David Engels. *Benefactors, kings, rulers: studies on the Seleukid Empire between East and West*

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REFERENCES

David Engels. *Benefactors, kings, rulers: studies on the Seleukid Empire between East and West*. (Studia Hellenistica, 57). Leuven: Peeters, 2017. xiii+603 p., ISBN 9789042933279

- 1 This anthology collects fourteen essays, the majority of which (nine) have previously been published between 2010 and 2017 in various journals and conference volumes. Some of these essays have been translated from German into English.
- 2 One of Engels' aims is to look at the Seleucid Empire as a specifically Near Eastern Empire, as heir to the Achaemenid and predecessor of the Parthian Empires. In his view, "the Seleucid dynasty ceased in some way to be a colonial power and merged with the empire's most important ethnic group, the Iranians." (p. 509), and consequently the A. emphasizes the Iranian family ties of the Seleucids. The book comprises four sections, each consisting of three chapters; there are additionally an introductory and a concluding chapter). All three hitherto unpublished articles are found in the second section entitled *Founding the Seleukid Empire: Seleukos I and Antiochos I*. They are dedicated to the construction of the empire, the focus being on the empire's regions east of the Tigris river. While chapters Five and Six provide an exhaustive overview of the pertinent sources, their conclusions do not go beyond the parameters established by recent research on the Seleucid Empire, e.g. by Laurent Capdetrey and Paul Kosmin.
- 3 Chapter Five, *Conquest and Administration: The 'Upper Satrapies' under the Early Seleukids* looks at the composition of the still rather elusive construct of the Upper Satrapies, over which Antiochos I was installed as governor during his co-rulership. For Engels (contrary to much recent scholarship on the question), these Upper Satrapies did not include Babylonia. In the second part of this essay, he provides a prosopography of

highest officials of the easternmost satrapies of the Empire, stressing continuities with the pre-Hellenistic (Achaemenid) period in the area.

- 4 Chapter Six, entitled *Creating a new Empire: Colonisation, Syncretism, Exploration and Defence*, discusses city founding activities of the first Seleukid kings. The A. specifically points out the emergence of an imperial *koinē* merging Graeco-Macedonian components with elements drawn from all over the Empire, which characterizes these new cities and colonies.
- 5 Chapter Seven, *Apama, the Fire Sanctuary of Antiocheia and the Persian feast of Damascus: the Early Seleukids and the Religions of Iran*, discusses the largely negative depiction of Alexander the Great in Zoroastrian literature, before tracing the potential presence of Iranian motives in several passages from Graeco-Roman historiography, including Polyaeus' account of the siege of Damascus under Antiochus I.