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Soldiers, Settlers, and Citizens: *Klêrouchoi* in the Seleukid Empire

Seleukid Lecture Series III.3

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The existence of *klêrouchoi* – settlers who were given a plot of land (*klêros*) in return for military service – within the Seleukid Empire is a long-debated topic. On the one hand, significant evidence exists that a class of mostly Greek and Macedonian settlers known as *katoikoi* fulfilled the same functions as *klêrouchoi* and garrisoned a number of Seleukid cities in exchange for farmland. On the other, a number of scholars have questioned the military nature of the *katoikoi* and even the very fact that a class similar to the Ptolemaic *klêrouchoi* existed at all within the Seleukid kingdom. While past scholarship was indeed too quick to assume the existence of Seleukid *klêrouchoi* based on Ptolemaic evidence, military settlers were commonplace during the fourth century in both Greece as well as Macedonia. This, combined with their extensive use by the Ptolemies, makes it unlikely that some form of *klêrouchoi* did not exist within other Successor realms. Although this paper will argue for the existence of military settlers within the Seleukid Empire, it equally aims to illustrate that the *katoikoi* were fundamentally different from the *klêrouchoi* in Ptolemaic Egypt. The latter were often settled in sparsely populated areas and on fallow land; the former, however, were almost exclusively allotted plots in or near cities with existing and at times large populations. Therefore, in comparison to previous and contemporary *klêrouchoi*, Seleukid settlers were far less likely to alter the cultural landscapes of the places in which they lived; in fact, since cooperation with locals was never vital to their continued existence on the land, they remained a privileged class, othering native populations and reinforcing Greek notions of citizenship, exclusivity, and cultural superiority.