In 294/3 king Seleucus I Nicator gave his wife Stratonice, daughter of Demetrius Poliorcetes, in marriage to his son Antiochus and decided that the couple would be his co-rulers in the eastern part of his empire. The events leading up to this curious decision are well-known; the story about the passionate love of the young Antiochus for his father’s wife, his stepmother, the romantic dénouement of the impending family-tragedy by the wise physician Erasistratus and the sensible father himself belong to the highlights of Hellenistic historiography. For the account of these events we are indebted to Plutarch and Appian, though the love-story can be found also in several other writers¹). There is no reason to reject the story in the way Beloch did: in itself it is not at all improbable. One could even ask, in view of the many mariages de raison in the Hellenistic monarchies, whether such a story would have been remembered at all, if this passionate love had not been a fact. On the other hand, we were told by Rohde (in his Griechische Roman) that the tale contains some typically romantic loci that recur also at other times and in other writings ²). The original author, then, may have embellished the story in order to fascinate his readers or to enhance the glory of Seleucus himself. It is somewhat difficult to believe that the love-affair and the decision of Seleucus to make his son co-ruler so neatly succeeded each other as Appian and Plutarch will have us to understand. Nevertheless, this


²) E. Rohde, Der griechische Roman, 53 ff.
love-story was necessary for anybody who wanted to give to Seleucus the glory of political wisdom and of the magnanimity of a good father 1). We could imagine, then, that the close connection between the two aspects is a product of royal propaganda, which was avidly taken up by interested historiographers. In any case, the modern historian, who is so often at a loss for lack of reliable data about Seleucid history, should be grateful to the unknown Hellenistic author for showing us Seleucus I as the kind of man who was able to deal with such situations in the way he did.

For the modern historian, however, the love-story itself is less important than the speech Seleucus is said to have delivered after taking his decision. Appian and Plutarch give only the barest outline of what the king said at the occasion; no more do we know whether the original Hellenistic author gave a reliable account of the address. The speech as we have it has rightly been regarded as an important document about some aspects of Hellenistic monarchy. What was the character and function of the assembly Seleucus directed his address to? Was it the specific Macedonian “Heeresversammlung” or a more or less informal meeting of soldiers and civilians in Antioch? From another point of view, the importance of the sentence in which Seleucus justifies his intentions by referring to the law which makes right whatever a king does, has been duly paid attention to.

It is not my wish to add striking new points of view to those brought forward by Ed. Meyer, Rostovtzeff, Granier, Bikermann. But the speech has never been treated as a whole, neither were the differences between the sources accounted for. Some light may be thrown on the historical and ideological context of this curious document 2).

There are some small but characteristic differences between Plutarch and Appian. According to Appian, Seleucus calls together his army: Plutarch makes him convene a “general assembly”