

gar el período republicano, especialmente el tardorrepublicano. Sin embargo, como todo análisis amplio, tenemos la sensación de que estamos ante una reflexión demasiado general sobre el concepto, quizás exceptuando la citada segunda parte de la obra, y estamos seguros de que las mutaciones a las que se refiere son muchísimas más. Todo ello, sin embargo, con la comprensible limitación de nuestras fuentes, mayormente parciales y escuetas. La propia investigadora señala al final de su obra que, en el fondo, lo útil de su monografía es ser consciente de que, ante estos conceptos, es importante «trouver une

matrice, un “germe”, et explorer ses potentialités». No podemos estar más de acuerdo, puesto que estamos ante una interpretación muy didáctica del momento histórico y del concepto de *res publica*. Sin duda, recomendamos su lectura y creemos que se alza como una herramienta utilísima con la que abordar cualquier estudio histórico.

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OGDEN, Daniel

The Legend of Seleucus Kingship, Narrative and Mythmaking in the Ancient World

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017, xiv-386 p.
ISBN 978-1-107-16478-9*

Despite the existence of many works about Seleucus I, we lacked a book that studied his legend, given that scholars had always paid limited attention to the legendary material. Daniel Ogden has been the first to write a monograph about this topic. In fact, it is the first book in any language devoted to the analysis and reconstruction of Seleucus' legend. Except for the introduction, the reader will not find any specific chapter about Seleucus' life, because its purpose is to examine the tales, stories and myths related to the founder of the Seleucid Empire. Even so, there is not a lack of historical or biographical details about Seleucus.

The book is divided into four distinct sections: introduction; seven chapters; six appendices and a bibliography. The introduction (p. 1-22) summarises the biographical details about Seleucus and offers the reader a brief presentation of the main sources about him (Diodorus, Justin,

Plutarch, Appian, Lucian, Libanius and Malalas) and the methodology used by the author. Ogden warns us that for various reasons the parallels between *Alexander Romance* and Seleucus will be a *leitmotiv* in his book (p. 9). Indeed, comparisons between *Alexander Romance* and Seleucus are a constant throughout the book. As a result, we can imagine “the legend of Seleucus and the *Alexander Romance* developing in tandem with each other across the Hellenistic period” (p. 325).

Then, following a biographical order, Ogden analyses the most important aspects of Seleucus' legend, which align with other ancient Greek narratives, universal folktales and tales resembling those of *Alexander Romance*.

As we stated before, the book comprises seven chapters. The first one (“Birth Myths and Omens of Greatness”, p. 23-67) focuses on a particular reference to the signs and

* I thank Déborah Molina Verdejo (deborah.molinaverdejo@gmail.com) for her careful and detailed correction of the English. The responsibility for any remaining errors is entirely my own.

omens that predicted the future kingship of Seleucus (dreams, signet ring, divine sonship, the diadem, the anchor and his mythical ancestors). All these elements bear many similarities with the Greek and Macedonian cultural imaginary. Ogden proves that the legend of Seleucus is deeply related not only to the figure of Alexander the Great, but also to the Macedonian tradition.

The second chapter ("Seleucus' Horseback Flight from Babylon", p. 68-98), on Seleucus' escape from Babylon is in our opinion one of the best chapters of this book, and perhaps one of the best things that Ogden has written in his prolific career. So far, the account of Diodorus (19.55) about the flight of Seleucus from Babylon was considered by most scholars as historical. But after this book, nobody will deny that this account was created based on the Macedonian tale of Perdicas and his siblings told by Herodotus (8.137-8). In Seleucus' case, a river is never mentioned, but according to Ogden, Seleucus had to cross the Euphrates during his flight. All these motives (flight, river, prophecies, token, etc.) created a specific story about the origins of the founders of ancient empires (Cyrus, Mithridates or Ardashir).

The third chapter ("Omens and Myths of City and Cult Foundation", p. 99-173) is devoted to study the famed Tetrapolis, that is to say, the four cities founded by Seleucus in Syria. These cities took their names from members of Seleucus' family: Seleucia in Pieria (from himself), Antioch (from his father or son), Apamea (from his wife) and Laodicea (from his mother) and they were evidence of the "macedonisation" of Syria (p. 173).

The fourth chapter ("Combabus and Stratonice", p. 174-206) examines the fictional tale of Combabus and the queen Arsinoe. As in the biblical story of Potiphar's wife, Combabus is falsely accused of raping a woman, the queen Stratonice, Seleucus' wife. Combabus is exonerated when it becomes apparent that he is in reality a eunuch. Ogden analyses with great meticulousness

all the alternatives and variations of this story to finish with the story of the Arsinoe, wife of King Lysimachus, and the eunuch Philetaerus, the royal treasurer. Readers intuitively grasp that both stories are linked, even after the author gives his opinion (p. 205).

The fifth chapter ("Antiochus and Stratonice", p. 207-46) gives special attention to the famed love story of Antiochus and his step-mother Stratonice. Antiochus was deeply in love with Stratonice, and fell mortally ill because of it. The doctor Erasistratus discovered his secret and, thanks to him, Seleucus gave up Stratonice in marriage to his son. The wedding between Seleucus and Stratonice is a historical fact, what inspired this romantic tale. However, this story bears again many similarities with another Macedonian account: the passion of Perdicas II for the wife of his father. It is really difficult to say which one was developed first, but in any case, "it is almost certainly true that, once both tales were up and running, they influenced each other's content" (p. 245). The origin of these stories would be a Macedonian tradition "in accordance with which successors tended to marry a widow of their predecessor, whether he was their father or not" (p. 240).

The sixth chapter ("Omens of Death, Death and Revenge", p. 247-69) provides the reader a complete list of the many versions about the death of Seleucus. The first thing which comes to our attention is the diversity of places in which the death of Seleucus took place (Macedonia, Thrace or Seleucia on the Tigris).

Finally, the seventh chapter ("Coins, Texts and Traditions", p. 270-325) collects the main writings and material sources (coins) about the legend of Seleucus. Ogden has decided to place this chapter at the end of his book, which enables us to deliver better on the last issue that he provides us: was there a work on Seleucus similar to *Alexander Romance*? Following the observations of P.M. Fraser, Ogden

seeks to argue for the existence of an ancient master narrative comparable to the *Alexander Romance* that bound together the different episodes in a coherent story (p. 304-5). This raises a series of questions and objections: why has not that book been preserved? Could this book influence on *Alexander Romance*? In any case, there are so many similarities between Seleucus' legend and the *Alexander Romance* that this theory cannot be rejected. In a word, this question is doomed to repetition.

The book concludes with six appendices that allow the author to discuss further certain issues raised in the context of his study.

All in all, as we have stated before, legends have traditionally been poorly

valued by some scholars. However, this work is able to demonstrate that some aspects of Seleucus' history considered as true (the escape of Seleucus from Babylon) are legends, and behind these legends there are important elements of historical value. This book will be a source of inspiration for scholars not only interested in the *Diadochoi*, given that it is especially useful for every issue related to ancient Macedonia, the Hellenistic period and traditional narratives in antiquity.

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ARNAU DE VILANOVA

Arnaldi de Villanova Opera Medica Omnia, XIII: Speculum medicine

Edició, prefaci i comentari introductor de Michael R. McVaugh

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La col·lecció que edita les obres mèdiques completes d'Arnau de Vilanova (*Arnaldi de Villanova Opera Medica Omnia = AVOMO*), que durant les últimes quatre dècades ha estat, gràcies al seu rigor i qualitat, la principal referència en el món dels estudis arnaldians, ha publicat finalment un volum —el XIII— dedicat a l'*Speculum medicine*, l'escrit més ambiciós del mestre català. No ha estat senzill aconseguir-ho. Tal com s'explica al prefaci del volum, la realització d'aquesta tasca s'ha anat posposant al llarg dels anys, ja que el comitè editorial, a causa de les colossals dimensions de l'obra —unes 90.000 paraules, més del doble que qualsevol altra— i la seva extrema complexitat —abraça tota la medicina d'Arnau i és, donant sentit al seu títol, un reflex del conjunt de la teoria mèdica europea del començament del segle XIV—, no acabava de trobar la manera adequada de

plantejar el projecte a un sol investigador. La decisió definitiva, motivada pel fet que el programa general d'edicions s'apropava al seu final, ha estat presa amb coherència, i l'excel·lent volum que n'ha resultat així ho certifica. La labor ha pertocat a Michael R. McVaugh, il·lustre historiador de la medicina medieval i un dels principals impulsors dels *AVOMO*. Aquesta vegada no s'ha dut a terme una edició completa i crítica del text, sinó que s'ha optat per establir-lo a partir de les lliçons d'alguns dels millors manuscrits conservats, que han estat seleccionats després de col·locar uns quants passatges de l'obra.

L'estudi introductor que obre el volum, magníficament organitzat, està dividit en tres grans blocs. El primer tracta sobre tot allò relacionat amb la composició dels últims escrits mèdics d'Arnau, entre els quals l'*Speculum* ocupa un lloc preminent. Segons