Elynn Gorris. *Power and Politics in the Neo-Elamite Kingdom (c. 1100-520 BC)*

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Elynn Gorris. *Power and Politics in the Neo-Elamite Kingdom (c. 1100-520 BC)*. Acta Iranica, 60. 2020, Leuven: Peeters. XII-264 p., ill., tables, maps. ISBN: 9789042942660.

- 1 A thorough treatment of the political history of the last centuries of Elam, this book is a vital resource for comprehension of the political landscape of southwest Iran during the rise and early years of the Persian Empire. By exploiting all available resources to their maximum potential, this volume, based on the author's doctoral research, achieves its lofty aim of improving our understanding of the last centuries of Elam.
- 2 After setting the background with an overview of prior studies of Neo-Elamite history, a historical framework, an outline of extant textual, archaeological and iconographic evidence, and a review of various proposals for Neo-Elamite periodization, the book proceeds in three parts.
- 3 Part I tackles the complex and often thorny issue of Neo-Elamite dynastic chronology and offers an updated lineage of Neo-Elamite kings. Noting the rare indications of Elamite royalty during the so-called "Dark Ages" (c. 1100-760 BC) ensuing the fall of the Middle Elamite kingdom, it commences with the genealogy of the first Neo-Elamite dynasty spanning from Huban-tahra to Huban-menanu (c. 760-689 BC) and then revises the second, Hubanid, dynasty (688-650 BC) from Huban-haltaš I to Tammartu, also accounting for the rebel kings (650-645 BC) who attempted—and often succeeded—to seize the Elamite throne in the midst of a Hubanid family feud. It then reconstructs the sequence of Elamite kings and contemporary local kings or "sheiks" who ruled various parts of Elam from the sack of Susa by the Neo-Assyrian king Assurbanipal up into the early years of the Persian Empire (c. 645-520 BCE). Visual representations of the

evidence in tables and charts significantly aid comprehension of the complex and detailed arguments.

- 4 Highlighting Elam's strategic position between the Mesopotamian alluvial plain, the Persian Gulf and the Iranian highlands, and its close involvement in the inter-regional network of Mesopotamia, Part II delineates the true extent of the geopolitical power of the Neo-Elamite rulers and discusses evidence for the locales of some of the more elusive toponyms of the Elamite political sphere. The core area of the Neo-Elamite kingdom is defined as a duality of lowland territory composed of the Susiana, Ram Hormuz and Behbahan plains and highland territory incorporating the Izeh and Mamasani regions. Neo-Elamite geopolitical power also periodically extended to the peripheral zones of southern Lurestan, the highly contested Trans-Tigridian corridor, the Bakhtiari mountains and the Kur River Basin; areas where Elamite cultural influence persisted irrespective of political circumstances.
- 5 Part III examines the formation of a late Neo-Elamite state after the collapse of the Assyrian Empire, whose relations with Elam had oscillated between amicable and antagonistic. A reanalysis of the internal mechanics of the Neo-Elamite state—its government system, governing bodies, and officials— leads to the conclusion that we are looking at neither a unitary state nor a fragmentary state; rather, a decentralized government with a federal state formation. The author highlights that the complexity and flexibility of this system, and the dynamics between the various ethnic and social groups living within and along the borders of the Elamite state facilitated its longevity.

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