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Danuta Okoń, *Septimius Severus et senatores: Septimius Severus' Personal Policy towards Senators in the Light of Prosopographic Research (193-211 A.D.)* Uniwersytet Szczeciński. *Rozprawy i studia*, 828. Szczecin: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Szczecińskiego, 2012. Pp. 147. ISBN 9788372418753.

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In the book under review, Danuta Okoń analyzes the ways in which Septimius Severus (AD 193-211) dealt with the members of the senate, who held many of the offices in the imperial government. This is the first volume of a planned series that will cover all the members of the Severan dynasty. By basing the study on epigraphic materials and the prosopography of Roman officials of the first few centuries AD, Okoń builds on the work of scholars such as Werner Eck, Geza Alföldy and Paul Leunissen, who have offered us extensive prosopographic analyses of inscriptions and other ancient sources. Okoń promises her readers a 'fuller profile' of the careers of senators under the Severan dynasty (p. 10).

In six chapters, Okoń presents various groups of senators whose careers were influenced by the decisions of the emperor himself. Whereas the first chapter sets the historical stage for Severus' reign and discusses the men who ended up in his close circle of trusted advisors, chapter two concentrates on those senators who made the wrong choice in the period of civil wars that eventually led to Severus' rise to power and ended up being killed or condemned to death in the early years of Severus' reign. Chapters three, four and five focus on members of the senate at different stages of their careers, holding offices such as provincial governors, when they were promising *candidati* and *adlecti*, or eventually, at the highest level, as consul (the chapter on consuls is surprisingly short). The final chapter deals with the emperor and his relationship with the senate in general and is based mostly on literary sources (Herodian, Cassius Dio and the *Historia Augusta*). Okoń's attempt to show a pattern of *gentes senatoriae* would have profited greatly from Inge Mennen's book *Power and Status in the Roman Empire, AD 193-284* (2011), in which Mennen carefully examines many of the families mentioned by Okoń in this chapter, but this book was probably too recent for her to have consulted it.

The author's short conclusion demonstrates in two graphs (pp. 105 and 106) some of the patterns that have emerged throughout the book from her prosopographical study, although the reader need not be surprised by these patterns since they have emerged from previous scholarship as well. Even though extensive prosopographies of individuals are necessary for an understanding of the lives and careers of Roman officials, the analyses tend to remain at a merely descriptive level. It would have been more helpful for Okoń to have placed the patterns that emerge from these prosopographical studies into the broader, analytical context of the workings of imperial power and the overall functioning of his empire, especially as Septimius Severus stood at the beginning of a century that we tend to treat as full of crises.

Furthermore, the book is marked by the omission of some modern scholarship that would have been expected, and from which Okoń would have profited, in a discussion of a Roman emperor and his policy towards senators, such as Fergus Millar's *The Emperor in the Roman*

World (1992), Andreas Kriekhaus' *Senatorische Familien und ihren Patriae* (2006) or the above mentioned work by Mennen.

It is obvious that Okoń has much experience in the field of epigraphy and prosopography, although in the end both the argumentation and clarity of the book are hindered by the fact that it was written in Polish and then translated into English. Many sentences appear to be a too-close translation of the original, which unfortunately does not result in clear English.