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# INTERROGATING THE SUCCESSES AND FAILURES OF THE SELEUCID EMPIRE

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### Abstract

The narratives surrounding the Seleucid Empire have been presented by modern historians, and drawing from the works of such ancient authors as Appian, Pliny, Polybius, and Josephus on the subject matter. These modern scholars namely, Strootman, Houghton and Lorber, Kurt and Sherwin-White among others have discussed the various aspects of the history, culture and structure of the Seleucid Empire, with little attention paid solely to her attainments and shortcomings. This study attempts to critically interrogate the successes and fiascos of the Empire, with a view to highlighting the workings of the leadership that translated to victories and failures in the Seleucid kingdom. The paper argues that the leaders who were motivated and succeeded in expanding the frontiers of the kingdom, in due course, became careless and deficient in employing effective strategic measures in administering the empire, and her weak foreign policies exacerbated the conflicts with allies and foes alike. Further studies may examine all the wars and peace treaties undertaken by the Seleucid Empire.

**Keywords:** Seleucid Empire, leadership strengths and weaknesses, incessant conflicts

## Introduction

The Seleucid Empire which existed between 312 BC and 64 BC was a Hellenistic State in the west of Asia. Ancient authors such as Appian, Diodorus Siculus, Polybius, Plutarch and Josephus among others, serve as primary sources for the political, economic, social and religious histories of the Seleucid Empire. Modern scholars rely on the works of these ancient scholars in critical analysis and examination of the various aspects of the people and culture of the Seleucid dynasty. Houghton and Lorber (2003), Kuhrt and Sherwin-White, eds. (1987), Strootman (2014), Bursten (1978), Van der Spek (2004) and Taylor (2014) among others, examined numismatic history, Hellenism, integration and cosmopolitanism in the Seleucid Empire. Haubold (2016) interrogated the essence of integration and assimilation in the realm. Drawing from the works of Berossos, he questions the depth of cosmopolitan accommodations of the locals. Haubold notes that Berossos projection of a Greco-Babylonian cooperation was a ruse. What was evidenced were collaborations between the distinct aristocratic networks; the Babylonian Chaldeans and the Greco-Macedonian elites in the Empire, with the exclusive Greco-Macedonian elites merely recognizing the roles of the Chaldean elites around the king and utilizing them to quell crisis whenever such arose. Many other authors while narrating the history of Alexander the Great and his diadochis have discussed variously, the themes of culture, acculturations, universal and exclusive culture of these Greek leaders and their colonies or areas of command. However, there is scant literature on the enumeration of the successes and failures of the empire. This paper attempts to interrogate the accomplishments and disasters of the Empire, with a view to understanding the effects of strategic measures adopted by the Seleucids for effective leadership and a successful Empire, and the lack of it leading to failures and eventual collapse of the kingdom. Further studies may examine all wars and peace treaties between the Seleucid nation and other neighbouring states.

The Seleucid kingdom which emerged from the division of the Empire of Alexander the great and existed between 312 and 64 BC, was an archetypal imperial state with diverse ethnic, cultural, religious and political institutions. It was an ancient empire that at the height of its civilisation, stretched from Anatolia, Persia, the Levant, Mesopotamia, Thrace in Europe, to the border of India, consequently, Engels (2011), stated that it could indeed be noted as the realest successor to the kingdom of Alexander

the Great. The founder of this Empire Seleucus I Nicator, was one of the Diadochis of Alexander the Great. He received Babylonia in 321 BC and continued to expand her territories to include Alexander's Near East regions. He established the Seleucid Dynasty that ruled for about two centuries. Thirty kings ruled the dynasty beginning with Seleucus I Nicator in 312 BC, and ending in 64 BC under the reign of Philip II Philoromaeus, when Rome overthrew the empire.

### **Seleucus I Nicator**

Seleucus was born in about 354 or 356 in the town of Europos in the North of Macedonia. His date of birth is contested. Appian tells us that Seleucus was 73 years old during the battle of Corupedium therefore that would indicate that he was born in 354. Eusebius of Caesarea mentions that he was 75 years old at the same battle. That would also indicate that he was born in 356, the same year that Alexander the Great was born. His father was Antiochus, and probably one of the Generals of Phillip II of Macedon. His mother's name was Laodice. Not much is known of his parents. However, Grainger (1990 p.2) mentions that Seleucus, as king, named a number of the cities he built after his parents. Grainger further notes that he served, as was customary for boys of noble families, as the king's page. Later in his life, he became an officer in the army of the king.

By 327, under Alexander the Great, he had risen to the rank of command of the elite infantry called the Silvershields in the Macedonian army. Arrian tells us that Perdikkas, Ptolemy I Soter, Lysimachus and Seleucus were the men who accompanied Alexander as he crossed the Hydaspes River on a boat. Seleucus married Apama, the daughter of Spitamenes, who gave birth to his son Antiochus I Soter. He also had two daughters from Apama named Laodice and Apama. Apama remained his wife all through her life (Grainger, 1990).

### **Satrap of Babylonia**

Seleucus I Nicator became satrap (governor) of Babylonia in 321 BCE, two years after the death of Alexander. Territorial expansion of the Seleucid Empire came under his reign of its first two kings, he, Seleucus I (312-281 BCE) and his son, Antiochus I (281-261 BCE) whereby the empire controlled a large portion of Alexander's Kingdom. At the end of the reign of Seleucus, the Seleucid Empire had stretched from Thrace in Greece to the

borders of India (Kurt and Sherwin-White, 1993). The empire grew to its greatest height under the reign of Antiochos III the Great, spanning from the Pamir Mountains to the Aegean Sea around 200 BCE (Strootman, 2012). The Empire began to decline around 150 BCE and its major territories were taken over by the Romans, which therefore led to the disappearance of the Seleucid Empire in 64 BCE (Strootman, 2012). The nature of the Seleucid state was a military organisation exacting tribute. The king was expected to be a successful war leader able to defend the interests of his followers and the cities under his protection. This, the Seleucid rulers; Seleucus I, Antiochus I and others did that translated to success, until its decline as a result of several factors, the primary being a failed leadership, especially after the leadership of Antiochus III the Great.

### **The Seleucid Kingdom**

The Seleucid Empire grew out of the Babylonian satrapy awarded to Seleukos by the Treaty of Triparadeisos in 320 BC (Strootman, 2012). Seleukos with the aid of conquest and diplomacy, first established his rule in the eastern satrapies of the former Achaemenid Empire. With the support of the eastern aristocracies whose efforts provided Seleukos's dynasty with cavalry for the next one and a half century, the Seleucid Empire rose to great heights. Using his marriage to Apame, an Iranian princess from Sogdia, Seleukos was able to leverage on this union to help in structuring negotiations with the local aristocracies. In India, Seleukos made an alliance with the Mauryan king Chandragupta, who provided him with a large number of war elephants in return for territorial concessions. Having secured these alliances, Seleukos then went westwards to establish his control in Syria and Anatolia, defeating his rival Antigonos I Monophthalmos in the battle of Ipsos in 301 BC (Strootman, 2012). In 281 BC Seleukos gained Asia Minor and the Macedonian kingship when he defeated Lysimachos at Kouropedion. Seleukos died in 281 BC. Consequently, uprisings sprung up in the west and these prevented the annexation of Thrace and Macedon.

### **Antiochos I Soter**

After the death of Seleukos, his son Antiochos I Soter took control of the Empire. Antiochos I Soter reigned from 281 BC to 261 BC. Under him, Seleucid rule was restored in the west but he had to accept the *de facto*

autonomy of Bithynia and Pontos. The Greek cities of Asia Minor addressed him as saviour, seemingly after his somewhat elusive victory over the Galatians in the so-called Battle of the Elephants. In the East, Antiochos like his father maintained strong family bonds with the Iranian nobility. It is worth mentioning that Antiochos was the son of an Iranian noblewoman. Antiochos governed the Upper Satrapies as co-ruler since 292 BC, strengthening the oasis of Merv and rebuilding Baktra (Balkh) as the easternmost Seleucid capital. Antiochos I organized and consolidated Seleucid rule, posthumously deifying his father and establishing the Seleucid Era. Despite all the great achievements of Antiochos I Soter, it was in his reign that the long and violent rivalry with the Ptolemies over possession of the Mediterranean seaports started. The Seleucid–Ptolemaic enmity which lasted between 274 BC and 145 BC resulted in no less than seven wars, known today as the Syrian wars.

Antiochos I Soter died in 262 BC and was succeeded by his son Antiochos II Theos. During his reign, there were repeated conflicts between the Seleucid kingdom and Ptolemy II of Egypt. There was a Celtic invasion of Asia Minor. Also many states wrested their independence from the Seleucids. They include Bactria, Sogdiana, Cappadocia and Partha.

In 246 BC, Antiochos II's son, Seleucus II ascended the throne. From this point of the Seleucid history, it is important to mention that a particular pattern where the history of the Empire was badly recorded ensued. During the reign of Seleukos II Kallinikos, the empire suffered a temporary setback, as Seleukos II Kallinikos spent his entire reign desperately trying to keep his ancestral domains together. When he began his rule, there was a severe succession crisis in which Ptolemy III intervened in supporting the infant son of his sister, Laodike, the second wife of Antiochos II (Strootman, 2012). This conflict led to the Third Syrian or Laodikean War 246 BCE–241 BC where several of the Seleucid cities fell into the hands of Ptolemy, whose troops progressed as far as Babylonia before the tables turned and they were forced to retreat to Egypt. At the end of the Third Syrian War, a conflict broke out between Seleukos and his brother, Antiochos Hierax (“The Hawk”), who himself had established himself as rival king in Asia Minor. This was the first serious outbreak of the dynastic infighting that would plague the empire especially in the second century. The War of the Brothers lasted with intervals from 239 BC to 228 BC and brought the empire to the threshold of downfall. Also, at this same time, there was intrusion of a nomad people

known as the Parni who migrated from Inner Asia to northern Iran, and settled in the Seleucid province of Hyrkania and later Parthia and were later known as the Parthians. The distractions caused by this war with his brother allowed Seleukos accept their presence and formally install their leader Arsaces I as vassal king. Seleukos' return to the west prompted Diodotos I, the satrap of Bactria and Sogdia to proclaim himself king. The reign of Seleukos II Kallinikos was followed by that of Seleukos III Keraunos from 226 BCE–223 BCE.

### **Antiochos III Megas**

The reign of Seleukos III Keraunos was very short and the empire fell to Antiochos III Megas who ruled from 223 BC–187 BC. During this time, the Seleucid authority in the Upper Satrapies was reasserted by Antiochos III Megas. It was under his reign that the empire reached its greatest extent. Despite being defeated by the Ptolemies in the Fourth Syrian War 219 BC–217 BC, Antiochos in 211 BCE embarked on a successful but prolonged campaign through Iran, Bactria, and India, where he collected tribute and picked up new war elephants.

In the Fifth Syrian War (202 BC–195 BC), Antiochos inflicted a crushing defeat on the Ptolemies at the Battle of Panion (200 BC). He occupied Palestine and the Ptolemaic possessions in Asia Minor, and annexed Thrace. Further westward expansion came to a sudden halt when Seleucid expansion in Greece provoked war with Rome. The Roman legions drove Antiochos back to Asia Minor, where they decisively defeated him at the Battle of Magnesia in 189 BCE. The peace treaty concluded at Apamea the following year forced Antiochos to give up Asia Minor and his Mediterranean fleet, and to pay a huge indemnity. The loss of Asia Minor was no fatal catastrophe for the Seleucids (Kuhrt and Sherwin-White 1993; Grainger 2002), although the loss was a severe blow to Seleucid's power and the charisma of its warrior-king, inciting dangerous uprisings elsewhere in the empire and leaving Rome as the only superpower in the Mediterranean. The death of Antiochos came as a result of the attempt to quell insurrection in Elam. He was succeeded by Antiochos IV Epiphanes.

### **Antiochos IV Epiphanes**

Antiochos IV Epiphanes (“God Manifest”; 170 BC–164 BC) reorganized the empire and also campaigned against the Ptolemies in Egypt, laying siege to

Alexandria and probably being crowned pharaoh in Memphis. However, the Parthian expansion in Iran forced him to accept a humiliating Roman ultimatum to abandon Egypt. His efforts to restore Seleucid authority in the east and perhaps to prepare for a new war against Rome ended with his premature death in Iran in 164 BC. After his short but remarkable reign, political decline accelerated and the Parthians took over the role of the Ptolemies as the Seleucids' principal military antagonists (Strootman, 2012).

During the last century of the existence of the Seleucid Empire, infighting between two rival branches of the royal family destroyed the empire from within. Also, the fact that all the vassal rulers asserted their independence helped to further destabilise the empire. This action allowed the Parthian king Mithradates I to take possession of Media in 148 BC and Babylonia in 141 BC. However, attempts at reconquest by Demetrios II Nikator in 140/39 BC and by the energetic Antiochos VII Sidetes in 130/29 BC both failed. The permanent loss of Iran and Mesopotamia to the Parthians effectively terminated the existence of the Seleucid state as an empire. The dynasty lingered on for another sixty-five years. At the beginning of the last century BC all that remained of the Kingdom of Asia was a small state in northern Syria, fractured by civil war. After a brief occupation of Syria by the Armenian king Tigranes, the Roman general Pompey abolished the monarchy without a blow in 64/3 BC, turning Syria into a Roman province. Rome initially preserved a reorganized version of the imperial vassal state system as it had existed under the later Seleucids, taking over the Seleucids' role as protectors of cities. In Mesopotamia and Iran the Parthian Kings, too, took on the role of the Seleucids as imperial suzerains over a patchwork of peoples and polities.

### **Administrative System of the Seleucid Empire**

The Seleucid state was essentially a military organisation whose intent was collecting resources (manpower, food supplies, timber, and metals) for its war making system, and the extraction of the capital needed to finance the empire's military apparatus and the gifts and status expenditures with which the loyalty of cities and powerful individuals was secured. One key feature to make this happen was that good relations had to be kept with the cities where surpluses were collected and so, this helped to hold the empire together.

A look at the geopolitical aspect of the Seleucid Empire showed that the empire was a patchwork of varying systems of control arranged around several clusters of cities which included western Asia Minor, Syria, Babylonia, Susiana (Elam), Media, and Bactria. These were the core regions and they were connected by land routes and protected by a collection of fortresses and fortified cities. In addition to the cities, military colonies were also founded and these were known as *katoikia* in Asia Minor. They were garrisoned by Macedonians who received land grants from the crown in exchange for military service. It is worth mentioning that these garrisons sometimes developed into flourishing cities as was the case of Dura-Europos in northern Mesopotamia (Strootman, 2012). Since the empire was a patch work of cities, the Greek and non-Greek cities alike were approached in accordance with local expectations. This was done mainly through the use of patronage as kings approached cities through the patronage of, and participation in, local cults. The kings ensured that the temples were well maintained by providing the funds needed, providing offerings, and also taking part in the rituals any time they were present in person. Examples of which include Antiochos III performing the role of a traditional Babylonian king in the Akitu Festival or Antiochos IV making offerings to Yahweh in the Temple of Jerusalem.

There were no deliberate attempts to “Hellenise” the population, but civic elites often assumed a double identity, such as Greek-Babylonian or Greek-Jewish, to express their allegiance to the empire, so that in the course of time a supranational imperial culture came into existence based on the Hellenic culture of the court. Urbanized areas were loosely administered by centrally appointed military governors known variously as *stratego*i or *satraps*. Their main function as governors was to ensure that tributes were collected, levying troops, and keeping the peace. In rural areas particularly Iranian, aristocracies remained in control of military resources. Maintaining good relations with them, too, was of pivotal importance for the empire. Cities moreover were more or less autonomous, and various remote and thinly populated areas within the empire's borders were never fully pacified.

From 250 BC onward, the Seleucid Empire gradually transformed into a hegemonial power loosely uniting a growing number of autonomous vassal states and small princedoms around a more or less directly controlled imperial core consisting of Iraq and Syria. This process began immediately



after the death of Seleukos, but the most prolific kingmaker was Antiochos III – hence presumably the pronouncement of his status of Great King in his official Greek title of *Megas*, “the Great.” The bonds between the imperial family and the various vassal monarchies were cemented with gifts and dynastic marriages. However, the Seleucid weakness in the mid-third and second half of the second century led to increasing autonomy of these vassals. First in Asia Minor Pergamon, Bithynia, and Pontos, then in northern Iran and Bactria, and finally along the fringes of the Fertile Crescent that is Judaea, Kommagene, Armenia, Charakene, Persis, and various autonomous city states ruled by local dynasts. Ironically, it was one of these vassal polities, the Parthian monarchy that would eventually terminate and take over the Seleucid kingdom's position as the principal imperial power in the Middle East.

### **Successes of the Seleucid Empire**

#### **Conquest, Diplomacy and Alliances**

The Seleucid rulers especially Seleucus I Nicator, Antiochos I Soter, Antiochos III Megas the Great and Antiochos IV Epiphanes adopted effective strategic measures that ensured growth and success of the Empire. They conquered and established satrapies, and thereby extending the borders of the kingdom. They adopted diplomacy in administering the state. Through this diplomacy, they got the support of the local aristocracies. They also entered into alliances, including marriage alliances. As an instance, Seleukos I Nicator married Apame, an Iranian princess. This went a long way to aid him structure negotiations with the aristocrats in the administration of the Empire.

#### **Hellenization Policies**

The Seleucid Empire experienced huge success with the Hellenization policies. The empire was a conglomeration of a mix of peoples due to its expansion. From the Aegean Sea to what is now Afghanistan and Pakistan, various people of Greeks, Armenians, Georgians, Persians, Medes, Assyrians, and Jewish extraction became part of the empire. Consequently, the Seleucid embarked on a Hellenization policy that translated to ethnic unity. The Seleucid succeeded due to the fact that they began to establish Greek cities and also renamed some of the cities in their realms with Greek names. This Hellenisation or colonisation of the empire further facilitated

the adoption of Greek practices and customs by native elites in order to be eligible for public office in the service of the state. The ruling Macedonian class also adopted elements of the traditions and culture of the natives and thus gained the support of the natives (Bidmead, 2014). This was acceptable and a blend or admixture of Greek culture with that of the natives was witnessed. This Hellenistic integration led to several success in other aspects of the culture of both the natives and the Greeks. Consequently, Hellenistic philosophy, arts, sculpture, architecture, religion and other aspects of Hellenistic ideas blossomed and grew during this era.

### **Territorial Expansion**

The success of the Seleucid Empire can be viewed from several angles such as its geographical expansion over the course of time that the empire lasted. Beginning from Babylon, the Seleucid Empire extended from Thrace in Europe to the border of India. The control of cities such as western Asia Minor, Syria, Babylonia, Susiana (Elam), Media, and Bactria ensured that the empire grew in fame and prosperity. This growth was first attributed to the efforts of Alexander the Great, then Seleukos, and later, Antiochos III Megas. These three ensured that the Seleucid Empire gained and controlled large expanse of territory.

### **Effective Military**

The armies of the Seleucid Empire was an inclusive one. A number of Greco-Macedonian soldiers formed the leadership of the army. There was also a huge number of native troops who fought alongside the Greeks. As a result of this, the Seleucid army could muster as many as 70,000 soldiers and 20,000 in manpower. With this army, the Seleucids could receive several victories in battles and with the best strategies or tactics employed to put her enemies to flight. Because Greeks were an important segment in the army, the Seleucids established several military settlements where land grants were available for service men. Great success of this was achieved under Seleucus I Nicator, Antiochus I Soter, Antiochus III and Antiochus IV Epiphanes.

## **Economy**

The economy of the Seleucids flourished until the empire began to experience failure. Her economy was sophisticated such that tributes were extracted from local temples, cities and royal estates and these aided in keeping and maintaining her sizable and effective military (van der Spek, 2000). van der Spek, (2004), notes that the economy of the Seleucids was a market oriented one. The Seleucids achieved great success here. The continuous successful wars could not have been sustained if the soldiers were not remunerated, even in silver (Reger, 2003) for their services to the Empire. The Empire also adopted a monetization policy that was equally successful. The adoption of the attic standard and the popularization of bronze coinage took the front burner. During the reign of Antiochus III, bronze minting became popular, and it was a successful means of exchange in battering (Reger, 2003). Another factor that also defines the success of the Seleucids was the capacity to manage the waterways of Mesopotamia. Consequently, the Seleucids could extract wealth from such source (van der Spek, 2004).

The Seleucids achieved successes in agriculture. This is due to the fact that the ruling class continued with the agricultural structures that had been put in place prior to the entrant of the Seleucids. A huge percentage of Mesopotamians was employed to work in the farms consequently, several, and a large number of products were harvest from the Greek polies and Mesopotamia itself. Grain, olives, olive oil, wine, figs, cheese from such animals as goat and sheep, and meat were grown and harvested in Greek polies in the Empire (Reger, 2003). Van der Spek (2004), notes that Mesopotamian goods grown and harvested in large numbers which include mustard, sesame, cress, dates, wool and barley were in abundance in the Empire.

## **Failures of the Seleucid Empire**

### **Internal Strife**

One of the major failures of the Seleucid Empire was the inability of the monarchy to stand as a united front against foreign interference. This ultimately led to the case of infighting that took place between Seleukos II Kallinikos and the infant son of his sister. This saw Ptolemy III intervening on the side of the infant who was the son of Laodike the second wife of Antiochos II. This led to the wars known as the Third Syrian or Laodikean

War, which took place between 246 BC and 241 BC. Thereafter, several Levantine cities fell into the hands of Ptolemy. There was also the case of infighting between Seleukos and his brother, Antiochos *Hierax* “The Hawk”. This happened immediately after the Third Syrian war, as Antiochos *Hierax* decided to proclaim himself as rival king in Asia Minor. This was the first serious outbreak of the dynastic infighting that would plague the empire especially in the second century. The War of the brothers lasted with intervals from 239 BC to 228 BC and brought the empire to the brink of collapse.

While the brothers warred, a nomad people known as the Parni migrated from Inner Asia to northern Iran, and settled in the Seleucid province of Hyrkania and later Parthia and thus were named Parthians. Seleukos accepted their presence and formally installed their leader Arsaces I as vassal king. The Parthians grew in strength and ultimately desired to take over the helms of affairs in the Seleucid kingdom.

### **Enmity between the Seleucids and Egypt**

The long and violent rivalry with the Ptolemies over possession of the Mediterranean seaports led to a very long enmity between the two kingdoms. The Seleucid–Ptolemaic enmity (274-145 BC) resulted in at least seven wars, which has been referred to today as the Syrian Wars. This was unnecessary, since much more was at stake than mere conflicting interests in Coele-Syria.

### **War with the Jews**

Hellenistic civilisation, an offshoot of one of the policies of Alexander the Great was hugely successful even as it was propagated and promoted by his Diadochis who took over the different parts of the Empire. While it was also successful in the Seleucid Empire, it met a brick wall with the Jews who resisted Hellenistic Judaism. This is because what the Seleucid leader, Antiochus IV, proposed as Hellenistic Judaism was totally against the practises and religion of the Jews. Josephus narrates the reason why many Jews rejected Hellenistic Judaism.

Now Antiochus was not satisfied either with his unexpected taking the city (Jerusalem), or with its pillage, or with the great slaughter he had made there; but being overcome with his violent passions, and remembering what he had suffered

during the siege, he compelled the Jews to dissolve the laws of their country, and to keep their infants uncircumcised, and to sacrifice swine's flesh upon the altar; against which they all opposed themselves, and the most approved among them were put to death.

Flavius Josephus - *The War of the Jews*, Book 1.1 §2.

In 1 Maccabees 2:1-22, we also learn that an insignificant priest by the name Mattathias who was a Hasmonean refused to obey Antiochus' decree which stipulated the worship of Greek gods. His action sparked a revolt by the Jews against the Seleucids. As a matter of fact, Mattathias killed a Hellenised Jew who intended to carry out the order of the king as he attempted to sacrifice a pig on the altar of the sacred space of the Jews. He also killed the Greek officer who accompanied the Hellenised Jew to carry out the order. This action of attempting to compel the Jews to practise Hellenistic Judaism cost the Seleucid Empire greatly, as it was one of the factors that led to its decline.

### **Conclusion**

The Seleucid Empire, led by Seleucus I Nicator and eventually his descendants existed for about 250 years. The leaders, as much as it was possible, could only rule effectively enough to sustain the dynasty for about two centuries. Not many Empires, including the Seleucid's, during this period were as formidable as the Great Roman Empire. This is due to the fact that the Roman Empire practised a systematic inclusive regime that incorporated anyone who could rise above his status to the aristocracies or the *honoures* to become a Roman Senator or magistrate. Foreigners could obtain citizenship and eventually rise to the aristocracies. The Seleucids on the other hand, were monarchs and the leadership was an exclusive one. In spite of Hellenisation system that was blatantly in place, a closer examination tended to prove otherwise. Haubold indeed interrogated this exclusiveness, in spite of Berossos' postulations of a Greco-Babylonian cooperation. The Seleucids, therefore, rose, expanded and became great, yet, this empire could only endure for about two centuries. The inability to manage the success and in due course, conflicts between the Seleucids and neighbours, civil war, further decay and many other factors, aided in the decline of an empire as large and blossoming as the Seleucid's.

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