



Chapter 7

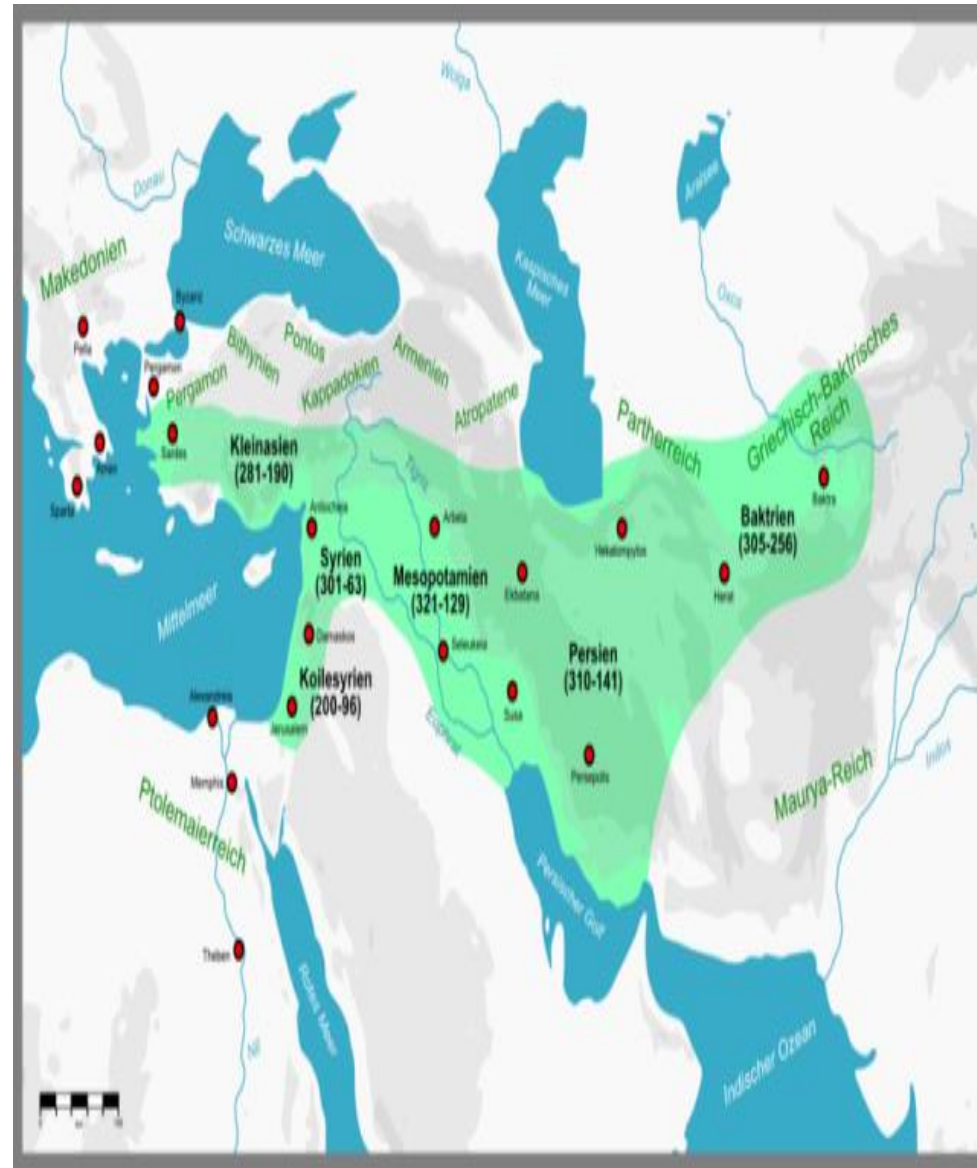
The Seleucid State Organization

BAAG 75602
Alexander to Kleopatra:
History of the Hellenistic period
Giorgos Mitropoulos

The Seleucid state: Geographical realities

Four large areas of great internal variety

- Mesopotamia, Syria, Cilicia: the political and economic nucleus
- Asia Minor (lost after 188 B.C.)
- Iran (lost after ca. 170-160 B.C.)
- Southern Syria and Palestine (incorporated after ca. 200 B.C.)



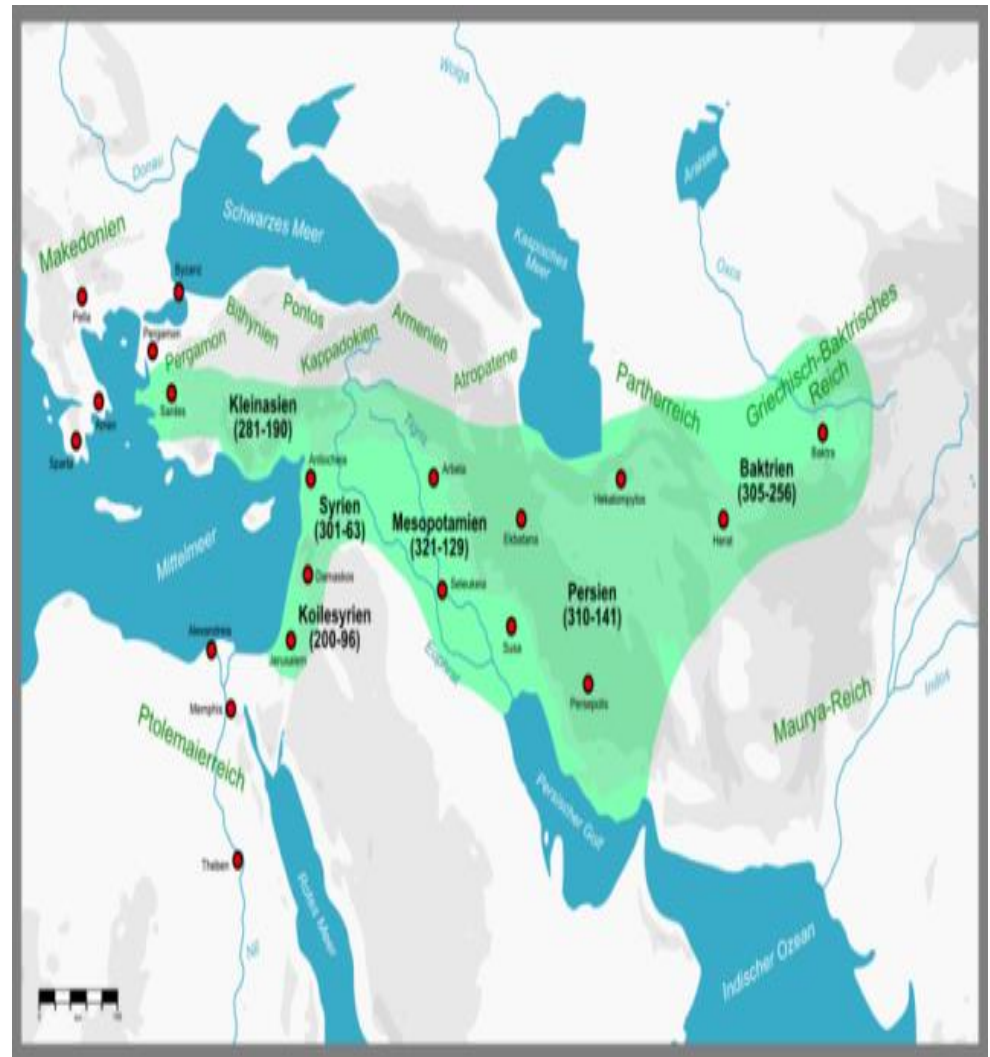
The Seleucid Asia Minor beyond the Taurus

- 281: conquered by Seleukos I
- ca. 240: ruled by Antiochos Hierax, brother of Seleukos II
- ca. 229: conquered by Attalos I of Pergamon
- ca. 222: re-conquered by Achaïos in the name of Antiochos III
- 220-213: Achaïos as independent ruler
- 213-188: rule by Antiochos III
- 188-133: after the treaty of Apameia former Seleucid Asia Minor is ruled by the Attalids of Pergamon



The Seleucid Iran

- 303 B.C.: Seleukos I hands to Sandrokottos the valley of Indos and east Arachosia and Gedrosia
- ca. 250: The Parthoi occupy Parthia – Diodotos king of Bactria
- 230-227: Unsuccessful attempts by Seleukos II to restore control
- 212-205: The *anabasis* of Antiochos III (nominal sovereignty)
- Under Mithridates I (171-139) the Parthians conquer East Iran, Media (149), Baylonia (141)
- Demetrios II fails to stop them in 139/8 and is captured
- A final Seleucid offensive by Antiochos VII ends in disaster in 129 B.C.
- The Seleucid state is confined to northern Syria and Cilicia



The Seleucid Monarchy

- **Military monarchy:** king expected to command in person in campaigns
- Empire defined by **reference to the king:** king, friends, army (no ethnic name or association with a particular ethnic group)
- **Military manpower:** different ethnic origin (Greeks and conscripts from subject people); no Syrians and Babylonians
- Standing mercenary army;
Military settlers in *katoikiai*



Administrative Realities: Central Administration

❖ Council of *philoí*

- ἐπὶ τῶν πραγμάτων ('in charge of affairs'): a kind of 'prime minister'
- ἐπὶ τῶν προσόδων ('in charge of revenues'): financial administration

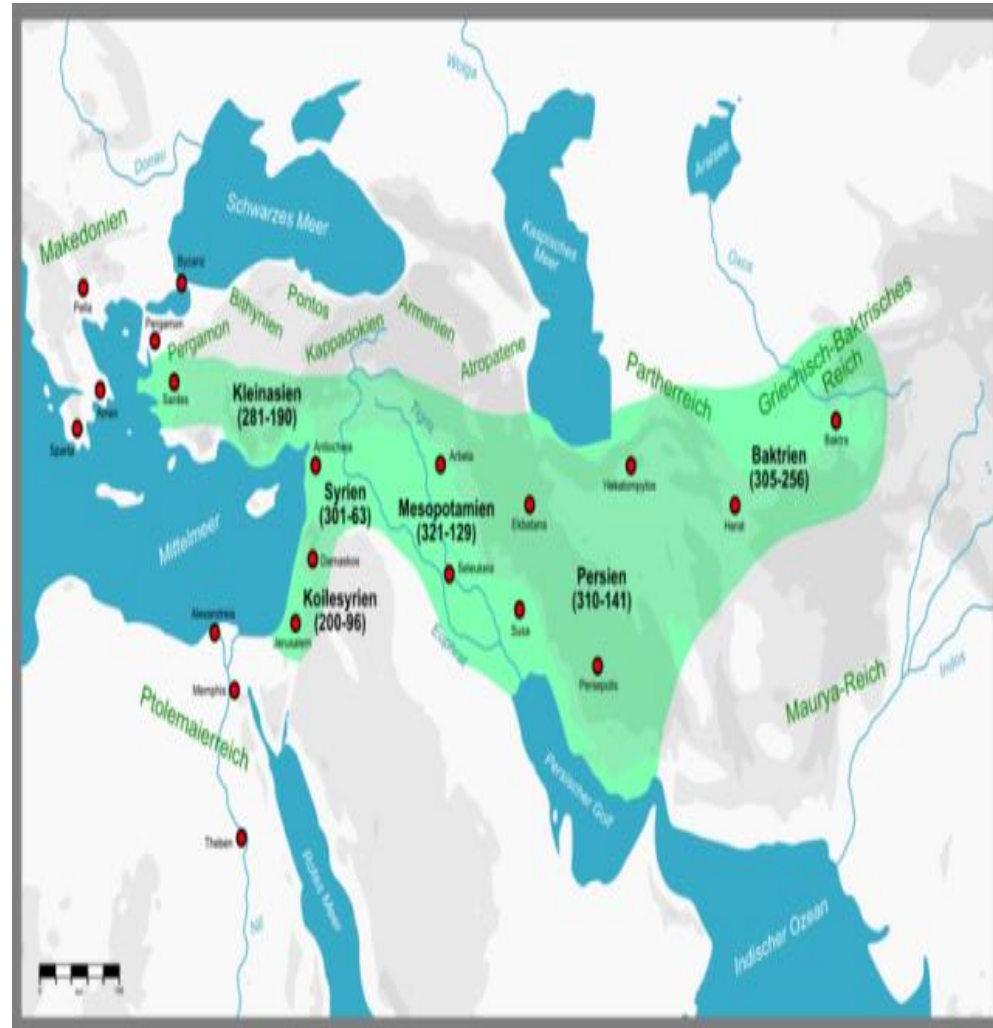


Administration of the Seleucid state: The royal land

Two large territorial districts ('viceroyalties')

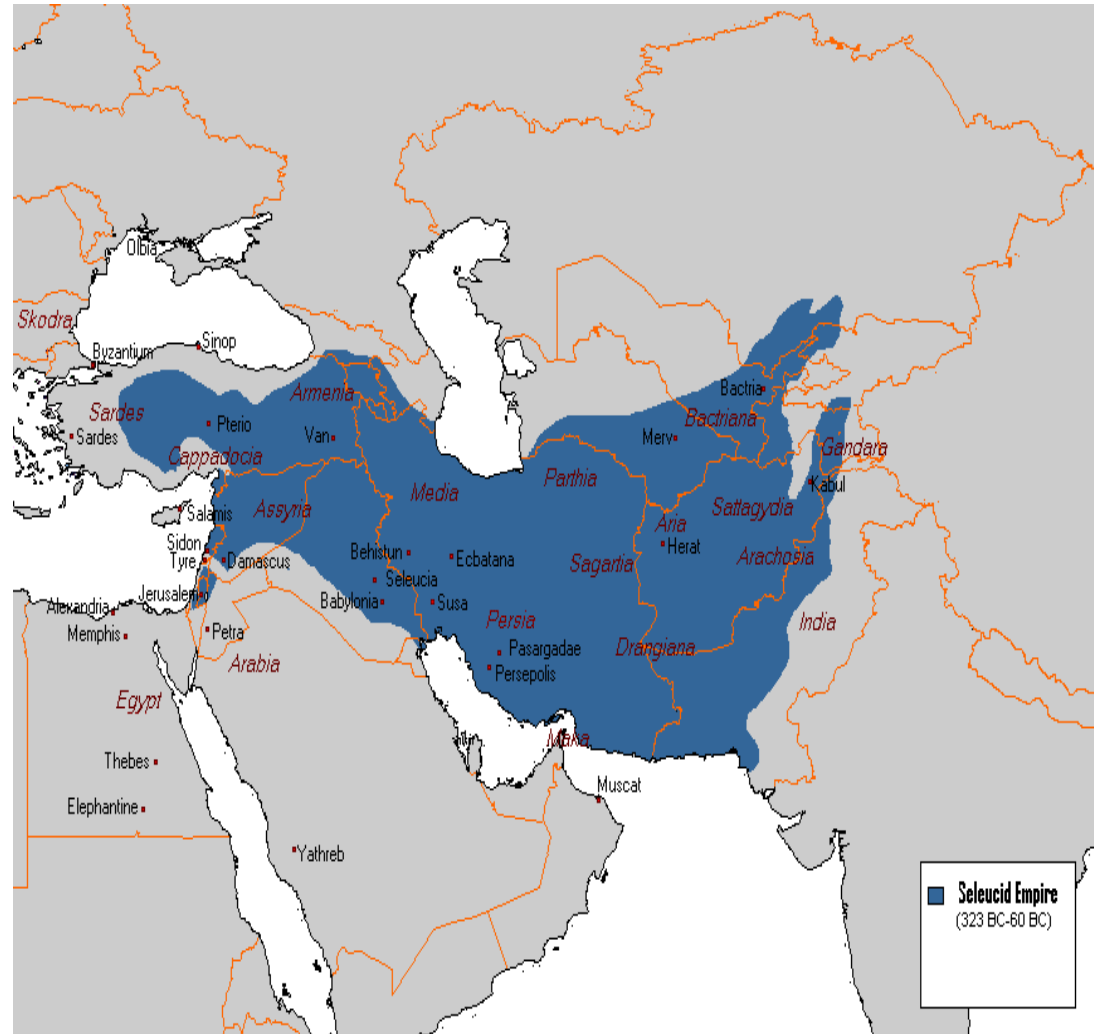
- *Ano satrapiai* (upper Satrapies): Iran with Seleukeia on Tigris
- Asia Minor west of Taurus with Sardeis

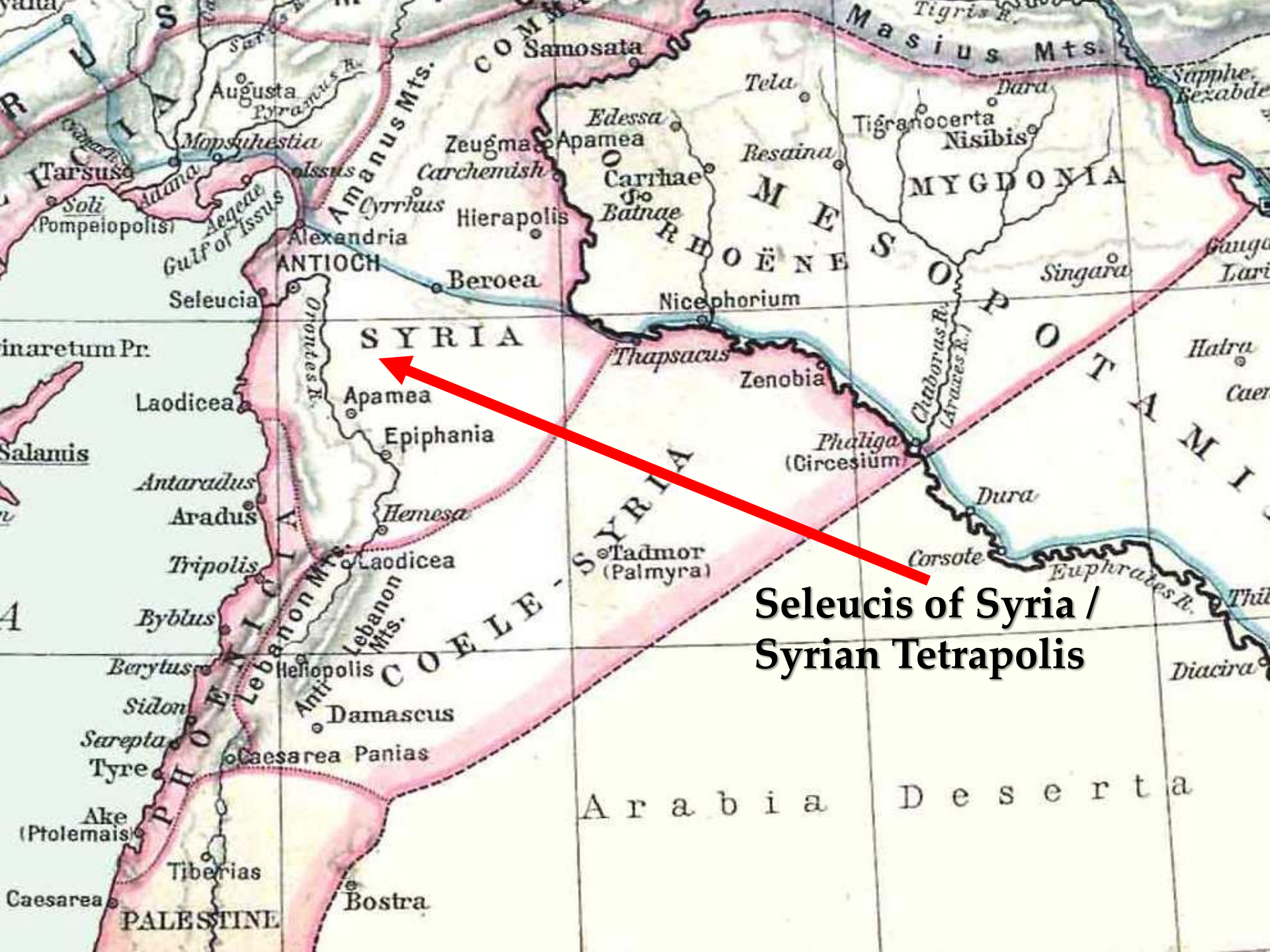
Governed usually by members of the royal family



Satrapies of the Seleucid state

- Governed by *strategoi* (Asia Minor) and *satrapai* (Iran) who had great political and military powers and a considerable decree of initiative.
- Officials at the level of the satrapies: *dioiketai*, *oikonomoi*, *chreophylakes*, *bibliophylakes*
- Subdivision into *hyparchies* and *topoi* (Asia Minor)
- Asia Minor: Hellespont, Lydia, Greater Phrygia
- Iran: Arachosia-Gedrosia, Bactria, Parthia-Hyrcania, Persis-Susiana, Media
- Nucleus: Seleucis of Syria, Mesopotamia, Babylonia





**Seleucis of Syria /
Syrian Tetrapolis**

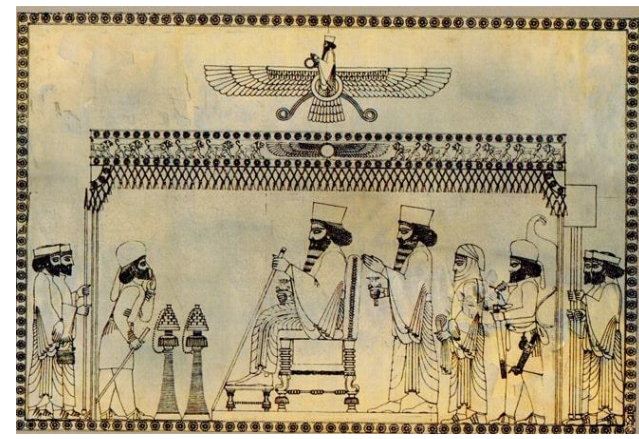
Territories not belonging to the royal land

- Greek cities: internal self-administration, usually controlled by a royal *epistates*.
- (Semi)-autonomous and self-governed *ethne*: Pisidians, Lycians, Lycaonians, Isaurians
- Principalities with local dynasts and temple-states
- Payment of taxes and provision of army.
- Network of bilateral relations between different communities and the king, renewed with each king



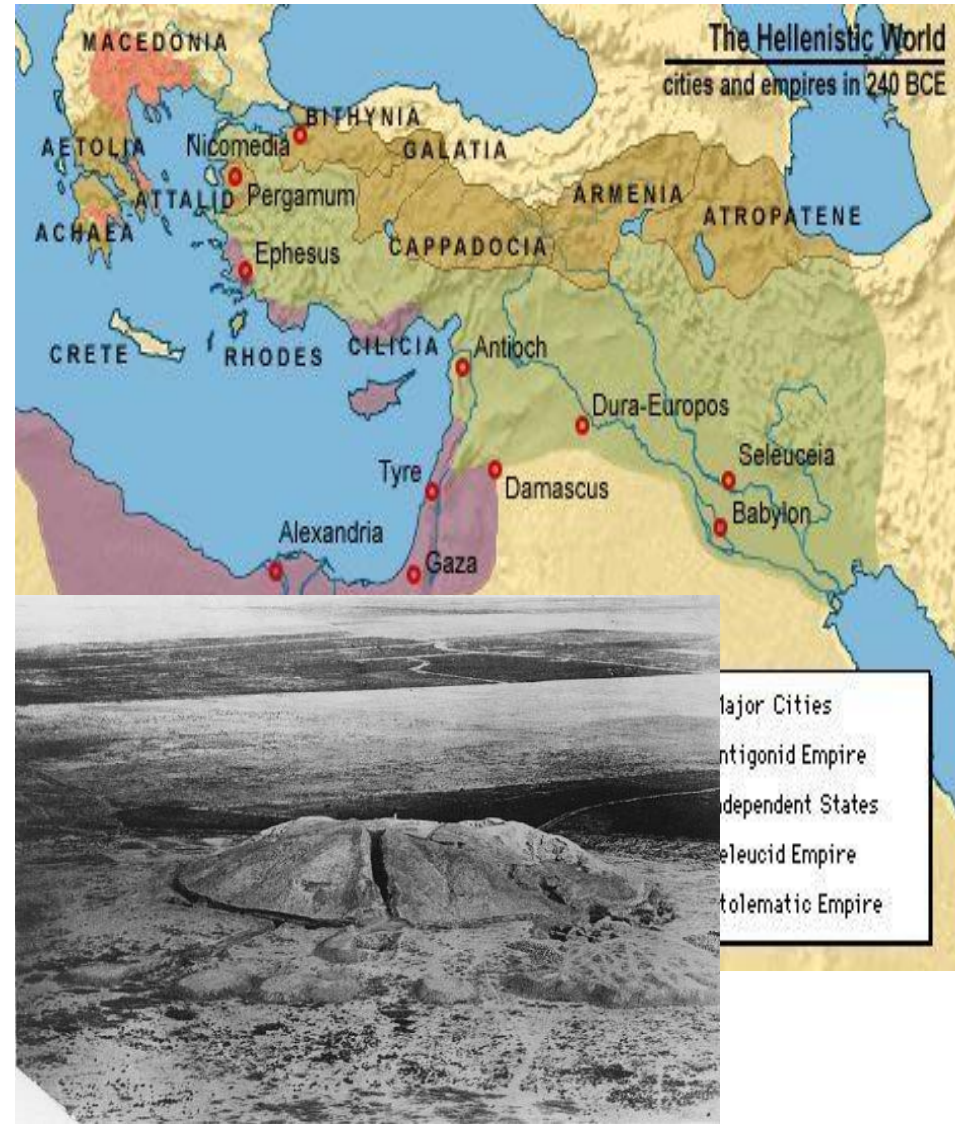
Achaemenid Heritage and Greek Present

- No deliberate connection with the Achaemenids
- Greek elements: gods, language, coins, *poleis*, Greek origins of royal friends
- Kings presented as Macedonians/Greeks by both Greek and eastern sources
- Greek elements serve imperial purposes not Hellenization



An example: Seleucid policy in Babylonia

- Respect for Babylonian traditions and priests (Antiochus I builds temples);
- Establishment of Greek *poleis* (Seleukeia on the Tigris promoted as a royal city)



Exploitation of the land: a sale of land by Antiochos II to Laodike

King Antiochus (II) to Metrophanes, greetings. We have sold to Laodice Pannucome the manor house, and the land which is attached to the village ... together with any hamlets which are found in this region, the peasants (*laoi*) who live there with all their household and belongings, and with the revenues of the 59th year, at a price of 30 talents of silver, and also any of the peasants from this village who have moved to other places, on condition that she pays no taxes to the royal treasury and that she will have the right to attach the land to any city she wishes. And similarly any who buy (the land) or receive it from her will own it lawfully and will attach it to any city they wish, unless Laodice has previously attached it to a city, in which case they will exercise their property rights where the land has been attached by Laodice.

Exploitation of the land: A gift of land to Aristodikides

King Antiochus to Meleager, greetings. Aristodicides of Assos came to see us requesting that we give him in the Hellespontine satrapy Petra, formerly held by Meleager, and in the territory of Petra 1,500 plethra of arable land and a further 2,000 plethra of arable land from the territory bordering on the portion already given to him. And we have given to him Petra, unless it has previously been given to someone else, and the land next to Petra, and a further 2,000 plethra of arable land because he as our 'friend' has performed for us all the services he could with all goodwill and zeal. Do you therefore investigate whether this Petra has not been previously given to someone else, and designate it with its neighbouring territory to Aristodicides, and from the royal land which neighbours on the land previously given to Aristodicides give instructions to measure out and assign to him 2,000 plethra, and to allow him to attach it to any city he wishes in the country (*chora*) and the alliance (*symmachia*). Should the royal peasants (*basilikoi laoi*) from the region of Petra wish to live at Petra for their own security, we have given instructions to Aristodicides to allow them to reside there. Farewell.



The land

- Royal estates cultivated by peasants living in villages and attached to the land (*λαοί*)
- ‘Private’ estates held by local dynasts, landlords and temples (whole villages) cultivated by dependent peasants as well
- Estates donated by the king
- Land belonging to cities or *katoikiai* (military colonies)

Dynastic rivalries in the 2nd and the 1st centuries

- The period after 162 is characterized by endless dynastic rivalries frequently leading to open civil wars that weaken the kingdom.
- internal unrest coexists with and provokes foreign interventions and invasions (Parthians, Jews, Arab tribes)



The end of the Seleucid state

- In 83 the citizens of Antiocheia appeal to Tigranes of Armenia who annexes Syria and Cilicia
- After Tigranes' defeat by the Romans, Lucullus restores a Seleucid king in Antiocheia
- The revival of civil wars leads Pompey to annex Syria as a Roman province in 64

