

Preface

Every time, in going on, there is something
of the first venture: a question of faith.
André Brink, *An Instant in the Wind* (1976)

Much gratitude is due to many people. It would take lengthy footnotes to do them all justice. Footnotes, however, have no place in a preface. But let me start with a nice quote I recently came across. In speaking of the Hellenistic kingdoms in the third century BCE, Sheila Ager remarked that ‘we may be in danger of seeking too much of a coherent pattern in a century where chaos theory might be a better methodology’.¹ Though certainly true – the Hellenistic Age really is the most fascinating period in world history – I merely shrugged: my mentor, Henk Versnel, always taught me not to despair in the face of seemingly contradictory evidence, but to accept ambiguity and disorder as part of historical reality.² He encouraged me to write this book. My other mentor, Josine Blok, encouraged me to finish it. During the final stages of the road to my doctoral degree, I could not have done without the help and perseverance of Godfried Marijnissen, συγγενῆς καὶ πρώτος φίλος, and Michel Buijs, colleague and friend.

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Frans and Inge Strootman, for making it all possible. I dedicate this book to them.

In the opening section of 1 Maccabees it is stated that the world had much to suffer from the Successors of Alexander. My family knows all about it. Elise Wiggers, David and Leonoor Strootman, for giving me a reason.

¹ S.L. Ager, ‘An uneasy balance: From the death of Seleukos to the Battle of Raphia’, in: A. Erskine ed., *A Companion to the Hellenistic World* (Oxford 2003) 35-50, at 35.

² See H.S. Versnel, ‘Inconsistency’, in: id., *Inconsistencies in Greek and Roman Religion I: Ter Unus. Isis, Dionysos, Hermes. Three Studies in Henotheism* (Leiden 1990) 1-37.