demetrias', in *RE*² III 426-7; id., 'Der Palast von Demetrias', in: Brands & Hoepfner 1996, 148-65.

³³ Plut., *Demetr.* 53.3.

century BCE.³⁴ When Seleukos took Demetrios prisoner, Demetrias became the residence of Antigonos Gonatas, who later buried his father's ashes there in 283.³⁵ Because of its central position in Greece and vis à vis the Aegean, Demetrias was an ideal base of operations for such imperialists as Demetrios Poliorketes and Philippos V, and for a short while also Antiochos the Great.

Demetrios programmed Demetrias to become at once a royal residential city, a naval base and a commercial centre. He chose this site because of the military advantages it offered. The city had steep approaches on almost all sides and disposed of two natural harbours, one of which became the basis of the Antigonid fleet.³⁶ The city in its final form was surrounded by extensive fortifications built by Demetrios, Philippos V, and Antiochos III.³⁷ The city was protected by a wall of over eight kilometres length, strengthened with artillery towers and defensive outworks, and three fortresses: two on the akropolis in the west and one in the south adjoining the palace.³⁸

The royal palace was built on an eminence in the city. Excavations have revealed a large structure around a central peristyle court, resembling the palace at Aigai but larger. This building, defended by thick outer walls and corner-towers was the focus part of a larger royal area.³⁹ Adjoining the palace to the west and south was a citadel of considerable size. Between the palace and the citadel lay a terrace overlooking the city. On this terrace was the palace's main entrance, a propylon gateway in the western façade. To the south of the palace was an open square. From an inscription found there, we know that this square was known as *hiera agora*, Holy Agora. The *hiera agora* was the centre of a ceremonial and cultic area and

³⁴ Kramolisch 1989; the phrase is from Liv. 39.23.12.

³⁵ Plut. *Demetr.* 53.3. The city remained under the control of the Antigonids until Philippos V yielded it to the Romans, who subsequently gave Demetrias to the newly founded League of the Magnesians. In 192/1 Demetrias fell into the hands of the Seleukid king Antiochos III, who enlarged its fortifications. One year later, Philippos V reoccupied the city and bequathed it to his son Perseus, who held the city until 168. On the history of Demetrias see F. Stählin, *Das hellenistischen Thessalien. Landeskundliche und Geschichtliche Beschreibung Thessaliens in den hellenistischen und römischen Zeit* (Stuttgart 1924) 69-70. On the burial of the city's *heros ktistēs* Demetrios see below, chapter 5.2.

³⁶ Strabo 9.5.1; Diod. 20.102. Cf. Winter 1971, 114. Polyæn. 6.2.1 informs us that already the fourth century Thessalian ruler Alexandros of Pherai had a naval base on the same location.

³⁷ Winter 1971, 277 with n. 31.

³⁸ Stählin 1924, 72-3; Winter 1971, 178 with fig. 172; Hammond and Walbank 1988, 480.

³⁹ Winter 1971, 277; Nielsen 1994, 93.

consisted of several buildings, including a temple of the city god Athena Iolkia.⁴⁰ The square apparently functioned as a transitional area between the *basileia* and the city. As in Halikarnassos, the city's *heroon*, here the tomb of Demetrios Poliorketes, was not connected with the *basileion* but built at some distance at the summit of a steep hill to the west of the city; near the tomb a theatre was built.⁴¹

Seleukid palaces

Both the vastness of their empire and their warlike nature induced the Seleukids to travel around continuously, and hence to maintain numerous residences. Seleukos I Nikator initially established his base at Babylon but added more and more residences as his territorial control expanded.⁴² In the centre of his empire, the former Achaimenid palaces of Ekbatana and Susa were at his disposal, and in the west Sardis. But Seleukos was also the most energetic founder of cities after Alexander.⁴³ In Mesopotamia he built *i.a.* Seleukeia on the Tigris, in Syria Antioch, Seleukeia in Pieria, Laodikeia on the Sea, Apameia, and many more. All these cities contained Seleukid palaces. Seleukos' successors built even more cities, or refounded and rebuilt existing ones, for example Damascus and Aleppo.⁴⁴ During the second century, when the Seleukids had lost Asia Minor and were gradually losing control over the Upper Satrapies, the residences of the dynasty became restricted to those lying in the Fertile Crescent of Mesopotamia and the Levant, until finally, after *c.* 120, only Antioch and its nearby sister-cities, and Damascus were left as (competing) operation bases for the by then hopelessly divided dynasty.

⁴⁰ Lauter 1986, 86, cf. 99-113; Kramolisch 1989, 191.

⁴¹ Lauter 1986, 86.

⁴² Strabo 16.2.4-5. Seleukeia overshadowed but never replaced Babylon, where Alexander had resided and where also several Seleukid kings stayed, among them Antiochos I and Antiochos IV, boasted three palaces; these were initially built by Nebuchadrezzar II (*c.* 604-562) and were later extended by the Achaimenids; on the palaces at Babylon see Nielsen 1994, 31-5. Near the palace in the south, a theatre was built, probably by Alexander, and later restored by the Seleukids.

⁴³ On the foundations of Seleukos Nikator: Kuhrt & Sherwin-White 1993, 20-1; J.D. Grainger, *The Cities of Seleukid Syria* (Oxford 1990).

⁴⁴ T. Leisten, 'Damaskos: Perserzeit und Hellenismus', in: *RE²* III, 294-7. Damascus had been a Macedonian colony since Alexander's reign and a Seleukid residence notably in the last phase of the dynasty's history.

In modern discussion of the Seleukid Empire there is a tendency to find the ‘capital’ of the kingdom, or of an individual king’s reign. In the past, historians identified notably Antioch as the Seleukid capital; today, historians prefer Seleukeia on the Tigris. Bickerman criticises Seleukos for having made Antioch his capital instead of Babylon or Seleukeia on the Tigris, and thereby weakened his position in the east.⁴⁵ Conversely, Downey believed that Seleukeia in Pieria initially was the Seleukid capital under until Antiochos I ‘shifted the capital to Antioch’.⁴⁶ Bickerman held that Seleukeia in Pieria was no more than a port for Antioch, and as such the city of course did function.⁴⁷ However, the notion of a capital in the modern sense, *i.e.* a central seat of central government, did not exist in this empire.⁴⁸ The Seleukids maintained more than one ‘capital’, each being the administrative, military and economic heart of its own region, and in this sense Antioch in Syria was not more important than Seleukeia in Mesopotamia, Sardis in Lydia, or Ekbatana in Media. Other capitals of the empire in its heyday may have been Baktra (Zariaspa) and the unnamed city near present-day Aī Khanoum (perhaps Alexandria in Oxiana).

The city of Seleukeia on the Tigris is poorly known.⁴⁹ Literary sources inform us that it was Seleukos’ main residence in Mesopotamia for the greater part of their history.⁵⁰ The

⁴⁵ E. Bickerman, ‘The Seleucid Period’, in: *CHI* 3.1 (1988) 3-20, 4-5.

⁴⁶ G. Downey, *A History of Antioch in Syria. From Seleucus to the Arab Conquest* (Princeton 1961) 54 and 87.

⁴⁷ E. Bickerman, ‘The Seleucid Period’, in: *CHI* 3.1 (1988) 3-20, 4-5.

⁴⁸ Given Antioch’s central location in the Seleukis region, and the fact that according to Strabo (16.2.6) and Libanius (*Or.* 11.94-9) Seleukos Nikator built a palace at Daphne, near Antioch, suggests that Seleukos also saw Antioch as a ‘capital’. Seleukeia in Pieria on the other hand was still considered a ‘royal city’ in the time of Antiochos III, even though the city was then in the hands of the Ptolemies (Polyb. 5.58.4). Apameia too was a Seleukid capital, as *i.a.* Antiochos III resided there when he made his preparations for his first campaign against the Ptolemies (Polyb. 5.58.2), as well as Diodotos Tryphon when he was fighting Demetrios II (Strabo 16.2.10).

⁴⁹ See in general Kuhrt & Sherwin-White 1993, 135, see further M. Streck, *Seleukia und Ktesiphon* (1917); J. Wagner, *Seleukeia-am-Euphrat/Zeugma. Studien zur historischen Topographie und Geschichte*. Beihefte zum Tübinger Atlas des Vorderen Orients, Series B, Geisteswissenschaften 10 (Wiesbaden 1976); R.A. Hadley, ‘The Foundation of Seleucia-on-the-Tigris’, *Historia* 27 (1978) 228-230; A. Invernizzi, ‘Seleucia on the Tigris. Centre and periphery in Seleucid Asia’, in P. Bilde *et al.* eds., *Centre and Periphery in the Hellenistic World* (Aarhus 1993) 230-50. For the excavations: L. Waterman, *Preliminary Report upon the Excavations at Tell Umar* (1931) and *id.*, *Second Preliminary Report upon the Excavations at Tell Umar, Iraq* (1933).

city was built at a crossing of the Tigris, where the roads from Media, southern Mesopotamia and Syria met, and was connected with the Euphrates by an artificial canal. Of the original Seleukid settlement not more than the so-called ‘administrative block’, perhaps part of the *basileia*, has been extensively excavated. The city was very large, larger even than Antioch, and had a mixed Macedonian, Greek and Babylonian population.⁵¹

In Levantine Syria Seleukos founded Antiocheia on the Orontes (Antioch), Laodikeia on the Sea, Apameia and Seleukeia in Pieria.⁵² These four cities were constructed by a concerted plan, involving the same architects, and resembled each other in their design.⁵³ They were called ‘sister-cities’ by Strabo, and the region in which they were founded was called the Seleukis.⁵⁴ Seleukos I perhaps at first preferred Seleukeia in Pieria as his main residence in the Levant, a strategically located Mediterranean port to rival Alexandria.⁵⁵ He was buried there, presumably according to his own wish, in a famous monumental *heroon*, the Nikatoreion.⁵⁶

⁵⁰ Strabo 16.1.5; 16.2.4-5.

⁵¹ S. Sherwin-White *et al.*, ‘Seleuceia on Tigris’, *OCD* 1380; Nielsen 1994, 112; Van der Spek 1986, 177. On the ‘administrative block’: ‘Fourth Preliminary Report of the Excavations at Seleucia and Ctesiphon, Seasons 1969, 1970’, *Mesopotamia* 5/6 (1970/71) 9-104.

⁵² The cities were named after Seleukos’ father, mother, wife, and himself respectively. According to App., *Syr.* 57, Seleukos all in all built sixteen cities named Antiocheia after his father, five Laodikeia after his mother, nine Seleukeia after himself, and four after his wives, *sc.* three Apameia’s and one Stratonikeia.

⁵³ Downey 1961, 54; Grainger 1990, 67-87.

⁵⁴ Strabo 16.2.4.

⁵⁵ On this residence in general see Downey 1961, 54 and Nielsen 1994, 112. The evidence for the foundation of Seleukeia is collected in Downey 1963, 29 n. 8. The city, with its splendid buildings and strong defences, is described by Polyb. 5.59.3-11. All remaining structures, however, date from the Roman period, though inscriptions from Seleukid times give valuable information on the *polis* institutions and magistrates of the city. Seleukeia as Nikator’s residence: H. Seyrig, ‘Séleucos I et la fondation de la monarchie syrienne’, *Syria* 47 (1970) 290-311; E. Will, ‘La capitale des Séleucides’, in: *Akten des XIII. Internationalen Kongress für klassische Archäologie, Berlin 1988* (Mainz am Rhein 1990) 259-65.

⁵⁶ App., *Syr.* 63. At Seleukeia, Antiochos I not only introduced a *heros ktistēs* cult for his father but also established a cult of Apollo Soter, his grandfather, to commemorate his victories over the Celts in Asia Minor, cf. Strootman 2005a, 115-7.

When Seleukeia in Pieria was captured by the Ptolemies, Antioch became the most important of the four ‘sister-cities’ of the Seleukis.⁵⁷ Antioch was destined to become the greatest city in the Levant until Late Antiquity, and for this reason its history is fairly well-known from written sources as compared to other Seleukid residences.⁵⁸ Thus we know that the foundation of Antioch in 300 was accompanied by a grotesque symbolic act at the expense of Antigonos Monophthalmos, Seleukos’ archenemy, whom he had vanquished the previous year at Ipsos. For not only did Seleukos transfer to his new city the inhabitants of nearby Antigoneia, the prestigious city foundation of Monophthalmos, but Seleukos also—*vae victis*—demolished Antigoneia completely, using the salvaged materials to build his own residence.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ Seleukeia fell into the hands of the Ptolemies in the Third Syrian War (246-241), until it was retaken by Antiochos III in 219. On the Ptolemaic occupation: A. Jaehne, ‘Die syrische Frage, Seleukeia in Pierien und die Ptolemäer’, *Klio* 56 (1974) 501-19; F. Muccioli, ‘Seleuco III, i Tolemei e Seleucia di Pieria’, *Simblos* 2 (1997) 135-50. Also Laodikeia on the Sea was temporarily lost to the Ptolemies. Apameia always remained under Seleukid control, becoming the main military base and training camp of the Seleukid army in Syria; Strabo 16.2.10 mentions a ‘war office’ (λογιστήριον τὸ στρατιωτικόν), a stud farm (ἵπποτροφίον) with 300 stallions and more than 30,000 mares, and instructors in phalanx-warfare; Apameia also accommodated a royal mint, cf. J.Oelsner, ‘Apameia’, in: *RE²* I (1996) 824-5. The palace of Apameia, where the peace conference after Antiochos’ III war with the Romans took place (188), has not been excavated but presumably was located on the fortified akropolis, now a small Syrian village, where the remains of a theatre were found. Excavation reports of Apameia are published by the Centres Belges de Recherches Archéologiques à Apamée as *Fouilles d’Apamées de Syrie* (Brussels 1961-) and *Fouilles d’Apamée de Syrie: Miscellanea* (Brussels 1968-), cf. J.-C. Balty ed., *Apamée de Syrie. Bilan de recherches archéologiques 1965-68* (Brussels 1969), and id., *Apamée de Syrie. Bilan de recherches archéologiques 1969-1971* (Brussels 1972).

⁵⁸ For the history of Antioch see Downey 1961 (*op cit.* above) and *id.*, *Ancient Antioch* (Princeton 1963). The literary and epigraphical evidence for Antioch under the Seleukids is collected and discussed in Downey 1961, 24-45. For the excavations in and around Antioch, present Antakya in the Hatay (Turkey) see the reports in *Excavations in the Plain of Antioch* (Chicago 1960-) and G.W. Elderkin *et al.* ed., *Antioch-on-the-Orontes* (Princeton 1934-1972).

⁵⁹ Downey 1961, 57. Outside the city, across the river Orontes, Seleukos set up a remarkable statue on a place that was since called Hippokephalos (‘Horse’s Head’). The statue represented the head of a horse with a gilded helmet lying beside it. The horse was said to be symbolic of Seleukos’ flight to Egypt after Antigonos Monophthalmos had driven him from Babylonia, whilst the helmet symbolized Seleukos’ final victory over his single-eyed opponent at Ipsos. The group bore the inscription: ‘On this

The city of Antioch commanded a junction of roads linking Asia Minor, Mesopotamia, and Koile Syria, and had access to the Mediterranean via the Orontes river and the port of Seleukeia in Pieria.⁶⁰ Besides the economic advantages of this location, Antioch was predestined to become a military centre, guarding the crossroads and enabling the Seleukids to quickly despatch troops to all corners of the surrounding region. The city was formally independent and had the political institutions of a genuine Greek *polis* such as a *boulē*. As was also the case in Alexandria, the inhabitants of Antioch were organised in citizen bodies, *politeumata*, based on ethnicity, each living in its own district.⁶¹

Libanius says that his home-town Antioch was so beautiful, that even the gods were eager to dwell there.⁶² One category of gods actually did so. From literary sources it can be established that the Seleukid kings maintained one their principal palaces in Antioch, though perhaps not earlier than the reign of Seleukos II.⁶³ The exact location of the palace is

Seleukos escaped from Antigonos, and was saved; and returning and defeating him, he destroyed him'. The horse's head also appeared on coins of Seleukos (Downey 1963, 38-9). Antigoneia on the Orontes had been Monophthalmos' most prestigious city founding (Billows 1990, 152, 242, and 297; cf. Downey 1963, 29 with n. 7; Tcherikover 1926, 61). Despite Seleukos' destructive interference, a town called Antigoneia still existed in Syria as late as 53 CE as a satellite village of Antioch (Dio 40.39.1-2; cf. Billows 1990, 297). Lib., *Ant.* 72-7, 87, 250, ascribed the foundation of Antioch to Alexander the Great; Downey 1963, 27-8 with n. 2, suggests that this legend may be based on an actual visit of Alexander *en route* from Issos to Phoenicia, that Alexander perceived the plan of building a city or a fortress there, and that Seleukos remembered this plan when he himself was king. But the story may as well be entirely legendary.

⁶⁰ Lawrence 1971, 38.

⁶¹ Strabo 16.2.4; cf. Lauter, 1986, 78; Downey 1961, 47; *id.* 'Strabo on Antioch: Notes on his methods', *TAPA* 72 (1941) 85-95. The quarters of Antioch were separated by means of a monumental, colonnaded avenue; the remains of the main road date to the Roman period but it already existed in a different form from the Hellenistic age (Lauter 1986, 81).

⁶² Lib., *Ant.* 109. On Seleukos Nikator's building activities in Antioch as known from written sources see Downey 1963, 27-44, and on the architectural design Downey 1963, 31-4. The most active builder in Antioch after Seleukos was Antiochos IV, who added a new quarter and a second *agora*, perhaps a part of the *basileion* like the *hiera agora* at Demetrias, cf. Downey 1963, 57, and Downey 1961, 95-6, 99-107.

⁶³ Apart from numerous sources attesting that the Seleukids resided at Antioch, Diod. 33.4, Jos., *AJ* 13.129-142, Strabo 16.2.5, and I *Macc.* 11.45 mention a palace specifically. Before the building of a palace in the city Antioch, the Seleukids probably resided in nearby Daphne.

uncertain, but most scholars agree that it was located on the island in the Orontes river, where the remains of a hippodrome, a Roman palace, and surrounding walls were excavated.⁶⁴ Thus, the royal area was separated from the city in a way that could not be misunderstood. Of the original Hellenistic palace little is known. Written sources attest only what one would already expect: that the *basileia* area consisted of several buildings (*oikoi*); that the main palace had a monumental *propylon* entrance; that it was fortified; that it was a renowned centre of royal patronage and housed a famous library.⁶⁵ The palace area on the island further included a hippodrome, and probably also a fortress with military barracks and arsenals.⁶⁶

About eight kilometres outside of Antioch, the sacred grove at Daphne was a central sanctuary of the Seleukid monarchy since the days of Seleukos Nikator.⁶⁷ It presumably was a sacred place already before the Hellenistic Age; under the Seleukids Daphne was consecrated to Apollo, tutelary deity and ancestor of the royal family, and Artemis.⁶⁸ The sanctuaries' focus was a divine laurel tree, and it was said that Apollo's pursuit of the maiden Daphne, and

⁶⁴ The island was still called *Regia* in the time of Malalas (sixth century CE); see further Nielsen 1994, 112-3. On the Roman palace: Downey 1961, 643-7, cf. Downey 1963, 117-8. On the hippodrome: W.A. Campbell, 'The Circus', in: G.W. Elderkin ed., *Antioch-on-the-Orontes I: The Excavations of 1932* (Princeton 1934) 34-41. The island no longer exists today, but its former shape can be determined by traces in the ground (Downey 1961, 27). The positioning of the fortified palace on an island has a precedent in the palace built by the Syracusean tyrant Dionysios I, who erected a *turanneia* on the island of Ortygia: 'Perceiving that the island was the strongest section of the city and could be easily defended, he divided it from the rest of the city by an extensive wall, and in this he set high towers at close intervals.. He also constructed on the island at great expense a fortified akropolis as a place of refuge in case of immediate need, and within its wall he enclosed the dockyards which were connected with a small harbour' (Diod. 14.7.1-3; transl C.H. Oldfather, cited after Hatzopoulos 2001, 191). Cf. B. Funck, 'Beobachtungen zum Begriff des herrscherpalastes und seiner machtpolitischen Funktion im hellenistischen Raum. Prolegomena zur Typologie der hellenistischen Herrschaftssprache', in: Brands & Hoepfner 1996, 44-55, esp. 44.

⁶⁵ Nielsen 1994, 113, cf. Downey 1961, 641. We know that the palace was fortified because in 147 it withstood military attack during the rioting that took place in the city in the reign of Demetrios II, cf. Bevan (1902) II, 223-6. Library: Downey 1963, 47-8. Antioch also harbored a royal treasury and a royal mint (Downey 1963, 54).

⁶⁶ Nielsen 1994, 113.

⁶⁷ Strabo 16.2.6; Lib., *Or.* 11.94-; cf. Downey 1961, 83.

⁶⁸ Strabo 16.2.6 mentions an 'asylum precinct' (ἄσυλον τέμενος), containing a temple dedicated to Apollo and Artemis.

the latter's transformation in a tree, had taken place there.⁶⁹ Daphne, also today a place of exceptional beauty, was in Hellenistic and Roman times renowned as a beautiful *paradeisos*, with streams, fountains, and springs, providing coolness and an abundance of clear water.⁷⁰ A yearly festival of Apollo was celebrated at Daphne by the inhabitants of Antioch.⁷¹ Antiochos IV Epiphanes attempted to transform the festival into a panhellenic event (below, chapter 5.4). The grove at Daphne further consisted of a theatre, a stadion, and a fortified royal palace.⁷²

Other important residences of the Seleukids were Sardis in Lydia, Ekbatana and Susa in the core of the empire, and Baktra and Aī Khanoum in the east. Sardis, the western terminus of the former Achaimenid, and subsequently Seleukid Royal Road, was the Seleukids' main stronghold in Asia Minor.⁷³ On a terrace against the northern slope of the reputedly impregnable citadel hill once stood the palace of Kroisos and later an Achaimenid palace.⁷⁴ In the third century the Seleukids transformed Sardis into a Hellenistic *polis*, both

⁶⁹ Myths relating to Syrian Daphne have been collected in Downey 1963, 41-4, and A. Porteous, *The Lore of the Forest* (London 1996; orig. publ. as *Forest Folklore*, 1928) 75-6.

⁷⁰ Strabo 16.2.4-5. The water coming to Daphne from the surrounding mountains was said to originate in the Kastalian fountains at Daphne in Greece, flowing all the way to Syrian Daphne via an underground waterway; in the murmur of the water oracles were heard (Porteous 1996, 75-6, cf. 252).

⁷¹ Strabo 16.2.6.

⁷² Downey 1963, 44; cf. Downey 1961, 642-3; Nielsen 1994, 115. As in the case of the palace at Antioch, the palace at Daphne must have been strongly fortified because in 246, during the Laodikean War, its outnumbered defenders successfully withstood a siege (Just. 27.1.4-7, App., *Syr.* 65; Val. Max. 9.10 ext. 1; Polyæn. 8.50; Hieron., *In Dan.* 11.5). Daphne may have been palace where Demetrios Poliorketes was imprisoned after his capture by Seleukos, and subsequently drank himself to death. This palace had gardens and game parks, and was located in the still unidentified 'the Syrian Chersonese' (Plut., *Demetr.* 50.5-6). The Seleukis indeed looks a little like a peninsula, but one may also think of the sedimentary plain in eastern Kilikia, with the cities Tarsos, Mallos, and Adana, all of whom were (re)named Antiocheia in Seleukid times and perhaps had palaces or *paradeisoi*, as well as Mopsuestia, where a Seleukid palace is mentioned by Jos., *AJ* 13.13.4. Nielsen 1994, 115 identifies Apameia as Demetrios' golden cage.

⁷³ Bickerman 1938, 53-5; G.M.A. Hanfmann, L. Robert, W.E. Mierse, 'The Hellenistic Period', in: G.M.A. Hanfmann ed., *Sardis: From Prehistoric to Roman Times. Results of the Archaeological Exploration of Sardis 1958-1975* (Cambridge, Mass., and London 1983) 109-39.

⁷⁴ Polyb. 7.15.2; Hdt. 1.154. Cf. Winter 1971 324-5; Nielsen 1994, 63. Xen., *Oec.* 4.20-4 praises the beauty of the *paradeisos* added to the palace by Cyrus the Younger. See also G.M.A. Hanfmann, 'On

architecturally and institutionally.⁷⁵ They enlarged the citadel's defences and rebuilt the palace as a genuine Hellenistic *basileion* serving as a royal palace when the king was present and as governor's palace in his absence.⁷⁶ This *basileia*, the administrative centre of Seleukid Asia Minor, boasted a Royal Treasury, a Royal Mint, and Royal Archives.⁷⁷

In the east the Seleukids also took over Achaemenid residence rather than building new palaces in new cities. The border regions between Mesopotamia and the Iranian plateau had been the geographical heart of Achaemenid power for more than two centuries. Here the Persian kings had build magnificent residences such as Persepolis and Pasargadai in the Persis, Ekbatana in Media, and Susa in Susiana.⁷⁸ Of these, the Seleukids, like Alexander before them, used Susa and Ekbatana as royal residences, but not, it seems, the palaces in the Persis.⁷⁹

the palace of Croesus', in: U. Höckmann and A. Krug eds., *Festschrift für F. Brommer* (Mainz 1977) 145-54.

⁷⁵ Kuhrt & Sherwin-White 1993, 180, have called Sardis 'perhaps the best example [of] deliberate hellenisation' in Asia Minor; the process of Hellenisation was speeded after Sardis had been depopulated by Antiochos III as punishment for its role in the revolt of Achaïos (220-213), and subsequently was repopulated by Antiochos' governor Zeuxis (Hanfmann *et al.* 1983, 109). Correspondence between Sardis and Antiochos III shows that the city had a *boulē*, passing regular decrees, but also a royal *stratēgos* and treasurer (*tamias*) (Hanfmann *et al.* 1983, 113). Architectural innovations included the building of an *agora*, a theatre, and a stadium. On Sardis as a Greek *polis* see esp. Kuhrt & Sherwin-White 1993, 181-2 and 135. On Hellenistic architecture in Sardis: C. Foss and G.M.A. Hanfmann, 'Regional setting and urban development', in: G.M.A. Hanfmann and J.C. Waldbaum eds., *A Survey of Sardis and the Major Monuments Outside the City Walls* (Cambridge, Mass., and London 1975) 17-34: 29-30.

⁷⁶ Winter 1971, 318-24; Hanfmann *et al.* 1983, 113. As a governor's residence Sardis was the seat of *i.a.* Zeuxis, Antiochos' III 'viceroy' in Asia Minor, whose rule is well known from epigraphical evidence.

⁷⁷ Hanfmann *et al.* 1983, 113.

⁷⁸ On Achaemenid royal palaces: Nielsen 1994, 35-51. Smaller palaces that once belonged to the Achaemenids were mainly used as the seats of governors, cf. Nielsen 1994, 112 with n. 217 and 115-28.

⁷⁹ Alexander's use of Iranian palaces: Bosworth 1993, 179. Susa as a Seleukid residence: Strabo 15.3.5; cf. Kuhrt & Sherwin-White 1993, 135. The two palaces at Susa were build by Darius I and Artaxerxes II, but the Seleukids may have rebuild them using elements of Achaemenid architecture: R. Boucharlat, 'Suse et la Susiana à l'époque achéménide: données archéologiques', *AchHist* 4 (1990) 149-

The Hellenistic palace found at Aī Khanoum in Afghanistan, perhaps Alexandria on the Oxus, was originally built under the Seleukids; around 150 the palace was enlarged by an unknown Greek-Baktrian dynast.⁸⁰ The palace in its final form was enormous, the whole area being some 87,500 m². It was a truly Hellenistic palace, its architecture combining Greek-Macedonian and Iranian elements, the latter represented by a large audience hall with a

75: 151; cf. Kuhrt & Sherwin-White 1993, 135; Nielsen 1994, 35. Ekbatana as Seleukid residence: Polyb. 10.31.4-13; Strabo 11.13.5; II *Macc.* 9.3. Ekbatana lay strategically at the Khorasan road connecting Mesopotamia with Iran. It had been the residence of Median kings until conquered by Cyrus the Great (Kuhrt 1995, II 654, 657-8). In 210/1 Antiochos III assembled the army for his *anabasis* at Ekbatana; Polyb. 10.31.12-3 says that Antiochos stripped the palace of its precious decorations in order to coin money for his troops, acquiring nearly 4,000 talents in this way; the enormous wealth Polybios claims to have been kept at the palace indicates how important Ekbatana was for the Seleukids as a treasury. The palace mentioned by Polybios was built by the early Achaimenids, but the whole site now lies under the modern city of Hamadan and is beyond reach for archaeologists: H.W.A.M. Sancisi-Weerdenburg, ‘Het Achemenidenrijk: een “early state”?’, in: R. Hagesteijn ed., *Stoepen met staten* (Leiden 1980) 165-86: 169. Strabo 15.3.3 explicitly states that the Seleukids did not use former Persian palaces in the Persis, the traditional core of the Achaimenid dynasty, *i.e.* Persepolis and Pasargadai, although there was a royal mint in the Persis. The reason may be, apart from the fact that Persepolis had been burnt by Alexander, that the Persis was a peripheral region, important only for the Achaimenids because it was their homeland and principal power base. Macedonian control of the Persis was weak from the beginning; the Persis was among the first countries to break away from Seleukid rule, perhaps *de facto* as early as the late third century, achieving formal independence under indigenous rulers in the second half of the second century (Kuhrt & Sherwin-White 1993, 225-6; Sullivan 1990, 110-2). Alexander may already have foreseen the difficulty of controlling this mountainous region, that cost him so much trouble to conquer (Bosworth 1993, 88-92); H.W.A.M. Sancisi-Weerdenburg, “*Den wereltvorst een vuyle streek aan sijn eer cleet*” (Utrecht 1991) 21, has suggested that Alexander destroyed Persepolis—Xerxes’ palace and the symbolic centre of Achaimenid power—not merely as an ideologically motivated act of revenge, but also as an attempt to destroy the central power base of the Achaimenid family, the Persian heartland, whose inhabitants were said to be the most warlike of all the Persians (Diod. 19.21.3). Thus, Alexander emphasised his personal victory over the Achaimenid family, replacing Darius as the legitimate Great King.

⁸⁰ K. Karttunen, ‘Aī Khanoum’, *RE*² 1 (1996) 306.

columned vestibule, resembling the Great Apadana at Persepolis.⁸¹ The palace enclosure was reached from the city by a monumental *propylon*, giving access to a broad avenue leading up to the palace proper. After passing a mausoleum the avenue terminated at a forecourt before the peristyle entrance to the main palace. The latter was divided in an official and ceremonial wing, and a residential part, separated from each other by a wide corridor. The ceremonial part consisted of a large audience hall and rooms for administration or service. Behind this lay the residential part, comprising apartments, decorated reception halls and dining rooms.⁸² As

⁸¹ M. Colledge, 'Greek and non-Greek interaction in the art and architecture of the Hellenistic East', in: A. Kuhrt and S. Sherwin-White eds., *Hellenism in the East* (Berkeley and Los Angeles 1987) 134-62, at 143; cf. P. Bernard, 'Ai Khanoum on the Oxus. A Hellenistic City in Central Asia', *Proceedings of the British Academy* 53 (1967) 71-95; id., 'An ancient Greek city in Central Asia', *Scientific American* 246 (1982) 126-35, esp. 129. Today it is often maintained that Ai Khanoum was first of all an 'eastern' city, e.g. Kuhrt & Sherwin-White 1993, 178-9; Nielsen 1994, 127-8; but to find Near Eastern culture in this part of the world is hardly surprising; much more striking is the undeniable Greek-Macedonian character that *also* characterized this ancient city: its hippodamian grid, Greek theatre, and gymnasium. Whether the palace—resembling the palaces at Pella and Aigai at least as much as Persepolis—is oriental or Greek depends on what one prefers; for example, with a total surface area of over 80,000 m², the palace at Ai Khanoum may 'dwarf' the 'by comparison miniscule' c. 10,000 m² of the palace at Aigai (Kuhrt & Sherwin-White 1993, 136), but hardly the 60,000 m² of the palace at Pella, and certainly not the *basileia* of Alexandria. I am therefore inclined to agree with Frank Holt, who, commenting on the western bias of W.W. Tarn and the eastern bias of A.K. Narain in respectively *The Greeks in Bactria and India* (Cambridge 1938) and *The Indo-Greeks* (Oxford 1957), stated that 'new evidence has clearly demonstrated the active cross-current of eastern and western cultures in ways that Tarn and Narain could scarcely imagine. ... At Ai Khanoum, a marvelous Hellenistic city has been unearthed which provides at once a clear picture of Greek and Oriental features side by side': F.L. Holt, *Alexander the Great and Bactria* (Leiden 1989) 5. For the excavations by the Délégation Archéologique Française en Afghanistan (DAFA) led by Paul Bernard, one may consult the eight volumes of *Fouilles d'Ai Khanoum*. Discovered only in 1961, excavations at Ai Khanoum came to a standstill with the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979; see P. Bernard, 'Ai Khanoum en Afghanistan hier (1964-1979) et aujourd'hui (2001): Un site en péril, perspectives d'avenir', *Comptes Rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* (2001) 971-77. In 2004 the site allegedly was stripped of its remaining archaeological treasures by treasure-hunters protected by warlords of the Northern Alliance.

⁸² Nielsen 1994, 125-6.

in other Hellenistic royal cities, a theatre was located at the divide between *basileion* and *polis*, against the slope of the akropolis.

Ptolemaic palaces

Unlike the Seleukids or Antigonids, the Ptolemies resided mainly in a single city: Alexandria by Egypt. Alexandria was not the capital of Egypt; the capital of Ptolemaic Egypt was Memphis. In its heyday, the third century BCE, Alexandria was first of all the centre of a maritime empire, connecting Egypt and the Red Sea with the eastern Mediterranean. Still, Alexandria was not the only place where the Ptolemies resided. Ptolemaic kings travelled too, albeit not as permanently as their Seleukid rivals, temporarily moving their court for the *ad hoc* reasons of war and diplomacy, marriage and accession. The Ptolemies, presumably *ab initio*, often stayed in Memphis, and in the second and first centuries BCE visited the Egyptian countryside on more regular basis. They maintained palaces in Memphis, Siwah and Pelousion.⁸³ Also the fortress-city Pelousion is likely to have contained a royal palace under the Ptolemies. Archaeological evidence for Ptolemaic palace architecture is scarce, though some indication regarding their outlook is given by the well-preserved governor's palaces in Ptolemaïs in Cyrenaïca and Araq el Emir in Transjordanian.⁸⁴

The most significant Ptolemaic residence after Alexandria was Memphis, where the Ptolemies were enthroned as pharaoh and where priestly delegations from the Egyptian temples would gather to meet with the king.⁸⁵ Memphis was almost 3,000 years old when Ptolemaios, son of Lagos, first took possession of it in his capacity as satrap of Egypt. Strategically located between the Nile Delta and the Nile proper, and at the terminus of the inland roads to both Asia and the western oases, Memphis had always been the principal economic, military and administrative centre of Lower Egypt.⁸⁶ The city was a royal residence

⁸³ *Ibidem* 130 n. 235. Ptolemaios II Philadelphos received Antiochos II Theos at Pelousion in 252 (Hieron., *In Dan.* 11.6); Pelousion also served as base of operations for Ptolemaios IV Philopator during the Fourth Syrian War.

⁸⁴ Nielsen 1994, 138-51.

⁸⁵ Ptolemies and Memphis: D. Crawford, W. Clarysse, J. Quaegebeur, eds., *Studies on Ptolemaic Memphis*. *Studia Hellenistica* 24 (1980) 83-9. D.J. Thompson, *Memphis under the Ptolemies* (Princeton 1988); W. Huss, W., *Der makedonische König und die ägyptischen Priester. Studien zur Geschichte des ptolemäischen Ägypten*. *Historia Einzelschriften* 85 (Stuttgart 1994).

⁸⁶ Thompson 1988, 3. The central position of Memphis is reflected in an earlier name given to the place: *Ankh-tawy*, 'The Balance of the Lands'. Strabo 17.1.31 says that Memphis lay 'near Babylon',

already in the Early Dynastic Period and the Old Kingdom, but also later pharaohs resided, built and were inaugurated there. Memphis was a sacred site, the home of Ptah and the house of the Apis bull. Under the Ptolemies Memphis was the first and foremost city in Egypt, the administrative centre of the province, and the scene of a successful attempt to integrate Greek-Macedonian kingship with local customs and beliefs. Memphis had a mixed population of Greeks, Egyptians, and Idumaeans, organised as *politeumata*.⁸⁷ The Egyptian element was dominant, and the temple priests formed the city's ruling class. Strabo describes the palace and the temple district as the two outstanding features of Memphis.⁸⁸ The Ptolemaic palace lay on a height in the northern part of the city, but all that Strabo says about it, is that it included a citadel (*akra*) and a large park with a lake. For ceremonial purposes the Ptolemies also maintained the existing Egyptian palaces, lying in a spacious enclosure in the north-east. These included the Palace of Apries, the only palatial structure in Memphis explored by archaeologists to some extent.⁸⁹ Near the Egyptian palace was an ancient temple precinct, where Ptah, the Creator God, was worshipped.⁹⁰ The great temple of Ptah was of special

i.e. it was the gateway to Egypt. Foreign invaders always headed for Memphis first, *i.a.* the Assyrian Esarhaddon, Kambyzes, Alexander, and Antiochos Epiphanes: Kuhrt 1995, II 499, 634, and 662; Thompson 1988, 4. Memphis flourished especially in the New Kingdom but was also crucial to the Saite kings (664-525) of late dynastic history: Kuhrt 1995, II 640. After 525 Memphis became the satrapal capital of Achaimenid Egypt: Kuhrt 1995, II 690.

⁸⁷ For the population see Thompson 1988, 82-105, cf. 107-8. On Egyptian priestly elites see also A.B. Lloyd, 'The Egyptian elite in the early Ptolemaic period. Some hieroglyphic evidence', in: D. Ogden ed., *The Hellenistic World. New Perspectives* (London 2002) 117-36.

⁸⁸ Strabo 17.1.31-2.

⁸⁹ Thompson 1988, 15; Nielsen 1994, 27. Remains of Hellenistic palaces have not been found, but Memphis is an extremely underexcavated site. The Hellenistic palace already lay in ruins when Strabo visited the city. The palace of the pharaoh Apries (589-570) was only one of several monuments within the palace enclosure built by the Saite kings. The Saite palace was later used by the Achaimenid satraps, by Alexander when he stayed at Memphis in 332 and 331, and by Alexander's satrap Kleomenes, whom Ptolemaios replaced in 323. For this palace see W.M.F. Petrie and J.H. Walker, *Memphis II: The Palace of Apries* (London 1909); B. Kemp, 'The Palace of Apries at Memphis', *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts in Kairo* 33 (1977) 101-8.

⁹⁰ Since the Early Dynastic Period there had been a cult of Ptah at Memphis; this Memphite god was a symbol of unity and thus of special importance for pharaonic kingship. In the so-called Theology of Memphis (*ANET* 4-6), an ancient text that explained the relation between Ptah and the pharaoh, Ptah was declared Creator God and king of the united Egypt (Kuhrt 1995, II 631, cf. I 145-6). The cult of

importance for the Ptolemies. In the temple's large ceremonial hall the Ptolemies, like the pharaoh's before them, were enthroned according to Egyptian custom. The monuments of Memphis were built by various pharaohs, and the Ptolemies too were eager to leave their mark on city and temple.⁹¹ Already Ptolemaios II presented the priests of Ptah with a statue of his deified sister-wife Arsinoë, who consequently became the Consort of Ptah.⁹² Philadelphos' grandson Ptolemaios IV Philopator set up statues of himself and added a ceremonial *propylon* in Egyptian style to the temple, no doubt to be used instead of the existing gateways for the Ptolemies' coronation ritual.⁹³ Also Kleopatra VII made additions to the temple area.⁹⁴

Alexandria, in contrast to age-old Memphis, was not an Egyptian but a truly Hellenistic city, home of a polyglot population of Greeks, Egyptians, Levantines and others.⁹⁵

the Apis Bull, who was worshipped as a physical manifestation of Ptah, was the most significant of various animal cults which became especially prominent in the last millennium BCE (Kuhrt 1995, II 637). On the cult of Apis under the Ptolemies see Thompson 1988, 190-211.

⁹¹ Thompson 1988, 18. The temple of Ptah was surrounded by several dependencies, including the stables and court of the Apis Bull and the Mother of Apis, built by Psammetichus II (595-589), and the Apis Bull embalming house of Soshenq I (945-924). A colossal statue of the Ramesses II (c. 1290-1224), who added more structures to the Temple of Ptah than any other king, stood outside the enclosure gates (in the twentieth century the statue was brought to Cairo, but has recently returned). Other builders at Memphis were Amenemhet III, Tuthmosis IV, Amenophis III, and Merneptah. For the archaeology of Memphis see W.M.F. Petrie *et al.*, *Memphis*, I-V (London 1909-13); R. Anthes *et al.*, *Mit Rahineh* 1955 and 1956 (Philadelphia 1959 and 1965).

⁹² Thompson 1988, 126-7.

⁹³ *Ibidem* 17.

⁹⁴ *Ibidem* 125.

⁹⁵ The single most important study of Alexandria still is P.M. Fraser's monumental *Ptolemaic Alexandria* (3 vols; Oxford 1972); on the city in general, its archaeology and history, also A. Bernard, *Alexandrie la grande* (Paris 1956; 2nd edn; Paris 1966); N. Hinske ed., *Alexandrien. Kulturbegegnungen dreier Jahrtausende im Schmelztiegel einer mediterranen Großstadt* (Mainz 1981); N.Grimal, *et al.* eds., *La gloire d'Alexandrie* (Paris 1998); G. Grimm, *Alexandria. Die erste Königsstadt der hellenistischen Welt* (Mainz am Rhein 1998); M. Pfrommer, *Alexandria. Im Schatten der Pyramiden* (Mainz am Rhein 1999); W.V. Harris and G. Ruffini eds., *Ancient Alexandria between Egypt and Greece* (Leiden 2004). For the initial population of Alexandria: Fraser, I 5-7; R. Cavenaille, 'Pour une histoire politique et sociale d'Alexandrie: les origines', *AC* 41 (1972) 94-112; A. Jähne, 'Die Ἀλεξανδρέων χώρα', *Klio* 63 (1981) 63-103: 68-72. At first, the Greek element was dominant; with the reign of Ptolemaios Physkon (145-116) as watershed, a certain degree of 'Egyptianisation' set in:

This lively and prosperous port with its many monuments was the greatest metropolis of the Mediterranean. It was rivalled only by Antioch and later by Rome in the size of its population and magnificence. Alexandria was a sea port, located in the heart of the Ptolemaic kingdom. Egypt with its agricultural abundance lay around the corner, and via the seas the Ptolemies had access to all parts of their maritime empire.⁹⁶ In a later age, Dio Chrysostomos commented that Alexandria...

is situated, as it were, at the uniting centre of the whole earth, of even its most far away nations, as if the whole city is an *agora*, bringing together all men into one place, displaying them to one another and, as far as possible, making them one people.⁹⁷

The city was the first city founded by Alexander the Great.⁹⁸ When Ptolemaios Soter buried Alexander here as *heros ktistēs*, Alexandria became the most prestigious and most hallowed

Fraser, 115-31; Hoepfner and Schwandner 1994, 242. On the multicultural, but predominantly Hellenic nature of the population see D. Delia, 'All Army Boots and Uniforms? Ethnicity in Ptolemaic Egypt', in: *Alexandria and Alexandrianism. Papers Delivered at a Symposium Organized by the J.P. Getty Museum, April 1993* (Malibu 1996) 41-52.

⁹⁶ Under normal weather conditions it was a mere 4,5 days sailing from Alexandria to Ephesos (Ach. Tat., 5.15.1, 17.1) and only 2,5 days to Cyprus (Lucianus, *Nav.* 7); Cyrenaica and Palestine were even easier reached by ship: F. Meijer, *Schipper, zeil de haven binnen, alles is al verkocht. Handel en transport in de oudheid* (Baarn 1990) 179-80. The Great Harbour of Alexandria, below the famed Pharos lighthouse of Ptolemaios Philadelphos, was among the largest in the ancient world. But the city boasted also a second harbour, the Eunostus harbour in the west (Fraser, II 58 n. 133; Hoepfner & Schwandner 1994, 238). The Great Harbour was enclosed by artificial dykes, of which the Heptastadium between the mainland and the Pharos island was the most impressive (Bernard 1966, 145-7; Fraser, I 21). The lighthouse on Pharos—like the Mausoleum at Halikarnassos one of the Wonders of the World—was built under Philadelphos, but perhaps planned already by his father, Ptolemaios Soter (Fraser, I 20).

⁹⁷ Dio. Chrys. 32.36.

⁹⁸ Arr., *Anab.* 3.1.5-2; 7.23.7; Diod. 17.52.1-2; Plut., *Alex.* 26.2; cf. Bosworth 1993, 247. After discussing the various reasons Alexander may have had for founding Alexandria, Bosworth concludes that 'his desire for glory, in this case to be honoured in perpetuity as founder, may have been the fundamental factor.' As regards the actual foundation, the sources agree that the plan to build Alexandria was conceived when the king was in Egypt, where he noticed the favourable site at Lake Mareotis, near the western delta, with its unique possibilities for trade with the Mediterranean and the

of all Alexander's foundations. The city had the democratic institutions of an autonomous *polis*.⁹⁹

When Ptolemaios I became satrap of Egypt in 323, he initially resided in Memphis, but when he acquired control of Palestine, Phoenicia and Syria after his defeat of Perdikkas in 320, he set up court in Alexandria.¹⁰⁰ There, waiting for him to take possession, was the royal palace that Alexander had ordered to be built. Archaeologically, this most renowned *basileion* of the Hellenistic world remains something of a mystery, but the lack of remains is counterbalanced by extensive literary evidence provided by Polybios, Strabo, and others. Of the original palace commissioned by Alexander no more is known than that it was a large and rich complex. Interestingly, the same source adds that Alexander did not conceive the palace as an integral part of the city, but as an additional element.¹⁰¹ The later Ptolemaic *basileia* was much larger. Strabo, who visited Alexandria in the late first century BCE, describes it in some detail, and informs us that the royal district was so large that it was known as the *basileia*, the Palaces. The *basileia*, Strabo says, covered one fourth to one third of the entire city, as each of the Ptolemies was eager add a monument of his own,¹⁰² constituting 'a city by itself'.¹⁰³ The *basileia*, according to Strabo, consisted of two parts. First, the *basileia* proper: a large semi-

hinterland. But Alexander planned his actions always well in advance. The foundation is usually dated after Alexander's return from Siwa in 331 (Bosworth 1993, 74). Alexander supervised the demarcation of the city's outline himself, and ordered his architect Deinokrates of Rhodes to build on a straight hippodamian grid five city districts, containing about forty residential blocks each, *i.e.* enough to accommodate a total population of 75,000 to 100,000; attracting many new settlers from Greece and from among the Greeks living in Egypt and Cyrenaïca, the city later may eventually have reached 300,000 (Diod. 17.52.6) to 500,000 citizens (Hoepfner & Schwandner 1994, 237 and 241).

⁹⁹ Fraser, I 93-115.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibidem* II, 11-2 n. 28.

¹⁰¹ Diod. 17.52.4.

¹⁰² Strabo 17.1.9 (793): 'And the city has beautiful public sanctuaries and the *basileia*, which occupies a quarter or even a third of the entire enclosure. For each of the kings added some adornment to the public structures and each one also added further buildings to those already existing, so that, as the poet says, "from others others grow". But all stand near each other, between the harbour and to what lies beyond them.' Plin., *NH.* 5.2.62 says that the *basileia* covered only fifth of the city, but that would bring the total area still to about one square kilometre, against two square kilometres for Strabo's estimation (Hoepfner and Schwandner 1994, 243; cf. Nielsen 1994, 131-33; Fraser, I 11-37; Bernard 1966, *infra*).

¹⁰³ Ach.Tat., *Leuc.* 5.1.88: ἀλλην πόλιν.

public and ceremonial area with temples, tombs and other monuments. Second the so-called Inner Palaces, the central residential palace on the Lochias peninsula where the kings lived, worked and received guests.¹⁰⁴ The long and narrow peninsula had its own enclosed harbour, to the effect that the Inner Palaces' focus point was the Mediterranean as well as the city and the hinterland. The Inner Palaces are only mentioned by Strabo; Polybios describes them with some more detail.¹⁰⁵ The complex was entered through a monumental façade with a Gate of Audience.¹⁰⁶ It contained, besides the usual residential rooms and offices, several peristyle reception halls, including a central Great Peristyle. In a park on the landward side of Lochias were many pavilions for banqueting and drinking, as well as guesthouses.¹⁰⁷ A citadel (*akra*), containing a prison, was also on Lochias.¹⁰⁸

The enormous semi-public part of the *basileia* dominated the centre of Alexandria, lying between the Inner Palaces and the city as a sort of transitional area. It contained many buildings, named by Strabo, who was stunned by their magnificence and size. Nearest to the Inner Palaces were the theatre and the stadion.¹⁰⁹ These could be used for ceremonial purposes, as was also the case with the *basileia*'s gymnasium. Strabo further mentions a huge temple of Poseidon at the harbour, a temple of the royal deity Dionysos, parks, the Museum, the Library, the law courts, and a precinct for ruler cult. The latter was near the sea and

¹⁰⁴ Fraser, I 22-3; II 60-3; Hoepfner & Schwandner 1994, 238 and 242; Nielsen 1994, 131. There was a second residential palace on the island Antirrhodos, close to Lochias, with a small harbour (Strabo 17.1.9; cf. Fraser, II 63 n. 147). Lochias mirrored the Zephirion peninsula at Halikarnassos, where Mausolos had built his palace. The remains of the palace now lie under the surface of the sea, though recently archaeologists have started diving up finds that may have belonged to the Ptolemaic palaces. For an overview and evaluation of the finds at Alexandria until the end of the Millennium consult R.S. Bagnall, 'Archaeological Work on Hellenistic and Roman Egypt, 1995-2000', *AJA* 105 (2001) 227-43, esp. 229-31. See further F. Goddio *et al.*, *Alexandria: The Submerged Royal Quarters* (London 1998); J.-Y. Empereur, *Alexandria Rediscovered* (London 1998); id., 'Travaux récents dans la capitale des Ptolémées', in: *Alexandrie: Une mégapole cosmopolite*. Cahiers de la Villa Kérylos 9 (Paris 1999) 25-9; J. Yoyotte, 'Alexandrie. La grande bataille de l'archéologie', *l'Histoire* 238 (1999) 50-4. For pictures see Grimm 1998 and L. Foreman, *Cleopatra's Palace. In search of Legend* (1999).

¹⁰⁵ Polyb. 15.25-34; Cf. Fraser, II 61-2 n. 144-5.

¹⁰⁶ Polyb. 15.31.2: τὸν χρηματιστικὸν πυλῶνα.

¹⁰⁷ Nielsen 1994, 130-131.

¹⁰⁸ Polyb. 5.39.3; Plut., *Cleom.* 37.5; Ath. 196 A. Cf. Fraser, I 29; II 99 n. 228.

¹⁰⁹ Bernard 1966, 140-1; Fraser, I 23, 31; II 64 n. 149; 99-100 n. 231; Hoepfner & Schwandner 1994, 245.

contained the tombs of Alexander and the Ptolemies, the so-called Sema, as well a sanctuary for dynastic cult.¹¹⁰ The buildings belonging to the Museum were also in the royal area, as well as the library, the most beautiful monument of Alexandria according to Strabo. The Alexandrian *basileia* furthermore consisted of parks and gardens with collections of exotic animals and plants.¹¹¹ Like genuine imperialists, the Ptolemies plundered the Egyptian countryside for monuments with which to adorn their capital; in particular obelisks and sphinxes from the New Kingdom and Saite periods were transported from Egypt to Alexandria.¹¹² The presence of these antiquated monuments must not be considered too rashly as proof of a thriving Egyptian culture in Alexandria, let alone of Egyptian prevalence in the city. Rather these monuments were expressions of Ptolemaic control over the province of

¹¹⁰ Strabo 793-4; cf. Plut., *Ant.* 86. Ach. Tat. 5.1. and Zenob. 3.94 locate the Sema ‘in the middle of the city’. On the location of the Sema: Fraser, II 36-41n. 85-8. Other writers mentioning the Sema *c.q.* Alexander’s tomb include Suet., *Aug.* 18; Dio 51.16.3-5; Hdn. 4.8.9. For an extensive discussion of these and other sources see especially Fraser, II 31-6 n. 79-84 with earlier literature; cf. Bernard 1966, 229-37. The location of Alexander’s grave has puzzled scholars and laymen for the last two centuries, but there is little chance it will be found. For the search for Alexander’s grave one may now consult N.J. Saunders, *Alexander’s Tomb. The Two Thousand Year Obsession to find the Lost Conqueror* (New York 2006). The Ptolemies were buried either in one and the same building or in separate tombs. The evidence collected by Fraser, II 34-5 n. 82 to prove that Alexander and the Ptolemies were buried in one mausoleum, only proves they were buried in the same enclosure, but not in the same building. According to Dio 51.8.6, Plut., *Ant.* 74 and Suet., *Aug.* 17.4 Cleopatra VII built a separate mausoleum for Antony, but presumably this tomb was situated in its own precinct. On Kleopatra’s tomb of see Fraser, II 33-4 n. 81. In Strabo’s time, the former Ptolemaic precinct of the ruler cult was consecrated to the worship of Augustus and was called *σεβαστή αγορά* (cp. the *hiera agora* at Demetrias; cf. Fraser, II 98 n. 220). The focus of this sanctuary was a temple called the *Sebasteion* (Caesareum); the building of this temple was begun by Kleopatra VII and finished under Augustus: Hoepfner & Schwandner 1994, 237, 245; cf. Bernard 1966 134-6; Fraser, I 24-5; II 68-9 n. 155-8.

¹¹¹ Ath. 654b-c.

¹¹² These were mainly from the New Kingdom and Saite periods, many originally set up in Heliopolis. Since these are ancient pharaonic monuments, it is difficult to date just when they were transported to Alexandria; although there is scholarly consensus that most were placed there under the Ptolemies, instead of exclusively in the Roman period, it remains controversial whether this was done during the entire Ptolemaic period, or only in the later phases of the kingdom’s history, when Ptolemaic power had become largely restricted to Egypt: Bagnall 2001, 229-30.

Egypt, their principal and most stable source of income, and should perhaps better be considered imperial appropriation, to use Saïd's term, of a conquered culture.¹¹³

2.2 A closer look

In the previous chapter a broad view of royal residences was given. In particular we have looked at the physical separation of civic and royal space in cities. It is now time to take a closer look at the structure of Hellenistic royal space and the architecture of what we have called the 'inner palace', the residential and representative abode of the royal family.

The Palace at Pergamon

The best known palace complex in the Hellenistic world (excepting the by comparison small Hasmonean and Herodean palaces in Palestine) is in the Attalid capital of Pergamon.¹¹⁴ As their kingdom was a relatively small one, the Attalid kings concentrated their building activities in the city that subsequently became synonymous with their state. Monarchic architecture in Pergamon reveals the same basic structure as in other Hellenistic cities; furthermore, the archaeological remains at Pergamon are reminiscent of Strabo's description of the Alexandrian *basileia*. But unlike the other major residences—Alexandria, Seleukeia-Tigris, Antioch—in Pergamon the various constituent buildings have been relatively well preserved. Pergamon therefore offers valuable indirect evidence for other royal centres.

Before Pergamon became the Attalid capital, it had been a royal stronghold of the Achaimenids, Alexander, Lysimachos, and the Seleukids. The palace complex, developing in the late third and early second century BCE, was focused on the akropolis. Like in other Hellenistic residential cities, it is possible to distinguish between an innermost palace—the heavily fortified private house of the king and his family—and a semi-public outer area

¹¹³ Strootman 2001, 204.

¹¹⁴ Good recent treatments of the monuments and archaeology of Pergamon are W. Radt, *Pergamon. Geschichte und Bauten einer antiken Metropole* (Darmstadt 1999); and H. Koester ed., *Pergamon, citadel of the gods. Archaeological Record, Literary Description, and Religious Development* (Harrisburg 1998), with an overview of new research until 1997 at pp. 1-40.

filled.¹¹⁵ This intermediary area was structured by means of a procession road leading from the city's main gate, passing various sanctuaries and other religious monuments, including the fabled Great Altar, and terminating at the inner palace. Taken together, the religious architecture on the akropolis of Pergamon was a magnificent shrine for the cult of victory and kingship.

The building programme at the akropolis was initiated by Attalos I immediately after he assumed the diadem in 238 or 237. Attalos' assumption of the diadem and the title of *sōtēr*, whereby he formally repudiated Seleukid sovereignty, was legitimised by his victory over the Celts who had invaded Asia Minor some decades before. Although both he and his, no less warlike, successor Eumenes fought other enemies as well—Bithynia, Pontos, Rhodes, the Seleukids—recurrent victories over the archetypal barbaric Celts conferred upon the Attalids an aura of beings the very saviours of civilisation, and the theme of the king as barbarianslayer subsequently became pivotal to Attalid image-building *c.q.* their superseding of the Seleukids as protectors and saviours of the cities of Asia Minor.¹¹⁶ To this end, Attalos re-dedicated the ancient *temenos* of Athena Polias, Pergamon's main deity, to Athena Nikephoros. Attalos also introduced a cult of Zeus Soter on the Pergamene akropolis.¹¹⁷ Just outside the city walls, a second sanctuary of Athena Nikephoros was built, the so-called Nikephorion, located at the beginning of the procession road that connected it with its

¹¹⁵ The concept of privacy and private life, as opposed to public life, is also visible in the structure of Greek houses of the classical period: L.C. Nevett, *House and Society in the Ancient Greek World* (Cambridge 1999) 155.

¹¹⁶ For the Attalid wars in Asia Minor consult F. Staehlin, *Geschichte der kleinasiatischen Galater* (Leipzig 1907); C. Habicht, 'Über die Kriege zwischen Pergamon und Bithynien', *Hermes* 84 (1956) 90-110; Hansen 1971, 28-33; Allen 1983, 195-9; F. Chamoux, 'Pergame et les Galates', *REG* 101 (1988) 492-500. For 'Celtic' propaganda see K. Strobel, 'Keltensieg und Galatersieger', in: E. Schwertheim ed., *Forschungen in Galatien* (Bonn 1994) 67-96; Strootman 2005a.

¹¹⁷ Allen 1983, 121-2; Hansen 1971, 447-50; cf. OGIS 302. Because Athena and Zeus, the deities most closely associated with *akropoleis*, were the saviour of cities and bestower of victory *par excellence*, they provided excellent paradigms for Attalid kingship. In Classical times it was not uncommon that Zeus and Athena were worshipped jointly, sharing the same cult epithets: J. Neils, 'Athena, Alter ego of Zeus', in: S. Deacy, and A. Villing eds., *Athena in the Classical World* (Leiden 2001) 219-32, esp. 224-6.

counterpart on the akropolis.¹¹⁸ It were however Attalos' sons and successors Eumenes II Philadelphos Soter (197-159) and Attalos II Philadelphos (159-138) who transformed the akropolis and its slopes into a coherent royal domain.¹¹⁹

The gradual transition from *polis* to palace, from civic to royal space, followed the city's main road, which began at the Nikephorion outside the monumental Gate of Eumenes, crossed the city, and finally winded up the akropolis hill to terminate at the palace. This doubtless was also the route taken by the *pompē* of the triennial panhellenic Nikephoria Festival, founded in 180 by Eumenes II to commemorate a victory over the Celts of Galatia, at which occasion Eumenes also took the epithet of Saviour.¹²⁰ The first landmark the road came across was the *agora*, the symbolic heart of the *polis* Pergamon. After passing several public building associated with civic life, the road led through a gate and followed its way up against the southern slope of the akropolis until it reached through a gate decorated with a statue of Nike a large peristyle court. Here we find an altar and temple dedicated to Zeus Soter, and a later added equestrian statue of Attalos III. This square—inaccurately called Upper Agora in modern literature—marked the transition from civic to royal space. Behind it were three interrelated *temenē* that together formed the heart of the building programme started by Eumenes II: the terrace precinct supporting the Great Altar, the *temenos* with the tombs of the Attalids, and the central sanctuary of Athena.

¹¹⁸ Radt 1999, 242-3; H.-J., Schalles, *Untersuchungen zur Kulturpolitik der pergamenischen Herrscher im dritten Jahrhundert vor Christus* (Tübingen 1985) 145-6. The Nikephorion was first built by Attalos I c. 220 and rebuilt by Eumenes II after troops of Philippos V had demolished it in 201 (Polyb. 16.1; App., *Mac.* 4; cf. Hansen 1971, 55-7). In 155 the sanctuary was razed again, this time by Prousius II, who carried the cult statue of Athena off to Bithynia.

¹¹⁹ Strabo 13.4.2; cf. Hansen 1972, 234-98.

¹²⁰ Hansen 1971, 449-50; Allen 1983, 123-9; Strootman 2005a. The Nikephoria found some recognition as a paramount panhellenic festival throughout the Attalids' sphere of influence in the Aegean; the festival was equated to the Soteria of Delphi, instituted to commemorate Apollo's saving of Delphi from a Celtic attack in 279. For the foundation of the festival see M. Segre, 'L'institution des Nikephoria de Pergame', in: L. Robert ed., *Hellenica* V (Paris 1948) 104-5; C.P. Jones, 'Diodorus Paspas and the Nikephoria of Pergamon', *Chiron* 4 (1974) 183-205. Coins struck to advertise the inauguration of the Nikephoria show an image of the cult statue of Athena Nikephoros, a fully armed goddess with a small Nike standing in her hand: A.S. 'Faita, The Medusa-Athena Nikephoros Coin from Pergamon', in: S. Deacy, and A. Villing eds., *Athena in the Classical World* (Leiden 2001) 163-180.

The Great Altar probably was built as a memorial commemorating Attalid victory, with the help of the gods, over the Celts (though exactly which victory remains a matter of controversy – possibly all victories together). It was most probably dedicated to Zeus. The reliefs on the altar's outer walls depicted a gigantomachy, the war between the Olympian Gods—representatives of *kosmos*—and the Giants—representatives of *chaos*—as an allegory of the Attalids' prestige as saviour-kings.¹²¹ The three central characters on the frieze are Zeus, Athena and Herakles. The participation of the latter, according to myth, was of decisive importance in the Olympians' final victory in the battle against the Giants; as a reward for having saved the day, Herakles was deified and awarded a place among the immortals as a thirteenth Olympian. The interesting thing is, of course, that in the iconographic programme of the Great Altar, the Attalid kings are associated with Herakles. Just as the mortal Herakles saved the world from the Giants on behalf of the gods, so too did the Attalids save the world the Celts. On the inside of the altar, a frieze depicted the myths of Auge and her son Telephos, son of Herakles and forefather of the Attalids.¹²² Auge had introduced the cult of Athena, and was buried, on the very hill where Telephos would later found the city of Pergamon. This inner frieze emphasised both Telephos' descent from Herakles and the Attalids' descent from Telephos. Beyond the Great Altar was a second precinct; this one contained the tombs of the Attalids, probably the tomb of Auge, and possibly the tomb of Telephos. Here the equation of Attalid victories with the victory of Herakles, for which he received a place on the Olympos after his apotheosis, on the Great Altar, becomes immediately relevant. Then, passing through

¹²¹ On the Great Altar, its construction and date, consult P.J. Callaghan, 'On the date of the Great Altar of Zeus at Pergamon', *BICS* 28 (1981) 115-21; W. Hoepfner, 'Das vollendete Pergamonaltar', *AA* (1996) 115-34; R. Dreyfus and E. Schraudolph eds, *Pergamon. The Telephos Frieze from the Great Altar* (2 vols; San Francisco and New York 1996); R. Özgan, 'Bemerkungen zum grossen Gallieranathem', *Arch. Anz.* (1981) 489-510; F. Queyrel, F., *L'Autel de Pergame. Images et pouvoir en Grèce d'Asie*. *Antiqua* 9 (Paris 2005); W. Radt and G. De Luca, 'Sondagen im Fundament des Grossen Altars', *AJA* 105 (2001) 129-30; A Stewart, 'Pergamon Ara Marmorea Magna. On the Date, Reconstruction, and Functions of the Great Altar of Pergamon', in: N. De Grummond and S. Ridgway eds., *From Pergamon to Sperlonga. Sculpture and Context* (Berkeley 2000) 32-3.

¹²² For the Telephos Frieze see I. Kertész, 'Der Telephosmythos und der Telephosfries', *Oikumene* 3 (1982) 203-15; B. Andreae, 'Dating and significance of the Telephos Frieze in relation to the other dedications of the Attalids of Pergamon', in: Dreyfus and Schraudolph 1996, I 121-6; W.-D. Heilmeyer ed., *Der Pergamonaltar. Die neue Präsentation nach Restaurierung des Telephosfrieses* (Tübingen 1997).

a last gate—a propylon entrance decorated with images of Athena's owl and Zeus' eagle—the road entered the sacred *temenos* of Athena. The focus of this final sanctuary was a small pre-Hellenistic temple, in which a cult statue of Athena Nikephoros with golden victory wreath was placed by Attalos I or Eumenes II. The Athena precinct further harboured a gigantic statue of Athena Promachos and a statue of Attalos Soter standing side by side, and various votive offerings commemorating Attalid success in war.¹²³ The surrounding stoai were decorated with sculptured and painted trophies—*sc.* Celtic and Macedonian (*c.q.* Seleukid) armour and weapons—and in the north gave access to a *tropaion* where the weapons dedicated to Athena the Bestower of Victory were kept. Together, the three central *temenē* corresponded with each of the three principal protagonists on the central frieze of the Great Alta: Zeus, Athena, and—given the association of the kings with Herakles and the possible presence of Telephos' *heroon* by the tombs of the Attalids—Herakles. Hidden behind this triad of *temenē* was, finally, the royal palace. The Hellenistic palace was heavily fortified.¹²⁴ Excavations have revealed that it consisted of five houses with peristyle courtyards and beautifully decorated reception rooms, classified as Palaces I-V, as well as storage chambers, workshops and offices. Also a fortress with arsenals and barracks was part of the Pergamene 'inner palace'.¹²⁵ In spite of the extensive semi-public sacred space in front of it, and its fortifications, particularly on the northern and eastern side of the akropolis, the palace of Pergamon showed also a rather 'open' face towards the city: the large theatre against the

¹²³ For the finds in the Athena precinct consult H. Fraenkel, *Altertümer von Pergamon* 8.1 (Berlin 1890); Radt 1999, 159-68. For interpretations and theories, esp. regarding the so-called Dying Gauls, see E. Künzl, E., *Die Kelten de Epigonos von Pergamon*. Beiträge zur Archäologie 4 (Würzburg 1971); R. Wenning, *Die Galateranatheme Attalos I. Eine Untersuchung zum Bestand und zur Nachwirkung pergamenischer Skulptur* (Berlin 1978); Schalles 1985, 80-149; cf. A. Stewart, *Attalos, Athens, and the Akropolis. The Pergamene 'Little Barbarians' and their Roman and Renaissance Legacy* (Cambridge 2005).

¹²⁴ M. Kohl, 'Sièges et défense de Pergame. Nouvelles réflexions sur sa topographie et son architecture militaires', in: J.-C. Couvenhes and H.-L. Fernoux, eds., *Les Cités grecques et la guerre en Asie Mineure à l'époque hellénistique* (Paris 2004) 177-98. Cf. W. Hoepfner, 'Zum Typus der Basileia und der königlichen Andrones', in: Brands & Hoepfner 1996, 17: 'Sie waren von einer eigenen Wehrmauer umgeben und deutlich von der Wohnstadt abgesetzt'.

¹²⁵ Radt 1999, 63-81. The service and storage rooms were located on the site where the Romans later built the Traianeum.

southern slope of the akropolis, the place where the Attalid royal family presented itself to the people during festive celebrations.

In sum, we may conclude on the basis of archaeological and written evidence, that Hellenistic palaces normally consisted of five components. First the internal, least accessible part of the palace, consisting of the residential quarters of the royal family, where perhaps also important courtiers dwelled, and where the king met with his council and his guests in the banqueting rooms so numerous and prominently present in palaces.¹²⁶ Second, a military section, consisting of a fortress with barracks and arsenals, and normally closely attached to the residential part palace. Third, a public or ceremonial section with an audience hall or throne room, banqueting rooms and small sanctuaries. Fourth, an operational section with servants' quarters, storerooms, kitchens, and so forth. Fifth, the more accessible, representational area between the palace and the city. This section belonged as much to the palace as to the *polis*, as here the city's main public buildings were located. Here one could find temples, altars, libraries, theatres, stadiums, hippodromes, and it was here that the monarchy presented itself to the populace.

Inside Hellenistic *basileia*

Our knowledge of the details of Hellenistic palace architecture is unfortunately meagre, even compared to Near Eastern palaces from earlier, let alone later periods. As there is no Hellenistic Persepolis, Alhambra, or Topkapı, information respecting their internal set-up, decoration and use must be gathered from various disconnected sources, including the finds at

¹²⁶ The exact place of *philoï* in palaces is difficult to ascertain, cf. Weber 1997, 40 n. 51. Respecting mansions in the Classical city, L.C. Nevett, *House and Society in the Ancient Greek World* (Cambridge 1999) 174, ascertains that 'as well as a core nuclear family, individual households are likely to have housed a number of other individuals, including long-term guests, and that friends and neighbours are also likely to have been an important part of domestic life. It remains to be explored how far these individuals were able to move freely about the house, and in what way the basic categories of outsider and family member ... need to be modified in order to accommodate them [in our understanding of what *oikos* means].' For the place of *philoï* and *xenoi* in royal households see further below, chapter 3.3. For the development of palatial banqueting rooms: W. Hoepfner, 'Zum Typus der Basileia und der königlichen Andrones', in: Brands & Hoepfner 1996, 1-43; I. Nielsen, 'Royal Banquets. The Development of Royal Banquets and Banqueting Halls from Alexander to the Tetrachs,' In I. and H.S. Nielsen eds., *Meals in a Social Context. Aspects of the Communal Meal in the Hellenistic and Roman World* (Aarhus and London 1998) 102-33.

Vergina and Pella, Masada and Jericho, the architecture of Hellenistic governor's palaces such as those excavated at Doura-Europos, Jebel Khalid and Araq el Emir, and sporadic descriptions of palaces' interiors in written sources.

The archaeological evidence shows that the basic constituent of an Hellenistic palace was a rectangular peristyle courtyard surrounded by rooms, sometimes with the addition of a second storey with a colonnaded balcony. The Antigonid palace at Aigai was a smaller, more basic version. In the middle of the monumental front façade of the palace, a propylon gate led to an inner court. Around this court were three large pillared chambers and nine smaller *andrones*, rooms for dining and drinking.¹²⁷ Next to the propylon was a round hall, the function of which remains unexplained.¹²⁸ In larger palaces simply duplicated the courtyards. Thus the palace at Pella consisted of multiple courtyards, each giving access to a different type of rooms, *i.a.* banqueting rooms, apartments, workshops, storage-rooms.¹²⁹ The palace was clearly divided into an 'official', ceremonial section, and a residential section laying at the back of the complex. The two parts were separated by means a portico. Besides *andrones* for ritual feasting, the official section contained two rounded rooms that may have served as sanctuaries. Perhaps the library mentioned by Plutarch was also located here.¹³⁰ In the residential wing heated apartments and a bathhouse with swimming-pool were found. Perhaps the western wing of the palace formed yet a third section, set apart for administration, service and storage, and perhaps containing the royal treasury.¹³¹ A similar set-up characterised the palaces of the Hasmoneans and Herod in Palestine, and the royal palace at Aï Khanoum. Audiences were held either in special audience halls, as in Aï Khanoum, or in the propylon gatehouse in the main facade, *i.e.* on the palace's threshold, as in Alexandria.¹³² Gardens

¹²⁷ Andronikos 1984, 42; Hammond and Walbank 1988, 477; Nielsen 1994, 81-4.

¹²⁸ This conspicuous round hall or *tholos*, next to the innermost hall of the vestibule entrance, may have served as a throne room, an audience hall or (most likely) a sanctuary; its inside was clad in marble and in it were found an inscription dedicated to Herakles, ancestor of the Argeads, as well as a tribune with two steps, perhaps a base for a throne, a cult statue or an altar: Nielsen 1994, 82-3. See however Saatsoglou-Paliadeli 2001, 202-4, for a re-investigation of the *tholos* and new suggestions.

¹²⁹ Livy (Liv. 40.6.1-16-3), drawing on Polybios, suggests that there were separate quarters for princes, *sc.* the quarrelling sons of Philippos V, and mentions such elements as a *vestibulum (aulē)*, *triclinium (andrōn)* and *ambulatio* (covered portico); cf. Hatzopoulos 2001, 193.

¹³⁰ Plut., *Aem.* 18.6.

¹³¹ Nielsen 1994, 92-3. Treasury: Plut., *Aem.* 23.3.

¹³² Nielsen 1994, 210, offers a table comparing the sizes of audience halls in various palaces.

normally formed part of a *basileia* as well, and often a Persian-style *paradeisos*, game park, was located in the vicinity of the palace.¹³³

Decoration

Of course, apartments, ceremonial halls, and banqueting rooms were richly decorated with floor mosaics and wall paintings. We can get some impression of the style and appearance of these from the mosaics found at Pella and the frescoes adorning the tombs at Vergina, as well as from Roman copies and imitations preserved in Italy, in particular the Alexander Mosaic and wall-paintings from Pompeii, the frescoes of Boscoreale and the Nile Mosaic of Palestrina. It comes as no surprise that subjects favoured at apparently were hunting, battle and myth. Sculpture focused on representations of gods and members of the royal family.

Some idea of what the Inner Palaces of Alexandria looked from on the inside has been indirectly preserved in Athenaios' *Deipnosophistai* V 204d-206c. Here Athenaios cites a description, perhaps ultimately based on an official account, of the ceremonial river boat commissioned by Ptolemaios Philopator. On board of this floating palace called Thalamegos, Philopator and later Ptolemaic kings and queens travelled up and down the Nile. They did so, perhaps on a yearly basis, to sacrifice at the temples alongside the river, be visible to the populace, and to demarcate the extent of Ptolemaic sovereignty.

The Thalamegos had three floors. On these were 'all conveniences of pleasant living', including bed-chambers, banqueting rooms and even sanctuaries. All storeys were surrounded by promenades, the first two colonnaded, the upper promenades shaped like a concealed peristyle with walls and windows. Athenaios particularises the interior and its decorations:

As one came on board from the stern there was an open vestibule with columns against its sides; at the side facing the bow there was a peristyle fore-gate made of ivory and exquisite wood. Opposite the main gate, at the other side of a kind of over-roofed proscenium, was a portal with four doors leading into a second vestibule. Beyond this was the main hall. It had columns all around and there was place for twenty couches. Most of it was made of Syrian (*i.e.* Phoenician) cedar and Milesian (*i.e.* Cypriote) cypress; the surrounding doors, twenty in total, had panels made of fragrant cedar wood and were adorned with ivory ornaments and handles

¹³³ Evidence for Hellenistic royal gardens and parks, and their eastern antecedents, has been collected in I. Nielsen, 'The gardens of Hellenistic palaces', in id. ed., *The Royal Palace Institution in the First Millennium BC* (Athens 2001) 165-87. For Near Eastern (palace) gardens in general see M. Carroll, *Earthly Paradise. Ancient Gardens in History and Archaeology* (Los Angeles 2003).

of red copper which had been gilded in fire. The shafts of the columns were made of cypress wood, their capitals in the Corinthian style were decorated with gold and ivory. The entire entablature was inlaid with gold, supporting a frieze with remarkable ivory figures, more than one and a half foot high, of rather mediocre workmanship, to be honest, but of extraordinary profusion. The ceiling consisted of panels made of cypress wood, beautifully decorated with gilded sculptured ornamentation. Adjacent to this banqueting-hall were seven sleeping apartments, behind which was a narrow passage-way dividing off the women's quarters. The latter contained a dining-hall with nine couches, similar to the main hall in its magnificence, and five sleeping apartments.¹³⁴

At the second storey there were more dining-rooms, a peristyle hall with columns of Indian marble, sleeping apartments, and a round sanctuary (ναὸς θολοειδής) with a marble statue of Aphrodite. There also was a dining-room in Egyptian style, with columns decorated with floral motifs. All rooms were richly decorated:

Near the bow one came upon a chamber devoted to Dionysos; it contained thirteen couches and was surrounded by a row of columns. It had a cornice which was gilded as far as the surrounding architrave; the ceiling was decorated in accordance with the spirit of the god. In this room, on the right-hand side, a recess was built, which was entirely covered with real gold and precious stones so that it looked like a stone wall. Enshrined in it were portrait statues of the royal family made of Parian marble.¹³⁵

In Alexandria the palace gardens were used for feasting. In 279 or 278 Ptolemaios Philadelphos entertained his household and guests in the palace gardens on the occasion of the first celebration of the Ptolemaia Festival and the posthumous apotheosis of his parents, Ptolemaios I and Berenike I. For this event an enormous banqueting pavilion was erected, which is described in full detail by Kallixeinos of Rhodes.¹³⁶ The pavilion could hold 130 couches along the sides. It was entirely covered with a scarlet canopy, resting on wooden pillars shaped like palm trees and bacchic wands. Along the edges of the pavilion there was a portico with a peristyle and a vaulted roof where the retainers of the guests could stand. On the outside the pavilion was enclosed by curtains, coloured with purple dye and decorated with

¹³⁴ Ath. V 204f-205d.

¹³⁵ Ath. V 205d-206c.

¹³⁶ Kallixeinos FHG III 58 *ap.* Ath. 196a-197c.

myrtle and laurel branches and the pelts of exotic animals. On the inside the pavilion was decorated with marble statues, portraits of the royal family, and painted panels depicting symposia and mythological scenes. Along the sides military beautifully elaborated military cloaks, armour, and shields were hung, and the ceiling was adorned with large gold images of eagles. The floor was covered with ‘Persian’ carpets, on which all sorts of flowers were strewn. All the tableware was made of gold and silver, Kallixeinos assures, totalling more than 10,000 talents.

2.3 The royal precinct

In Hellenistic residences, the royal palace formed the heart of the city. Yet at the same time, they were cut off from the cities in which they stood, to the effect that the city became divided into clearly discernible civic and royal space.¹³⁷ Both choice of site and architectural means were employed to set palaces apart from their urban surroundings. The dividing line was delimited by walls, water, differences in altitude, or a combination of these. Palaces could be build on a promontory (Halikarnassos, Alexandria, Herod’s Caesarea on the Sea, to some extent also Aī Khanoum), an island (Antioch), or, more commonly, on a hill (Aigai, Demetrias, Pergamon, Sardis, Apameia). Monumental facades, and broad avenues and ramps leading up to the main entrance enhanced the image of the palace as an elevated, almost mysterious place.¹³⁸ Thus, royal space and civic space were separated in a way that could not

¹³⁷ Cf. Jos., *AJ* 14.59: ‘the palace and the city of Jerusalem’ (πόλις καὶ βασιλεία); cp. 13.36, where we read that Demetrios II shut himself up in a palace ‘near Antioch’, even though evidently the *basileion* on the Orontes island *in* Antioch is meant.

¹³⁸ Cf. Bertelli 1986, 17: ‘The spaces, external and internal, in which the court is situated, are the visible measure of its sacred quality; its ideal separateness is accentuated by physical separation from the town in which it stands.’ Visitors of the archaeological remains of Pergamon can experience for themselves how height was employed to literally elevate kingship; the *Rough Guide to Turkey* (3rd. edn.; London 1997) 251, comments that ‘the acropolis is readily accessible on foot – though this is one attraction you may want to reach by taxi, at least on the way up.’ Cp. the recommendations in the 1996 *Lonely Planet* guide for Israel and the Palestinian Territories respecting the (in)accessibility of the Herodian residence of Masada: ‘The steep and long “Snake Path” ... is hard going and, depending on how fit you are, the stagger to the top takes anything from 30 minutes to over an hour. ... Top up with water before you start out, even though there is water available at the summit.’ Hatzopoulos 2001,

be misunderstood. The separation could be reinforced by the use of strong defensive outer walls, towers and bulwarks, and the incorporation of a fortress. The perception of akropolis and citadel as royal space—also in non-residential royal garrisons would be stationed there—emphasised the military nature of the monarchy. It indicated the king's role as protector of cities, a conviction expressed in Kallimachos' encomiastic Hymn to Zeus: 'From Zeus come kings. ... You gave them cities to protect. And you yourself are seated in the citadels of the cities to judge those who rule their people badly, and those who rule well.'¹³⁹ Presumably, in the eyes of some citizens in some cities it might as well have indicated military occupation.

The use of *akropoleis* meant not only that kings appropriated the city's main military focus but also, according to Greek tradition, the city's principal sacred area. In Greek *poleis*, and many eastern cities as well, the citadel hill was the abode of the principal city deities, associated notably with Zeus and Athena.¹⁴⁰ These gods were expected to protect the city from its enemies, precisely the responsibility that kings too claimed vis-à-vis the cities. Because cities were autonomous, and not legally part of kingdoms, it was only by playing the role of a god that a king could legitimise his presence and influence in cities.¹⁴¹ Cities, in turn, offered cult to their royal protectors and benefactors, precisely like they offered cult to their divine *sōtērēs*. By incorporating elements of religious architecture—enclosure walls, *propylaia*, forecourts, theatres, temples and *tholoi*—the palace district was consciously fashioned to resemble a *temenos*, with the 'closed' and somewhat hidden 'inner palace', where the king dwelled, becoming almost like a temple or *naos*.

The incorporation of sacral architecture in palaces is also known from pre-Hellenistic Mesopotamia and Egypt, and these examples may have influenced Hellenistic palace architecture to some extent. Unlike Mesopotamian or Egyptian palace architecture, however,

argues that the Argead-Antigonid palaces at Pella and Vergina were much more open and undefended than the Seleukid, Ptolemaic and Attalid *basileia*, and suggests that this was due to the despotic nature of the eastern monarchies; this contrast seems rather overdrawn, especially in the case of Vergina, where the palace was located on a height near the citadel.

¹³⁹ Callim., *Hymn* 1.78-88. See also below, chapter 4.5). In Hellenistic town planning, it was customary to incorporate the citadel in the defences surrounding the city as a whole: Lawrence 1979, 131.

¹⁴⁰ When Demetrios Poliorketes visited Athens in 304, he stayed in the *opisthodomos* of the Parthenon as the *xenos* of Athena Polias: Plut., *Demetr.* 23-4; cf. 26.3 and Diod. 20.100.5-6.

¹⁴¹ S.R.F. Price, *Rituals and Power. The Roman Imperial Cult in Asia Minor* (Cambridge 1984).

the boundaries between royal and civic space in Hellenistic cities were not rigorously demarcated. Palaces were not isolated from their surroundings. On the contrary, palaces were the focal points of a lively interaction between *basileus*, *philoï*, *politai* and foreign ambassadors. In most residences we find a transitional area between *polis* and palace, such as the *Basileia* in Alexandria, the *hiera agora* in front of the palace at Demetrias, or the sequence of *temenē* along the processional road in Pergamon, which became more and more related to monarchy as one neared the palaces on top of the akropolis. This ‘representational’ section was a more or less public area where king and citizens met. In the stadiums, hippodromes and theatres built here, the public rituals of royalty were performed.¹⁴²

¹⁴² See below, chapter 5. This aspect of Hellenistic palace architecture endured in the Roman Empire, cp. the positioning of hippodromes before the Palatine and the imperial palace in Rome and Constantinople respectively.