

F. Muccioli, *Gli epiteti ufficiali dei re ellenistici (Historia – Einzelschriften 224)*, Franz Steiner Verlag, Stuttgart 2013, pp. 562, ISBN 978-3-515-10126-4

One of the biggest difficulties in studies on the history of the Hellenistic period is the small number and fragmentary nature of narrative sources. Scholars dealing with this era are therefore forced to make use of all available evidence in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of it. Paradoxically, this state of affairs makes it easier for them to undertake studies on issues that have previously been ignored or not sufficiently explored. This is demonstrated by the growing number of books and dissertations written in recent years on aspects of the history of the Hellenistic period as a whole as well as individual Hellenistic states.

F. Muccioli's book on the official titles of Hellenistic rulers is just such a work. This issue was examined by several scholars in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but their interest did not go beyond the scope of their selected topics. None of Muccioli's predecessors took the trouble to conduct a systematic analysis of all the sources related to this question, although it appears very frequently in the context of all interpretations related to the ideological contents and propaganda functions of the titles used by the various Hellenistic rulers.

Muccioli has been analysing and interpreting the titles of the Hellenistic rulers for some two decades, generating an impressive list of publications on the subject. An important characteristic of his research is the fact that it does not limit itself to the rulers of one dynasty, but encompasses all those of the Hellenistic period. This broad sweep gives readers certainty that his conclusions are very universal, referring to the entire Hellenistic world.

First and foremost, we should note that the author's objective was not to create a repertoire of the titles used by Hellenistic rulers, but to use them to reconstruct the monarchical ideology of the period. This means both those aspects that are common to all monarchies of the era, and the individual characteristic of the various dynasties. Thanks to the latter, whose significance tends to be disregarded in general studies of the Hellenistic monarchy, we are able to perceive differences that divide the local dynasties on the basis of the specific cultural context from which they derived and in which they operated (pp. 17–18).

Muccioli begins in the introduction (*Introduzione*, pp. 9–33) by discussing at length issues concerning the history of previous studies on the titles of Hellenistic kings, the methodological premises of his research as well as the problems posed by their analysis and interpretation. The main part of his study is divided into three sections. In the first, *Linee evolutive* (pp. 35–155), he presents the development of the practice of using royal

titles in the Hellenistic world from the time of Alexander the Great to the fall of the Ptolemaic monarchy. Although he does this chronologically, the author also strives to demonstrate how this practice worked within each dynasty. In doing so, he pays attention to the dynasties in the sphere of influence of the Hellenistic world as well as its major dynasties. For this reason, his observations on the positions of the non-Greek rulers of less important dynasties in Asia Minor, or the ruling Arsacid Party, who were happy to copy Hellenistic models (*La diffusione degli epiteti ufficiali nelle monarchie tra Ellenismo e altre culture*, pp. 124–145), are certainly of note. Muccioli also looks specifically at the Macedonian monarchy, because the position of the rulers of Macedonia regarding usage of titles was distinctly different from that taken by other Hellenistic kings (pp. 145–155).

In the second part (*Indagine analitica*, pp. 157–352), Muccioli provides a classification of the titles of Hellenistic rulers mentioned in the sources. He groups them into five types based on character. The first refers to the political sphere (pp. 159–202), and includes such epithets as Soter, Euergetes (Eucharistos), Dikaios, Chrestos and Ktistes. The second group of titles clearly refers to the ruler's family relations (pp. 203–255), and includes titles including Philadelphos, Philopator, Eupator, Philometor, Philoteknos, Philostorgos, and Philopappos. The third comprises bynames which Muccioli defines as “epiteti con prefisso philo-/phil- non attinenti alla sfera familiare” (pp. 257–280). Since these express clearly defined ideological contents, they can with little reservation be classed in the category of titles referring to the political sphere. However, as they mostly allude to specific political attitudes towards Rome and its representatives and towards the person's own state or various groups of its subjects, the author rightly gives them their own distinct category. This group includes the names Philhellen, Philopatris (Philodemos), Philorhomaïos, Philokaisar (Philosebastos), Philantonios, and Philklaudios. The fourth group of royal titles constitutes those which refer to the religious sphere (pp. 281–332), and specifically to the ruler's divine features. These are mostly expressed by the epithets Theos, Epiphanes, Theos Epiphanes, and Eusebes. In this chapter, Muccioli devotes a separate section to the question of titles and the cult dominant in the monarchies associated by cultural and religious traditions with the Iranian world (cf. pp. 318–332). This long-discussed topic has undergone something of a renaissance in recent years. The last category of royal titles are those concerning the military sphere (cf. pp. 333–352). These were popular and common names used by Hellenistic monarchs, as they played an important role in their victory propaganda campaigns.

The third part of the book provides a summary of the previous analyses and interpretations and concerns the ideal image of the Hellenistic ruler emerging from beyond the titles he used (*Le immagini del re ellenistico*, pp. 353–390). An aspect worthy of note here is the analysis of the influence that the philosophical treatises *Περὶ βασιλείας*, popular in the Hellenistic period, had on the types of title the kings adopted. However, according to the author it is difficult to find such a connection, and we can therefore fairly safely say that the philosophical concepts contained in these treatises did not exert much influence on their epithets (cf. pp. 355–370). Also interesting are his conclusions on the question of the confrontation of the contents of the Hellenistic rulers' propaganda and the practices of their rules with the conceptions of the ideal ruler expressed in the literature of the time, the public reception of the titles they used and the rules (or lack thereof) which rulers of various dynasties applied in using bynames. Muccioli's conclu-

sions are very brief (*Conclusioni*, pp. 390–393). He refrains from repeating what has been established in the previous chapters, instead outlining the trends common to the whole era associated with the practice of kings using individual epithets and the changes taking place over time.

At the end of the book, we find two annexes presenting observations on the titles used by Hellenistic rulers connected to the Iranian world, which were not the subject of the analysis and interpretation in the main section. Annex I (pp. 395–417) covers the titles of Megas, Basileus Megas and Basileus Basileon, while Annex II (pp. 419–421) covers the title of Autokrator.

There is no doubt that the sheer size of this work, and the large number of sources that the author has used, make it a notable accomplishment. Moreover, regardless of whether we deem all of the author's interpretations to be legitimate or criticise them, the investigation, analysis and interpretations that he has performed add considerably to the state of knowledge and provide new conclusions on the ideological and propaganda aspects of the Hellenistic monarchies. Listing all of these would require a large amount of space. Certainly very important is the claim that the individual Hellenistic monarchies had their own characteristic titles, and the ideological contents linked to them changed constantly over time. A further important conclusion for scholars is the argument that the same titles could have various meanings in different monarchies. This makes it impossible to automatically and uncritically transfer the models used for one monarchy to another.

The abundance of source material accumulated analysed by Muccioli and the significance and originality of his conclusions make his work one that will be required reading for most scholars interested in the Hellenistic period. They will be aided in using it by chronological tables of all Hellenistic dynasties (pp. 423–429), an impressive bibliography (pp. 431–515) and an index of the sources used (pp. 517–546) and figures cited (pp. 547–562).

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