Nikolaus Leo Overtoom. "The Power-Transition Crisis of the 160s–130s BCE and the Formation of the Parthian Empire"

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Electronic version

URL: <https://journals.openedition.org/abstractairanica/52627>

DOI: 10.4000/abstractairanica.52627

ISSN: 1961-960X

Publisher:

CNRS (UMR 7528 Mondes iraniens et indiens), Éditions de l'IFRI

Electronic reference

Reinhard Pirngruber, "Nikolaus Leo Overtoom. "The Power-Transition Crisis of the 160s–130s BCE and the Formation of the Parthian Empire"", *Abstracta Iranica* [Online], Volume 42-43 | 2021, document 22, Online since 15 April 2021, connection on 21 December 2022. URL: <http://journals.openedition.org/abstractairanica/52627> ; DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4000/abstractairanica.52627>

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REFERENCES

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- 1 The article discusses the rise of the Parthians to power over large territories in the Middle East at the expense of their Seleucid rivals. The author borrows a framework from International Relations theory, namely (Offensive) Realism, to place the actions of the Parthian kings, in particular Mithridates I in their wider geo-political environment. While the resulting account is rather close to a traditional (positivist) political history, the explicit reference to political science theory allows for a fresh appreciation of systemic pressures and dynamics. In particular, the position of the Seleucid Empire in several loosely (if at all) connected state-systems is revealing as regards the challenges for the dynasty in the century after c. 240 BCE and sheds new light on its decline. Thus, the Seleucid kings had to grapple simultaneously with the Mediterranean world dominated by Rome, the Near East characterized by the emergence of a multitude of smaller powers, and the East including Bactria and the Parthians, the latter an often neglected dimension.

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