

Kingship in Hellenistic Bactria

by

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Abstract

This study examines the history of Hellenistic Bactrian kingship and the means by which kings acquired, legitimated, and maintained their authority. The history of this kingship covers the period from Alexander the Great's conquest of Bactria (330-327 BC) to the reign of the last Hellenistic king c. 140 BC during which a number of different dynasties had control. The acquisition of kingship largely followed Alexander's example and conformed to a pattern of imperialistic conquest. Legitimation was closely tied to conquest, as the possession of territory "spear-won" by a triumphant conqueror conferred the opportunity to claim kingship. The extent to which a ruler matched the heroic precedents set by legendary kings of Asia played a large part in identifying men worthy of kingship. The maintenance of kingship was achieved through propaganda, city foundations, and other identifiers of the king's ideological status and through careful control of the royal administration.

Table of Contents

Title Page	i
Abstract	ii
Table of Contents	iii
Acknowledgments	iv
Introduction	1
Chapter 1 – Sources	8
Ancient Sources	8
Modern Sources	11
Archaeological Evidence	14
Numismatics	21
Chapter 2 – Chronology of Bactria’s Hellenistic Period	26
Alexander in Bactria	26
Post-Alexander Consolidations of Power	33
The Seleucid Era	36
The Diodotids	41
An Independent Bactria	48
Chapter 3 – The Ideological Basis for Kingship	57
Influences of Imperialism	58
Legendary History and Eastern Conquest	66
Case Study 1: Imperialistic Kingship and Marriage	73
Case Study 2: Kingship on Coins	79
Chapter 4 – Kingship and Ruling Power	86
City Foundations	87
Economic Administration	100
Conclusion	110
Conclusion	113
Bibliography	120
Appendix 1 – Map of Bactria	130
Appendix 2 – Timeline	131

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Introduction

Hellenistic kingship in Bactria began when Alexander the Great made his entrance into the central Asian country in 330 BC. Bactria had previous experience with kings under two centuries of Achaemenid rule and during the unknown years of its own prehistory, but the coming of Alexander ushered in a period when the rulers of Bactria followed a style of kingship which originated from Hellenic culture around the Mediterranean far to the west. The Hellenistic period in Bactria lasted for as long as the Hellenistic kings – the top representatives of the political qualities characterizing this post-Classical culture – held sway. The kings fall into three groups: Alexander himself and the non-royal officials who ruled in his name after his death, Seleucus I and the early Seleucids, and the succession of independent kings from Diodotus I to Heliocles. In total, these men's reigns (there were no queens) lasted about nineteen decades from 330 to c. 140 BC.

The character of the kings and the nature of their kingship remained quite consistent through the years of the Bactrian kingdom, despite several dynastic changes. The primary model for the acquisition and exercise of ruling power was Macedonian style imperialism inherited from Alexander, and the method for legitimation was an appeal to the Hellenistic mentality using legendary and mythological motifs far older. The Achaemenid empire had its place as the source for certain administrative styles and structures, in particular the satrapy, but the Bactrian royal administration was inherited from Seleucus I and influenced by the Ptolemaic system and later, when Bactria was independent, by the western Seleucid empire.

This study identifies three major themes to the history of the Bactrian kingship,

shaped in large part by the sources presently available. The first theme is the historical narrative. It survives today in a fragmentary form divided between several authors, and, though quite episodic in nature, the events it does cover show that the kings were of literary and historical interest as successors to Alexander's kingship. The literary texts together with numismatic evidence are the basis for the second theme: the king's character as a ruler with divine and heroic connections, a participant in imperial supremacy exclusive to the most worthy, and an emulator of the greatest heroic achievements. The third theme – the king's ruling power – draws upon textual and physical sources and highlights the methods by which the Hellenistic kings maintained their control of Bactria and carried out the practical measures which would strengthen the construct of their character.

This study will adhere closely to the historical account of the Bactrian kings as it appears in the different textual sources and from the chronology provided by numismatic evidence, thus the resulting conclusions on the nature of Bactrian kingship will be contained mostly within the political and economic sphere. There are undoubtedly relationships between kingship and the cultural and religious situation in Hellenistic Bactria, but access to these topics is necessarily from a broader selection of source materials and their attendant methods of interpretation, such as art history and ethnography. The social history of Bactria in which one would find such discussions simply does not yet exist, though with more investigations into different areas of this history, such as kingship, the possibility that such a project will go forward is promising. At certain points cultural issues do connect to the narrative of kingship presented, as political and economic matters in Hellenistic Bactria embraced a variety of ideological

concerns.

The Hellenistic field – in which era the Greek world is typically understood as undergoing geographical and cultural expansion – encourages study of regions, like Bactria, which are rather distant from the Mediterranean. Undertaking this study may seem risky due to a heightened potential for leaving the realm of Classical history altogether and falling prey to the label of “Orientalism”, much as Alexander the Great upon discovering things in Asia of great interest to himself was accused of turning barbarian.¹ As a type of antidote to this, the question of Hellenism is often invoked, with its main concern being the extent to which Hellenic culture was transmitted to and established among non-Greeks. In assuming that Greek interactions with Asia can be resolved to an account of cultural conquest, Hellenism seeks to simplify what seems a confusing period when the meeting of west and east showed different results depending on location, gender, ethnicity, and class.² Orientalism and Hellenism are really two sides of the same coin, each limiting historical study to either an eastern or western perspective and reducing cultural exchange to a one-way flow.³ Even though the Greeks may have bequeathed to us a fear of barbarizing, they themselves never limited their interests to the Mediterranean. As study of Bactria’s Hellenistic period shows, Greek perceptions of Asia played a large part in shaping the institution of kingship in Bactria and in determining the types of information available about it. A history of this kingship is thus never far removed from the western mentality and fits squarely within the Hellenistic milieu.

¹ See Chapter 3, p. 76.

² Susan E. Alcock, “Breaking up the Hellenistic world: survey and society,” in *Classical Greece: ancient histories and modern archaeologies*, Ian Morris, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 171-175.

³ For an example of this, see Chapter 1, pp. 12-13, for the description of Tarn and Narain’s works.

Bactria was indeed a distant land but by no means isolated; it was the main juncture for trade routes from Siberia, western China, India, and the Iranian plateau and the focus of great interest among ancient geographers. The large corpus of ancient topographical surveys on Bactria and its surrounding regions is readily available but highly unwieldy for a study requiring only a basic orientation, so it will be helpful to supply just a brief description. Bactria was a land existing in ancient times only; it covered present-day Afghanistan and the southern portions of Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan. As far as ancient geographers were concerned, its borders were the Oxus river on the north (the Amu Darya river, still the northern border of Afghanistan and called the Prandj in its upper course), inaccessible mountains to the east (the Pamirs), the Caucasus (Hindu Kush) range to the south, and to the west the Arius river (Har-i Rud) and the central Iranian desert. A number of rivers bringing melt-water down from the surrounding mountains combined with foothills and lowland plains to ensure that Bactria was home to large agricultural and pastoral populations.⁴

In geo-political terms, the inhabitants of Bactria were first conquered by Cyrus the Great c. 545-540, and from then on the country was a satrapy in the Achaemenid empire.⁵ The Hellenistic-era Bactrian satrapy included regions to the north outside the official borders given above: Margiana and Sogdia(na), which had been individual satrapies under the Achaemenids. Margiana centred on the Margiana oasis on the Margus river, modern-day Merv, Turkmenistan on the Murghab river. Sogdia was the more mountainous land between the Oxus and Iaxartes (Syr Darya) rivers with its capital at

⁴ Strabo 11.8.7, 11.10.1-11.1; Ammanius Marcellinus 23.6.55-58; Curtius 7.4.26, 30.

⁵ Herodotus indicates that Cyrus took central Asia after defeating Croesus in 546 but before conquering the neo-Babylonian empire in 539: Hdt. 1.153, 177.

Marakanda (Samarkhand) on the Zerafshan oasis, and beyond Sogdia lay the endless steppes of the central Asian Scythians. When Bactria became independent it began to expand into other neighbouring regions: Aria, Paropamisus, and Arachosia. Aria(na) was to the east around the Arius river and what is modern-day Herat. Paropamisus (or the Paropamisadae) was a mountainous area on the south side of the Hindu Kush, and Arachosia was the land spreading beneath them through which what is now the Kabul river flowed into the Indus.⁶

“Bactria” is the Greek transliteration of the indigenous term for the country, deriving from Bactra, the name of its capital city; at times it appears as “Bactrianê/a”, which was its name as a satrapy.⁷ The city’s present name is still “Balkh”, the Islamic-era transliteration; these terms are all versions of the original Iranian name, listed as “Bâkhtri” in Persian cuneiform inscriptions from the Achaemenid era.⁸ Of the above place names, certain of the Greek names do resemble modern ones: Marg(iana) and Merv, the Margus and Murghab, Marakanda and Samarkhand, Aria and Herat, the Arius and Har-i Rud. Usage of place names in this study will follow the Greek terms. Given the apparent consistency of place names, it is then not surprising that the present-day Persian-speaking Tajiks are most likely the descendants of the same Bactrians whom Cyrus and Alexander encountered.⁹ As indicated by its place names, Bactria has experienced great

⁶ Amm. Marc. 23.6.59-60, 69, 72; Strabo 11.10.1-2; Edgar Knobloch, *The Archaeology & Architecture of Afghanistan* (Stroud, Gloucestershire: Tempus, 2002), 25.

⁷ The -nê/-na suffix denotes satrapies. Cf. Strabo 11.8.2, 11.11.4; Justin 13.4.19; W. W. Tarn, *The Greeks in Bactria & India*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1951), 3-4.

⁸ H. G. Rawlinson, *Bactria: The History of a Forgotten Empire* (London, 1912; reprint: New York: AMS Press, 1969), 1, n. 1.

⁹ Giorgio Vercellin, “Bactria: Past, Present and Future,” in *Bactria: An Ancient Oasis Civilization from the Sands of Afghanistan*, Giancarlo Ligabue, Sandro Salvatori, eds. (Venice: Erizzo, 1990), 34, 36.

continuity over the *longue durée*. Fertile loess soil provides for the timeless architecture in strong and waterproof mud brick and is excellent for agriculture, to which millennia have been devoted. The many river valleys were augmented early on by irrigation canals and *qanats*, vast underground channels dug dozens of metres below the surface of the ground.¹⁰ Both the Iranians and Greeks were diligent in maintaining irrigation structures, but following the Hellenistic period Bactria underwent some desertification, and the many “well-watered” cities and towns described in ancient times disappeared as intervening years saw abandonment of water-works.¹¹ Bactra/Balkh, for example, now a vast, empty mound, was once a renowned citadel situated in one of the world’s largest oases and called “Umm-al bilad,” or “the Mother of Cities.”¹²

Amidst the millennia of continuous civilization in Bactria, the Hellenistic period seems a brief, bright spark, but its history is important both to the account of central Asian history and to the narrative of the Hellenistic world and the ways in which Hellenes engaged with the world around them as well as interacting with their own past. The kings of Hellenistic Bactria provide an example of the latter activities, showing how tradition, enterprise, conquest, legend, and pragmatism worked together to perpetuate and increase the success of Alexander the Great’s far-eastern venture. The tools with which they achieved this survive today as the very sources from which we gain information about them. That the Bactrian kings appear in assorted western literary texts is testament to their identity as accomplishees of deeds worthy of record as exempla of ruling power

¹⁰ Ibid, 29-30.

¹¹ Tarn, *Greeks in Bactria*, 102-103.

¹² Arnold Toynbee, *Between Oxus and Jumna* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963), 92-94; Vercellin, “Bactria: Past, Present and Future,” 27.

and great kingship. The physical remains bearing the kings' chosen emblems of their authority compare well with the information about kingship transmitted by other means and the mode of that expression. From this body of evidence there emerges a picture of the kings and their kingship, both as they characterized it and as it truly was. The first chapter of this study will outline the different types of evidence available, both textual and material, as well as provide an account of the Bactrian historiography. The second chapter surveys the historical narrative to be gleaned from the sources; this account has its own problematical areas in which scholarly debate continues, but it is the necessary framework for all subsequent analyses of Bactrian politics and society. The third chapter examines the ideological aspects of the kingship in its two main categories of imperialism and legend, which served to set precedents and patterns for behaviour and also motivated new achievements. The fourth and final chapter touches again upon imperialism and legend, but this time in their more pragmatic manifestations as they guided the creation and maintenance of royal administration.

Chapter 1 – Sources

Bactria, though distant from the Mediterranean, has long been a focus of western imagination. This attention resulted in the writers of antiquity presenting Bactria as a place of fantastic wealth, fierce warriors, epic conquests, and mysterious kings. In latter years scholars have added to the ancient accounts new and equally impressive evidence for Bactrian civilization. In order to survey concisely the evidence for Bactrian history it will be helpful to note the chronological development of the field and the types of sources available. Historiography begins with the classical textual tradition, and a surprisingly large number of writers provide information about Bactria. The tradition of modern scholarship began in the eighteenth century, and today it is as diverse and vital as ever. This is in large part due to an wealth of physical evidence for the Neolithic through Islamic periods gathered by archaeologists in Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Pakistan. To plumb fully the depths of the archaeological discoveries from the Hellenistic period in Bactria requires far more space than is available here; the evidence presented is that which indicates the various inhabitants of Bactria whom the Hellenistic kings ruled and the basic defensive, administrative, and social structures of their settlements. Numismatics, the original body of physical evidence for Bactria, is at present dependent upon archaeology for providing new material and historical contexts, yet it remains a cornerstone for studying Bactrian politics, economy, and culture.

Ancient Sources

Descriptions of Bactria and accounts of Bactrian history appear in a number of different classical texts. The ancient authors who had an interest in Bactria generally wrote according to particular themes, and the information available thus falls into three

categories: geographical survey, warfare, and legendary history. Geographical information comes primarily from Strabo, as well as Ptolemy's *Geography*, Isidore of Charax' *Stathmoi Parthikoi* (*Parthian Stations*), Pliny the Elder's *Naturalis Historia*, and Stephanus of Byzantium's *Ethnika*. These texts cover considerably more than just Bactria, but what they do say concentrates on descriptions of the topography and vegetation and the names of regions, rivers, mountains, inhabitants, and city-sites. At times Strabo and Pliny provide important historical details and explanations, particularly alongside the identifications of cities and towns.

There are more classical texts dealing with warfare and related political concerns in Central Asia, though by no means do they present a complete picture of such things. The earliest sources are Herodotus' *Histories* and Ctesias of Cnidus's *Persika*. Given their fifth-century dates, both authors present pre-Alexander evidence for Bactria. Herodotus, for example, includes the Achaemenid imperial list of tribute gathered by Darius I from the twenty satrapies, including Bactria.¹ Ctesias provides accounts of the legendary warfare waged by Ninus, Semiramis, and the Achaemenids which set the pattern for later Hellenistic ventures into Bactria. A number of later authors describe these later events and in so doing, supply evidence regarding the nature of Bactrian kingship. Polybius provides an invaluable account of the campaign by Seleucid Antiochus III against Euthydemus of Bactria.² Diodorus Siculus presents several episodes of Bactrian history from Alexander's invasion and conquest through to his successors' various wars. The two Alexander historians Arrian and Curtius also describe these events,

¹ Herodotus 3.89-95.

² Polybius 10.49, 11.34.

providing more and different details of Alexander's protracted Bactrian and Sogdian campaign. What remains of Trogus' *Philippic History* in his prologues and Justin's epitomes is a key source for the Bactrian revolt of Diodotus I from the Seleucids and for later events in the reign of the Bactrian king Eucratides. There is an ongoing dispute over Justin's dating scheme in the revolt passage, since he seems to include several possible dates.³ It must be remembered, though, that none of the above authors is infallible; some of them wrote centuries after the events they describe, and all were reliant on other sources for their information.

The third aspect of accounts on Bactria is the area of legendary history. Already mentioned is Ctesias' *Persika*, whose tale of Ninus' invasion of Bactria and Semiramis' success at the siege of Bactra gives an excellent picture of pre-Hellenistic (even pre-Achaemenid) Bactrian society, though the historicity of the actual campaign is rather more doubtful, since Ctesias wrote his account as a description of marvelous and exotic events.⁴ Plutarch appears to do his own mythologizing in his treatise on Alexander's philosophical civilizing of Asia, yet, again, here is a passage containing details which highlight some important social conditions in the far east.⁵ Arguably, the various Alexander historians also are not immune from including tall tales in their accounts.

³ Cf. A. Cunningham, *Coins of Alexander's Successors in the East, (Bactria, Ariana & India)* (1884; reprint: Chicago: Argonaut, 1969), 79ff; J. Wolski, "The Decay of the Iranian Empire of the Seleucids and the Chronology of Parthian Beginnings," *Berytus* 12 (1956), 35ff; D. Musti, "Syria and the East," *Cambridge Ancient History*, 2nd ed, vol. 7, pt. 1, F.W. Walbank et al, eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 213-4, 219-20; Frank Holt, *Thundering Zeus: The Making of Hellenistic Bactria* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 57ff; Jeffrey Lerner, *The Impact of Seleucid Decline on the Eastern Iranian Plateau, The Foundations of Arsacid Parthia and Graeco-Bactria*, *Historia: Einzelschriften*, Heft 123 (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1999), 12ff; H. Sidky, *The Greek Kingdom of Bactria: from Alexander to Eucratides the Great* (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 2000), 140ff.

⁴ Ctesias *FGrHist* 688 F 1b.

⁵ Plutarch *de Alex.* 328C-329A.

Sorting out mythical hyperbole from historical events is helpful for constructing a factual framework, but legendary aspects cannot be completely discounted since they often reflect real conditions in the past.

One other non-classical textual source describes Bactria less than two decades after its last Hellenistic ruler. In 128/7 BC, the Chinese official Chang Ch'ien explored west beyond China on a search for military allies against China's enemy the nomadic Hsiung-nu (Huns). He reconnoitred around Ferghana, Sogdiana, East Parthia, and Bactria, returning home in 126/5 to introduce reportedly the grape, pomegranate, sesame, coriander, and garlic to China and to write a report on his western discoveries for the Han emperor Wu-ti. The contents of this document and Chang Ch'ien's story were included in chapter 123 of the *Shih-chi*, a massive history finished c. 99 BC by Ssu-ma Ch'ien, a court astrologer and the so-called "Herodotus of China". This text survives today, and the relevant portions describe the territory, people, and social organization of the former Bactrian kingdom which Chang Ch'ien encountered.⁶

Modern Sources

Bactrian historiography began anew after a millennium-long hiatus when in 1738 Theophilus Bayer published *Historia Regni Graecorum Bactriani*, collecting all the available textual evidence together with two coins bearing the names of Greek kings.⁷ Over the following centuries as European military activity and exploration in Central

⁶ Friedrich Hirth, "The Story of Chang K'ien, China's Pioneer in Western Asia," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 37 (1917), 91, 93-98, 135. The spelling here of Chinese names will follow the Wade-Giles system rather than the Pinyin, as this proves more readable phonetically and is the system followed by the most recent translation used: Ssu-ma Ch'ien, *Records of the Grand Historian of China*, vol. 2, Burton Watson, trans. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961).

⁷ H. H. Wilson, *Ariana Antiqua* (1841; reprint: Delhi: Oriental Publishers, 1971), 3; A. N. Lahiri, *Corpus of Indo-Greek Coins* (Calcutta: Poddar, 1965), 3-4.

Asia increased so too did the body of physical evidence for Bactria and the number of interested scholars, who now began to consider the historical interpretations possible for the apparent existence of several dynasties of Greek kings in Central Asia. H. H. Wilson published in 1841 *Ariana Antiqua, A Descriptive Account of the Antiquities and Coins of Afghanistan* surveying the classical account of Bactrian history and the reigns and dates of nineteen rulers named on coins.⁸ There later followed contributions by Major-General Cunningham of the Archaeological Survey of India on twenty-nine different rulers and by Percy Gardner on thirty-three rulers.⁹ Their research and writing were efforts to rationalize the plethora of rulers' names, textual references, and scattered coin provenances into reasonable schemes of dynastic chronologies and territories, and they have bequeathed this analytical style to many subsequent scholars.

The early twentieth century saw new scholarship in the field. Henry Rawlinson's 1912 history contains observations on cultural and social conditions as well as the *de rigueur* dynastic chronology but without the expected coin catalogue; George Macdonald wrote his chapter in much the same vein for the *Cambridge History of India* in 1921.¹⁰ In 1938, W. W. Tarn published the first edition of his lengthy history (the second edition appeared in 1951); 1957 saw A. K. Narain's contribution. These two authors form the basis for the second generation of Hellenistic Bactrian studies. They both concentrate on rationalizing the Bactrian dynasties and their kingdoms, but they emphasize the necessary

⁸ Wilson, *Ariana Antiqua*, 119ff, 215-242, 262-300.

⁹ Cunningham, *Coins of Alexander's Successors in the East*, 91ff; Percy Gardner, *Catalogue of Indian Coins in the British Museum: Greek and Scythic Kings of Bactria and India* (1886; reprint: Chicago: Argonaut, 1966), xix-xxxvii.

¹⁰ Rawlinson, *Bactria: The History of a Forgotten Empire*, passim; George Macdonald, "The Hellenic Kingdoms of Syria, Bactria, and Parthia," *Cambridge History of India*, vol. 1, E. J. Rapson, ed. (1921; reprint: Delhi: S. Chand, 1962), 384-419.

social and cultural contexts, though doing so from opposite perspectives. Tarn feels Bactria is an essential component of a complete Hellenistic history, and Narain says it best belongs to Indian history. For example, both begin with Greek settlement in the far east, before, during, and after Alexander's time, but while Tarn traces out a continuity of colonial ties between Bactria and the West – including a highly inventive genealogy with Seleucid-Bactrian royal intermarriages – Narain sees the lengthy Greek presence in Central Asia as evidence for an equally long established assimilation to the native culture.¹¹

Up to Tarn and Narain the different histories of Bactria all rely on much the same evidence: a selection of classical references, a gradually-increasing collection of coins, and a few scattered archaeological discoveries. Since their time, archaeology in Bactria has increased greatly, and, despite the recent decades of warfare which halted many excavations, historians are still sorting through the new material and evaluating its historical implications. Recent studies still rely on the chronological structure provided by numismatics, but they are much more balanced thanks to Tarn and others and the wealth of new archaeological findings. Examples of this are found in the sections devoted to Bactria in the work of Susan Sherwin-White and Amélie Kuhrt, the recent editions of the *Cambridge History of Iran* and the *Cambridge Ancient History*, and the UNESCO volumes on ancient Central Asia.¹² One fairly prolific scholar of late is Frank Holt, whose

¹¹ Tarn, *Greeks in Bactria*, xxi, 18ff, 73; A. K. Narain, *The Indo-Greeks* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1957), 1-6, 10-11.

¹² Amélie Kuhrt, Susan Sherwin-White, *From Samarkhand to Sardis: A new approach to the Seleucid empire* (London: Duckworth, 1993); E. Bickerman, "The Seleucid Period," *Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. 2, Ilya Gershevitch, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 3-20; Musti, "Syria and the East," 175-220; A. H. Dani, P. Bernard, "Alexander and his successors in Central Asia," *History of civilizations of Central Asia*, vol. 2, János Harmatta, ed. (Paris: UNESCO, 1994), 67-97.

expertise is in numismatics but who makes strong use of social history in and of itself as well as for a critical tool in analyzing coins.¹³ In the last few decades scholars have also tended to pursue a limited focus of study, such as concentrating on a particular king or untangling the chronological confusions in Bactrian history, in contrast to Tarn's more universal approach.¹⁴ Some specific topics in Bactrian history which have yet to be addressed satisfactorily on their own terms are socio-economic organization and the interaction of ethnicity and political status.

Archaeological Evidence

For a time Hellenistic archaeology in Bactria was limited to the rather meager findings of French excavations at its eponymous town, Bactra (modern-day Balkh). In 1921, after finishing the first mission and not uncovering the anticipated riches, Alfred Foucher abandoned the site and declared ancient Bactrian civilization to be a "mirage".¹⁵ Optimistically, in 1947 Daniel Schlumberger made 61 *sondages* at Bactra but unearthed from the acropolis only a single ceramic shard of apparent Hellenistic fabric with a head in relief, short-haired, clean-shaven, and wearing a diadem.¹⁶ As of 1955 the earliest dated level which excavators had reached was from the second century AD, and the considerable stratigraphy of the site was felt at least not to rule out the possibility of

¹³ Cf. Frank L. Holt, *Alexander the Great and Bactria: The Formation of a Greek Frontier in Central Asia* (Leiden: Brill, 1988); Holt, *Thundering Zeus*.

¹⁴ Al. N. Oikonomides, "Eucratides the Great and Hellenistic Bactria," *Ancient World* 9 (1984), 29-34; Lerner, *Impact of Seleucid Decline*, 45-56; Sidky, *The Greek Kingdom of Bactria*, 130ff.

¹⁵ E. Kuzmina, "The 'Bactrian Mirage' and the Archaeological Reality: On the Problem of the Formation of North Bactrian Culture," *East & West* 26 (1976), 112.

¹⁶ D. Schlumberger, "La Prospection archeologique de Bactres," *Syria* 26 (1949), 186-7, fig 16.

Hellenistic remains buried deeper within the mound.¹⁷ This theory may yet be borne out, since illegal excavators in 1995 reportedly discovered “fluted columns” similar to those found at Ai Khanoum, another more famous Hellenistic site.¹⁸

In 1963 the ruins of a Hellenistic town dating from the late fourth to second centuries were discovered at Ai Khanoum on the junction of the Kokcha and Pranj rivers. French-led excavations began immediately and over the next two decades steadily uncovered spectacular evidence of Greek settlement in northeast Bactria. Ai Khanoum consists of an acropolis and a lower town separated by a street running the full length of the site; its defenses were the acropolis’ ridge on the east, ramparts with ditch and towers along the town’s north wall, and at the west and south the two rivers’ steep and fortified banks. The presence of a large (100 by 140 metres) arsenal for making and storing arms and a citadel (100 by 150 metres) at the southeast corner of the acropolis towering eighty metres above the Kokcha river and separated from the main acropolis by a moat suggests that Ai Khanoum in part served a military purpose.¹⁹ Other major structures at the site also point to an administrative role. Covering 87,500 square metres of the lower town is a palace complex with a large (137 by 108 metres) courtyard surrounded by Corinthian columns, a columned vestibule, four “chancery” and “audience” halls, residential units complete with mosaic-floored bathrooms, a smaller courtyard in Doric style, a treasury,

¹⁷ Rodney Young, “The South Wall of Balkh-Bactra,” *American Journal of Archaeology* 59 (1955), 270, 276.

¹⁸ Knobloch, *The Archaeology & Architecture of Afghanistan*, 97.

¹⁹ Paul Bernard, “An Ancient Greek City in Central Asia,” *Scientific American* 246.1 (1982), 148; C. Rapin, “Greeks in Afghanistan: Ai Khanum,” in *Greek Colonists and Native Populations: Proceedings of the First Australian Congress of Classical Archaeology* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1990), 331-332.

and numerous offices and storerooms.²⁰ The treasury housed certain very productive discoveries; there excavators found raw and worked precious stones, including lapis lazuli from the upper Kokcha valley, carnelian and rubies from the mountains of the upper Pranj, and coral from India.²¹ In addition, they discovered many jar fragments bearing labels indicating that they had held olive oil and cash reserves of Bactrian and Indian coins. These ostraka are written in Greek, and they provide the names of dozens of officials, most of them Greek but also some Bactrians.²²

The town has many other interesting structures. Built into the slope of the acropolis is a theatre of larger dimensions than the Hellenistic theatre in Babylon, and containing private boxes, a feature generally absent from traditional western “democratic” theatres. Performances of Greek drama likely took place, given Plutarch’s statement that Euripides and Sophocles were made part of Asian cultural life,²³ possibly corroborated by discovery in the palace of a parchment fragment impression of some poetic or dramatic work.²⁴ North of the palace is a gymnasium with palaestra and porticoes; there excavators found a limestone block with a dedicatory inscription:

²⁰ P. Bernard, “La campagne de fouilles de 1970 à Ai Khanoum (Afghanistan),” *Comptes Rendues des Séances – Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* (1971), 386ff; Bernard, “Campagne de fouilles 1974 à Ai Khanoum (Afghanistan),” *Comptes Rendues des Séances – Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* (1975), 168ff; Rapin, “Greeks in Afghanistan,” 333-334.

²¹ Bernard, “An Ancient Greek City,” 151; Rapin, “Greeks in Afghanistan,” 334-335; P. Bernard, “The Greek Kingdoms of Central Asia,” in *History of civilizations of Central Asia*, vol 2, Harmatta, ed. (Paris: UNESCO, 1994), 110.

²² Claude Rapin, “Les inscriptions économiques de la trésorerie hellénistique d’Ai Khanoum (Afghanistan),” *Bulletin de Correspondence Hellénique* 107 (1983), 319ff.

²³ P. Bernard, “Campagne de fouilles 1975 à Ai Khanoum (Afghanistan),” *Comptes Rendues des Séances – Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* (1976), 314-318; Bernard, “The Greek Kingdoms,” 111-112; Plut. *de Alex.* 328D.

²⁴ Alongside the poetic fragment was also discovered an impression of a papyrus fragment containing an Aristotelian philosophical treatise. Rapin, “Greeks in Afghanistan,” 339.

Τριβαλλὸς / καὶ Στράτων / Στράτωνος / Ἑρμῆ, Ἡρακλεῖ.²⁵ A few houses were unearthed, most of them on a non-Greek plan similar to the palace's residential areas.²⁶ A necropolis was located outside the town walls to the northeast, but at the centre of town were two special burial sites: a mausoleum and a heroon. The heroon – belonging to a certain Kineas – is a simple, podiumed structure containing four burials beneath its floor. A limestone block was discovered there bearing two Greek inscriptions: an epigram in small cursive lettering and a list of five Delphic maxims in larger, more monumental style. The former declares that Clearchus of Soli (late fourth century) in a private Hellenizing effort brought the wisdom of “holy Pytho” to the far east; though only five maxims survive, comparison with a similar Delphic text at Miletropolis suggests the inscription was originally far longer, and an indentation on the block's top surface is where a stele bearing the rest of the maxims likely stood.²⁷ Two temples were unearthed; one outside the north wall and another near the palace complete with a sanctuary complex and a small chapel.²⁸

Downstream from Ai Khanoum on the opposite side of the Pranj where it joins the Vakhsh river is the site of Takht-i Sangin, the centre of an impressive tale of modern

²⁵ (Triballos and Straton, sons of Straton, to Hermes and Heracles.) Bernard, “Campagne de fouilles 1975,” 293-298; Louis Robert, “De Delphes a l'Oxus, inscriptions grecques nouvelles de la Bactriane,” *Comptes Rendus des Séances – Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* (1965), 417-418.

²⁶ Bernard, “An Ancient Greek City,” 154; Rapin, “Greeks in Afghanistan,” 339-340.

²⁷ The necropolis: P. Bernard, “Campagne de fouilles à Ai Khanoum (Afghanistan),” *Comptes Rendus des Séances – Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* (1972), 608ff; the mausoleum: Bernard, “Campagne de fouilles 1974,” 180-189; the heroon: Robert, “De Delphes a l'Oxus,” 421ff; P. Bernard, “Ai Khanoum on the Oxus: A Hellenistic City in Central Asia,” *Proceedings of the British Academy* 53 (1967), 80-82; Leyla B. Pollak, “The Heroon at Ai-Khanoum,” *Afghanistan* 30 (1977), 73-76; for the Miletropolis inscription: Wilhelm Dittenberger, *Sylloge inscriptionum graecarum*, vol. 3 (Hildesheim: G. Olms, 1982), 1268.

²⁸ Bernard, “La campagne, 1970,” 414ff; Bernard, “Campagne,” (1972), 625ff; Bernard, *Campagne de fouilles 1975*, 303-306.

treasure hunting and banditry. In 1877, inside an ancient fortress overlooking the river junction some exploring peasants discovered a large and valuable golden treasure, part of which they sold to three merchants from Bokhara – Vazi ad-Din, Gulyam Mukhammad, and Shuker Ali – who were subsequently robbed en route to the antiquities markets in India. The three were attacked by bandits from the Gilzai tribe, but they were defended by an English captain F. C. Burton who chased the tribesmen and, coming upon them just as they were about to melt down the gold, compelled them to surrender part of it. Just under 2,000 objects and coins were then sold in Rawalpindi (mod. Pakistan) to various British officials, including General Cunningham. In time certain of the officials turned over their portions of the treasure to the British Museum, where for decades the collection of Achaemenid, Scythian, Bactrian, and Hellenistic objects mystified scholars and acquired the name it still bears, “the Treasure of the Oxus.” In 1993 interest in the treasure was revived when another very similar and much larger treasure was sold in England by members of an Afghan tribe who had rediscovered it hidden in their territory and, to the great relief of scholars, resisted the temptation to melt it down, the frequent fate of secretly discovered hoards. The story given is that the Gilzai tribesmen surrendered only part of the original treasure to Burton and then disappeared with the remainder into a mountain settlement up the Pyandzhshir river in Nuristan. The local chief seized the treasure and hid it underwater in a spring without disclosing the specific location; for a hundred and twenty years his family members searched, the whole time passing down the story of the gold’s origin on the banks of the ancient Oxus. The over 2,500 gold and silver objects and coins found in 1993 now reside in the Miho Museum, Japan, and are clearly part of the same original hoard from which the British Museum

treasure came.²⁹

A century after the Oxus treasure was first discovered Soviet archaeologists began excavating what was believed to be the original find-spot. They indeed discovered an important fortress: two parallel walls over a kilometre apart run from the river to nearby mountains enclosing a town and a citadel (165 by 237 metres) with a three metre deep moat, six metre high stone walls, and towers at each corner. Inside the citadel is a complex with three wings, of which the central wing contains a Zoroastrian temple. Built of whitewashed mud-brick, it has a columned porch, a central hall with alabaster floor and four columns to support the roof, and the surrounding corridors were filled with rich votive deposits laid down in post-Hellenistic years but mostly containing examples of Achaemenid and Hellenistic artwork.³⁰ A collection of sheathes for Greek swords dated to the fifth through third centuries BC is larger than the total finds of Greek swords from the entire Mediterranean basin to date.³¹ One enigmatic votive is a small altar topped by a bronze statuette of Marsyas playing the double flute and dedicated to the local river-god Oxus by an Iranian in a Greek inscription: *Εὐχὴν ἀνέθηκεν Ἀτροσωκῆς Ὁξῶ.*³² This Greek dedication to the Oxus has an Aramaic counterpart (“to Vakhsh”) inscribed on a

²⁹ R. D. Barnett, “The Art of Bactria and the Treasure of the Oxus,” *Iranica Antiqua* 8 (1968), 34-35; I. R. Pichikyan, “Rebirth of the Oxus Treasure: Second Part of the Oxus Treasure from the Miho Museum Collection,” *Ancient Civilizations (from Scythia to Siberia)*, 4.4 (1997), 306-311.

³⁰ B. A. Litvinskiy, I. R. Pichikyan, “The Temple of the Oxus,” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1981), 135-136, 154ff; B. A. Litvinskiy, I. R. Pichikyan, “Monuments of Art from the Sanctuary of Oxus (North Bactria),” in *From Hecataeus to Al-Huwarizmi: Sources for the History of Pre-Islamic Central Asia*, J. Harmatta, ed. (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1984), 28-29, 31ff; Boris A Litvinskiy, Igor R. Pichikyan, “From the Throne of Stone: A treasure trove of Greco-Bactrian art,” *UNESCO Courier* (July 1985), 29-31.

³¹ I. R. Pichikyan, “The Sheathes of the Greek Swords from Northern Bactria,” *Soviet Archaeology* 4 (1980), 202ff; Pichikyan, “Rebirth of the Oxus Treasure,” 308.

³² Litvinskiy, B. A., Yu. G. Vinogradov, I. R. Pichikyan, “The Votive Offering of Atrosokes, From the Temple of Oxus in Northern Bactria,” *Vestnik drevnej istorii* (1985): 84-110.

ring in the British Oxus Treasure. It thus appears that the two treasures came from further votive deposits located at the Takt-i Sangin temple which were concealed in stages from the third century BC to the first century AD when Kushan nomads from Scythia made an invasion into Bactria.³³

As well as excavating the impressive Takht-i Sangin, Soviet archaeologists throughout the later twentieth century uncovered extensive evidence for Bactrian civilization over the *longue durée*. One important area of discovery is the great extent to which an indigenous irrigation agriculture developed in the Bronze and Iron ages. All the rivers valleys and oases saw continued growth of sedentary occupation and urban settlements, despite several influxes of nomadic pastoralists, notably the Iranians. Thus Foucher's mirage is increasingly proved real.³⁴ Excavations have also uncovered on the Syr Darya (Iaxartes) river the ruins of Alexandria-Eschata (Khojent) and Cyropolis (Kurukada/Ura-Tyube), the famous cities at the boundary of Alexander's empire and reported sites of Greek colonies. Evidence there of widespread agriculture, strongly defended fortresses, and deep cultural layers have verified and exceeded the information from the textual tradition.³⁵

Archaeology in the Afghan portion of Bactria is now in an unsettled state of affairs. The Soviet invasion in 1979 put an end to all western European expeditions, and after the Soviet withdrawal in 1988 major political destabilization caused widespread

³³ Pichikyan, "Rebirth of the Oxus Treasure," 308, 312; Litvinskiy, Pichikyan, "Monuments of Art," 31-32.

³⁴ Grégoire Frumkin, *Archaeology in Soviet Central Asia* (Leiden: Brill, 1970), 66ff; Kuzmina, "The 'Bactrian Mirage'," 112ff, 126, 130; J. C. Gardin, "The Development of Eastern Bactria in Pre-Classical Times," *Puratattva* 10 (1981), 8ff.

³⁵ Justin 12.5.12-13; Strabo 11.11.4; Arrian 4.1.3, 4.4.1; Numan N. Negmatov, "Archaic Khojent – Alexandria Eschata (To the Problem of the Syr-Darya Basin Urbanization)," *Journal of Central Asia* 9.2 (1988), 42-45.

damage to museums and archaeological sites. In May 1993 and November 1995 the Kabul National Museum – which housed ninety percent of the material from all excavations in Afghanistan – suffered rocket attacks. This combined with persistent looting meant that as of 1996 seventy percent of the museum’s collection was missing, either destroyed or circulating on the black market. Even by 1993 investigators had established that the museum’s entire collection of 30,000 coins had been stolen, along with most of the finds from Ai Khanoum, which was itself badly pillaged.³⁶ To a certain extent, such damage to and movement of artifacts is simply a part of the historical process. Most Bactrian towns remained as dwelling places for many centuries, and so the alteration and recycling of structures was normal, such as the huge Islamic walls built over earlier ramparts at Balkh.³⁷ Ai Khanoum is exceptional because after its destruction in the late second century it was never reinhabited and so preserved in its original state for us to see. Yet even here the palace complex and heroon underwent several phases of renovation,³⁸ and after destruction by both invaders and earthquakes limestone blocks were removed for making lime, bronze and lead fixtures stripped from masonry, mud bricks taken from building foundations, and various tombs robbed.³⁹

Numismatics

The archaeology of the later twentieth century has greatly increased the body of numismatic evidence. Coin hoards such as that found in the Oxus Treasures, at Takt-i

³⁶ Nancy Hatch Dupree, “Museum Under Siege,” *Archaeology* 49.2 (1996), 42ff; Knobloch, *The Archaeology of Afghanistan*, 73-4.

³⁷ Young, “The South Wall of Balkh-Bactra,” 267ff.

³⁸ Bernard, “Ai Khanum on the Oxus,” 80-82; D. W. MacDowell, M. Taddei. “The Early Historic Period: Achaemenids and Greeks,” in F. R. Allchin, Norman Hammond, eds, *The Archaeology of Afghanistan from earliest times to the Timurid period* (London: Academic Press, 1978), 221, 224.

³⁹ Bernard, Ai Khanum on the Oxus,” 75-77.

Sangin, and at Ai Khanoum have added greater numbers and new stylistic types to catalogues and have given scholars better established dates and locales for tracing coin circulation.⁴⁰ Due to the theft of the coin collection from the Kabul Museum the preliminary studies on some of these hoards are now the only available sources. The theft also highlights a major issue for Bactrian numismatics: the difficulty in establishing provenance for, or even simply accessing, all the coins worldwide. There is no complete catalogue, and extant catalogues do not agree in their analyses of sequence and style, the criteria for which are determined on a very individual and subjective basis.⁴¹

An example of this subjectivity with considerable bearing on the study of Bactrian kingship is the question of ruler portraits and types. Bactrian coins typically follow the pattern set by the early Seleucids: gold, silver, and bronze denominations (staters, tetradrachms, drachms, obols, and chalkoi) are on the Attic weight standard, with the ruler's portrait on the obverse and a Greek deity or representative emblem and Greek legend on the reverse.⁴² Cataloguers often organize coin sequences according to the portraits' ages, yet clearly for rulers of the Hellenistic kingdoms royal portraiture was ideological, and thus the apparent youthfulness or maturity of a king depended more on his preference to appear as a godlike hero or a toughened military commander than on his

⁴⁰ Hyla Troxell, William Spengler, "A Hoard of Early Greek Coins from Afghanistan," *American Numismatic Society, Museum Notes* 15 (1969), 1ff; Frank Holt, "The Euthydemid Coinage of Bactria: Further Hoard Evidence from Ai Khanoum," *Revue Numismatique* 6th series, 23 (1981), 7ff; Nataliya Smirnova, "On Finds of Hellenistic Coins in Turkmenistan," *Ancient Civilizations (from Scythia to Siberia)* 3 (1996), 260ff; Pichikyan, "Rebirth of the Oxus Treasure," 310-311.

⁴¹ Olivier Guillaume, *Analysis of Reasonings in Archaeology: The Case of Graeco-Bactrian and Indo-Greek Numismatics*, trans. O. Boppearachchi (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1990), 8, 23ff.

⁴² Bronze coins may have a deity's portrait on the obverse instead of the ruler's. Edward Newell, *The Coinage of the Eastern Seleucid Mints, from Seleucus I to Antiochus III* (American Numismatic Society, *Numismatic Studies* 1, 1938), 229ff; Michael Mitchiner, *Indo-Greek and Indo Scythian Coinage*, vol. 1 (London: Hawkins, 1975), 28ff.

actual age.⁴³ In the same way, caution is advisable when reverse types are interpreted as guides to a ruler's personality, for example when contrasting a battle-weary seated Heracles (Euthydemus I) with a Heracles "vigorously" standing (Demetrius, son of Euthydemus) in order to imply that the latter king better enjoyed the fruits of the former's exertions in empire-building.⁴⁴ Caution is needed because evaluations of type can soon lead to statements on the character and political conditions of kings' reigns.⁴⁵

Hellenistic Bactrian coins have a host of details beyond portraits and type which scholars examine for historical clues. Most of the coins have monograms whose true signification is still uncertain but variously suggested as denoting cities, mints, engravers, kings, magistrates, or dates, and depending on a cataloguer's opinion, arrangements of coins on the basis of monograms can widely differ.⁴⁶ Legends are also a point of focus. Beginning with Demetrius, kings issued some bilingual coins with obverse Greek legends and reverse legends in Brahmi and Kharoshthi, Aramaic-based scripts developed in the early Hellenistic period for the dialects of the northwest Indus region. The obvious inference is that the coins were intended for circulation among both Greek and Indian speakers, but concluding whether the kings actually controlled, or merely traded in, these

⁴³ J. J. Pollitt, *Art in the Hellenistic Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 70-71; R. R. R. Smith, *Hellenistic Royal Portraits* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1988), 46-47; Guillaume, *Analysis of Reasonings*, 73ff.

⁴⁴ Pollitt, *Art in the Hellenistic Age*, 285; Guillaume, *Analysis of Reasonings*, 78ff; Mitchiner, *Indo-Greek Coinage*, 48.

⁴⁵ Guillaume, *Analysis of Reasonings*, 89-93; cf. Narain, *The Indo-Greeks*, 47ff; Osmund Boppearachchi, "The Euthydemus' Imitations and the Date of Sogdian Independence," *Silk Road Art and Archaeology* 2 (1991/1992), 3-13.

⁴⁶ Cunningham, *Coins of Alexander's Successors*, 45ff; Lahiri, *Corpus*, 52-62; Mitchiner, *Indo-Greek Coinage*, 68, Table 10; Brian Krit, *Seleucid Coins of Bactria* (Lancaster, Pennsylvania: Classical Numismatic Group, 1996), 17.

bilingual regions is rather more difficult.⁴⁷ Related to this problem are the different weight systems for Bactrian coins. As noted above, the Attic standard was normal, but during the reigns of Antiochus I, Demetrius, Antimachus, and Eucratides coins (often the bilingual coins) were issued conforming to Greek denominations but Iranian or Indian weights.⁴⁸ Metal content is another debated aspect of the coins, particularly the cupro-nickel issues by Euthydemus II, Pantaleon, and Agathocles. Cunningham and Tarn suggested that Euthydemus I expanded his territory into Ferghana and acquired Chinese contacts, allowing these kings to obtain nickel for some special issues.⁴⁹ In fact, the Chinese nickel mines did not open for two more centuries, and local Bactrian copper mines likely produced a mixed ore.⁵⁰ The cupro-nickel coin-types match those of the three rulers' normal bronze coins, suggesting that minters did not distinguish the new alloy with a unique series or denomination.⁵¹ Though used most often in the rationalizations of dynasties and kingdom territories, the different qualities of Bactrian coinage fabric are more productive as evidence for economic relations in Bactria and the administrative role of its kings.

The sources of evidence for Hellenistic Bactria are many and diverse. Modern study has predominantly sought to reconcile the textual tradition of antiquity to the

⁴⁷ Wilson, *Ariana Antiqua*, 18-20; Cunningham, *Coins of Alexander's Successors*, 120-121; Gardner, *Catalogue of Indian Coins*, liii; Mitchiner, *Indo-Greek Coinage*, 46-47, 61-62, 69; R. Salomon, "Brahmi and Kharoshthi," in *The World's Writing Systems*, Peter Daniels, William Bright, eds (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 373, 375-377.

⁴⁸ Gardner, *Catalogue of Indian Coins*, lxxvii; Newell, *Eastern Seleucid Mints*, 233; Mitchiner, *Indo-Greek Coinage*, viii, 47.

⁴⁹ Cunningham, *Coins of Alexander's Successors*, 306-309; Tarn, *Greeks in Bactria*, 87.

⁵⁰ Schuyler Cammann, "The 'Bactrian Nickel Theory'," *American Journal of Archaeology* 62.4 (1958), 410-412; Mitchiner, *Indo-Greek Coinage*, 367.

⁵¹ Lahiri, *Corpus*, 17; Mitchiner, *Indo-Greek Coinage*, 63, 79, 84.

available archaeological and numismatic evidence. As recent study has shown, considerable agreement exists between these two types of evidence. Archaeological excavations have added some new Greek texts to the chronicle of Greek experiences in Bactria, and they have brought to light structures and artifacts which corroborate the classical accounts. The scope of the sources is very broad and has allowed scholars to study Bactrian history through settlement developments, dynastic phases, warfare and territorial expansion, and inter-cultural contacts and adaptations. To study Bactrian kingship draws upon this diversity, both for understanding the character of the rulers' kingdoms and for discovering the ways in which they acquired power, legitimized their rule, and administered their territories.

Chapter 2 – Chronology of Bactria's Hellenistic Period

The Hellenistic period in Bactrian history lasted for about two hundred years, from the point when Alexander the Great campaigned there from 330 to 327 to the entry of nomad tribes from the northeast c. 140 BC. Not only did contemporary events influence kingship in the ways kings acquired, expressed, and maintained their ruling power, but, due to classical writers' mode of writing, most of the information about the Hellenistic kings is to be gleaned from descriptions of events. The intent of this historical outline is thus to provide a concise, detailed account of the different phases of the Hellenistic period in Bactria, and so introduce the kings and the important events of their reigns. At a few points it will be appropriate to enter with more depth into some of the scholarly arguments and hypotheses surrounding certain episodes of Bactrian history. The outline will proceed chronologically, beginning with Alexander's Bactrian campaign and his arrangements of local governments. After Alexander came a brief period (323-312) in which Bactria was caught up in the successor generals' competition for Asian predominance; with the rise of the Seleucid empire Bactria entered a quiet and apparently peaceful period. Then at the middle of the third century the Seleucid satrap of Bactria initiated its separation from the empire, and from this point the independent Bactrian kingdom existed, continuing for a time the stability enjoyed under the Seleucids but eventually facing decline and takeover by the northern newcomers.

Alexander in Bactria

Alexander entered Bactria from the south over the Hindu Kush. This hazardous wintertime crossing (330/29 BC), was precipitated by the pursuit of Bessus, the satrap of Bactria who had killed Darius III, giving himself a claim to the Achaemenid throne

rivalling Alexander's, and who had fled into Bactria and was now gathering forces from all across the northeast.¹ Once safely down out of the passes, Alexander's army easily captured the major towns Drapsaca, Aornus, and Bactra, and soon reached the mighty Oxus river. Bessus had earlier crossed the river into Sogdia, burning the boats used in his crossing; he was apparently determined not to face Alexander, as he employed a scorched earth policy in his flight across Bactria in order to delay the Macedonian approach and crossed the Oxus as soon as he learnt that the Macedonian army was in the region. According to Arrian, the seven thousand Bactrian cavalry with Bessus deserted at this point and returned to their towns, once they realized that he did not intend to do battle with Alexander, who was currently sweeping through their territory.² Curtius, however, records that Bessus had 8,000 Bactrians, who deserted out of fear for Alexander.³

At the Oxus Alexander faced the greatest transportation dilemma of his campaign so far; it was a wide and deep stream with a swift current, and, as noted, the normal means for crossing it had been burnt by Bessus. Alexander managed to get his army across by floating upon inflated animal skins.⁴ The Oxus was later the site of a marvelous portent. The encamped soldiers were digging wells in search of fresh water, as the river was quite muddy with silt, and were finding only dry earth when suddenly a spring bubbled up inside Alexander's own tent. Arrian records that a spring of oil emerged nearby and Alexander promptly made a sacrifice, but Curtius believes that the story of a divine gift was spread by the soldiers who had overlooked the spring earlier in their

¹ Arrian 3.28; Curtius 5.9.5ff, 7.3.5ff; E. Badian, "Alexander in Iran," in *The Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. 2, Ilya Gershevitch, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 449.

² Arr. 3.28.8-29.2.

³ Curt. 7.4.20-21.

⁴ Arr. 3.29.2-5; Curt. 7.5.17-18.

digging efforts.⁵ The Oxus was for a long period the object of reverence, as shown by the votive offerings “to Oxus/Vakhsh” from the temple at Takht-i Sangin. Given that this trove of dedicated treasure contains the largest collection of fourth to third century Greek weapons ever found, including rare ivory *makhaira* (Thracian cavalry sword) sheaths,⁶ it appears that the river made a lasting impression upon Greek soldiers, as partly reflected in the textual accounts of portents among Alexander’s troops.

Across the Oxus, Bessus was soon betrayed and delivered to Alexander by Spitamenes, Bessus’ ally and the satrap of Sogdia. Alexander received his captive and then planned to tour Sogdia, travelling east to Marakanda and west to the Iaxartes, but for the first time he began to meet armed resistance from local inhabitants not under the command of his enemies. This new opposition began with a guerilla-style ambush upon a Macedonian foraging party and culminated in a battle at a mountainous stronghold in which Alexander himself was wounded.⁷ Frank Holt has suggested that the cause for this rebellion by people who were already peacefully conquered – that is, they did not put up a fight when Alexander first took charge of their lands and cities – was Alexander’s proposal for a new Greek city to be built on the banks of the Iaxartes where it would disrupt traditional socio-economic exchanges with the Scythians to the northeast.⁸ This hypothesis has merit, if applied to the later period when Alexander actually constructed his city and the Scythians against whom it was directed became involved in the fighting, but there was a considerable length of time between the proposal for the city and its

⁵ Arr. 4.15.7-8; Curt. 7.10.13-4. Cf. Strabo 11.11.5.

⁶ Pichikyan, “Rebirth of the Oxus Treasure,” 308; Pichikyan, “Sheathes of Greek Swords,” 212.

⁷ Arr. 3.29.6-30.11; Curt. 7.5.13-26, 7.5.36-6.3.

⁸ F. Holt, *Alexander the Great and Bactria*, 54ff.

construction during which rebellion took place all across Sogdia and north Bactria.⁹ Edmund Bloedow instead looks to a brief passage in Arrian for the cause. While in Sogdia Alexander reportedly “replenished the cavalry from the horses in that place (for many of his horses were lost in the crossing over the Hindu Kush and the crossing over the Oxus and on the journey from the Oxus)”.¹⁰ The region’s horses were, and still are, renowned throughout Central Asia for their strength, and the local Iranian socio-political system was at its foundation a nomadic “horse culture”.¹¹ Alexander undoubtedly chose for his replacements the best horses available, which would be the trained war-chargers. That Alexander stole the Sogdians’ own main tool of warfare to use it against them must have been intensely irritating, and it is no surprise that the first attack against his men came soon after he commandeered a valuable resource. This seemingly innocuous cavalry replenishment thus demonstrated the rapaciousness of the Macedonian army and was catalyst for an indigenous rebellion which must have greatly pleased Spitamenes and Alexander’s other enemies.¹²

In the midst of hostilities with local inhabitants, Alexander still sought to defeat his political enemies, the Bactrian and Sogdian lords. At this point his proposed city on

⁹ Edmund F. Bloedow, “Alexander the Great and those Sogdianaeen Horses: Prelude to Hellenism in Bactria-Sogdiana,” in *Hellenistische Studien: Gedenkschrift für Herman Bengtson*, Jakob Seibert, ed. (Munich: Editio Maris, 1991), 22.

¹⁰ Arr. 3.30.6; Curtius reports that the Macedonians crossing Hindu Kush were beset with starvation and resorted to eating their pack animals (7.4.22-25) and when down on the plains still faced the dangers of heat prostration and mortal thirst (7.5.2ff).

¹¹ Polybius (10.48.1-2) records how many decades later the Apasiakai nomads made impressive transhumance-style migration with their horses from the Sogdian mountains down to Hykania by the Caspian sea.

¹² Bloedow, “Those Sogdianaeen Horses,” 26-31. Curtius observed the abundance of pasture and horse herds in Bactria, giving a total of 30,000 cavalry (7.4.26, 30); years later Chang Ch’ien reported seeing in Ferghana (the steppes east of Sogdia and Bactria) fine horses bred from the *t’ien-ma*, or “heavenly horse,” Hirth, “The Story of Chang K’ien,” 95.

the Iaxartes, Alexandria Eschata, enters the picture as a device to keep out the Scythians whom Spitamenes was recruiting to his cause. The heroic marvel of an Alexandria at the world's edge immediately incurred serious Scythian disapproval. Archaeology shows that the Iaxartes valley was quite densely settled from the sixth century on, and the offense taken to Alexandria Eschata concerned not so much its presence as its role as an imperial check upon local populations who had hitherto enjoyed free passage back and forth across the river valley.¹³ Spitamenes and the other leaders further enflamed the rebellion by spreading rumours that Alexander intended to massacre the entire Bactrian cavalry, a neat *coup de grâce* to his earlier horse theft.¹⁴ Scythian war parties who hated the new city on their border and were eager to drive Alexander away and, presumably, eager for spoils, raided relentlessly.¹⁵ As a result, Alexander spent the remainder of the year with his forces divided between campaigns along the Iaxartes and around Marakanda, in the process sacking and burning several hostile towns. Wintering at Bactra (329/28) provided only a brief respite, and the entire following year was spent pursuing the incendiary Spitamenes and Scythian raiding bands and subduing the Bactrians and Sogdians. The latter effort was carried out with a heavier hand than the previous year, with numbers of inhabitants resettled in new garrison towns; Alexander also detached thousands of his soldiers to be military colonists.¹⁶

By the next winter (328/27), Alexander pushed the Scythian raiders back to the

¹³ Negmatov, "Archaic Khojent – Alexandria-Eschata," 42-43; Holt, *Alexander the Great and Bactria*, 54-56.

¹⁴ Arr. 4.1.5; Curt. 7.6.13-15.

¹⁵ Arr. 4.1.3-4, 3.6, 4.1ff; Curt. 7.7.1ff.

¹⁶ Arr. 4.2.1-7.1, 16.1-17.2; Curt. 7.9.20-10.16; A. B. Bosworth, "A Missing Year in the History of Alexander the Great," *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 101 (1981), 26. Justin 12.5.13 says that Alexander founded twelve cities in Bactria and Sogdiana.

northeast and drove the Bactrian and Sogdian rebel leaders into their most defensible strongholds, the so-called Rocks of Ariamazes, Sogdiana, and Chorienes. After not a little mountaineering and creative siege works, the fortresses were taken, causing the Scythians and other rebels to retreat further and providing Alexander with the opportunity for an extremely helpful marriage alliance to Oxyartes, a major Bactrian rebel leader whose daughter, Rhoxane, was inside the Rock of Sogdiana.¹⁷ Soon afterwards Spitamenes was finally killed, according to Arrian by rebels fleeing into the desert and in need of a diversion, and according to Curtius by his own wife.¹⁸ With domestic affairs in the rest of Bactria sufficiently managed and a firm grip on the political leadership, Alexander felt able to move his campaign back over the Hindu Kush and on into India.¹⁹

Alexander chose to administer his Central Asian territories through local satrapal governors, in much the same manner as the Achaemenids had done. He usually established a satrap, often an Iranian, as he moved forward on campaign, also leaving behind a *strategos*, invariably a Macedonian or Greek, to supervise a defensive garrison. He was quick to remove any officials whose administration was inadequate or rebellious, and a number of appointments occurred in quick succession.²⁰ Artabazes was one Iranian who had quite a successful career under Alexander. In the winter of 330/29 he was sent

¹⁷ Arr. 4.18.4-21.10; Curt. 7.11.1ff, 8.2.19ff. Archaeological work has uncovered a whole line of fortresses along the Oxus and its tributaries; all have substantial ramparts and citadels, take advantage of natural defenses like rivers and mountains, and date to the late Bronze Age (c. 1500 BC): J.-C. Gardin, "Fortified Sites of Eastern Bactria (Afghanistan) in Pre-Hellenistic Times," in *In the Land of the Gryphons: Papers on Central Asian archaeology in antiquity* (Florence: Casa Editrice Le Lettere, 1995), 83ff.

¹⁸ Arr. 4.17.7; Curt. 8.3.1-10.

¹⁹ Arr. 4.22.3.

²⁰ Arr. 3.29.5, 4.22.4, 6.15.3; Curt. 8.3.16-17.

with two Companions to deal with some rebels in Aria;²¹ a year or so later he was dispatched north in pursuit of Spitamenes.²² While his Iranian replacement in Aria fell out of favour and was replaced by the Companion Stasanor,²³ Artabazes became satrap of Bactria, with responsibility for the various Bactrian fortresses and Alexander's new colonies.²⁴ Artabazes soon requested permission to retire, and in his stead Alexander appointed first Clitus and then Amyntas, also appointing Coenus as *strategos* of a large Macedonian, Greek, and Iranian force to guard against incursions from the north.²⁵

En route to India when in the Paropamisadae (the satrapy of the south Hindu Kush) Alexander stopped at his town Alexandria (founded on the first crossing in 330/29) and replaced the town governor with a satrap, Tyriaspes.²⁶ Later, when Tyriaspes was found to be ruling poorly, Alexander brought in his father-in-law Oxyartes to control the Paropamisadae, an appointment he retained for the remainder of his career.²⁷ Oxyartes is an important example of an Achaemenid noble, even one who opposed Alexander, staying in his former office; initially, Alexander even allowed him to continue governing in Bactria, provided that two of his sons serve in the king's army.²⁸ Most of the governors of the upper satrapies retained their offices under Alexander's immediate successors; Perdikkas kept Oxyartes in the Paropamisadae, Stasanor in Aria, and Amyntas in Bactria,

²¹ Arr. 3.28.2.

²² Arr. 4.16.3.

²³ Arr. 3.29.5; Curt. 8.3.17.

²⁴ Arr. 3.29.1; Curt. 7.11.29.

²⁵ Curt. 8.1.19, 8.2.14; Arr. 4.17.3.

²⁶ Arr. 3.28.4, 4.22.3-5.

²⁷ Arr. 6.15.3; Diodorus 18.39.6; Justin 13.4.21.

²⁸ Curt. 8.4.21. Arrian names Oxyartes with Spitamenes as the two leaders who supported Bessus in his attempt to gather an army against Alexander (3.28.10).

but when Antipater was briefly in control of Asia (320) he appointed Stasanor over Bactria and Sogdia.²⁹

Post-Alexander Consolidations of Power

After Alexander's death in 323, Bactria had a rather ambivalent relationship with his various successors, pitting imperial loyalty to the west against local concerns. The strong pull exerted by these local concerns reflects the role which a person's status as a settler or ruler of Bactria had as the main determinant of his political identity. Even while Alexander still lived and was campaigning at the Indus, upon hearing a rumour of his death some three thousand of the veterans he had settled in Bactria and Sogdia revolted and occupied Bactra, and their leader, Athenodorus, declared himself king.³⁰ They were put down, but not too effectively, since at later news of Alexander's actual death in Babylon they revolted again, this time amassing twenty thousand infantry, three thousand cavalry, and a general, Pithon. In response, Perdikkas dispatched the satrap of Media, Pithon, with a choice army and letters authorizing the muster of more troops from local satraps. In the end, Pithon won the battle against the revolters with the aid of a traitor from their number, and the revolters were either killed or returned to their colonies.³¹ Ethnicity seems to have played a role in these events, the revolters being Greeks and their opponents Macedonians.³² It also appears that during the first revolt the Greeks also forced some native Bactrians into an alliance, probably a result of their occupation of

²⁹ Justin 13.4.19-23; Diod. 18.39.6.

³⁰ Diod. 17.99.5-6; Curt. 9.7.1-11.

³¹ Diod. 18.7.1-9.

³² Diod. 11.99.5, 18.7.1.

Bactra, the Bactrian capital.³³ Ultimately, Pithon's Macedonian army decided to massacre the defeated Greeks,³⁴ whose original reason for revolt was reportedly a "longing for the Greek education and way of life."³⁵

Through the next five or so years, Bactria remained a strong source of, if not revolt, at least the means for political opposition against those with imperial control. Pithon was quite disappointed at his troops' massacre of the Greek revolters in Bactria, for he had hoped that the subdued soldiers would add military strength to his own scheme for controlling Asia.³⁶ Though his initial plans were foiled, Pithon was later made strategos over the upper satrapies and soon used this to his advantage, killing the satrap of Parthia and replacing him with his own brother, Eudamus. The other upper satraps, appreciating the dangers posed to themselves by Pithon's ambition, collected their forces and drove him from the Iranian plateau.³⁷ Shortly after this, Eumenes arrived in Babylonia on a search for supporters in his conflict against Antigonos; he solicited the upper satraps' assistance and was thus pleased to discover them already gathered in Parthia.³⁸ The upper satraps were then drawn into the struggle for overlordship of Asia. Of a force of over twenty-three thousand strong, Oxyartes had supplied with his general Androbazes twelve hundred infantry and four hundred cavalry; Sibyrthus the Arachosian satrap had one thousand infantry and over six hundred cavalry; Stasander the Arian satrap (possibly a misspelling of Stasanor), who was also leading the Bactrian troops, had

³³ Curt. 9.7.1-2.

³⁴ Diod. 18.7. 8-9.

³⁵ *ποθοῦντες μὲν τὴν Ἑλληνικὴν ἀγωγὴν καὶ δίαιταν*, Diod. 18.7.1.

³⁶ Diod. 18.7.4, 8-9.

³⁷ Diod. 19.14.1-2.

³⁸ Diod. 19.12.3, 19.13.7, 19.14.4.

fifteen hundred infantry and one thousand cavalry.³⁹ All these forces were present at the battle between Eumenes and Antigonus near Gabene in 317, and both sides had additional troops, likely Bactrian cavalry, in their battle-lines, Eumenes with five hundred Thracians and Antigonus with eight hundred from the “upper colonies.”⁴⁰ The troops from the upper satrapies made up a little over fifteen percent of the total fighting forces present, but about forty-two percent of the cavalry.

There was dissention among the leaders in Eumenes’ camp leading up to this battle. While he was eager to march down out of Iran, the upper satraps and their representatives preferred a more defensive position near their territories; they prevailed, and Eumenes agreed to take up camp in Persis, lest he lose the badly-needed support of the satraps.⁴¹ Though Eumenes attempted in various ways to obtain the satraps’ admiration, fear, and loyalty,⁴² their concern was primarily for their satrapies, and once Antigonus appeared to have won, they departed east, leaving Eumenes to the mercy of his Macedonian troops.⁴³ Pithon, who fought with Antigonus, had not relinquished his hopes for advancement, and the prospect of keeping his generalship over the upper satrapies was used by Antigonus to lure Pithon into capture, whereupon he was tried and killed.⁴⁴ The same idea of a far eastern basis for power appealed years later to Demetrius, Antigonus’ son, who intended to flee east and incite revolt.⁴⁵

³⁹ Diod. 19.14.6-8.

⁴⁰ Diod. 19.27.3-5, 19.29.2.

⁴¹ Diod. 19.21.1-2.

⁴² Diod. 19.23.1-24.3.

⁴³ Diod. 19.43.5-9.

⁴⁴ Diod. 19.46.1-4.

⁴⁵ Plutarch *Dem.* 46.4.

Though the western generals habitually entertained the notion of taking control of Asia via the upper satrapies, this was a rash hope, as Antigonus discovered. Now the titular lord of Asia, he made no attempt to replace the upper satraps, who had fought against him, since they had also firmly established themselves in the local governments, acquired their own allies, and maintained strong militaries. Of Oxyartes Diodorus says that only “much time and a strong army” could dislodge him from the Paropamisadae, and Stasanor was equally entrenched in Bactria.⁴⁶ Coins issued in Oxyartes’ name have been found, showing that the satraps administered in economic matters. The coins are in two types, one an imitation of Alexander’s Athena type and one bearing a man’s head with the satrapal headdress on the obverse and a chariot on the reverse; both types bear the Aramaic name “Vakhshuwarda”, of which “Oxyartes” is the Greek transliteration.⁴⁷ Their earlier concerns under Eumenes indicate that the priorities of these rulers were the conditions of their own territories, and had they not already been gathered to expel Pithon from Parthia, it is questionable whether Eumenes could have gained their support at all. At the same time, the power with which they ruled Bactria and neighbouring regions, and the wealth they undoubtedly gained from them, was eagerly sought by the western generals.

The Seleucid Era

Little is heard of the upper satrapies until Seleucus campaigned there between 308 and 303 in order to establish his Asian empire, and few details of how he acquired control are available for what A. B. Bosworth calls “some of the most important actions of his

⁴⁶ Diod. 19.48.1-4.

⁴⁷ Mitchiner, *Indo-Greek Coinage*, 9.

career.”⁴⁸ Plutarch reports that Seleucus intended to “march with his army and reach the peoples bordering on India and the eparchies near the Hindu Kush;” Justin states that Seleucus did attack Bactria but gives no description of the fight.⁴⁹ Seleucus then proceeded on to India (c. 306/5) where he met the great Sandrocottus (Chandragupta) who had in recent years overcome Alexander’s Indian satraps and expanded his new Mauryan empire into Macedonian-controlled territory. Faced with a massive army gathered from all across the Ganges and Indus basins, Seleucus understandably did not carry on campaigning, but made a treaty with Sandrocottus, officially ceding to him the Indus valley and eastern Arachosia in exchange for five hundred war elephants.⁵⁰ Judging from the army gathered in the upper satrapies with which Seleucus arrived at Ipsus – twenty thousand infantry, over eleven thousand cavalry with mounted archers, four hundred and eighty elephants, and over one hundred scythed chariots – it appears that he indeed achieved suzerainty over most of the far east.⁵¹ He retained the satrapal system of government for his empire, which reportedly contained seventy-two satrapies.⁵² Appian provides one clue regarding how Seleucus won his territories, saying that he combined watchful and patient observation of the targeted lands with military might and calculated diplomacy.⁵³ As far as gaining the support of the upper satraps went, Bosworth suggests that Stasanor, Sibyrtius, and Oxyartes (if he was still alive) perhaps accepted Seleucus’

⁴⁸ A. B. Bosworth, *The Legacy of Alexander: Politics, Warfare, and Propaganda under the Successors* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 237.

⁴⁹ Plut. *Dem.* 7.2: ἀνέβη μετὰ δυνάμεως, τὰ συνοροῦντα τοῖς Ἰνδοῖς ἔθνη καὶ τὰς περὶ Καύκασον ἐπαρχίας προσαξόμενος; Justin 15.4.11.

⁵⁰ Justin 15.4.12-21; Strabo 15.2.9.

⁵¹ Diod. 20.113.4; cf. Plut. *Dem.* 28.3.

⁵² Appian *Syr.* 62.

⁵³ *Ibid.* 55.

Seleucus' claims, anticipating that he would soon return west and destroy himself in the war with Antigonus, just as the previous successor generals had, and leave them in peace as "de facto monarchs of their satrapies" – which of course did not happen.⁵⁴

In about 292, Seleucus divided the ruling responsibility of his empire in half, making his son, Antiochus, viceroy over all the satrapies east of the Euphrates river.⁵⁵ This reorganization coincided with his famous handing over of Stratonice to be Antiochus' wife.⁵⁶ Antiochus' own mother, Apama, was the daughter of the Sogdian rebel Spitamenes, and his vicerealty in the far east may have not only eased one strained family relationship, but also reasserted the ties with his maternal relatives. An inscription from Miletus erected by Seleucus' general Demodamas in honour of Apama says that "she supplied great kindness and goodwill to the Milesians on campaign with king Seleucus" in her homeland (c. 306-304), and Antiochus too may have benefited from connections with his maternal relatives during his eastern viceregency.⁵⁷ The same Demodamas, described by Pliny as "Seleuci et Antiochi regum dux" and so possibly their *strategos* in the northeast, erected altars to Apollo Didyma on the far side of the Iaxartes where he campaigned on their behalf.⁵⁸

One of Antiochus' duties was to repair damage done by nomadic incursions from

⁵⁴ Bosworth, *The Legacy of Alexander*, 238.

⁵⁵ App. *Syr.* 59, 62.

⁵⁶ Plut. *Dem.* 38.8.

⁵⁷ Arr. 7.4.6; Louis Robert, "Pline VI 49, Démodamas de Milet et la reine Apamè," *Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique* 108 (1984), 469-471. Cf. A. Rehm, *Die Inschriften, Milet*, vol. 3, 480, cited in Kuhrt, Sherwin-White, *Samarkhand*, 26; Pierre Briant, "The Seleucid Kingdom, the Achaemenid Empire and the History of the Near East in the First Millennium BC," in *Religion and Religious Practice in the Seleucid Kingdom*, Per Bilde et al, eds. (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 1990), 55; Dani, Bernard, "Alexander and his successors," 90-91.

⁵⁸ Pliny *N.H.* 6.49; Robert, "Pline VI 49," 467-468.

the north, and in this he was probably assisted by Demodamas. He refortified several cities which had been destroyed, including Artacabene in Aria and Alexandria in Margiana, which he refounded as Antiocheia.⁵⁹ The archaeological evidence from the Merv oasis confirms this; excavations have uncovered remains of Antiochus' *pakhsa* ramparts and his enlargement of the old Achaemenid town.⁶⁰ It is also a possibility that the Arian city Soteira was a foundation by Antiochus, one of whose epithets was "Soter".⁶¹ Another Antiocheia, whose foundation or refoundation would logically date to Antiochus' rule, is listed by Stephanus of Byzantium as being in "Scythia," which coincides rather well with Demodamas' activity in the northeast and may have been a foundation by him in honour of Antiochus.⁶² New Seleucid fortifications dating to the early third century also appear at Marakanda (Afrasiab, near Samarkhand), Artacoana (Herat), and Ai Khanoum.⁶³

Numismatic evidence, including both older discoveries of dubious provenance and new finds from Merv, attests to Antiochus' presence in the upper satrapies. He issued coins in his own name and jointly under Seleucus' from several different mints, at least one of which was located at Ai Khanoum, with another likely at Bactra.⁶⁴ For a time,

⁵⁹ Pliny *N.H.* 6.47, 93; Strabo 11.10.2; Isidore §15, *FGrHist* 781 F 2.

⁶⁰ Andrej N. Bader, Vassif A. Gaibov, Gennadij A. Kosshelenko, "Walls of Margiana," in *In the Land of the Gryphons*, Antonio Invernizzi, ed. (Florence: Casa Editrice, 1995), 41ff.

⁶¹ Ptolemy, *Geog.* 6.17.7; Ammanius Marcellinus 23.6.69; E. R. Bevan, *The House of Seleucus*, vol. 1 (London, 1902; reprint: New York: Barnes & Noble, 1966), 269. For "Soter," given after a victory against the Galatians: App. *Syr.* 65.

⁶² Step. Byz. s.v. *Antiocheia*; Robert, "Plin VI 49," 472; Tarn, *Greeks in Bactria*, 83-84.

⁶³ Dani, Bernard, "Alexander and his successors," 91-92.

⁶⁴ Newell, *Eastern Seleucid Mints*, 228ff; Mitchiner, *Indo-Greek Coinage*, 28-29; Arthur Houghton, Wayne Moore, "Some Early Far North-eastern Seleucid Mints," *American Numismatic Society, Museum Notes* 29 (1984), 5-9; Kritt, *Seleucid Coins of Bactria*, 9-10, 31ff; Smirnova, "Finds of Hellenistic Coins in Turkmenistan," 262-4.

Antiochus seems to have issued coins on a non-Attic weight standard probably corresponding to Mauryan coinage in India; this was likely done for purposes of trade with the regions Seleucus had ceded to Sandrocottus.⁶⁵ Seleucus and Antiochus maintained diplomatic relations with the Mauryan empire, undoubtedly using Bactria as a base of operations. Megasthenes, Seleucus' ambassador to Sandrocottus, made journeys as far as the Ganges river and took up residence with Sibyrtius the Arachosian satrap.⁶⁶ Just as Seleucus through his envoys explored the regions of India beyond the Indus, the furthest point of Alexander's journey east,⁶⁷ he and Antiochus also sent the general Demodamas on an expedition past the Iaxartes river, which had been Alexander's limit for the northeastern lands.⁶⁸

Information about Bactria is generally lacking for the next thirty or so years during Antiochus' full reign and that of his son Antiochus II. They continued to mint coins in Bactria,⁶⁹ and a cuneiform document from Babylon records that the Bactrian satrap supplied twenty elephants for Antiochus I's campaign against Egypt in 274/3,⁷⁰ but Bactria figured little as a theatre for Seleucid political activity in these years. Then, in the mid-second century, the Bactrian satrap Diodotus began to change local coinage, still issuing in Antiochus' name, but now with his own portrait and type (Zeus carrying the

⁶⁵ Newell, *Eastern Seleucid Mints*, 233.

⁶⁶ Arr. 5.6.2; Strabo 2.1.9.

⁶⁷ Pliny *N.H.* 6.62.

⁶⁸ Pliny *N.H.* 6.49; Demodamas likely was sent in response to the nomadic movements in this region: Kuhrt, Sherwin-White, *Samarkhand*, 19.

⁶⁹ Newell, *Eastern Seleucid Mints*, 236-245; Mitchiner, *Indo-Greek Coinage*, 29-32.

⁷⁰ Kuhrt, Sherwin-White, *Samarkhand*, 46-7.

aegis and wielding the thunderbolt).⁷¹ At this point the ancient writers again take up the account of Bactrian history, saying that Diodotus revolted from Seleucid imperial control and declared himself king.⁷²

The Diodotids

A lengthy debate has surrounded the textual and numismatic evidence for the Diodotid revolt. On the surface this debate appears to concern the dating of the revolt, since between them, Justin and Strabo's accounts suggest several potential dates. The same passages also point to some causes for the revolt, and combined with the numismatic evidence they hint at the course the revolt took, which is really the matter of deeper concern. These are the disputed passages:

Postea diductis Macedonibus in bellum civile cum ceteris superioris Asiae populis Eumenes secuti sunt, quo victo ad Antigonum transiere. Post hunc a Nicatore Seleuco ac mox ab Antiocho et successoribus eius possessi, a cuius pronepote Seleuco primum defecere primo Punico bello, L. Manlio Vulso M. Atilio Regulo consulibus. Huius defectionis impunitatem illis duorum fratrum regum, Seleuci et Antiochi, discordia dedit, qui dum invicem eripere sibi regnum volunt, persequi defectores omiserunt. Eodem tempore etiam Theodotus, mille urbium Bactrianarum praefectus, defecit regemque se appellari iussit, quod exemplum secuti totius Orientis populi a Macedonibus defecere.

(Thereafter the Macedonians were split in civil war with the other people from upper Asia who followed Eumenes, after he was defeated the lands passed to Antigonus. After this they were possessed by Seleucus Nicator and soon by Antiochus and his successors, from whose great-grandson Seleucus they first revolted, during the start of the Punic War when L. Manlius Vulso and M. Atilius Regulus were consuls. The discord of the two royal brothers, Seleucus and Antiochus, gave impunity to the revolters of these upper kingdoms. For while the princes each wished to snatch the rule for themselves, they neglected to hunt down the revolters. At the same time, Theodotus, satrap of the thousand Bactrian cities, revolted and ordered that he be called king, which example the peoples of the entire East followed to revolt from the Macedonians.)⁷³

⁷¹ Newell, *Eastern Seleucid Mints*, 245-249; Mitchiner, *Indo-Greek Coinage*, 33ff.

⁷² Justin 41.4.5; cf. Strabo 11.9.2-3, 11.11.1.

⁷³ Justin 41.4.2-5.

Νεωτερισθέντων δὲ τῶν ἔξω τοῦ Ταύρου διὰ τὸ πρὸς ἄλλοις εἶναι τοὺς τῆς Συρίας καὶ τῆς Μηδίας βασιλέας τοὺς ἔχοντας καὶ ταῦτα, πρῶτον μὲν τὴν Βακτριανὴν ἀπέστησαν οἱ πεπιστευμένοι καὶ τὴν ἐγγὺς αὐτῆς πᾶσαν, οἱ περὶ Εὐθύδημον.

(When revolutions were made by those outside the Taurus because the kings of Syria and Media who owned them were dealing with others, first those who had been entrusted with Bactria and all of the nearby territory revolted, that is, those following Euthydemus.)⁷⁴

Though, as will be seen below, these two passages contain some discrepancies, their very existence highlights the importance of Diodotus' actions, both to the history of Bactrian kingship and to Hellenistic Asia in general.

Justin derives his first date from Roman history: the consular year of L. Manlius Vulso and M. Atilius Regulus during the First Punic War. In 256/5, L. Manlius Vulso and Q. Caedicius were made consuls, and in their names is that year dated, but Caedicius died, and M. Atilius Regulus became suffect consul. Due to Regulus' fame in the war with Carthage it may be that Justin chose to name the year after him.⁷⁵ Justin may instead have made a spelling error, for the consuls of 250/49 were L. Manlius Vulso and C. Atilius Regulus (the brother of M. Atilius Regulus).⁷⁶ Scholars interpreting Justin's account do not lay much emphasis on the consular date except to point out the difficulty in deciding which year Justin actually meant by it.⁷⁷ What fits best with the rest of

⁷⁴ Strabo 11.9.2.

⁷⁵ Wolski, "Decay," 51; F. W. Walbank, *A Historical Commentary on Polybius*, vol. I (Oxford: Clarendon, 1970), 86-87.

⁷⁶ Cunningham, *Coins of Alexander's Successors*, 79-80; Narain, *The Indo-Greeks*, 14; Walbank, *Polybius*, I, 82, 101.

⁷⁷ Wolski, "Decay," 51; Musti, "Syria and the East," 219; Sidky, *The Greek Kingdom of Bactria*, 140-141.

Justin's passage and with what else is known of the revolt is to use 256 as a *terminus post quem* for the entire revolt process.

The second date under investigation is indicated by Strabo's mention of a war between the "kings of Syria and Media". After Antiochus II's death in 246, the Third Syrian War (246-241) began between his son, Seleucus II, and Ptolemy III (Euergetes); Appian reports that Parthia took advantage of the war to launch its own revolt from the Seleucid empire.⁷⁸ Though Justin is silent, circumstances of the Seleucid disorder had more impact on the far east than supplying an opportunity for the Parthians; on an inscription found at Adulis, Ptolemy III recounts that the course of his campaign into Asia took him up to the borders of Bactria. The inscription says he ventured no further, and some scholars have seen it as so much propaganda, saying Ptolemy only had a physical presence up to Mesopotamia and from there on had only notices of support from the upper satraps.⁷⁹ Nevertheless, Ptolemy's large army successfully invading western regions of Asia must have caused disruption within the Seleucid empire as well as some alarm inside Bactria,⁸⁰ at least to the extent of causing Diodotus to anticipate being called upon for military aid as was his elephant-supplying predecessor during the First Syrian War.

For a third date, Justin refers to the dynastic conflict between Seleucus II and his brother Antiochus Hierax which took place from 240 to 236. He states that the two

⁷⁸ App. Syr. 65; the war was reportedly Ptolemy's revenge for the murders of Antiochus II, his second wife Berenice (sister to Ptolemy), and their child by Laodice, Antiochus' first wife.

⁷⁹ OGIS, 54; Bevan, *House of Seleucus*, 187; H. H. Scullard, *The Elephant in the Greek and Roman World* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1974), 134. Appian says that Ptolemy "drove on into Babylonia" (Syr. 65).

⁸⁰ Holt, *Thundering Zeus*, 59-60; Sidky, *Greek Kingdom of Bactria*, 138, 144.

brothers gave “impunity” to the eastern revolters because their own conflict distracted them from making any timely reprisals.⁸¹ Strabo’s passage is at times invoked in connection with this conflict, but since neither brother was the king of Syria or Media, this is a false comparison, and his account best fits with the war between Ptolemy III and Seleucus II.⁸² Strabo made one error in listing Euthydemus as the revolt’s leader,⁸³ as numismatic evidence confirms Justin’s statement that Diodotus, or “Theodotus,” led the Bactrian revolt: his are the first coins in the Bactrian sequence after those of Antiochus II. That Diodotus issued coins only in Antiochus’ name and his own means that he never officially recognized the imperial authority of Seleucus II, suggesting that Bactria was already becoming independent by 246 and, as both Justin and Strabo say, that the two major wars which Seleucus II faced after his succession provided an entire decade for Diodotus to confirm his position unopposed.⁸⁴

A final event for comparison dating is the Parthian revolt, and the accounts of it supply further information on Diodotid politics. In 247 Andragoras, satrap of Parthia since the reign of Antiochus I, revolted from the Seleucid empire. Soon – according to Justin “in the same time” as Diodotus’ revolt – Arsaces, leader of the Parni tribe from the Caspian Sea invaded Parthia, overthrew Andragoras, conquered another satrapy (Hyrcania), and created his own kingdom, establishing the Arsacid dynasty which lasted

⁸¹ Justin 41.4.4.

⁸² Musti, “Syria and the East,” 219-220; Holt, *Thundering Zeus*, 56; Sidky, *Greek Kingdom of Bactria*, 142-143; contra Wolski, “Decay,” 40.

⁸³ Musti, “Syria and the East,” 220; Holt, *Thundering Zeus*, 56.

⁸⁴ Lerner, *The Impact of Seleucid Decline*, 21-22, Sidky, *Greek Kingdom of Bactria*, 143-144.

for six centuries.⁸⁵ Though it came to dominate Asia, and thus the minds of ancient historians, Arsacid Parthia had a small beginning,⁸⁶ its founder variously characterized as a “plunderer”, a fugitive from Diodotus, and a Scythian with a horde of nomadic brigands.⁸⁷ Arsaces initially had to enlarge defenses against his new enemies Seleucus II and Diodotus,⁸⁸ the latter probably angry at the violence done to his fellow satrap and revolter Andragoras. Centuries later when the might of Parthia was imprinted on western imagination Bactria was described as “ruled by kings formidable even to Arsaces”, and Arsaces benefited greatly from a peace treaty with Diodotus II, who reversed his father’s hostile policy towards Parthia.⁸⁹ The Parthian calendar began on the vernal equinox 247 BC, but this is most likely the date of Andragoras’ revolt. It seems that upon assuming the throne Arsaces postdated his reign to the cessation of Seleucid control in Parthia, obliterating Andragoras from the record. Scholars disagree as to whether Arsaces seized power in 246 or 239, but the former date fits best with the history of Seleucid wars and the Bactrian revolt.⁹⁰

After when, the next question about the Diodotid revolt is why it took place. The revolt of Diodotus is a curious event, when considered in the light of Bactria’s history as

⁸⁵ Arrian *Parthica*, *FGrHist* 156 F 31; Justin 41.4.6-10; A. D. H. Bivar, “The Political History of Iran under the Arsacids,” in *Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. 3/1, Ehsan Yarshater, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 28-29.

⁸⁶ Cf. Kuhrt, Sherwin-White, *Samarkhand*, 84; Lerner, *Impact of Seleucid Decline*, 12ff.

⁸⁷ Justin 41.4.6-8; Strabo 11.9.2-3. For Arsaces as a Scythian see also Arrian *Parthica*, *FGrHist* 156 F 30.

⁸⁸ Justin 41.4.8.

⁸⁹ Amm. Marc. 23.6.55; Justin 41.4.9.

⁹⁰ Bivar, “Political History under the Arsacids,” 28. For varying dates: Cunningham, *Coins of Alexander’s Successors*, 82-83; Wolski, “Decay,” 43; Musti, “Syria and the East,” 214, 219-220; Sidky, *Greek Kingdom of Bactria*, 149. Cf. Appian’s remark (*Syr.* 65) that Parthia revolted during the Third Syrian War (246-241).

a satrapy quietly concerned with internal affairs and participating on the world stage only when directly threatened (as in the case of Pithon) or required by the emperor (such as the shipment of war elephants), and just briefly as a hot-bed of sedition (until Alexander's colonists were forcibly reconciled to their new situation). The decade of conflict between 246 and 236 is generally looked upon as providing the main opportunity for revolt, as a distraction from Diodotus' activity. It has been noted that assuming the kingship was the logical extension of satrapal responsibility to ensure Bactrian security in the face of invasions by Ptolemy and the rabble-rousing Arsaces, who apparently was something of a personal enemy.⁹¹ Another explanation sees the Diodotid revolt as a "sign of the times", part of a widespread erosion of empire experienced during Seleucus II's reign with revolts in Parthia, Armenia, Cappadocia, and Attalid Pergamon as well as invasions by the Galatians.⁹² Bactria's material wealth and large population would have drawn the attention of western Seleucid tax-gatherers, their attentiveness heightened by escalating wartime expenses.⁹³ Even if military problems to the west did not disrupt the civil administration inside Bactria, as Rawlinson puts it, "it was not long ere the inhabitants of Parthia and Bactria recognized the folly of paying tribute to a distant monarch who was incapable of enforcing respect or obedience."⁹⁴ The time had come for Diodotus when the defensive, administrative, and monetary advantages of personal rule outweighed any professions of loyalty to the Seleucids.

⁹¹ Holt, *Thundering Zeus*, 61-62.

⁹² M. Rostovtzeff, *The Social & Economic History of the Hellenistic World* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1941), 43, 429. This compares with Justin's remark (41.4.5) that the "entire East" revolted at the same time.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 78, 545-549. Bactria was the land of "a thousand cities" (Justin 41.4.5); as noted above and as will be seen below, the Bactrian satraps and kings could muster armies in the tens of thousands.

⁹⁴ Rawlinson, *Bactria: The History of a Forgotten Empire*, 54.

Bactrian money in its own way tells the story of the revolt. Numismatic evidence shows that even while Antiochus II was still suzerain, Diodotus was already minting coins in his own type bearing his own diademed portrait, thus setting the ideological groundwork for his kingly status and the existence of a Bactrian empire rather than membership in the Seleucid. The diadem was an emblem reserved for monarchs, and even the coins issued earlier by Oxyartes portray him only in the traditional satrapal cap.⁹⁵ Analysis of Diodotid coin portraits has been difficult for scholars because all the gold and silver “Zeus wielding the thunderbolt”-type coins have on their obverse a legend naming either Antiochus or Diodotus, and for both these names there are accompanying “aged” or “youthful” portraits of Diodotus. Since it is known from Justin that Diodotus’ son of the same name ruled after him, interpreting these coins on the basis of portrait “age” means either that both kings as co-rulers issued coins in Antiochus’ name and their own, or that an old Diodotus I issued only in Antiochus’ name and Diodotus II in Antiochus’ and then his own, or that Diodotus I issued in both Antiochus’ and his own and Diodotus II in his own name only.⁹⁶ Given that a Hellenistic ruler’s portrait age was more often dictated by ideology than reality,⁹⁷ it is fortunate that the coins provide further and more straightforward evidence.

Analysis done on die-linkages among Diodotid coins of all denominations shows that at least two mints were in operation, each with several workshops and magistrates,

⁹⁵ For the diadem: Smith, *Hellenistic Royal Portraits*, 34-38. For the satrap’s cap: Mitchiner, *Indo-Greek Coinage*, 9.

⁹⁶ Justin 41.4.9; Gardner, *Catalogue of Indian Coins*, xx-xxi; Newell, *Eastern Seleucid Mints*, 248-249; Narain, *Indo-Greeks*, 16-17; Mitchiner, *Indo-Greek Coinage*, 36ff; Sergei Kovalenko, “The Coinage of Diodotus I and Diodotus II, Greek Kings of Bactria,” *Silk Road Art and Archaeology* 4 (1995/96), 57; Holt, *Thundering Zeus*, 91ff; B. Kritt, *Dynastic Transitions in the Coinage of Bactria, Antiochus-Diodotus-Euthydemus* (Lancaster, PN: Classical Numismatic Group, 2001), 7ff.

⁹⁷ Smith, *Hellenistic Royal Portraits*, 46-47.

whose numbers and expertise increased through the Antiochus period. The numbers and the expected period of time before they would wear out show that after the revolt Diodotus I ruled for seven to eight years and Diodotus II for five more after that. These reign lengths happily correspond with the comparative dates discussed above. If Diodotus II succeeded c. 240-38 (at a time when Arsaces was still at war to establish his kingdom), then Diodotus I revolted c. 246 (at the end of Antiochus' reign) having experimented earlier with coin issues in Antiochus' name for an indeterminate but fairly short period.⁹⁸

The coinage debate shows that the most important point about the Diodotid revolt is how it took place, particularly concerning Diodotus I's relationship with his Seleucid master. The process was by all indications peaceful, and though he puts it "eodem tempore" as various other conflicts, Justin does not say that warfare took place inside Bactria, nor is there any evidence of destruction layers from Bactrian towns for this time period.⁹⁹ Since to all appearances the new Bactrian king continued to employ the same ideological language of propaganda as Seleucid monarchs, exemplified by the diadem, shows that it was not a nationalistic separation from the Hellenistic world. It seems, instead, that Holt's comment holds true: "the Diodotids played their part as heirs to the opportunism unleashed at Babylon in 323."¹⁰⁰ Creation of a Bactrian kingdom was politically and economically expedient and carried out with some forethought on Diodotus' part at a time when significant internal or external opposition was absent.

An Independent Bactria

The next king after the Diodotids was Euthydemus, a Magnesian, and assumed

⁹⁸ Kovalenko, "Coinage of Diodotus I and Diodotus II," 19, 24, 55-57.

⁹⁹ Holt, *Thundering Zeus*, 62-63.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 137.

not to be related to Diodotus, who achieved the kingship c. 230. The best known episode of his reign is his successful defense against Antiochus III at the siege of Bactra from 208 to 206.¹⁰¹ Polybius reports that Antiochus on his eastern *anabasis*, the long-delayed Seleucid reaction to the eastern revolts, entered Bactrian territory at the river Arius, where Euthydemus had stationed ten thousand cavalry at the river's ford. Antiochus took advantage of the fact that the horsemen spent their nights in a city twenty stades distant by quickly crossing the river in their absence and launching a surprise attack. The ensuing battle was quite fierce. Antiochus' force barely survived three waves of Bactrian cavalry attacks, and as a result Euthydemus decided to take up a defensive position at Bactra. Some time later, Antiochus, who was apparently "long on the look-out for a solution" to the now stalemated situation, sent to Euthydemus an envoy, Teleas, specifically chosen because he was also Magnesian and could appeal to common heritage as grounds for diplomatic favour.¹⁰² After some negotiation, Antiochus conceded the Bactrian kingship to Euthydemus and, after being generously provisioned with food and elephants by the Bactrians, departed for India to meet Sophagasenus, scion of the now dwindled Mauryan dynasty. Though once safely returned to the west he described the upper satrapies as his "subjects," Antiochus in fact does not seem to have extracted any great terms of allegiance from the Bactrians or the Indians, instead promising to Demetrius, Euthydemus' youthful son, a marriage with one of his daughters.¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ Polybius 11.34.1; Walbank, *Polybius*, vol. II, 264, 312.

¹⁰² In his 1763 edition of Polybius, Reiske prefaces chapter 34.1 with: Antiochus ad Euthydemum pacis conciliatorem mittebat Teleam, Magnesia oriundum, qui amicus quondam fuisset Euthydemum et eadem, qua ille, patria uteretur (Polybius, *Historiae*, Wobst, ed. 1962).

¹⁰³ Polyb. 10.49; 11.34.7-11, 14. Euthydemus' defense against Antiochus was a more spectacular episode of the latter's *anabasis*; Polybius notes that the siege of Bactra was a popular topic for other historians who glamourized their accounts beyond the basic facts. (29.12.8. Also, Walbank, *Polybius*, 265)

Euthydemus is the only ruler of Bactria after the Seleucids whose ethnicity is reported in a text. All the other Bactrian kings had Greek names, but even Antiochus I was half Sogdian, so determining ethnicity from names is only guesswork. Euthydemus was a *Μάγνης*, and there are three possible Magnesia from which he or his family could have originated: Magnesia ad Maeandrum, Magnesia in Thessaly, or Magnesia ad Sipylum. The latter is suggested on the basis of similar coin types: Euthydemus' type of Heracles seated and resting on his club somewhat resembles a short-lived Lydian issue dated about thirty-five years before he came to the throne.¹⁰⁴ The Thessalian city is a possibility because Alexander and Seleucus campaigned with Thessalian troops, whom they may have made colonists, and Kineas, the *oikistes* founder of Ai Khanoum, bore a Thessalian name.¹⁰⁵ Magnesia ad Maeander is possible, as it sent at least one colony to the east in the Seleucid era, commemorated by an inscription set up in their mother city by the citizens of Antiocheia in Persis.¹⁰⁶ Also, the votive altar from Takht-i Sangin dedicated to the river Oxus is topped by a bronze statuette of a Silenus playing a double flute. It is thought that the figure is Marsyas, who in mythology was identified with the Maeander river and who was now identified – possibly by Magnesian colonists – with a new marvelous river.¹⁰⁷

Contained in Euthydemus' message to Antiochus are clues regarding some

Polybius thus does not give us any details of the siege, but it is interesting that the besieged Bactrians apparently suffered few deprivations at the hands of their invaders, and that it was Antiochus who lacked supplies and most wished to end the siege, Sidky, *Greek Kingdom of Bactria*, 173.

¹⁰⁴ Lerner, *Impact of Seleucid Decline*, 53-54; Sidky, *Greek Kingdom of Bactria*, 161-162.

¹⁰⁵ Robert, "De Delphes à l'Oxus," 431-438. Cf. Arr. 3.29.5: Alexander sent one group of Thessalians home, but others may have been included amongst his colonists.

¹⁰⁶ *OGIS*, 233. The Antiocheians say that their city was named after Antiochus I Soter.

¹⁰⁷ Litvinskiy, Vinogradov, Pichikyan, "The Votive Offering of Atrosokes," 110. Cf. the river's portents noted above (pp. 27-28).

circumstances of his reign. He argued that he was the rightful king of the Bactrian empire because he had deposed the original rebels against the Seleucids, a comment likely referring to the Diodotids.¹⁰⁸ To prevent having to turn over his kingdom due to this loyalty to the Seleucid empire, Euthydemus continued on and claimed a greater loyalty to the Hellenistic world, reporting that if his kingship were in any way weakened Bactria would surely be overrun and “barbarized” by nomads from the north.¹⁰⁹ Euthydemus’ use of the term “Bactrian empire” (τῆς Βακτριανῶν ἀρχῆς) corresponds well with remarks by Strabo that the Bactrian kings greatly expanded their borders beyond the original satrapy.¹¹⁰ If Euthydemus campaigned along his northern borders, he may have provoked the nomads living there much as Alexander had a century earlier. Numismatic evidence shows that Sogdia separated from Bactrian control in the late third century. The Sogdian rulers initially issued coins in imitation of Euthydemus’ but soon changed the legend from Greek to the Aramaic *mlk sgd*, “king of Sogdia,” suggesting that they had a greater connection with the nomadic Iranian culture than the more hellenized Bactria, and it may be this political development on his north border to which Euthydemus refers.¹¹¹

Euthydemus cannot have ruled many years after Antiochus III’s departure, but he and his several successors were inspired by the western conqueror’s journey into wealthy India to embark upon a successful plan of expansion. (Already known from Polybius is

¹⁰⁸ Polyb. 11.34.2; Narain, *Indo-Greeks*, 19-20. Narain rightly observes that this “loyalty” was in all likelihood merely an excuse for “personal ambition” and what may have been a violent usurpation.

¹⁰⁹ Polyb. 11.34.4-5.

¹¹⁰ Polyb. 11.34.2; Strabo 11.11.1.

¹¹¹ Mitchiner, *Indo-Greek Coinage*, 284; Bopearachchi, “The Euthydemus’ Imitations and the Date of Sogdian Independence,” 1-2, 12-13; Kazim Abdullaev, “Nomadism in Central Asia. The archaeological evidence (2nd-1st centuries B.C.),” in *Land of the Gryphons*, A. Invernizzi, ed. (Florence: Casa Editrice Le Lettere, 1995), 151-2.

that Euthydemus controlled Aria in the southwest – his cavalry were stationed there when Antiochus arrived.¹¹²) Through the first quarter of the second century there reigned a number of kings who, except for Demetrius, are not named in any extant texts but who did issue coins widely: Demetrius, Euthydemus II, Antimachus, Agathocles, and Pantaleon. Of these, Demetrius, Antimachus, Agathocles, and Pantaleon issued coins on the Indian weight standard with bilingual legends, indicating that they probably ruled significant portions of the Paropamisadae and Arachosia.¹¹³ Justin records that a Demetrius “king of the Indians” had a kingdom about mid-century, and may or may not have been the son of Euthydemus, who in Polybius’ account is described as a “young man” (τὸν νεανίσκον).¹¹⁴ Later, from c. 155 to c. 130 the great Indo-Greek king Menander reigned; he expanded deeper into India and is known from Buddhist chronicles.¹¹⁵ Strabo and his source, Apollodorus of Artemita, knew of great conquests made by Demetrius (son of Euthydemus) and Menander, and Trogus, Justin’s source, wrote about Menander and another Greek ruler in India, Apollodotus.¹¹⁶

While the Indian branch of Greek kings was getting established, Eucratides “the Great” ruled Bactria from c. 171 to c. 150, and Justin compares him to Mithridates I, the great Parthian conqueror who came to power at the same time.¹¹⁷ Apollodorus and Trogus appear to have written comparatively large amounts on Eucratides, and given the

¹¹² Polyb. 10.49.1; Narain, *Indo-Greeks*, 93.

¹¹³ Gardner, *Catalogue of Indian Coins*, xxv-xxvii, 8-12; Mitchiner, *Indo-Greek Coinage*, 66ff.

¹¹⁴ Justin 41.6.4; Polyb. 11.34.9; Narain, *Indo-Greeks*, 28ff.

¹¹⁵ Narain, *Indo-Greeks*, 74ff, 181; Tarn puts his reign at c. 161-145, *Greeks in Bactria*, 226.

¹¹⁶ Strabo 11.11.1, 15.1.3; Trogus, *Prologue* 41. Apollodorus wrote *The Parthica* (*FGrHist* 779). For an excellent discussion of Apollodorus and Trogus see Tarn, *Greeks in Bactria*, 44-48.

¹¹⁷ Justin, 41.6.1; Bivar, “Political History under the Arsacids,” 33, 98.

fragments of their accounts, the history of his reign made interesting reading. Described as the king of “a thousand cities,” he made campaigns against Sogdia, Arachosia, Drangania, and Aria, and lost two satrapies of Bactria, Aspionus and Tapuria, to Mithridates. He campaigned in India and was besieged for five months by Demetrius but eventually fought his way out with a small party of men. In a final grisly episode Eucratides was killed by his son, whom he had made associate king of Bactria in his absence. The son killed Eucratides while still on the journey home from India, driving his chariot over the corpse and forbidding its burial.¹¹⁸ Eucratides’ successor in Bactria was his son Heliocles “Dikaios”. His epithet must derive from the patricide; its perpetrator, who denied that he killed his father, calling Eucratides an “enemy” instead, may have been Heliocles himself, who subsequently proclaimed his position as “the Just”.¹¹⁹ On the other hand, Heliocles may have gained his epithet from avenging the patricide, committed then by an unknown brother.¹²⁰ Heliocles was the last Hellenistic king of Bactria, now reduced by the wars and territorial losses of his father’s reign.

The northern nomadic threat which Euthydemus had used to deflect Antiochus III was now more forceful, and, as part of it, Parthia was a cause of ongoing concern. If Euthydemus indeed killed Diodotus II and/or his heirs as Polybius records, the only

¹¹⁸ Justin 41.6.1-5; Strabo 11.9.2, 11.11.2, 15.1.3. Regarding second of the two lost satrapies (Strabo 11.11.2), Meineke (*Strabonis Geographica*, A. Meineke, ed. Graz: Akademische Druck-u. Verlagsanstalt, 1969) gives τὴν Ταπυρίαν, which matches the name of the region where Euthydemus encamped while waiting for Antiochus III’s invasion (Ταπουρίαν, Polyb. 10.49.1) i.e., in eastern Bactria near Aria and next to Parthia. In the Loeb edition, H. L. Jones instead gives the satrapy as Τουριούαν (Turiva). Elsewhere Strabo describes the “Tapuri” as dwelling between Aria and Hyrcania and that Parthia came to include their territory, 11.8.7, 11.9.1.

¹¹⁹ Justin 41.6.5.

¹²⁰ Eucratides’ father was also named Heliocles, making king Heliocles named after his grandfather according to Hellenistic custom. Cunningham, *Coins of Alexander’s Successors*, 184-187; Narain, *Indo-Greeks*, 72.

known reason for this is Diodotus II's reversal of his father's hostile policy towards Parthia and the peace treaty made with Arsaces I. One consequent hypothesis makes Euthydemus a high-ranking official, perhaps the satrap of Aria, who disapproved of this alliance and seized the throne.¹²¹ There is little indication that Euthydemus actually went to war with Parthia, and, aside from the Sogdian separation later in his reign during which Parthia likely made some gains in the northwest near Marakanda, he was probably numbered among the early Bactrian kings whose power kept Arsaces at bay.¹²² Eucratides did face real pressure from the Parthians, who under Mithradates were acquiring their territorial ascendancy, evidenced by the loss of Aspionus and Turiva.¹²³ Ai Khanoum on the Oxus, the traditional border between Bactria and Sogdia, was destroyed by fire c. 145, either at the very end of Eucratides' reign or during Heliocles'; given the historical context, the fire is viewed as result of an attack by northern raiders.¹²⁴

Indeed, just as the Arsacids had in Parthia a century earlier, Scythian nomads overran Bactria. Strabo lists four tribes from across the Iaxartes which had been displaced by the Yüeh-chih, Chinese Scythians who were themselves attacked by the Hsiung-nu (Huns) c. 150 and who in turn invaded Sogdia and Bactria c. 130 to 125.¹²⁵ During this time, when the Chinese explorer Chang Ch'ien sojourned in Bactria, or "Ta-hsia"

¹²¹ Justin 41.4.9; Cunningham, *Coins of Alexander's Successors*, 133,135; Tarn, *Greeks in Bactria*, 74; Sidky, *Greek Kingdom of Bactria*, 162-163.

¹²² Cf. Narain, *Indo-Greeks*, 23; Abdullaev, "Nomadism in Central Asia," 151-152. Amm. Marc. 23.6.55: "Bactriani, natio antehac bellatrix et potentissima, . . . rexere veteribus saeculis etiam Arsaci formidabiles reges."

¹²³ Strabo 11.11.2.

¹²⁴ Bernard, "Ai Khanum on the Oxus," 75, 93; Bernard, "The Greek Kingdoms," 103.

¹²⁵ Strabo 11.8.2; Hirth, "The Story of Chang-K'ien," 93-94; K. Enoki, G. A. Koshelenko, Z. Haidary, "The Yüeh-Chih and their migrations," in *History of civilizations in Central Asia*, vol. 2, Harmatta, ed. (Paris: UNESCO, 1994), 173-174, 178.

(128/27) he gave an enigmatic description of the land he beheld:

Ta-hsia is situated over two thousand *li* southwest of Ta-yüan [Ferghana], south of the Kuei River. Its people cultivate the land and have cities and houses. Their customs are like those of Ta-yüan. It has no great ruler but only a number of petty chiefs ruling the various cities. The people are poor in the use of arms and afraid of battle, but they are clever at commerce. After the Great Yüeh-chih moved west and attacked and conquered Ta-hsia, the entire country came under their sway. The population of the country is large, numbering some million or more persons. The capital is called the city of Lan-shih [Bactra] and has a market where all sorts of goods are bought and sold.¹²⁶

Over his year-long stay Chang observed a populous and prosperous country with urban settlement but no centralized state and a weak military. The legendary reputation of a “land of a thousand cities” makes this discovery of abundant people, wealth, and cities to house them in Bactria unsurprising.¹²⁷ What is surprising is that so shortly after Eucratides and Heliocles the Bactrian government existed solely at the urban level and was thoroughly decapitated of its royal administration, including the military, a hitherto defining feature of Bactrian history. Classical authors agree that throughout history the Bactrians were bellicose and courageous.¹²⁸ Bactria was capable of fielding armies thousands strong for the Achaemenid and Hellenistic rulers, whose iconography favoured arms, armour, and figures in aggressive poses.¹²⁹ The apparent lack of a Bactrian king in Chang’s eyes can be no mistake, as he specifically journeyed west to search for allies in the Chinese war against the Hsiung-nu and would surely have vetted any local ruler for

¹²⁶ Ssu-ma, *Records of the Grand Historian*, 269.

¹²⁷ Strabo 15.1.3; Justin 41.4.5.

¹²⁸ Ctesias, *FGrHist* 688 F 1b; Curt. 4.6.3; Amm. Marc. 23.6.55.

¹²⁹ The armies: 9,000 cavalry and an unspecified number of infantry at Gaugamel.; Curt. 4.12.6-7; a cavalry 30,000 strong, Curt. 7.4.30; and 10,000 cavalry of Euthydemus, Polyb. 10.49.1. The iconography: Smith, *Hellenistic Royal Portraits*, 114.

this role, as he did other kings and their militaries in his report.¹³⁰

The “barbarization” of which Euthydemus earlier warned apparently affected only the Bactrian kings and the military under their control; while Ai Khanoum was destroyed most other cities endured, as Chang noticed. Even in the second century AD Ptolemy recorded the names and locations of dozens of Greek cities in Bactria; one such town was Eucratidia, the last foundation by a Hellenistic monarch in Bactria.¹³¹ Theoretically, barbarians from the north could have toppled the Hellenistic state, but hostilities between the Yüeh-Chih and Hsiung-nu characterize the nomadic movements into Bactria more as displacement and migration than a concentrated invasion campaign. Pastoralists on the frontier were an ordinary fact of Bactrian history, to which the kings would have long been accustomed while their own internal politics, such as the familial violence displayed in Eucratides’ murder, provided more immediate problems.¹³² It could very well be that the Bactrian royalty and their warriors also migrated into the Indian kingdoms established by Demetrius and Menander. These latter events thus mark the end of the Hellenistic period in Bactria, an era defined by the character and activities of its kings, and to these topics we now turn.

¹³⁰ Hirth, “The Story of Chang K’ien,” 93ff; Ssu-ma, *Records of the Grand Historian*, 264ff.

¹³¹ Ptolemy *Geog.* 6.11.7-9.

¹³² B. Bronson, “The Role of Barbarians in the Fall of a State,” in *The Collapse of Ancient States and Civilizations*, N. Yoffee, G. Cowgill, eds. (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1988), 201, 205-206; Enoki, Koshelenko, Haidary, “The Yüeh-Chih,” 179.

Chapter 3 – The Ideological Basis for Kingship

Kingship in Bactria was not simply a matter of the strongest general, warlord, or chieftain defeating his rivals and holding supreme power, though history from Alexander on suggests this. Kingship belonged to the deserving, who attained worthy status by defeating rivals and wielding supreme power in the eyes of their subjects. A ruler's behaviour could be rationalized according to practical contingencies, but the answer to why he existed as a king and why he made such grand gestures as marching into a barbarian hinterland is ideological. Ideology was the foundation for Hellenistic kingship, providing the institution with patterns for imperialistic conquest and historical precedents for its legitimation, and Bactria was often the prime location for these displays of heroic kingliness. When Alexander, Seleucus, Diodotus, Euthydemus, Antiochus III, and Eucratides each in their turn claimed the Bactrian kingship they also claimed an ideological status by which all their deeds would be measured. The purpose of this chapter is to examine some of these ideological measurements as a way of better understanding how kingship functioned in Bactria.

The characteristic ideological qualities of the Hellenistic Bactrian king were in essence heroic: courage, bellicosity, grandeur, divine fortune, wealth, a certain measure of strategic intelligence, and the ability to claim victory from any given situation. The two ideological systems which produced these royal characteristics are imperialism and legend. Linking them is the activity of conquest, important both to the establishment and perpetuation of imperialistic structures and attitudes and to the themes of Asian legendary history as seen through Greek eyes from which royal legendary precedents were derived. In this chapter, we will first look at the imperialism of the Persian and Macedonian

empires (Achaemenid, Alexandrian, and Seleucid), particularly at how the ideology of imperialism granted ruling power and determined a king's relationship to his subjects. Next, we will examine the ways in which the ideology of conquest and the emulation of legendary warfare shaped kingship in Bactria. Finally, we will observe the interaction of these two ideological systems in two examples from Bactria's Hellenistic period: the establishment of treaties with marriages and the portrayals of kingship on coins.

Influences of Imperialism

Alexander's Bactrian campaign against Bessus, Spitamenes, and their allies marked the end of his struggle with the Iranian Achaemenid empire. Though pre-Hellenistic and outside the strict scope of this study, a brief overview of Achaemenid imperial kingship is a helpful starting point for understanding the imperial systems which succeeded it. Like the Macedonians and Greeks, the Persians who ruled Bactria were western outsiders, though they were culturally closer by virtue of shared Iranian tribal origins. The basis of Achaemenid power was broad territorial control and the accompanying management of many diverse peoples, to which Herodotus' catalogue of Xerxes' multi-cultural invasion force is testament.¹ Xerxes' army is an example of the Achaemenid acceptance of regional individuality and autonomy, provided that ultimate political loyalty was to the king.² Loyalty was expressed through the contribution of soldiers and tribute, activity also observed by Herodotus;³ the satrapies whose administrations oversaw this were in domestic matters left mostly to themselves. Language provides a good representation of the nature of the imperial structure:

¹ Herodotus 7.60-81. The Bactrians and neighbouring peoples are described in 64-66.

² Briant, "The Seleucid Kingdom, the Achaemenid Empire," 43, 46.

³ Hdt. 3.89-96.

Achaemenid chancery offices used Semitic Aramaic as the standard language of communication, but for satrapies, including Bactria, in which a variety of Iranian languages were spoken scribes employed Aramaic script to transliterate their documents into locally-recognizable forms and allow for non-Aramaic speakers to interact with the wider empire.⁴ The balance between centralized conformity and regional autonomy seems to have been an outgrowth of traditional Iranian aristocracy in which a king was the unifier of society, superceding tribal divisions and drawing disparate parts together. He was also supreme military commander and representative of the gods, legitimizing his position by physical prowess, moral integrity, education, and ability to provide for and protect his subjects in both material and spiritual matters.⁵

The role of a king's merit was also a central feature of Macedonian imperialism. Under "kingship" the *Suda* gives one quite illustrative statement: "neither nature nor right grants kingdoms to people, but they belong to those capable of leading an army and prudently handling state affairs; such a man was Philip and the successors of Alexander."⁶ Since Alexander himself inherited his throne and his successors called themselves exactly that, it is clear that a sense of "right" played a part in legitimizing rulers; it can be added that "nature" had its role too, usually in terms of a perceived natural superiority over conquered peoples. The definition for kingship stresses the importance of military success as a practical determinant of a king's worthiness; that it

⁴ M. A. Dandamayev, "Media and Achaemenid Iran," in *History of civilizations of Central Asia*, vol. 2, J. Harmatta, ed. (Paris: UNESCO, 1994), 47, 55.

⁵ Josef Wiesehöfer, "'King of Kings' and 'Philhellên': Kingship in Arsacid Iran," in *Aspects of Hellenistic Kingship*, Per Bilde et al, eds. (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 1996), 55-56. Hdt. 1.125 describes the ten tribes of the Persians, of which the Achaemenids were one.

⁶ *Suda* s.v. βασιλεία (2). οὔτε φύσις οὔτε τό δίκαιον ἀποδιδούσι τοῖς ἀνθρώποις τὰς βασιλείας, ἀλλά τοῖς δυναμένοις ἡγεῖσθαι στρατοπέδου καὶ χειρίζειν πράγματα νουνεχῶς· οἷος ἦν Φίλιππος καὶ οἱ διάδοχοι Ἀλεξάνδρου.

was also the hallmark of royal status and of the special Macedonian character further shows the military focus of Macedonian imperialism. The king drew his strength from the military, and, in turn, his actions were to be for its benefit as well as his own. In this respect, Macedonian imperialism had its basis in acquisition: conquest provided territory, which produced wealth, which pleased soldiers, which increased the king's standing and fuelled the potential for more conquest and wealth.⁷

There are two associated institutions of Macedonian imperialism: the *doriktetos chora* and the kleruchy. The concept of “spear-won land” was a mechanism to justify the accumulation and control of territory and ensure a king's predominance whereby after a battle the victor received all his defeated foe's possessions. Making a claim of *doriktetos chora* was a proclamation of imperial kingship and personal ownership of land and the people and wealth belonging to it.⁸ Amidst describing the wars between Perdiccas, Antipater, Pithon, Eumenes, and Antigonus, Diodorus draws the connection between their claims of *doriktetos chora* and kingship: “there being no longer anyone to inherit the empire, each of those who ruled over nations or cities had hopes of royal power and held the territory which had been placed under him as if it were a spear-won kingdom.”⁹ The claim and territorial possession were reciprocal; Antipater and Antigonus made their

⁷ Richard A. Billows, *King and Colonists: Aspects of Macedonian Imperialism* (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 20-21, 28-29, 44; M. M. Austin, “Hellenistic Kings, War and the Economy,” *Classical Quarterly* 36.2 (1986), 457, 460-461.

⁸ Rostovtzeff, *Social and Economic History*, 482, 525; F. E. Adcock, “Greek and Macedonian Kingship,” *Proceedings of the British Academy* (1953), 176; F. W. Walbank, “Monarchies and Monarchic Ideas,” in *The Cambridge Ancient History*, 2nd ed., vol. 7, pt. 1, Walbank et al, eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 66; J. K. Davies, “Cultural, Social and Economic Features,” in *Cambridge Ancient History*, 7²/1, 296.

⁹ Diodorus 19.105.4: οὐκέτι γὰρ ὄντος οὐδενὸς τοῦ διαδεχομένου τὴν ἀρχὴν τὸ λοιπὸν ἕκαστος τῶν κρατούντων ἔθνῶν ἢ πόλεων βασιλικάς εἶχεν ἐλπίδας καὶ τὴν ὑφ' ἑαυτὸν τεταγμένην χώραν εἶχεν ὡσανεὶ τινα βασιλείαν δορίκτητον.

claims to Asian overlordship via *doriktetos chora* and assumed the powers of governance would follow, while Pithon believed he could acquire the upper satrapies and then become heir to the kingship-deferring claim, a move at which Diodotus I succeeded.¹⁰

Once territory was duly claimed and possessed, there came the need for maintaining peace and the amassing of wealth, as well as satisfying the soldiers whose labour had furnished the king with his power.¹¹ An institution serving all these ends was the kleruchy, an allotment of conquered foreign land given to a military officer who then supervised the estate and its native inhabitants. By appointing soldiers over localities in his conquered territory, the ruler established a standing army to defend a region from external attack and police the native inhabitants. He also ensured that production of new wealth from the kleruchies would flow to the military hierarchy, satisfying his soldiers and enriching himself.¹² The Seleucids employed the kleruchy system throughout their empire, and, since Alexander is known to have settled large numbers of his soldiers in Bactria, it is likely that the institution existed there also.¹³

Given the militaristic nature of Macedonian imperialism, the role of violence under Alexander and the Seleucids is an important point of consideration. The sort of activity necessary to warrant a claim of *doriktetos chora* was violent: application of force against another people, seizure of their possessions, destruction of their homes, possible

¹⁰ Neither Antipater nor Antigonus personally conquered the upper satrapies or were assigned to them by Alexander, yet both made dispensations concerning satraps (Diod. 18.39.6, 19.48.1-4). For Pithon's saga, see Diod. 18.7ff. Diodotus moved from satrap to king, i.e. he already possessed control of the Bactrian territory, government, and economy.

¹¹ Bosworth, *The Legacy of Alexander*, 258-259: kings needed to give "some semblance of reciprocity in dealings with [their] subjects", i.e. the subjects who gave them authority: their soldiers.

¹² Billows, *King and Colonists*, 160ff; cf. Kuhrt, Susan Sherwin-White, *Samarkhand*, 120-121.

¹³ Rostovtzeff, *Social and Economic History*, 481, 487-492; Tarn, *Greeks in Bactria*, 7, 31-32; Holt, *Alexander the Great and Bactria*, 81.

forced migration, and sufficient spread of terror to ensure their subjugation and compliance. This activity took place in the initial conquest and was part of subsequent governance through local garrisons which policed the people and ensured the flow of wealth back to the king.¹⁴ Whether or not the imposition of *katoikoi* and *kleruchs* on the native Bactrians was peaceful, the underlying basis for later imperial presence was violence committed by Alexander. The narrative of widespread combat waged all across Bactria and Sogdia testifies to the violence inherent in the imposition of imperial control and any resistance against it. Bloedow's point regarding the Macedonians' forcible seizure of horses – the basis for Bactrian and Sogdian military power and undoubtedly of great economic importance – fits squarely within this picture.¹⁵ The Greek authors of Alexander's campaign are careful to account for the provocations of raiding Scythian war parties and revolts incited by Spitamenes, and Curtius feels that Alexander was lenient towards the Bactrian insurgents.¹⁶ But the readiness of the Bactrian cavalry to believe that Alexander planned their murder suggests that both sides in the conflict were earning a reputation for spreading terror.¹⁷ Later Iranian historical accounts called Alexander “accursed”, and the “destroyer of fire-temples, the burner of the holy scriptures, and the murderer of the magi, . . . annihilator of Iran's unity and power . . . and author of many woes for Iran.”¹⁸ On this note, Strabo's brief mention that Alexander “terminated”

¹⁴ John Ma, *Antiochus III and the Cities of Western Asia Minor* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 108-109, 113ff.

¹⁵ Bloedow, “Alexander the Great and those Sogdianaeon Horses,” 26-29.

¹⁶ Arr. 4.1.3-5; Curt. 7.6.13-15, 8.1ff. Alexander's leniency: Curt. 8.2.13-18.

¹⁷ Curt. 7.6.15.

¹⁸ Ehsan Yarshater, “Introduction,” in *The Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. 3/1, Ehsan Yarshater, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), xxiii.

(καταλύσαι) Bactrian funeral practices becomes less the promotion of Hellenic hygiene and more an oppressive measure.¹⁹

The question of hellenization in Asia relates closely to the imposition of imperial control upon a subjected people. Plutarch praises Alexander for hellenizing the East, in his view the ultimate benefit of the Asian conquest,

Τὴν δ' Ἀλεξάνδρου παιδείαν ἄν ἐπιβλέπῃς, Ὑρκανούς γαμῆν ἐπαίδευσεν καὶ γεωργεῖν ἐδίδαξεν Ἀραχωσίους, καὶ Σογδιανούς ἔπεισε πατέρας τρέφειν καὶ μὴ φονεῦν, καὶ Πέρσας σέβασθαι μητέρας ἀλλὰ μὴ γαμῆν. ὦ θαυμαστῆς φιλοσοφίας, δι' ἣν Ἴνδοι θεοὺς Ἑλληνικοὺς προσκυνοῦσι, Σκύθαι θάπτουσι τοὺς ἀποθανόντας οὐ κατεσθίουσι. . . . ἀλλ' Ἀλεξάνδρου τὴν Ἀσίαν ἐξημεροῦντος Ὀμηρὸς ἦν ἀνάγνωσμα, καὶ Περσῶν καὶ Σουσιανῶν καὶ Γεδρωσίων παῖδες τὰς Εὐριπίδου καὶ Σοφοκλέους τραγωδίας ἤδον. . . . διὰ δ' Ἀλέξανδρον τοὺς Ἑλλήνων θεοὺς Βάκτρα καὶ Καύκασος προσεκύνησε. . . . Ἀλέξανδρος δ' ὑπὲρ ἑβδομήκοντα πόλεις βαρβάρους ἔθνεσιν ἐγκτίσας καὶ κατασπείρας τὴν Ἀσίαν Ἑλληνικοῖς τέλεσι, τῆς ἀνημέρου καὶ θηριώδους ἐκράτησε διαίτης. . . . μακαριώτεροι τῶν διαφυγόντων Ἀλέξανδρον οἱ κρατηθέντες γενόμενοι· τοὺς μὲν γὰρ οὐδεὶς ἔπαυσεν ἀθλίως ζῶντας, τοὺς δ' ἠνάγκασεν εὐδαιμονεῖν ὁ νικησας. . . . οὐκ ἄν ἡμερώθησαν, εἰ μὴ ἐκρατήθησαν· . . . οἷς ἐμπολισθεῖσιν ἐσβέσθη τὸ ἄγριον καὶ μετέβαλε τὸ χεῖρον ὑπὸ τοῦ κρείττονος ἐθιζόμενον.

(If you inspect Alexander's education, you see that he taught the Hyrcanians to marry and instructed the Arachosians to farm, he also persuaded the Sogdians to care for their fathers and not to kill them, and the Persians to honour their mothers and not to marry them. O marvel of philosophy! through which the Indians worship Greek gods, the Scythians bury their dead and do not eat them.... but as Alexander was civilizing Asia, there was public reading of Homer, and the children of the Persians, Sousians and Gedrosians knew the tragedies of Euripides and Sophocles. . . . through Alexander Bactra and the Caucasus worship the gods of the Greeks. . . . Alexander, having founded over seventy cities among barbarian peoples and having scattered Asia with Greek magistracies, controlled its brutal and savage mode of life. . . . those who are ruled by Alexander have become happier than those who escaped him; for no one stopped the latter from living wretchedly, but as the victor he compelled the former to be happy. . . . they would not have been civilized unless they had been overcome; . . . by the foundations of cities in these places their ferocity was quelled and the worse element changed by being accustomed to the influence of the better.)²⁰

The *topos* of the “culture-hero,” or institutor of morality and *technai* among barbarians

¹⁹ Strabo 11.11.3.

²⁰ Plutarch *de Alex.* 328C-329A.

was recurrent in Greek historical narrative as a disguise for imperialism and justification for military violence against foreign peoples.²¹ Contrary to Plutarch's eulogistic understanding of it, hellenism in the context of violent conquest and imperialism would not be an expression of philanthropic good-will but a demonstration of the king's complete ownership and control over the *doriktetos chora* and its inhabitants and their social institutions.

More benignly, physical evidence of a "Hellenistic" presence in Bactria (such as the city foundations to which Plutarch refers) can be read simply as the consequence of imperial needs. Satraps, *strategoi*, *kleruchs*, and *katoikoi* all required homes and spaces in which to carry out their official duties, and signs of post-conquest development are mostly reflective of these prosaic concerns rather than an agenda for cultural transformation.²² The most dramatic evidence for cultural syncretism in Bactria is both religious and military in nature and comes from the temple at Takht-i Sangin. Here were votive deposits containing fourth-century Greek swords and a dedication in Greek made by a non-Greek. The temple was functioning from Achaemenid times, and it seems that Greek soldiers, who as we know from accounts were already impressed with the mighty Oxus,²³ added their offerings to locals', and in time Greek language and artistic style became an accepted form of religious expression.²⁴

The Macedonian imperial system in Asia was like the Achaemenid empire in

²¹ Frances Pownall, *Lessons from the Past: The Moral Use of History in Fourth-Century Prose* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004), 25, 121-122, 179.

²² Alcock, "Breaking up the Hellenistic world," 188-189.

²³ Arr. 3.29.2, 4.15.7-8; Curt. 7.10.13-14; Strabo 11.11.5. See Ch. 2, pp 27-28.

²⁴ Pichikyan, "Sheathes of the Greek Swords," 212; Litvinsky, Vinogradov, Pichikyan, "The Votive Offering of Atrosokes," 110.

several respects. A king had supreme power by merit of his personal achievements and his ability to maintain the territorial claims and wealth which he had gained. To this latter end he possessed an administrative structure for providing tribute and keeping the peace among the untold myriads of conquered peoples. History's exceptional events show that this was an ideological system, developed from pragmatic concerns, but still an imperialism striven for and not always realized. In Bactria the colonists grew dissatisfied and twice revolted. From the beginning their loyalty seems doubtful, since Alexander found garrisoning a convenient method of weeding undesirable soldiers from his ranks, a habit not exactly conducive to peaceful and effective administration.²⁵ Nor was it guaranteed that even loyal veterans, now thousands of miles from home, would long appreciate their reward of "toiling over a patch of Asian land."²⁶ The use of violence did not always succeed in asserting imperial control; Antiochus III apparently had free run of the Bactrian countryside during his two year siege of Bactra, yet it profited him little in acquiring provisions.²⁷ This last example returns us to the point of ideology, for Antiochus was still acclaimed a successful conqueror and master of Asia. Kingship meant having control of land, wealth, and people, but it also implied participation in legendary imperialism and the possession of special historical status granted by Asian conquest.

²⁵ Arr. 4.4.1: at Alexandria Eschata, "he settled...whomever was unfit for service" (ξυνοικίσας... ὅσοι ἀπόμαχοι ἤδη ἦσαν), 4.22.5: also at Alexandria by the Hindu Kush, "ὅσοι τῶν στρατιωτῶν ἀπόμαχοι ἦσαν", 5.27.5: a soldier informs Alexander that, "of the rest of the Greeks, those who are settled in the cities which were colonized by you do not remain there at all willingly" (τῶν δὲ ἄλλων Ἑλλήνων οἱ μὲν ταῖς πόλεσι ταῖς πρὸς σοῦ οἰκισθείσασιν καταρκισμένοι οὐδ' οὗτοι πάντη ἐκόντες μένουσιν). Justin (12.5.13) calls Alexander's settlers "mutinous" (seditiosos). Curtius (10.2.8) offers the more positive view that Alexander used "colonists who desired to maintain the state [of affairs]." (. .. conditas urbes colonis replesset res retinere cupientibus).

²⁶ Billows, *King and Colonists*, 170.

²⁷ Polybius 11.34.7-10; Sidky, *The Greek Kingdom of Bactria*, 171-173.

Legendary History and Eastern Conquest

Hellenistic kingship in its role of imperial dominance over Asia was shaped by constant interaction with history and legend. The Asian empires of Alexander and the Seleucids functioned along the lines of Macedonian militarism and pragmatic imperialism, and epic myth provided a culturally Hellenic image of the naturally-endowed king as master and provider,²⁸ but Greeks of the time were certain that imperialistic kingship was a thoroughly Asian invention, with all the otherness and corruptibility exemplified by oriental kings of the past.²⁹ Even the diadem, the headband worn by all Hellenistic rulers after Alexander first associated it with the status of ruler over *doriktetos chora*, was reportedly of Asian origin, having been invented by Dionysus after he conquered India.³⁰ If kingship came from the East, then the way a leader became a king of truly imperial and historical proportions was to go East himself. Alexander, Seleucus, Ptolemy III, Antiochus III, and Eucratides all to greater and lesser degrees followed in the footsteps of preceding conquerors. Each time someone followed the exempla of previous kings he added weight to their importance, and each time history was repeated it gave legitimation to actions in the present. To use the example of the diadem again, whenever a king portrayed himself wearing it, he alluded to its legendary origin and its creator's great Asian conquest, and thus identified himself as heir to that glory and power which both emanated from and established kingship.

²⁸ Adcock, "Greek and Macedonian Kingship," 165.

²⁹ Billows, *King and Colonists*, 57ff; eg, Hdt. 1. 30ff (Croesus), 7.24, 35, 8.118-119 (Xerxes). Cf. Suda s.v. *Basileia*, 1: "Kingship/kingdom: the rank. Also the nation being ruled, such is that of the Persians, Indians, and Arabs." (*Βασιλεία. τὸ ἀξίωμα. καὶ τὸ ἔθνος τὸ βασιλευόμενον· οἶον Περσῶν, Ἰνδῶν, Ἀράβων.*)

³⁰ Diod. 4.4.4; Pliny *NH* 7.191; Plut. *Dem.* 18.1-2; Smith, *Hellenistic Royal Portraits*, 34-38.

The Western Greeks before and during Alexander's time had a long-standing interest in the marvels of eastern history and its kings. Herodotus is undoubtedly the most famous source of eastern history, but he was just one of a number of late sixth through fourth century authors who travelled in Asia and wrote books on its ancient civilizations. Unfortunately many of these other authors are today known only from bare references to their names and the titles and some fragments of their writings, but people in the Hellenistic era would have been fully aware of the body of information and opinion found in such texts as Dionysius of Miletus' *Affairs after Darius* (τὰ μετὰ Δαρείου) and *Persika*; Hellanicus of Lesbos' *Persika*; Charon of Lampsakos' *Persika*; the *Anabasis* and *Cyropaideia* of Xenophon; Ctesias' *Persika* and *Indika*, the *Persika* of Heracleides of Cyme; and Dinon's *Persika*.³¹ Their presentation of political history was entwined with that of cultural matters such as legend, religion, philosophy, and antiquarian interest. This may frustrate the modern reader, but these authors, being Greek, were of the view that the non-Hellenic, barbaric past was largely outside the range of historical "cause and effect". Native histories were the "erga" of foreign peoples, excellent moral exempla on the achievements and folly of humankind, and the source for ancient and mystical wisdom.³² It should then be reasonable to understand early eastern histories in a purely literary and even mythological sense and as descriptions more of how Greeks thought than of actual events. In fact the texts are historical and describe real people and real conditions, a paradoxical situation which makes them a nice counterpart for addressing the role of

³¹ For all except Xenophon – whose works are, of course, well known – see *FGrHist* 687, 687a, 687b, 688, 689, 690, respectively. Demodamas, Seleucus and Antiochus' general, also wrote a book, *Indika*, presumably influenced by his far eastern travels; *FGrHist* 428 F3.

³² Arnaldo Momigliano, *Alien Wisdom: The Limits of Hellenization* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 141-144; Robert Drews, *The Greek Accounts of Eastern History* (Washington, DC: Centre for Hellenic Studies, 1973), 98-99.

ideology and legend within the institution of kingship. Bactria is the location of several interactions between ideological history, history for which there is corroborating evidence, and the activities of kingship.

The first case occurs far in the distant past during the campaign of legendary Assyrian conquerors Ninus and Semiramis. Ctesias reports that Ninus had difficulty against the “extreme fortification” in Bactria, having to postpone his campaign there until he collected a greater army, and that the city Bactra was home to the royal palace.³³ Justin says that Ninus fought “Zoroater, king of the Bactrians, who is said to have been first to introduce magical arts and to have with great dedication observed the principles of the universe and the movement of the stars.”³⁴ This is clearly a conflation with Zoroaster, born in Bactra, who was a great prophet and instructor of kingly matters but likely not a king himself.³⁵ With Ctesias (or Diodorus, by whom Ctesias is quoted) calling Ninus’ royal opponent in Bactria “Oxyartes,” which was the name of Alexander’s Bactrian enemy, it has been postulated that the early history of Ctesias was later re-written to accommodate Alexander’s adventures and provide them an illustrious precedent.³⁶ Foucher was quite justified in seeing such accounts as less than scientific and calling the whole of early Bactrian history a “mirage.”³⁷ Since Foucher, however, Soviet

³³ Ctesias, *FGrHist* 688 F 1b, pp. 422, 426.

³⁴ Justin 1.1.9.

³⁵ Bactra as Zoroaster’s birthplace: Rawlinson, *Bactria: The History of a Forgotten Empire*, 11. Diogenes Laertius – citing Xanthus of Lydia, late 5th century BC – describes Zoroaster as the founder of the “Magian” religion either 5,000 years before Troy or 6,000 before Xerxes, *Proem*. 2. On the topic of Persian kings, Plato says that princes were taught “μαγείαν . . . τὴν Ζωροάστρου,” which was cultivation of the gods and kingly affairs (βασιλικά), *Alcibiades* 122A. Justin’s association of Zoroaster with royalty is thus not completely unfounded.

³⁶ Holt, *Alexander and Bactria*, 36, citing Pierre Briant, *L’Asie centrale*.

³⁷ Kuzmina, “The ‘Bactrian Mirage’ and the Archaeological Reality,” 111-112.

archaeological discoveries have made the picture of a wealthy, populous, fortified, pre-historical Bactria decidedly more real. A line of fortresses along the Amu Darya, organized irrigation and canal projects, deep cultural layers and fortifications throughout the upper Syr Darya valley all dating back well into the Bronze Age (c. 2000) are some of the physical signs of what Ctesias says existed.³⁸ The archaeological evidence does not make Ninus or Semiramis any more real, but it does make the picture of what they met in Bactria more realistic.

That the mirage of early Bactrian history is now proved a physical reality does not discount the fact that its representation in a text like Ctesias' fits best into the category of legendary, not factual, history. The story of Ninus and Semiramis' campaign in Bactria strikingly parallels at points that of Alexander. Whether this is because writers did indeed go back and rewrite Ctesias' account, or Alexander's recorders characterized his deeds in terms that followed the legendary precedent, or Alexander himself took inspiration from legend is unclear. The first parallel concerns the Bactrian method of defense against invasion; both Ninus and Alexander discovered that after facing the enemy once in battle the Bactrians retreated to their hometowns and strongholds.³⁹ It can be added here that this phenomenon repeated again when Euthydemus preferred to stay in Bactra after his ambivalent loss against Antiochus III.⁴⁰ Secondly, Semiramis broke Ninus' siege of Bactra by scaling its acropolis with a few trusty mountaineers, a feat later duplicated by

³⁸ Ibid, 112ff, 130; Gardin, "Fortified Sites of Eastern Bactria," 86ff; Gardin, "The Development of Eastern Bactria in Pre-classical Times," 9ff; Negmatov, "Archaic Khojent – Alexandria Eschata," 42-43.

³⁹ Ctesias, *FGrHist* 688 F 1b, p. 426: κρατούμενοι τοῖς πλήθεσι κατὰ πόλεις ἀπεχώρησαν, ἕκαστοι ταῖς ἰδίαις πατρίσι βοηθήσοντες. *Απ.* 3.28.10: ἄλλος ἄλλη ἐπὶ τὰ σφῶν ἕκαστοι ἀπηλλάγησαν.

⁴⁰ Polyb. 10.49.15.

Alexander in taking the Rock fortresses.⁴¹ Thirdly, after Ninus' death Semiramis ruled an empire from Egypt to Bactria and from there invaded India, although she failed to defeat its king or seize any territory.⁴² The important point about her campaign was, in the words of Justin, that "she brought war into India," a feat replicated by no one else except Alexander.⁴³

Another interaction between ideology, history, and kingship concerns the successful ruler and the city. The Assyrians' siege of Bactra was, depending on how Polybius is read, duplicated by Antiochus III. Polybius lists Bactra as one of the great sieges of history, and it is assumed that he meant Antiochus' siege. Ideologically, it was a great success for Antiochus, adding to his catalogue of great deeds and merit as a conquering king. Capturing a large and powerful city or fortress was a deed of great mythical merit, and as noted, Semiramis cleverly seized Bactra, but Alexander managed to take the city without even a siege.⁴⁴ Capturing cities and fortresses was also a pragmatic action, since they were administrative, defensive, and religious centres. With Antiochus III's siege of Bactra, however, we see two Hellenistic monarchs opposed, and from perspective of kingship, two protagonists. On this occasion, as when Eucratides was later besieged by Demetrius, a king could derive glory from successful resistance against a glorious foe, or, if not glory, at least an honourable mention in historical narrative.

The repeated Indian conquests provide another interaction between ideology, history, and the institution of kingship. Like Semiramis, Alexander fought with powerful

⁴¹ Ctesias, *FGrHist* 688 F 1b, p. 427; Arr. 4.18.5-19.3; Curt. 7.11.1-19.

⁴² Ctesias, *FGrHist* 688 F 1b, pp. 434-438.

⁴³ Justin 1.2.9.

⁴⁴ Arr. 3.29.1.

Indian kings, but unlike her he was able to obtain their allegiance and consider their lands conquered. Seleucus also campaigned up to India, though he did not triumph against Sandrocottus, but made a peace treaty with him.⁴⁵ Antiochus III followed in his ancestor's footsteps and dealt similarly with Sophagasenus, the then king of India.⁴⁶ Soon conquerors from the Bactrian kingdom succeeded where few had before, and we find Demetrius and Menander as "reges Indorum".⁴⁷ Getting control of Bactria was always the last step before entry into India, and, at least for Semiramis, the region served as a mustering point for extra forces and contributed its own soldiers to the invasion effort.⁴⁸ The Indian kings always had huge armies and reserves of wealth and men drawn from the unknown and mysterious depths of the subcontinent, and this usually helped later justify the western king's halted campaign and make entrance into India a triumph in itself.⁴⁹ Seleucus had also to contend with the personal charisma of Sandrocottus, a king inspired by the sight of Alexander years before, who had overthrown the Macedonian governors and a corrupt Indian king, and who went to war upon a fearsome and portentous elephant.⁵⁰ Seleucus was seen as fortunate to depart safely with five hundred elephants, and Antiochus III with far less than that.⁵¹ It is likely that Seleucus' envoy to Sandrocottus, Megasthenes, was initially sent to spy out the possibilities for invasion (his

⁴⁵ Justin 15.4.20-21; Strabo 15.2.9.

⁴⁶ Polyb. 11.34.11.

⁴⁷ Justin 41.6.4; Strabo 15.1.3: according to Apollodorus the Bactrians conquered "more of India than the Macedonians" (πλείω τῆς Ἰνδικῆς ἐκείνου ἢ Μακεδόνας καταστρέψασθαι).

⁴⁸ Ctesias, *FGrHist* 688 F1b, pp. 434-435.

⁴⁹ Hdt. 3.98ff; Plut. *Alex.* 62.4.

⁵⁰ Plut. *Alex.* 62.9; Justin 15.4.12-21.

⁵¹ Seleucus: Strabo 15.2.9; Plut. *Alex.* 62.4. Antiochus: Polyb. 11.34.11-12.

report excerpted in Strabo highlights the Mauryan tribes, warriors, and communications) but upon reporting the extent of Mauryan power was demoted to honest diplomat.⁵² The Indus was thus the practical limit of Hellenistic conquest, and any sort of treaty a western conquerer made with an Indian king became the appropriate ideological *telos* for an eastern conquest, as well as the practical basis for a supply of war elephants.

From legendary to historical times, events in Bactria show the pattern of what superior monarchs do: campaign far and wide, attack great cities, and face down formidable kings. Alexander, his soldiers, and later writers were fully aware of the glory perceived in finding mythical precedents to match and exceed. Arrian records that envoys from Nysa, a legendary foundation by Dionysus, happily compared their town with Alexander's two new Alexandrias in Egypt and by the Hindu Kush, and that Alexander appreciated the flattery since he fully intended to exceed Dionysus in territory travelled as well as cities founded.⁵³ Eratosthenes reported that Macedonian soldiers discovered the cave from which Heracles freed Prometheus, but Arrian discounts this as over-enthusiastic confusion of one Mount Caucasus with another and an eagerness to follow Heracles' footsteps into India.⁵⁴ Strabo views this incorrect attribution of a legendary place-name as an attempt to glorify Alexander by showing that he travelled to the ends of the earth, where Prometheus was reputedly imprisoned.⁵⁵ Other rulers were not immune to the lure of far eastern power and glory: Seleucus had expeditions beyond both the

⁵² Kuhrt, Sherwin-White, *Samarkhand*, 95-97. Megasthenes' account is the source for descriptions of India in Strabo, Diodorus, and Arrian; cf. *FGrHist* 715 F4 ff.

⁵³ Arr. 5.1.5, 5.2.1.

⁵⁴ Arr. 5.3.1-4. The Greek authors often call the Hindu Kush mountains the "Caucasus".

⁵⁵ Strabo 11.5.5.

Iaxartes and Indus, which Pliny notes exceeded the limits met by Alexander.⁵⁶ Ptolemy III recorded his eastern exploits, in the same inscription numbering both Heracles and Dionysus among his ancestors.⁵⁷ Clearly, there were many different levels upon which the ideology of eastern imperialistic kingship could function, most generally in campaigning east and behaving imperiously. Observation of the specifics of imperialism and ideology and their relationship to Bactrian kingship would be a long and involved task, but two specific areas are quite revelatory. What follows are two case studies on ideology and kingship: its relationship to imperialistic marriage and its visual expression on Bactrian coins.

Case Study 1: Imperialistic Kingship and Marriage

A common motif in the histories of eastern conquest is the king's marriage to a barbarian princess, most famously that of Alexander to Roxane.⁵⁸ In a huge ceremony at Susa, Alexander also supplied Asian wives for his top soldiers, including Apama, daughter of Spitamenes, for Seleucus and for himself two more Persian women, one a daughter of Darius III.⁵⁹ Seleucus later established with Sandrocottus the right of intermarriage (*ἐπιγαμία*) which may have included another wife for himself.⁶⁰ After his siege of Bactra, Antiochus III, impressed with Demetrius' good manners and appearance, promised to him one of his daughters, of which he had four, although at the time they

⁵⁶ Pliny *N.H.* 6.49, 61-63. Pliny notes that Heracles, Dionysus, Cyrus, and Semiramis all reached the Iaxartes as well as Alexander and, later, Demodamas.

⁵⁷ *OGIS*, 54, ln. 5-6, 13-21.

⁵⁸ Arr. 4.19.5; Strabo 11.11.4.

⁵⁹ Arr. 7.4.4-6.

⁶⁰ Str. 15.2.9.

were rather young for marriage.⁶¹ The final Bactrian royal marriage concerns the parents of Eucratides, known from his commemorative coins as Heliocles and Laodice. Some scholars feel that Laodice is portrayed wearing a diadem and, given that Laodice was a popular name for Hellenistic princesses, postulate that she was of royal birth, probably Seleucid. Originally Tarn's idea, the current hypothesis has Antiochus III handing his widowed daughter – Laodice had been married to her short-lived brother, Antiochus – to an eastern general or satrap c. 190.⁶² There are several ways to interpret these marriages in terms of their relationship to imperialism and kingship: according to traditional Greek ideology, imperialistic pragmatism, and imperialistic ideology.

The traditional Greek interpretation was generally negative, viewing Alexander's Asian marriage arrangements as evidence of his orientalism and intent to fuse Hellene and Persian into a new race. This is indeed the explanation which Alexander reportedly gave, that the marriage would "remove shame from the conquered and pride from the victors," adding that Achilles had consorted with a captive Trojan girl for the same reason. Curtius characterizes this statement as a rationalization of Alexander's lust for Rhoxane, since Alexander had previously been presented with the equally beautiful and nobler royal women of Darius III's family, with whom marriage would be perfectly acceptable, rather than the union with the Bactrian girl of "obscure birth".⁶³ For their part, Alexander's soldiers were continually outraged that he would marry from a conquered

⁶¹ Polyb. 11.34.9. The eldest of Antiochus' daughters married in 195 and the rest in 193, and they were likely just children in 206: App. Syr. 4-5; A. S. Hollis, "Laodike Mother of Eucratides of Bactria," *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 110 (1996), 162.

⁶² Hollis, "Laodike," 161-162; cf. Tarn, *Greeks in Bactria*, 196-7. The likelihood of Laodice being sent east is borne out by the fact that she served as chief priestess of her mother Laodice's cult in Media: John D. Grainger, *A Seleukid Prosopography and Gazetteer* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 48.

⁶³ Curt. 8.4.22-26.

people and invite the defeated Asians into the army, particularly into their elite regiments, the Silver Shields and Companions; they concluded that Alexander was forgetting his Macedonian heritage and “barbarizing”.⁶⁴ In the same vein, Curtius observes with disappointment that Alexander’s garrisons around Margiana had soon “forgotten their origin and serve[d] those whom they once ruled.”⁶⁵ The possible positive interpretation was to see Alexander and others as civilizing culture-heroes and founders of a new and improved Asian race. Alexander’s contemporaries and biographers, however, looked askance at this, viewing it (as noted) as a justification for some deeper, less heroic motive.

The marriages can also be interpreted along practical lines, such as the making of dynastic alliances. In all of the marriages listed above it is the names of husband and father-in-law which feature most prominently, even in the cases – like Seleucus with Sandrocottus, Antiochus III with Demetrius, and Antiochus III with Heliocles – when the actual marriage is unconfirmed or hypothetical. For the marriages arranged in conjunction with peace treaties (Seleucus/Sandrocottus’ and Antiochus/Demetrius’) perhaps a marriage *in potentia* was enough to secure political goodwill. In the case of Alexander and Rhoxane, Oxyartes, as father-in-law to Alexander, retained a high position in far eastern politics, probably for the rest of his life.⁶⁶ Presumably by combining this marriage with the recruitment of Asian soldiers (two of whom were Rhoxane’s brothers) Alexander hoped to create new loyalty among the Bactrians.⁶⁷ Of Alexander’s Susian

⁶⁴ Arr. 7.6.1-5, 7.11.1-4, 6-9; Curt. 8.4.30.

⁶⁵ Curt. 7.10.16: ...nunc originis suae oblita, serviunt quibus imperaverunt.

⁶⁶ Diodorus 18.38.6; Justin 13.4.21.

⁶⁷ Oxyartes’ two sons in the army: Curt. 8.4.21.

marriages, Seleucus and Apama's apparently succeeded: Seleucus named at least three cities in her honour, and her son Antiochus I founded one Apameia.⁶⁸ The Seleucid general Demodamas' dedication at Miletus in honour of Apama for her support of the Iaxartan expedition shows that her husband, son, and their soldiers in the far east benefited from her knowledge of that region and ties to its inhabitants.⁶⁹ There was an historical precedent for gaining Bactrian loyalty and support via a local princess: Ctesias records that Cyrus, while waging a "doubtful" war with the Bactrians, achieved a successful peace once the Bactrians discovered that his mother, Amytis, was Bactrian herself.⁷⁰ At this point, Tarn's dynastic marriage theory must be mentioned, if only briefly. He postulated that the Diodotids and Seleucids were related by several intermarriages in order to explain the Bactrian "pedigree" coins on which kings celebrated previous rulers. Included in this category is Eucratides' issue commemorating his parents. (Tarn felt that the coins showed actual, rather than ideological ancestry – more on this point will be in the following case study.)⁷¹

Tarn's emphasis on understanding the wives and daughters of Hellenistic kings as "pawns" in royal and dynastic politics is important and brings us back to the imperialistic ideology of marriage.⁷² Considering imperialism's goal (to control) and means of effecting that goal (often by violence), marriages such as Rhoxane's and Apama's were just another way for the conquering king to effect and broadcast his subjugation of the

⁶⁸ Appian *Syr.* 57; Strabo 16.2.4; Pliny *N.H.* 6.132.

⁶⁹ Robert, "Pliny VI 49," 469-471.

⁷⁰ Ctesias, *FGrHist* 688 F 9.

⁷¹ Tarn, *Greeks in Bactria*, 73-73, 196, 202, genealogical table following p. 561.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 74.

conquered people, by taking possession of the women.⁷³ This explanation adds greater nuance to the accounts of Alexander's Macedonian soldiers' objections to his marriages. The soldiers were upset because he seemed to be turning oriental (*βαρβαρίζων*) and marrying conquered women was only part of the problem. The soldiers themselves all took local wives and had children by them but, despite the familial affection which must have grown up, were fully expected to put them aside for proper Macedonian wives upon return home.⁷⁴ Taking local women was part of imperialism; besides being a symbolic act of conquest, possession, and control, marriage gave soldiers access to local resources, both through any dowries they might receive and through the assistance their wives and families-in-law could render them. To this more prosaic activity Alexander ought to have referred when he cited Achilles' captive consort,⁷⁵ but he was confusing one ideological pattern with another and founding a new race when his soldiers expected to see only imperial glory for Macedon.

The Susian mass-marriages fit squarely within the imperialistic pattern. Arrian is careful to record the names both of the Persian wives and of their fathers. A quick comparison with the surrounding narrative reveals that these new fathers-in-law were the leading Persian satraps and generals, some of them from the royal family. These marriages were not between equals. But the conquest and the pattern of imperialism meant that these grandees who were allowed to live had capitulated to Alexander, stripping themselves of immense powers and handing their daughters to foreigners not of

⁷³ Billows, *King and Colonists*, 30.

⁷⁴ Arr. 7.12.1-2; Curt. 10.4.3.

⁷⁵ Perhaps a better example from the Trojan war is the wholesale enslavement of the Trojan women, such as Agamemnon's possession of Cassandra, but Alexander seems to have preferred Achilles.

their own choosing. Read this way, the marriages are symbolic of the Persian loss and the Macedonian gain. In the end, of all the Macedonian bride-grooms only Seleucus is recorded as having kept his Asian wife after 323, the wives' sole purpose being to be symbolic of their husbands' and Alexander's imperial control. Apama made herself inexplicable, probably helped in this by Seleucus' aim to be king of Asia and thus his need for advice on any number of local social, political, and cultural details, plus the continued reminder through their marriage that he was a conqueror of Asia.

In the later marriage agreements between Seleucus and Sandrocottus, Antiochus III and Demetrius, and possibly Antiochus III and Heliocles, the categories are less clear-cut. Imperialistic ideology decrees that the victor takes a woman from the loser. Judging from the sizes of their respective empires and resources, Seleucus and Sandrocottus were probably evenly matched and thus intermarriage or *ἐπιγαμία* was instituted instead of the usual victor's marriage. The proposal made by Antiochus III to Demetrius of Bactria suggests that in some way he found himself in a difficult situation in Bactria; a marriage arrangement, even if it was unlikely to be carried through, was one way to treat Euthydemus as an equal and improve relations with the Bactrians. The hypothetical marriage of Laodice and Heliocles may have simply been the case of a successful general or high official being rewarded with a royal princess, or, depending on where in the East Heliocles lived and which eastern king he served (Seleucid, Parthian or Bactrian), a case of conciliating a powerful neighbour.

The marriage arrangements of Hellenistic kings in Bactria generally benefited the kings. Primarily, a marriage provided ideological status to a king, as conqueror and master of his new realms and, depending on how it was viewed by other parties, as a

beneficent civilizer and elevator of lowly barbarians to Hellenic standards. The main practical benefit to be derived was loyalty and assistance from the wife and her native relatives, should she and they be amenable. There was the possibility for the non-Greek father-in-law to profit from the arrangement, but even Oxyartes remained subordinate to Alexander and subsequent western leaders. Marriage had currency in Hellenistic imperialism as a means for extending a ruler's ideological kingship. It was an obvious means of this by clearly showing the king's possession and control, and a subversive means in its potential for fostering friendliness and commonality among the king's subjects.

Case Study 2: Kingship on Coins

Of all the tangible means by which a ruler could communicate with his subjects, coins were ideal. The issue of coinage was under royal control, and so as far as images of the king went, coins provided the "official" and most standardized version.⁷⁶ Coins were also a part of daily life, sought, handled, or stored by most, if not all, members of society, and as such they were an excellent medium for the propaganda of royal ideology. The Achaemenids had established a monetary system throughout their empire, though coins tended to be valued more for their metal and intrinsic worth than their artistic forms.⁷⁷ Hellenistic kings, however, were the undisputed masters of coinage propaganda, turning what had been simple weights and measures into ideological tools. The immediate example of this is the unerring consistency with which all Bactrian kings portrayed

⁷⁶ Robert Fleischer, "Hellenistic Royal Iconography on Coins," *Aspects of Hellenistic Kingship*, Per Bilde et al, eds. (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 1996), 28.

⁷⁷ The Achaemenid coinage was based on the gold daric (= 20 silver sigloi, or "half shekels"). Coins were more common in western areas in contact with Greeks; eastern trade was conducted according to weight in bullion/ingots: Mitchiner, *Indo-Greek Coinage*, 1.

themselves on coins wearing the diadem, noted above as the key insignia of Hellenistic kingship.⁷⁸ The kings included many other emblems of kingship on their coins, each of them fraught with ideological importance. It is an important caution that interpretation of coinage insignia is equally obscured by difficulty. Ambiguous symbols make labelling a highly subjective process, for example, is a figure a member of the Greek pantheon or a local deity, or some syncretized version of the two?⁷⁹ In order to avoid overly hypothetical characterizations and still present examples of the royal iconography, the images discussed below are the more firmly established ones, usually because figures are accompanied by clearly identifying emblems.

Certain kings portrayed themselves wearing more than just the diadem. Demetrius and Antimachus are both shown wearing a *kausia*-style helmet; Eucratides is shown wearing the Boeotian cavalry helmet and a cuirass and on some issues is also hurling a spear from his right shoulder.⁸⁰ These items seem to fit with a militaristic image of the Bactrian kings, usually described more in terms of their portraiture which, since they typically do not subscribe to the youthful, “Apollonic” style, is described as “hard-bitten” and “a strong expression of martial determination.”⁸¹ It can be noted that the image of Eucratides hurling the spear looks like a clear statement of *doriktetos chora*,⁸² which fits into the history of his reign, filled as it was with warfare against other kings. On some coins Demetrius portrayed himself wearing an elephant scalp, and at times Eucratides’

⁷⁸ Ibid, passim.

⁷⁹ Guillaume, *Analysis of Reasonings*, 33ff.

⁸⁰ Ibid, 61, 73-74, 86-87, 90ff; Gardner, *Catalogue of Indian Coins*, 12.

⁸¹ Pollitt, *Art in the Hellenistic Age*, 70-71; Smith, *Hellenistic Royal Portraits*, 113-114.

⁸² Billows, *King and Colonists*, 27.

helmet is adorned with a bull's ear and horn.⁸³ On one level, the elephant scalp may signify Demetrius' conquests in India;⁸⁴ on another level the headdress represents the "craze" rulers had for the war elephant, which was an important element on Hellenistic battlefields.⁸⁵ For example, Seleucus and Antiochus I placed an elephant *quadriga* on the reverse side of their silver coins, Antiochus had an elephant head on certain silver issues, and Demetrius had the same image on some of his copper coins.⁸⁶ The bull's horns in Classical times signified a Dionysiac connection and in Hellenistic-era imagery could refer to Alexander's horse Bucephalus or his Indian city Bucephalia, or to Seleucus' legendary bull-wrestling.⁸⁷

The Bactrian kings all adopted or were given epithets in the legends on their coins, which could be significant for any Greek-literate subjects. Diodotus I was Soter, Euthydemus Theos, Demetrius Aniketos, Antimachus Theos, Agathocles Dikaios, Pantaleon Soter, Eucratides Megas, and Heliocles Dikaios. It appears that the use of epithets was a later development. Diodotus and Euthydemus did not use epithets on their own coins but were given them on the commemorative coins of Antimachus and Agathocles, who also began the practice of epithet-use by a living king. Demetrius used "Aniketos" during his reign, but whether he was earlier, later, or contemporary with

⁸³ Mitchiner, *Indo-Greek Coinage*, 61, 79; Gardner, *Catalogue of Indian Coins*, 6, 13ff, plates V 7-9.

⁸⁴ Smith, *Hellenistic Royal Portraits*, 41.

⁸⁵ Lahiri, *Corpus*, 23.

⁸⁶ Newell, *Eastern Seleucid Mints*, 125, 229ff; Mitchiner, *Indo-Greek Coinage*, 10, 28, 60.

⁸⁷ Cunningham, *Coins of Alexander's Successors*, 181; Oikonomides, "Eucratides the Great and Hellenistic Bactria," 31; Smith, *Hellenistic Royal Portraits*, 40-41. Seleucus and the bull: Appian *Syr.* 57.

Agathocles is unclear.⁸⁸ Tarn called these commemorative series “pedigree” coins because they also include Alexander “son of Philip” and Antiochus “Nikator”, leading him to believe that their issue was for dynastic propaganda during a civil war, wherein claims to the throne could be made according to succession from Alexander or the Seleucids.⁸⁹ This is a fairly reasonable explanation for the simultaneous appearance of both epithet use and commemorative coins, since the regnal dates of the kings after Euthydemus are only approximate (c. 200-170 for the entire group) and may overlap, and in the case of Eucratides and Demetrius of India two kings were fighting each other. The theory also highlights the most important aspect of epithets: their role as propaganda of kingly attributes and triumphs.

In addition to details directly associated with the king’s portrait and name, Bactrian coins display royal ideology through images of deities. The reverse side of coins of all denominations would typically show a Greek deity or, if space was small, some representative emblem; kings often used more than one deity, but chose one in particular for all their higher gold and silver denomination issues. Zeus, Apollo, Athene, Dionysus, Hermes, Heracles, and the Dioscuri were popular choices, and though labelling them as dynastic “patron deities” is perhaps going too far,⁹⁰ it is clear that the Diodotids favoured the image of Zeus, Euthydemus and others preferred Heracles, and Eucratides the Dioscuri.⁹¹ As to why kings chose certain gods and what this tells us about their

⁸⁸ Mitchiner, *Indo-Greek Coinage*, 61, 73-74, 77ff; Gardner, *Catalogue of Indian Coins*, 10ff.

⁸⁹ Tarn, *Greeks in Bactria*, 201-202; Frank Holt, “The So-Called ‘Pedigree Coins’ of the Bactrian Greeks,” in *Ancient Coins of the Graeco-Roman World: The Nickle Numismatic Papers*, Waldeman Heckel, Richard Sullivan, eds. (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1984), 70-71.

⁹⁰ Guillaume, *Analysis of Reasonings*, 79-86.

⁹¹ Mitchiner, *Indo-Greek Coinage*, 39ff, 51ff, 88ff.

personalities and approaches to kingship the interpretations vary widely. It is prudent to avoid basing an historical account on a ruler's iconographical choices. The coin imagery best functions as corroborating evidence for what is already known of Bactria's Hellenistic history.⁹²

The figure of Zeus on Diodotid gold and silver coins is shown striding to the left, bearing the aegis on his outstretched left arm and holding in his right hand the thunderbolt, with the eagle at his feet.⁹³ The possibility that this pose signifies "spear-thrower" or *doriktetos chora* propaganda has been raised, though it is doubtful that such non-divine activity can be attributed to Zeus himself.⁹⁴ Lahiri says that the "thundering" Zeus pose corresponds to the point in mythology when Zeus "using his two newly acquired terrorizing and devastating weapons, the aegis and the thunderbolt...[makes] his final bid to vanquish the almost invincible Titans," and, though Lahiri does not say it, this inevitably leads to a comparison with Diodotus' own successful revolt from Seleucid authority.⁹⁵

Heracles was used by Euthydemus, Demetrius, and Euthydemus II and shown in a variety of poses, always with his club and lion skin. Euthydemus I's Heracles was seated on a rock, and Demetrius and Euthydemus II's Heracles was standing, holding his club in his left hand and with his right crowning himself with a laurel wreath.⁹⁶ It is already noted above that Alexander's soldiers had earlier attributed some importance to Heracles as

⁹² Guillaume, *Analysis of Reasonings*, 113-115.

⁹³ Gardner, *Catalogue of Indian Coins*, 3, plates I. 4-8; Mitchiner, *Indo-Greek Coinage*, 39ff.

⁹⁴ Holt, *Thundering Zeus*, 18.

⁹⁵ A. N. Lahiri, "Religio-Mythical Bearing of the Representation of Zeus on Indo-Greek Coins," *Journal of the Numismatic Society of India* 42 (1980), 61-62.

⁹⁶ Gardner, *Catalogue of Indian Coins*, 4-8; Mitchiner, *Indo-Greek Coinage*, 51ff.

their legendary precursor in Asia. Heracles along with Hermes was given a dedication at the Ai Khanoum gymnasium, and he had a sanctuary at Dilberdjín (at the north end of the Bactra oasis).⁹⁷ A relief-carved ivory *xiphos* hilt from Takht-i Sangin shows Heracles and Achelous fighting over Deianira.⁹⁸ But undoubtedly the most interesting image of Heracles is a bronze statuette found at Ai Khanoum where Heracles is posed in exactly the same manner as on Demetrius and Euthydemus II's coins.⁹⁹ This particular pose for Heracles was popular throughout the Hellenistic world in the second century as an athletic or victor image (hence the laurel wreath) and was frequently found in gymnasia, of which Ai Khanoum's is already associated via the dedication to Heracles.¹⁰⁰

As a final example, the Dioscuri on Eucratides' coins – shown charging on horseback and holding spears¹⁰¹ – provides the epitome for a motif running throughout the history of Bactrian kingship and warfare. Cavalry forces were a consistent part of Bactrian warfare, whether seen in the backlash Alexander received for seizing horses, in Eucratides' cavalry helmet portrait, or in the cataphract horse armour found at Ai Khanoum's arsenal.¹⁰² Hellenistic kings were the leaders of armies and their kingship depended on military strength, which in Bactria was cavalry, and so for Eucratides, a

⁹⁷ Robert, "De Delphes à l'Oxus," 417-421; Irina Kruglikova, "Les fouilles de la mission archéologique soviéto-afghane sur le site gréco-kushan de Dilberdjín en Bactriane (Afghanistan)," *Comptes Rendus des Séances – Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* (1977), 422.

⁹⁸ B. A. Litvinskiy, I. R. Pichikyan, "River-deities of Greece salute the God of the river Oxus-Vakhsh. Achelous and the hippocampess," in *In the Land of the Gryphons: Papers on Central Asian archaeology in antiquity*, Antonio Invernizzi, ed. (Florence: Casa Editrice Le Lettere, 1995), 129ff.

⁹⁹ P. Bernard, "Fouilles de Ai Khanoum (Afghanistan), Campagnes de 1972 et 1973," *Comptes Rendus des Séances – Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* (1974), 302.

¹⁰⁰ C. C. Vermeule, "Herakles Crowning Himself: New Greek Statuary Types and their Place in Hellenistic and Roman Art," *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 77 (1957), 289, 292.

¹⁰¹ Mitchiner, *Indo-Greek Coinage*, 88ff.

¹⁰² Bloedow, "Alexander the Great and those Sogdianaeon Horses," 28-29; Valerii Nikonorov, *The Armies of Bactria, 700 BC – 450 AD* (Stockport, Cheshire: Montvert, 1997), 39, 41, 45.

king who experienced continued warfare, the Dioscuri represent his power base and, if all went well for him, his reason for success. That the Dioscuri were part of wider Hellenistic Bactrian culture is evidenced by a c. 150 BC temple at Dilberdjin where they are featured in two wall paintings.¹⁰³

Coins are quite a different type of evidence than written accounts, yet they shed a similar light on the ideology of Hellenistic kingship in Bactria. It is possible to emphasize the militaristic nature of certain kings' portraiture and chosen emblems, but it yields a richer understanding of Bactrian kingship to see warfare as only one aspect, albeit a major one, of a king's role. Most kings showed themselves simply wearing the diadem, and their epithets described them as providers of justice and peace and intermediaries with the gods: Heliocles "the Just", Diodotus "the Saviour", Demetrius "the Unconquerable", and Antimachus "the Divine". Certain later kings made direct references to their illustrious predecessors, presumably as a means of displaying their royal heritage and identifying themselves with glorious memory. Choices of deities and emblems provided allusions to mythology and legendary precedents, and they also reflected the interests of contemporary religious culture in Bactria. Altogether, the Bactrian coinage displays the blending of imperialistic ideology with the mythology and legendary and factual history which informed the institution of Hellenistic kingship.

¹⁰³ Kruglikova, "Les fouilles de la mission," 409.

Chapter 4 – Kingship and Ruling Power

Upon conquering to his satisfaction and having rationalized his kingdom according to the appropriate mythology, how did the king of Bactria rule? In the ancient accounts Bactrian kings appear solely in a context of warfare or revolt, but during the two-century long Hellenistic period there were many more years of peacetime, very little of which was recorded by the ancient authors. It is a reasonable supposition that even during peaceful years the king's attention focused on his military and wealth, for sound practical reasons as well as their ability to grant him ideological clout. The neighbouring Scythians had never been subdued or driven away; Parthia grew stronger year by year, and thirteen decades after Alexander Sogdia separated from the kingdom. Bactria was a large territory with varied terrain, a large population, and undoubtedly a corresponding potential for criminal elements to appear and thrive inside the kingdom. For a king who achieved his kingdom by force and wished to continue ruling, any physical threat to his subjects, whether politically or economically motivated, could be a dangerous blow to his basis for power. In order to defend and police, kings needed money and thus were also the overseers of the sorts of economic activities which would ensure a bountiful income.

The ideological patterns of imperialism and legendary history were not limited to iconography and royal propaganda, but brought their own practical influence to bear on the business of ruling. A king was only one man and so could not supervise all affairs directly, which is where legend provides its main practical precedent. Many kings, particularly those in the early Hellenistic period, founded cities. Any town or village could organize a militia and hold a market, but a city founded by a king was, regardless of its actual size, an institution created as his representative in the land and the location

where his delegated power and authority resided. The city was also repeatedly attested by the Asian historians as a premier establishment by successful conquerors. The first section in this chapter thus examines the different ways in which cities functioned on the king's behalf. Imperialism certainly had its place in the city, but it also can be observed at work in the practical structure of royal economic organization, the types of affairs overseen, and the function of regional and city administrations, which are the focus of the second section.

City Foundations

Royal foundation of cities was a favoured activity. It had many practical benefits such as displaying a ruler's greatness, providing for military defense, and supervising economic development and trade. Creating a city in one's name also sent an ideological message because the famous and legendary foundations in Asia were always made by successful conquerors. Dionysus was heralded as founder of Nysa in Bactria, where he settled his victorious Indian veterans and bestowed ivy and laurel groves as memorials to his greatness.¹ The great Ninus built his eponymous city, Ninevah, in Assyria before he ventured into Bactria; Semiramis built Babylon after the Bactrian victory but before her campaign into India.² Cyrus is credited with several foundations in the Iaxartes valley, including Cyropolis, besieged and sacked by Alexander, though unwillingly since he wished to spare the memory of his great predecessor.³ Stephanus of Byzantium notes that this city was also called Cyreschata, since, like Alexandria Eschata, it was in the

¹ Arrian 5.1.5-6, 2.5.

² Ctesias *FGrHist* 688 F 1b, p. 422-423, 428. Pliny (*N.H.* 6.92) also reports that Semiramis founded a town, Cufis or Arachosa, in Arachosia; Ptolemy (*Geog.* 6.20.5) may list it as Arachotos.

³ Curtius 7.6.16-21; Justin (12.5.12) says that Cyrus had founded three cities near the Iaxartes; cf. Strabo 11.11.4 for a town Cyra in the same area.

“furthest” region of the Persian empire.⁴

Alexander was prodigious in his foundations. There were his eponymous towns, which in the upper satrapies included Alexandria Eschata, Alexandria Margiana, Alexandria in Aria, and Alexandria ad Caucasum.⁵ Stephanus lists eight far eastern Alexandrias in total, two in India, two in Arachosia, one in Aria, one in Bactria, and two in Sogdia.⁶ Alexander also founded other towns, including Heraclea and Boucephalia; Strabo reports that Alexander founded eight cities in Bactria and Sogdia, while Justin gives the number as twelve.⁷ Among the Seleucids, Antiochus I rebuilt and refounded Alexandria Margiana as Antiocheia and Heraclea as Achaida, and in Aria he founded Soteira and rebuilt Artacabene (near Alexandria in Aria) with new ramparts and a four-square town plan.⁸ The last Hellenistic foundations, both of them likely made by their eponymous kings, were Eucratidia and Demetrias.⁹ At some point at the end of the fourth century Ai Khanoum was established, but whether it was in fact one of the cities named in the texts or some other town is uncertain. It is thought that a Thessalian named Kineas was its colonial founder, because he was commemorated with a *heroon* burial dated to the earliest construction period of the town, but he may have served either Alexander or

⁴ Step. Byz. s.v. *Kyrou polis*. See also Amm. Marc. 23.6.59 and Ptolemy *Geog.* 6.12.5.

⁵ Isidore §19; Pliny *N.H.* 6.47, 49, 61-2, 93; Ptolemy *Geog.* 6.12.6, 17.6, 20.4; Amm. Marc. 23.6.69, 72.

⁶ Step. Byz. s.v. *Alexandreia*.

⁷ Heraclea: Pliny *N.H.* 6.48; Boucephalia: Plut. *de Alex.* 328F; Strabo 11.11.4; Justin 12.5.13.

⁸ The refoundations: Isidore §14; Pliny *N.H.* 6.47-48; Strabo 11.10.2; Ptolemy *Geog.* 6.10.4. Soteira: Step. Byz. s.v. *Soteira*; Ptolemy *Geog.* 6.17.7; Amm. Marc. 23.6.69. Artacabene: Pliny *N.H.* 6.93; Dani, Bernard, “Alexander and his successors,” 91-92.

⁹ Eucratidia: Strabo 11.11.2; Ptolemy *Geog.* 6.11.8. Demetrias: Isidore §19.

Seleucus, who both employed Thessalians in their armies.¹⁰

As witnessed at Cyropolis, the destruction of cities also sent an important ideological and imperialistic message and was of strategic benefit. Though the actual burning of it took place in more ignominious circumstances, Alexander's famous destruction of Persepolis was, according to Curtius, for reasons both of avenging past wrongs and to forestall a Persian resurgence.¹¹ In Bactria, Alexander destroyed numerous villages whose inhabitants were either suspected of participating in the revolts or deemed suitable for relocation to the new garrison towns. Before he reached the old Achaemenid foundations at the Iaxartes Alexander destroyed the city of the Branchidae, a group of Milesians relocated to Sogdia by Xerxes after betraying to him the treasury of Apollo Didyma. Due to their ancestors' crime and their degenerate bilingualism which had grown over a good century and a half of Central Asian settlement, the Brachidae served Alexander better as victims than allies.¹² The inhabitants of Cyropolis, on the other hand, simply erred in resisting Macedonian authority, and the legacy of their illustrious founder was not enough to counteract the imperialistic demands of a quiet frontier and reduction of Scythian influence.

There are several reasons why city foundations (and destructions) were beneficial to kings. In the mind of Plutarch the primary reward was the glory gained from extending

¹⁰ Robert, "De Delphes à l'Oxus," 431-438. The first construction phase for Ai Khanoum was c. 330-300; MacDowell, Taddei, "The Early Historic Period: Achaemenids and Greeks," 221, 225.

¹¹ Curt. 5.6.1, 7.8-11. The importance of cities to Macedonian imperial strategy can be seen in Philip's earlier campaigns at Philippi and Olynthus ("Philip II," *OCD*) and with Alexander at Thebes ("Thebes," *OCD*), where the refounding or destruction of a city signified territorial control and mastery over recalcitrant populations.

¹² Curt. 7.5.28-35; Strabo 11.11.4.

Hellenism to the far corners of Asia.¹³ An illustrious foundation could not only allude to the king's legendary heroism but also represent him as a "patron of culture".¹⁴ It is clear from the accounts of Alexander's campaign in Bactria that cities were arranged with a strategy for military defense in mind and for maintaining control of local populations, as seen in the developments around Margiana.¹⁵ Cities provided for organization of colonists and served as locations for regional administration. Throughout the Hellenistic period, however, the central function of all cities would have been for the benefit of the imperial economy: to supervise trade, provide safe locations for markets, and collect taxes to be sent to the king.

While the Hellenistic cities of Bactria, either in their appearances in textual sources which are generally restricted to topographical descriptions and accounts of their foundings, or in archaeological discoveries, do not seem explicitly intended for the hellenization of native populations, they could be centres of Hellenistic culture.¹⁶ The best evidence for this comes from Ai Khanoum, perhaps the best site because it was inhabited only during the Hellenistic period and so is a record of that period alone. A

¹³ Plut. *de Alex.* 328E.

¹⁴ Walbank, "Monarchies and Monarchic Ideas," 73.

¹⁵ Curt. 7.10.15: "Around it six spots were chosen for founding towns, two towards the north, four facing east; they were separated by moderate distances, lest their mutual help be too far to fetch. All these towns were situated on high hills. Although at that time they were checks upon the conquered peoples, now they have forgotten their origin and serve those whom they once ruled." (Circa eam VI oppidis condendis electa sedes est, duo ad meridiem versa, IIII spectantia orientem; modicis inter se spatiis distabant, ne procul repetendum esset mutuum auxilium. Haec omnia sita sunt in editis collibus. Tunc velut freni domitarum gentium, nunc originis suae oblita, serviunt quibus imperaverunt.)

¹⁶ It is possible that the cities' existence as islands of Hellenistic culture served to rival the surrounding Bactrian culture, whose own pre-existing history of city settlements was immediately apparent in all the cities Alexander left intact, and to bolster the Macedonian imperial conquest through foundations which were at one and the same time specifically Hellenic and a feature of the Bactrian culture. The forcible supplanting of native funeral rites at Bactra – the ancient Bactrian capital – with Hellenic practices is one example of such imperial cultural competition, Strabo 11.11.3.

plethora of small objects were found there which, due to their quality, were either imported from the west or made in Asia by Greek craftsmen. These include an image of Ajax raping Cassandra, a frieze of Athena and Poseidon, a relief plaque of an ephebe in a chlamys, a statue of a woman in a chiton, a bronze statuette of Heracles, a mantled female (perhaps Demeter) in high relief, and a silver medallion showing Cybele in a lion-drawn chariot.¹⁷ There were also pebble mosaics of dolphin and sea-horse patterns on the palace bathroom floors, a sundial in the gymnasium, and a fountain with six gargoyle spouts (one a dolphin, one a lion, and one a bearded man).¹⁸ In terms of large structures the ones most obviously Greek in style are the theatre, gymnasium, heroon, and mausoleum. Two of the town's three temples are built on the traditional Greek plan: the temple hors-les-murs with a podium, pronaos, and three chambers and a chapel in the temple à redans complex with a cella and pronaos with two Ionic columns. The temple à redans itself follows an eastern plan seen at other Bactrian sites like the Oxus temple at Takht-i Sangin and Dilberdjin's Dioscuri temple. Inside this temple were found fragments of a wall frieze of lions and clay fragments of the cult statue, whose feet were sandaled and impressed with the image of the thunderbolt.¹⁹

What this evidence seems to show is popularity of certain traditional Greek artistic and architectural styles, and a favouring of "religious traditionalism" which, due

¹⁷ Bernard, "La campagne, 1970," 433; Bernard, "Campagne," (1972), 623-625, 628; Bernard, "Fouilles, 1972 et 1973," 302; Leyla Pollak, "The Cybele Medallion from Ai Khanoum," *Afghanistan* 30 (1977), 12ff.

¹⁸ Bernard, "Campagne, 1974," 178; Bernard, "Campagne, 1975," 299, 307-313.

¹⁹ Lise Hannestad, Daniel Potts, "Temple Architecture in the Seleucid Kingdom," in *Religion and Religious Practice in the Seleucid Kingdom*, Per Bilde et al, eds. (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 1990), 93-101. For the theatre and gymnasium: Bernard, "Campagne, 1975," 293ff, 314; mausoleum: Bernard, "Campagne, 1974," 180ff; temple hors-les-murs: Bernard, "Campagne, 1975," 303ff; chapel in the temple à redans: Bernard, "Campagne," (1972), 625ff; temple à redans: Bernard, "La campagne, 1970," 414ff.

to the number of religious traditions in Bactria, led to some flexibility in the area of religious architecture and, probably, religion itself.²⁰ Diodorus reported that the earliest Greeks in Bactria named their primary need as “the Greek education and mode of living” (τὴν Ἑλληνικὴν ἀγωγὴν καὶ δίκαιταν), epitomized by Ai Khanoum’s gymnasium.²¹ The best evidence for traditional Greek thought comes not from the temples but from the Ai Khanoum heroon, which housed a stele inscribed with nearly one hundred fifty maxims brought from Delphi by the philosopher Clearchus of Soli (fl. c. 300). But whether the Graeco-Bactrian inhabitants of the town were “well-behaved” as children, “in youth self-controlled, in middle age just, when elders prudent, and at death without grief”²² or not, the Delphic inscription represents the idea of Hellenism in Bactria more than the facts of it. Delphi was the traditional source of advice on colonization and Hellenic “patriotism” and retained that status through the years of colonization by the early Seleucids, who also had a strong affiliation with Apollo.²³ Clearchus had a philosophical and educational interest in the wisdom of barbarians, such as the Iranian Magi and Indian gymnosophists, as well as in Delphic wisdom. His willingness to travel so far as a “moral propagandist” and agent of *paideia* reflects upon his own character as a peripatetic and on the worthiness of Ai Khanoum as a destination where his peculiar interests intersected.²⁴ As

²⁰ Hannestad, Potts, “Temple Architecture,” 123.

²¹ Diod. 18.7.1; Robert, “De Delphes à l’Oxus,” 420-421. Even before Ai Khanoum was discovered, Tarn observed from the Diodorus passage that “for a Greek city in the East a gymnasium, the centre of both physical and intellectual training for the common man who did not specialise in the higher learning, must have been all important.” Tarn, *Greeks in Bactria*, 18.

²² What remains of the maxims reads: Ἰταῖς ὧν κόσμιος γίνου / ἠβῶν ἐψκρατής / μέσος δίκαιος / πρεσβύτης εὐβουλος / τελευτῶν ἄλυπος.

²³ Robert, “De Delphes à l’Oxus,” 442, 450; cf. the altars to Apollo Didyma erected in Scythia by Demodamas, Seleucus’ general there.

²⁴ Leyla Pollack, “The Heroon at Ai-Khanoum,” *Afghanistan* 30 (1977), 76-78; Robert, “De Delphes à l’Oxus,” 441-442, 446ff.

for the involvement of kings, it is clear that their choice of the Greek language and Hellenic images for their coinage propaganda was a fitting one. From the presence of impressive buildings and the educational spectacles afforded by the gymnasium, theatre, and an array of religious foundations the Bactrian subjects were at least aware of their rulers' Hellenistic character and methods of legitimating their kingship.

In the Hellenistic context, the word "city" (*πόλις*) is a significant term. In classical Greece and Asia Minor the *πόλις* was the city state, the central unit of government, social membership, and local identity, and it was an institution made up more of human relationships than any physical structures. The authors who write in Greek about Bactria use this term when they describe the various large and fortified settlements which they and other travellers encountered there, both those of ancient Bactrian origin and the newer Hellenistic foundations.²⁵ All that survives of the so-called Bactrian *πόλεις* are physical remains, thus any description of their social and political organization is necessarily hypothetical because the Greek authors did not include notes on their usage of the term *πόλις*, whether to denote political status or a generic large city.²⁶ A number of public buildings have been found at Ai Khanoum, including the massive complex of courtyards, peristyles, vestibules, passages, and chambers dubbed by its excavators the "palace" or simply the "administrative quarter" of the town. This complex contains no obvious clues as to what level or type of government it housed. It may have been a true *basileion*, since its monumental architecture does not rule this out;

²⁵ Cf. Strabo 11.10.2, 11.2-4, 15.1.3; Arr. 3.28.4, 29.1, 4.1.3, 22.4-6, 5.27.5.

²⁶ Tarn gives a lengthy discussion of the various "classes" of Asian cities, but even this deals mostly with western Asia; Tarn, *Greeks in Bactria*, 18ff. To surmise on the existence of a traditional polis city-state in eastern Asia raises the difficult issue of Hellenism and how much the historian wishes to read it into the rather meager body of evidence.

or a seat for a satrap, military governor, or some other civil or royal official; or a *polis* administrative centre with offices for magistrates and large areas for assemblies, though none of its rooms bears any resemblance to a traditional Greek *bouleuterion*.²⁷ The second designation is most likely, as shown by further evidence below, and the division of Bactria into satrapies by the Hellenistic kings is reported by Strabo.²⁸

Archaeological evidence from all across Bactria shows that military defense was a major concern of cities, and the foundation of a city was at its most basic level the (re)construction of fortifications. This is seen in the extensive ramparts and walls at most sites as well as in their positions upon elevated ground or beside rivers. In the late fourth century various repair works and improvements were made to the old fortified settlements in the Iaxartes valley. Intensification of development occurred in the fourth to first centuries around Alexandria Eschata, but this town was not isolated: up to the second century people were living at the hilltop citadel Cyreschata/Cyropolis – which Alexander supposedly destroyed – and a nearby fortress on a mountain ridge bordering the steppe had eighteen hectares of citadel and town with earthen ramparts and pakhsa walls.²⁹ The citadel at Ai Khanoum – towering some sixty metres over the town and eighty metres over the Kokcha river with “impregnable” walls and ditch³⁰ – was a replacement for an older series of forts placed on the Oxus and Kokcha rivers and guarding the Dasht-i Qala plain, but some Hellenistic potsherds have been found at these sites suggesting that they were not abandoned totally for the new city. The large Iron age

²⁷ Bernard, “Fouilles, 1972 et 1973,” 292-293.

²⁸ Strabo 11.11.2.

²⁹ Negmatov, “Archaic Khojent-Alexandria Eschata,” 44-45.

³⁰ Bernard, “An Ancient Greek City,” 148.

citadel at Kunduz also had a continued Hellenistic habitation even though there was a new Hellenistic fortress constructed one kilometre away.³¹ Margiana was the site of foundations by both Alexander and Antiochus I. Two encircling walls have been found at the site, both very large and built in with the timeless pakhsa construction, and since no datable materials have been found associated with either wall it is unclear whose they are. However, the inner wall – about three metres high, six to seven metres deep, and surrounding over forty square kilometres – matches the dimensions given by Pliny for Antiochus’ wall.³² The Hellenistic town which this wall encloses is on a four-square plan with four gates and two intersecting main streets and a large tower at each of the wall’s corners.³³

It seems best to understand these fortresses as strongholds to which local inhabitants could flee when under attack. It is clear from Bactrian history that professional soldiers and kings used them for this purpose also, such as in the cases of the Bactrians fighting Ninus and Alexander and Euthydemus’ cavalry guard at the river Arius and his retreat to Bactra. Alexander certainly felt that installing local garrisons was beneficial and did so at every opportunity. In the aftermath of invasions and revolts the garrisons’ duties must have consisted mostly of supervising the population and reminding it of the king’s authority. At all times, both peaceful and war-torn, the soldiers would ensure that the various local economic activities, such as irrigation works and market

³¹ Gardin, “Fortified Sites of Eastern Bactria,” 86-95.

³² Bader, Gaibov, Koshelenko, “Walls of Margiana,” 40, 44-47. Both Pliny (*N.H.* 6.46-47) and Strabo (11.10.2) say that the town Margiana included a much larger fertile oasis region, which the larger of the two walls seems to surround; however Hellenistic finds are restricted to the area within the lesser wall, suggesting that this was what Antiochus built and that Strabo confused a description of the oasis with the wall (which he said was 1500 stades long). Pliny says the wall was seventy stades long (*N.H.* 6.47).

³³ Dani, Bernard, “Alexander and his successors,” 91.

places or caravanserais, had adequate protection, as well as provide any physical support needed for tax collectors and other government officials to carry out their duties. It is thus no coincidence that the fortresses occur at points along the lucrative river and land trade routes and at oases and irrigated plains, where the bulk of agriculture took place.³⁴

Elsewhere in the Hellenistic world city foundations were part of the business of colonization. There is very little direct evidence for Hellenistic colonization in Bactria, but given its great potential for agriculture,³⁵ the extensive Seleucid colonization further west, and the later testimony by Chang Ch'ien of a settled population one million strong it seems a reasonable supposition that Bactria also had colonies associated with its cities.³⁶ The ancient accounts indicate that any colonies by Alexander and subsequent rulers probably began as native communities refounded as Greek cities to serve as headquarters for the various military garrisons dotted around the country.³⁷ This much is seen in the archaeological evidence of old Iron age fortresses given Hellenistic era repairs or replaced by a new fort nearby. A reference in Menander's *Samia* suggests that in the early-Hellenistic period mercenaries and the like were travelling to Bactria in search of

³⁴ Gardin, "Fortified Sites of Eastern Bactria," 99-101.

³⁵ Curtius (7.4.26-27, 30) describes Bactria thus: The nature of the Bactrian land is manifold and diverse. In one place many trees and vines produce bountiful and mellow fruits, numerous springs water the rich soil, the milder parts of which are sown with grain, while the rest provide grazing for herds. From there in the greater part of this same land there are barren sands But, in what is the gentler land, a huge multitude of men and horses is raised. (Bactrianae terrae multiplex et varia natura est. Alibi multa arbor et vitis largos mitesque fructus alit, solum pingue crebri fontes rigant, quae mitiora sunt frumento conseruntur, cetera armentorum pabulo cedunt. Magnam deinde partem eiusdem terrae steriles harenae tenent.... Sed, qua mitior terra est, ingens hominum equorumque multitudo gignitur.)

³⁶ Tarn, *Greeks in Bactria*, 118-120. For Chang Ch'ien's reference to the population see Ssu-ma, *Records of the Grand Historian*, 269.

³⁷ Take for example the reassignments of land to native inhabitants who had capitulated or been captured: Curt. 7.6.27, 8.1.2.

employment.³⁸ There is also the case of Euthydemus the Magnesian, whose military and political career began, nominally at least, in some sort of colonial setting. As for the amount of settlers involved, the 23,000 who revolted in 323 suggest that there were quite large numbers to begin with, many of them former soldiers, but many of them also craftsmen and other suppliers of the soldiers' needs.³⁹

In time the money-making aspect of colonization would have come more to the fore. Enterprising merchants certainly had many opportunities for trade in precious stones and Siberian gold with Mauryan India and with tribes further east,⁴⁰ and Chang Ch'ien later observed that the Bactrians were "shrewd traders" who had many profitable markets with a diverse array of goods.⁴¹ In addition to the different skilled crafts, local economies were based in agriculture. Aristoboulus reported that rice was grown in Bactria,⁴² and Theophrastus says that the pistachio was also grown.⁴³ As for the traditional Greek vines and olive trees, Pliny reported that vines grew well at the Margiana oasis, and we know from treasury records at Ai Khanoum that olive oil was in production.⁴⁴

Water is absolutely essential to agriculture as well as husbandry, and all of the

³⁸ Menander *Samia* ln. 627-629: the character Moschion says "...but having made off from the city I would depart to Bactria somewhere or Caria and employ myself as a warrior there" (ἀλλ' ἀποφθαρεῖς / ἐκ τῆς πόλεως ἂν ἐκποδῶν εἰς Βάκτρα ποι / ἢ Καρίαν διέτριβον ἀιχμάζων ἐκεῖ).

³⁹ Rostovtzeff, *Social and Economic History*, 131-133. Cf. Diod. 18.7.2.

⁴⁰ Rostovtzeff, *Social and Economic History*, 545-546.

⁴¹ Hirth, "The Story of Chang K'ien," 98.

⁴² Strabo 15.1.18.

⁴³ Theophrastus *H.P.* 4.4.7.

⁴⁴ The vine: Pliny *N.H.* .6.46; olive oil: Rapin, "Les inscriptions économiques," 319-323. The climate was favourable to viticulture and olive production, provided that irrigation was used. For the same reasons flax and sesame could also have been raised. (J.-C. Gardin, P. Gentelle, "Irrigation et peuplement dans la plaine d'Ai Khanoum de l'époque achéménide à l'époque musulmane," *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême Orient* 63 (1976), 66-67).

major cities were located on river valleys or oases, sometimes with more than one town per water source. The role of cities was not only to take advantage of the precious supply but also to supervise water usage and irrigation maintenance and encourage development. Alexandria Eschata and associated towns were, of course, on the Iaxartes river, and even beyond it traces of ancient irrigation have been found.⁴⁵ Marakanda and Margiana were both in river-fed oases,⁴⁶ and Ai Khanoum overlooked a four hundred square kilometre irrigated plain with canals drawing water from the Kokcha and Oxus rivers and the surrounding hills.⁴⁷ The greatest oasis by far was around Bactra, and forty kilometres northwest of the capital at the oasis edge was Dilberdjīn, supplied by a canal drawn from the Bactrus river.⁴⁸ Most notable of Bactria's irrigation projects is the Rud-i Shahrawan, an artificial river constructed in the early first millennium for a distance of fifty kilometres across the Taluqan river plain where it then empties into the Oxus just downstream from Ai Khanoum. Under Greek administration in c. 300 further streams were dug out onto the plain and up into the surrounding hills, suggesting that this system still supplied local farmers who were increasing their operations.⁴⁹

Irrigation on such a large scale as some of these projects would certainly have been paid for out of royal coffers and probably commissioned by the royal administration as well. An example of the reverse activity – destruction of irrigation – appears in Polybius' account of Antiochus III's wars in Parthia where Antiochus put a stop to

⁴⁵ Negmatov, *Archaic Khojent-Alexandria Eschata*, 46.

⁴⁶ Isidore calls Antiocheia Margiana “*Ἐνυδρος*,” §14. For Marakanda (on the Zerafshan oasis): Dani, Bernard, “Alexander and his successors,” 91.

⁴⁷ Gardin, Gentelle, “Irrigation et peuplement dans la plaine d’Ai Khanoum,” 64-65, 68ff.

⁴⁸ Kruglikova, “Les fouilles de Dilberdjīn,” 407.

⁴⁹ Gardin, “The Development of Eastern Bactria,” 10, 12-13.

Arsaces II's terrorism campaign of filling in the ancient *qanats*.⁵⁰ To Pierre Briant, this Seleucid intervention suggests a deliberate policy of continuing the old Achaemenid infrastructure as well as imperial benevolence towards peasants.⁵¹ So too for Bactria, repairs made to canals were probably part of restoration projects in associated towns and counterbalanced the assorted acts of violence committed during warfare. Ai Khanoum was likely a centre for regional agricultural administration; on the north-east edge of town overlooking the Dasht-i Qala plain it had what seems a suburban development outside the town walls. This neighbourhood hors-les-murs contained a rather large multi-winged house and substantial public building with podiomed foundation and nine chambers around a central court whose likely role was to oversee the neighbouring agricultural fields and irrigation works.⁵²

There is nothing as helpful as an ancient four-square planned town, a theatre, or a fragmented image of a well-known deity to show that Greeks inhabited a particular place. The moniker "land of a thousand cities" given to Bactria in the Hellenistic period indicates that cities and towns figured prominently in the landscape and social organization of the country. A good many exotic place names merited mention in the geographical lists of Isidore, Ptolemy, and others; some of them were ancient Bactrian towns, some of them newer Hellenistic foundations, but all of them belonged to the king.⁵³ The different material developments and political and economic transactions

⁵⁰ Polybius 10.28.5-6.

⁵¹ Briant, "The Seleucid Kingdom, the Achaemenid Empire," 58.

⁵² Bernard, "Fouilles, 1972 et 1973," 281-289.

⁵³ Justin (41.4.5) says that Diodotus was satrap of a thousand cities when he revolted (Theodotus, mille urbium Bactrianarum praefectus). Strabo 15.1.3: "Eucratides had a thousand cities under his power" (Εὐκρατίδαν γούνη πόλεις χιλιάς ὑφ' ἑαυτῶ ἔχειν). For various cities' names cf. Isidore §§ 15, 18-19:

taking place in the cities were royal activities, and the cities were the primary representation of the kings' ideological status and the means for continuing and securing their rule.

Economic Administration

Based on the available evidence, the *raison d'être* for the existence of the Bactrian cities was economic. This is not to discount the expedient pressures caused by warfare and the need for garrisons and fortresses to protect against enemies, but in the midst of a settled and agricultural country defenses existed to protect markets, warehouses, treasuries, and the local inhabitants who produced the goods to fill them. From a Hellenistic king's perspective acquisition of wealth was the best evidence that his conquests served some practical purpose and the best guarantee that his reign had the means to continue. M. I. Rostovtzeff has identified a description of royal economy (*οἰκονομία βασιλική*) in the *Oeconomicus* II as a pseudo-Aristotelian text based on the Seleucid system as it derived from the Persian and Alexandrian systems.⁵⁴ This text first denotes four levels of economy: royal, satrapal, city, and household. It describes the royal economy as concerned with three main things: monetary policy, exports and imports, and taxation. The physical evidence available from Bactria corresponds exactly to these three categories. The first body of evidence is the Bactrian coinage, not in its iconographic aspects, but in its minting and the extent of its circulation. The second body of evidence comes from the treasury at Ai Khanoum where were found examples of the types of

Kandak, Artakauan, Sakastane, Barda, Min, Pharsana, and Chorochoad; Ptolemy 6.11ff: Chartracharta, Astakana, Ebusmu Anassa, Menapia, Oxeiana, Trybaktra, Indikomordana, and Drepsa Metropolis. In the mountains of the Scythians near the Iaxartes lay the enigmatic Lithinos Pyrgos, or "Stone Tower" (Ptolemy 6.13.2; Amm. Marc. 23.6.60).

⁵⁴ Rostovtzeff feels that the text was not written by Aristotle but by another Peripatetic, Rostovtzeff, *Social and Economic History*, 440-441. The relevant passage is Aristotle *Oec.* 2.1.1-6.

import and export trade goods in which a local administration centre dealt and the types and numbers of officials involved. The third and unique piece of evidence regarding the Bactrian royal economic administration is a tax receipt dated to c. 175 and comparable with what is known of the Ptolemaic and Seleucid taxation systems as well as a discussion in the *Oeconomicus* of royal taxation.

Monetary policy was the management of coinage, essentially, the determination of how much of the gold, silver, and bronze reserves ought to be minted into coins at a given time. It was thus also the regulation of coinage circulation. Traditionally in the Persian, Alexandrian, Seleucid, and Ptolemaic empires, this activity was firmly under royal control, though at times satraps and lesser city officials issued coins of their own.⁵⁵ By means of iconography and coin legends the kings made it very clear that Bactrian coinage was theirs alone and probably destined as payment for their own expenses, such as the salaries of their soldiers and the funding of expeditions abroad, diplomatic and otherwise. Details from the coins show that a considerable system of monetary officials and craftsmen must have existed as well as policies for determining the amounts, quality, and intended circulation of different issues. The so-called “monograms” are the first group of details and reflect upon coinage manufacture; dealing more with circulation are the separate bilingual series destined for foreign markets.

A simple comparison of coinage types shows that even coins of the same denomination were not all struck from the same master die; rather, there are variations according to die artist and mint workshop, probably indicating that Bactria actually had

⁵⁵ Rostovtzeff, *Social and Economic History*, 442. In Bactria the occasional non-royal minting is illustrated by Oxyartes/Vakhshvarda's own coins and, notably, by the early coins of Diodotus I.

several different mints.⁵⁶ Also intriguing is the large, highly idiosyncratic, and as yet undeciphered catalogue of monograms, small notational marks which appear on most Bactrian coins. At times scholars have suggested that these monograms represent dates, rulers' names, officials' names, mint locations, separate mint workshops, or artists' markings. Some monograms are quite common and last over several reigns, in which case they probably refer to mint or workshop locations, but others are variations on a simpler monogram type and may denote a particular mint official or artist in charge of a given issue.⁵⁷ One monogram – a circle inscribed with an equilateral triangle – which appears on coins of Seleucus I, Antiochus I, and Diodotus I⁵⁸ was found impressed on some mud bricks from the earliest sarcophagus in Ai Khanoum's heroon and thus linked to two hypothetical mints established by the Seleucids in that town.⁵⁹

Alongside the monogram on the sarcophagus bricks was also a character from the Brahmi language of northwest India. Also at Ai Khanoum were discovered a cache of 676 punch-marked coins from Taxila in northwest India – with legends written in Brahmi – and textual references from the treasury to “kapasana”, apparently the Greek transliteration for *kharshapanas*, the Indian term for punch-marked coins.⁶⁰ Economic

⁵⁶ Cf. Kovalenko, “The Coinage of Diodotus I and Diodotus II,” 24.

⁵⁷ Cunningham, *Coins of Alexander's Successors*, 51-52; Tarn, *Greeks in Bactria*, 437-441; Lahiri, *Corpus*, 52-62; Mitchiner, *Indo-Greek Coinage*, Table V, p. 49, Table X, p. 68; Guillaume, *Analysis of Reasonings*, 99-103; Kritt, *Dynastic Transitions*, 67.

⁵⁸ Newell, *Eastern Seleucid Mints*, 236-239, 241-242; Mitchiner, *Indo-Greek Coinage*, 10; Kritt, *Seleucid Coins*, 19; Kritt, *Dynastic Transitions*, 51.

⁵⁹ A number of the so-monogramed coins were found in the Oxus treasure from Takt-i Sangin, which is not far from their possible point of origin at Ai Khanoum. A. K. Narain, “The Greek Monogram and Ai-Khanum – The Bactrian Greek City,” *Numismatic Digest* 10 (1986), 7ff; Kritt, *Seleucid Coins*, 23, 31.

⁶⁰ A.K. Narain, “Notes on Some Inscriptions from Ai Khanum (Afghanistan),” *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 69 (1987), 278-279. For the punch-marked coins: Bernard, “Fouilles, 1970,” 435-439. For the “kapasana”: Rapin, “Les inscriptions économiques,” 365.

contact between Bactria and India is represented further by the bilingual coins of Demetrius, Agathocles, Pantaleon, Antimachus, Eucratides, and Heliocles. These coins feature the same iconographic types and monogram system as on the Greek coins but generally follow the Indian weight system, are often square shaped like Indian coins, and include a Brahmi or Kharoshthi version of their Greek legends (so, for example, ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΜΕΓΑΛΟΥ ΕΥΚΡΑΤΙΔΟΥ becomes *Maharajasa Eukratidasa*).⁶¹ Some scholars view these coins primarily as evidence for Bactrian territorial expansion,⁶² but this is an investigation fraught with difficulty, given how inconclusive the monogram system is for establishing where coins were minted. What these coins do show, however, is that Bactrian-Indian trade relations were strong enough to warrant Bactrian kings striking coins specifically for exchange into the Indian monetary system.⁶³ It is probable that as Bactria expanded it incorporated regional economies which operated according to the Indian weight system, but even so, the find of Indian coins at Ai Khanoum in north Bactria shows that the movement of these coins was very broad. The later Bactrian kings thus benefited from the conjunction of monetary and trade policies under royal control by creating coinage to enhance their buying and selling power abroad and to facilitate the passage of Indian merchants and their goods inside Bactria. This was not without precedent, as during his viceregency Antiochus I issued a series of coins on the Indian weight standard to take advantage of the relationship his father had arranged with

⁶¹ Gardner, *Catalogue of Indian Coins*, 10ff; Lahiri, *Corpus*, 39; Mitchiner, *Indo-Greek Coinage*, 61ff.

⁶² Cf. Mitchiner, *Indo-Greek Coinage*, 46ff.

⁶³ Guillaume, *Analysis of Reasonings*, 94-96.

Sandrocottus.⁶⁴

Even without the striking coin evidence, the possibilities for Bactrian foreign trade can be postulated simply from the country's known mineral resources and its position between India, the west Chinese and Scythian steppes, and the Near East and Mediterranean. Given the large number of settlements and scattered nature of agricultural and pastoral areas, as the rivers and oases were separated by stretches of arid plains and mountains, domestic trade and movement of staple supplies must have been commonplace. The Achaemenids had established a highway network throughout the East, and in the same way that older cities were recycled as fortresses and markets, the Seleucids probably maintained the highways as routes for trade and travelling colonists.⁶⁵ The collection and storage of Bactrian products was probably the duty of city and regional administrators, who then reported their incomes to royal officials. The role of the royal administration was to ensure a profitable trade dictating the goods to be taken from regional treasuries and exported and which imports were required by the kingdom.⁶⁶ The royal management of trade, among other activities, was carried out by a network of *τράπεζαι*, or regional treasuries and banks, in which various royal and civil officials served.⁶⁷

The Ai Khanoum palace or administrative complex contains what appears to be one such regional treasury. The treasury is a series of twenty-two chambers surrounding a large hall adjacent to a peristyle courtyard on the north wing of the complex, excavated in

⁶⁴ Newell, *Eastern Seleucid Mints*, 233; Rostovtzeff, *Social and Economic History*, 461.

⁶⁵ Rostovtzeff, *Social and Economic History*, 133, 459.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 443.

⁶⁷ P. Bernard, C. Rapin, "Un parchemin gréco-bactrien d'une collection privée," *Comptes Rendus des Séances – Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* (1994), 288.

1977 and 1978. Inside the treasury and in nearby palace rooms excavators found traces of raw materials (garnet, turquoise, crystal, asbestos, and lapis lazuli) for use in workshops as well as jewellery, stone plates, and worked ivory. In addition they found a few Indian items, notably semiprecious stones and the punch-marked coins.⁶⁸ In several of the rooms were also found a number of scattered ostraka which once formed a cache of storage jars. A few dozen of the fragments bear the remains of labels, and together with the above discoveries they provide a brief inventory of the treasury's contents when it was pillaged at the time of the town's abandonment (c. 130 BC).⁶⁹ The texts are written in a neat majuscule cursive Greek and are comparable with similar texts from the Mediterranean. The more complete labels list such jar contents as olive oil (*ἐλαίου ἐλαίνου*) and drachmas (abbreviated to *δρχ*), and the bulk of the jars appear to have held payments of some sort, probably in cash but possibly in kind.⁷⁰

The treasury labels are formulaic and testify to the bureaucratic role of Ai Khanoum's administrative quarter. The label formula lists – probably in hierarchical order⁷¹ – the different officials who oversaw the acquisition of the goods (for instance, *παρὰ Φιλίσκου*), measured out the contents (*ἠρίθμηται*), and sealed the jar (*ἐσφράγισται*). On the label for a jar containing objects of “pure silver” (*δοκίμου ἀργυρίου*) is noted another type of official who ensured the purity of the jar's contents (*δεδοκίμασται*). Given the presence of the Indian silver punch-marked coins in the palace, it may be that the quality control official ensured the suitability of the treasury cash

⁶⁸ Rapin, “Greeks in Afghanistan,” 334-336.

⁶⁹ Rapin, “Les inscriptions économiques,” 316-317.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 319ff.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 360.

reserves accumulated through foreign trade for later reminting.⁷² A dozen or so of the officials named are identifiably Greek (eg. Hippeas, Zenon, Kosmos, and Philoxenes); eight names are clearly Bactrian transliterated into Greek forms (eg. Oxeboakes and Oxybazos), and there are a few more fragmentary names.⁷³ Cross-referencing the names of local officials who appear together in the different texts indicates that though probably not all contemporary, many of their years of office overlap. That the Ai Khanoum treasury was storing cash as well as trade goods suggests that the town was the site of a regional governor or even a satrap, and given the number of officials employed at roughly one time, this governor had a fairly large staff and substantial responsibilities over local trade and revenue.

The evidence from Ai Khanoum is exceptional in that it is the only body of evidence of its type to have emerged from Bactrian archaeology. Given that no direct textual or epigraphical references to any Bactrian king have been discovered at the site, the town itself was likely not too unusual, that is, it can be taken as a fair indication of what a Bactrian regional or satrapal administrative centre looked like. To such cities the Bactrian kings delegated the authority to manage agriculture, mint local bronze coinage, and send out requests for trade goods, and from such cities they drew their own income and materials to be traded elsewhere. Like the Ai Khanoum treasury's reflection on the wider Bactrian economy, the third and last piece of evidence pertaining to the *οἰκονομία βασιλική* is rare and exceptional, but it too is a window on the larger system.

The Bactrian tax receipt is written in Greek in black ink on a small piece of

⁷² Ibid, 364-365.

⁷³ Ibid, 319ff; p. 334: one official who appears on a few texts is Straton, possibly the same man who erected the dedication to Hermes and Heracles found in the gymnasium.

parchment measuring thirteen by six centimetres. It has seven lines of majuscule cursive script which matches that found on the Ai Khanoum treasury ostraka and is comparable to late third to early second century cursive writing from the Mediterranean region. The parchment has no known archaeological context, but reportedly came from the south of Afghanistan; it was shown by a dealer in Bactrian antiquities to R. C. Senior, who recognized its significance and encouraged its later donation to the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. As the only known perishable Hellenistic Bactrian document to have been found the receipt is unique, but since a clay impression of a parchment text was discovered at Ai Khanoum, the receipt is not an unprecedented find, and should conditions allow more like it could be expected.⁷⁴ The restored text contains a number of names and official titles and runs thus:

βασιλευόντων θεοῦ Ἀντιμάχου καὶ Εὐμένους καὶ Ἀντιμάχου
 ου, ἔτους δ, μηνὸς Ὀλώου, ἐν Ἀσαγγάρνοις, νομοφυ-
 λακοῦντος . . . ου. ἔχει Μηνόδοτος λογευτής, συμπαρόντων
 του συναπεσταλμένου ὑπὸ Δημώννακτος [] τοῦ γενομένου
 μεως καὶ Σίμου τοῦ διὰ Διοδώρου τοῦ ἐπὶ τῶν προσόδων
 π ου τοῦ Δατάου ἐξ ἱερειῶν τρα-
 τῆ ὠνή τὰ καθήκοντα. (vac.)

(In the reign of Antimachus Theos and Eumenes and Antimachus. . . . year 4, month of Olōus, in Asangorna(?), when NN was *nomophylax*. Menodotus the *logeutes* in the presence of NN, who was dispatched together by Demonax the former. . . , and of Simus(?), who was. . . by agency of Diodorus, the controller of the revenues, acknowledges receipt from(?) NN the son(?) of Dataes(?), from the sacrifices [from the sacred bank?]. . . of the payments due in respect of the purchase. . .)⁷⁵

The very beginning of this document poses an interesting problem; here is

⁷⁴ A. S. Hollis, J. R. Rea, R. C. Senior, "A Tax Receipt from Hellenistic Bactria," *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 104 (1994), 261-262, 267-268; P. Bernard, C. Rapin, "Un parchemin gréco-bactrien," 261-, 265, 289.

⁷⁵ Hollis, Rea, Senior, "A Tax Receipt," 263.

verification that the coins with legends ΘΕΟΥ ANTIMACHΟΥ did indeed belong to a king who had his impressive epithet while still reigning,⁷⁶ but who Eumenes and the second Antimachus were and what their role as βασιλεῖς was is a mystery. It seems that Antimachus had some associate kings, and the large scope of Bactrian territory would allow for such delegation of power.⁷⁷ The “year 4” in line two ought to yield a firm date for the document; it may be a regnal date for Antimachus, making it c.181, but it may be the fourth year of the three kings’ joint rule. What it is the regnal date of Eucratides, to whom Antimachus and the others would then be vassals, has been suggested (giving a date of 167) but seems unlikely.⁷⁸ The month Ὀλωῶς is a Macedonian month in June/July, more often spelt Λωῶς; the variant spelling occurs seven other times from the late third century BC to the first century AD, once in Thessaly and six times at scattered Asian sites.⁷⁹ The receipt is thus the first evidence that the Bactrian administrative system followed a Hellenic calendar – the Macedonian calendar so it seems.

The Bactrian administrative system also operated with some of the same offices as western systems. In lines two and three of the receipt is mentioned the νομοφύλαξ, or “guardian of the laws,” an office created by Demetrius of Phalerum at Athens in his legal reforms of 317-315 and later used in Ptolemaic Egypt.⁸⁰ Cicero commented that the νομοφύλακες both kept actual law code texts in good condition and saw to it that people’s

⁷⁶ Bactrian kings on occasion put epithets before names; Antimachus always did so. Ibid, 263, 269; Bernard, Rapin, “Un parchemin gréco-bactrien,” 272-275. Cf. Mitchiner, *Indo-Greek Coinage*, 73-74.

⁷⁷ Hollis, Rea, Senior, “A Tax Receipt,” 275-276.

⁷⁸ Ibid, 271-272; Bernard, Rapin, “Un parchemin gréco-bactrien,” 271-272.

⁷⁹ The six sites are: Sardis, Orthosia in Caria, north Lydia, Doura-Europus, Seleucia-on-the-Tigris, and Susa; Bernard, Rapin, “Un parchemin gréco-bactrien,” 275-276.

⁸⁰ E. Ziebarth, *RE* s.v. *Νομοφύλακες*.

behaviour conformed to them.⁸¹ The unknown νομοφύλαξ in this text seems to serve as an eponymous official denoting the fiscal year.⁸² The λογευτήης in line three was a tax-collector of modest rank; in the Ptolemaic and Seleucid kingdoms λογευταί were usually in the service of the τράπεζαι, or royal banks, to which the τρα- at the end of line six may refer.⁸³ The third official listed is the ὁ ἐπὶ τῶν προσόδων, or “overseer of public revenues,” the most senior financial administrator in a given sphere of government; he could serve a king and supervise the entire empire or a satrap or local governor and supervise regional finances.⁸⁴ Given the inclusion of what must be a place name or community name – ἐν Ἀσαγγάρνοισι, “among the Asangornians” – and the eponymous title “when NN was νομοφύλαξ”, this receipt appears to represent business done at a regional or satrapal level within the larger Bactrian kingdom. The τῶν ἱερειῶν of line six suggests that the source of the payments was a temple or sanctuary; both the Ptolemies and Seleucids considered temples as part of their imperial possessions, and civil officials of the royal administration did oversee them. Since it is unclear whether they taxed temples as a matter of course or only in exceptional circumstances, it cannot be stated for certain that this receipt represents a normal occurrence, if indeed it refers to taxes taken from a temple.⁸⁵

The information contained in the receipt tells us that the Bactrian kingdom had a

⁸¹ Cic. *leg.* 3.20; cf. Xenophon *Oec.* 9.14.

⁸² Hollis, Rea, Senior, “A Tax Receipt,” 265.

⁸³ Bernard, Rapin, “Un parchemin gréco-bactrien,” 287; Rostovtzeff, *Social and Economic History*, 328.

⁸⁴ Bernard, Rapin, “Un parchemin gréco-bactrien,” 284-285.

⁸⁵ Bernard, Rapin, “Un parchemin gréco-bactrien,” 285-286; Rostovtzeff, *Social and Economic History*, 506-507.

well-developed royal administration analogous to those of the Ptolemies and Seleucids. It may have been put in place under the early Seleucids and simply continued by the later independent kings. The *Oeconomicus* provides evidence regarding what sort of revenues (πρόσοδοι) the ὁ ἐπὶ τῶν πρόσοδων likely managed. It lists six sources of revenue: land (ἐκφόπιον “rent” and δεκάτη “a tithe”), state or royal property (ἴδια), trade and commercial duties (ἐμπόρια), tolls on land and business transactions (τέλη κατὰ γῆν and ἀγοραῖα τέλη), cattle taxes or pasturage payments (βοσκήματα), and personal taxes (ἐπικεφάλαιον and χειρωνάξιον). Overseers of the revenues at the regional or city level dealt mostly with income from city-owned lands and taxes on local commerce.⁸⁶ In addition to these sources of revenue Hellenistic kings typically received tribute (φόρος) from the parts of their satrapies which had been accorded ownership of χώρα, such as cities, temples or sanctuaries, and tribal communities.⁸⁷ Royal coffers in Egypt, Judea, and Babylonia were also filled by lucrative salt taxes, and the Seleucids likely received taxes from mines and quarries.⁸⁸ Thus in the case of Bactria, which did have extensive lands for farming and pasturage, cities, temples, trade routes, likely several mines for semi-precious stones, and large settled and migratory populations,⁸⁹ the opportunities for royal taxation abounded.

Conclusion

Accounts of Bactrian Hellenistic history are generally forthcoming regarding city foundations, but less informative on other civil affairs. The silence of ancient accounts on

⁸⁶ Rostovtzeff, *Social and Economic History*, 444-445.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 464-465.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 470-472.

⁸⁹ Strabo comments that the mountains of Aria and Margiana were inhabited by “Tent-dwellers” (σκηνῆταί τινες), 11.10.1.

the topic of Bactria for large periods of time between the more noteworthy events of invasions, revolt, sieges, and royal parricide hints at a less exciting but more important history of successful royal administration. If the texts only report times when – from the western perspective, at least – things went wrong in Bactria, the decades upon which they fall silent may be times when things were working properly, in which case most of the Hellenistic period in Bactria was characterized by the progress of a relatively peaceful and stable royal government.

The textual signs that this was indeed the case are few, but they are present. When Polybius describes the Bactrian force opposing Antiochus III's invasion, he says that Euthydemus camped with his army at one town while a further 10,000 cavalry served as advance guard at the river Arius.⁹⁰ Besides indicating that Euthydemus had a large army (if 10,000 cavalry could be detached as a picket), this description shows that Euthydemus or the Diodotids before him had successfully achieved the incorporation of the traditional Bactrian cavalry muster into his military. Fielding a large cavalry was expensive in supplies, manpower, and training, and earlier Curtius had noted that the spacious grazing and a large human population of Bactria had produced a powerful cavalry.⁹¹ Euthydemus' command of the cavalry points to his command of loyalty and obedience from the social and economic system which produced it.⁹² How this state of affairs was achieved is unknown, but it must have involved the granting of *χωρα* rights, regulation of trade routes and markets, appointment of suitable local officials, maintenance of a stable coinage, and judicious taxation. Even at the outset of the Hellenistic period, Alexander's

⁹⁰ Polyb. 10.49.1, 4.

⁹¹ Curt. 7.4.26, 30.

⁹² Rostovtzeff, *Social and Economic History*, 549; Tarn, *Greeks in Bactria*, 124-125.

satraps and the other rulers in Bactria were held to a high standard of fair governance and obtained great power from adhering to it.⁹³

The evidence for the practical ways in which Bactrian kings ruled indicates the more economic aspects of governing power. In terms of the distribution of political authority it appears that cities played an important role, mainly as locations where the king's power was visibly expressed and his military and civil officials could base their operations. It is interesting to speculate whether Bactria saw any political assemblies or how autonomous or strictly governed the Bactrian inhabitants were, but the evidence for such things is simply absent. The existence of a system of civil officials is attested, and its nature was strikingly similar to those of the contemporary western Hellenistic empires. The remarkable site of Ai Khanoum displays the way in which strategic defense, Hellenistic colonial settlement, irrigation agriculture, monetary activity, and trade came together in a regional administrative centre. Given the more scattered evidence for defensive fortifications, settlement, irrigation, minting, and trade routes throughout the rest of Bactria, Ai Khanoum can be taken as representative of the typical town upon which the kings based their royal government.

⁹³ Cf. Arr. 4.22.4, 6.15.3; Curt. 8.3.16-17; Diod. 19.48.1.

Conclusion

The history of kingship in Hellenistic Bactria, as seen through a number of different sources, is a consistent account of an institution and a figure. The institution of kingship embraced the authority, physical powers, and social rank inherited from kings past and reinforced by kings present. The figure of the king was a character distinguished by the heroic qualities of his legendary forebearers and his own achievements, whether military or administrative, each of which had their own heroic aspects. The course of this present study of kingship has been to consider the different source materials, construct from them as detailed a chronology possible without many interpolations, and draw out from the resulting history the patterns and structure of the kingly identity and role.

The types of sources available with which to study the Hellenistic period in Bactria determine what can be learnt. This is not to say that they limit discoveries, but fidelity to the sources, particularly the literary ones, lends a certain pattern to the resulting argument. The literary sources – so-called because “textual” would include the parchment tax receipt, labelled ostraka, and various fragments of epigraphy – are overwhelmingly Greek and western in outlook. Thus most of the political information to be gathered concerns matters of importance to western kings, as when Diodotus revolted or Euthydemus put up a defense against Antiochus III; other events, such as Eucratides’ murder or the expansion into India, are included for their spectacular nature. Throughout the whole runs a strong strain of the legendary Asian *erga* which so interested westerners of earlier centuries. Information presented in the geographical texts is no more or less fabulous or accurate. Western audiences were entranced by the exotic city names, vast deserts and mountains, and the highways upon which so much eastern wealth flowed, yet

this is an image borne out by archaeological discovery as much as the character of the Bactrian kings is by other material evidence. Evidence from archaeological excavations shows the defensive and economic foundations for the Bactrian kingdom, and numismatics, after the classical sources the oldest area of inquiry into Hellenistic Bactria, provides a view on royal iconography and the nature of the royal-administered monetary system.

The king most prominent, in the literary sources at least, is Alexander the Great. For purposes here he is important as the conqueror who first brought Bactria within the purview of Hellenes and set an influential template for Hellenistic imperial kingship. After his death, Bactria underwent about two decades of satrapal rule, primarily under Stasanor, which was distantly overseen by the various western lords of Asia. With the ascendancy of Seleucus I came participation in a much longer-lasting empire and with it direct royal administration in addition to satrapal, especially with Antiochus I's eastern viceroyalty in 292. Under Antiochus I and Antiochus II, Bactria experienced a succession of satrap governors, culminating with Diodotus, who took advantage of disruptions in western Seleucid politics to establish his own personal rule as the first independent Hellenistic king of Bactria. Diodotus II followed, altering his father's lines of alliance with neighbouring Parthia, and soon after Euthydemus took the throne to rule for about thirty years. Towards the end of his reign he faced invasion by Antiochus III, generating one of the major literary episodes of Bactrian history, and soon left his now expanded kingdom to his son Demetrius and a series of kings known solely from numismatic evidence. In 171 Bactria reemerged in the literary account as the kingdom of Eucratides, son of Heliocles and Laodice, who endured wars with regions once part of Euthydemus'

kingdom and areas of India now ruled by offshoots of Bactrian royalty, experienced the loss of two eastern satrapies to Parthia, and was killed in a dramatic patricide. The last Hellenistic king was Heliocles, either his father's murderer or avenger, after whom Bactria became part of the Scythian nomads' territory.

What brought Bactria into Alexander's empire and then Seleucus' and kept it under the control of Hellenistic kings for the next century and a half was imperialism. This is the situation at its broadest explanation; the imperialism was ideological and practical and was joined in both aspects by a uniquely Hellenistic pattern of legendary precedents derived from Greek impressions of Asian history and the proper activities of kings. On the ideological level, imperialism and legend were connected by the pursuit of conquest, something which accomplished both the acquisition of territory and wealth and the sort of fabulous honour typical of legendary heroic kingship. The imperialistic ideology also carried with it an understanding of kingship, wherein the king's personal achievements at empire-building translated into new benefits and responsibilities for his subjects, particularly his military, and were heritable by future rulers as well. The mechanisms permitting this were the institution of *doriktetos chora* and the kleruchy. Exempla from legendary history strengthened the system of imperial kingship by providing a standard of achievement to which rulers could aspire and precedents which could justify their actions. Bactrian royal marriages are one example of how a seemingly minor mythological-style pattern was in fact a case of imperialistic conquest and control shown at its strongest. The iconography visible on Bactrian coinage is not only a representation of a king's personal possession of territory and wealth but also a body of evidence showing how kings chose to link themselves with different legendary

precedents and aspects of the ideology of kingship.

In the practical outworkings of imperialism by which kings maintained their control and administration of Bactria legendary precedents also played a role. Conquest had been achieved and there was no more fitting or illustrious way to formalize this than the foundation of cities. All the great Asian conquerors of ages past left cities testifying to their greatness, activity emulated most notably by Alexander. Cities expressed a king's territorial and material greatness in terms of his personal control of and beneficence toward his subjects. Cities were the locations where royal government met the people, since there operated the officials who ensured Bactria's safety and peace, managed the movement of trade goods, and oversaw the development and maintenance of agriculture. The royal civil administration was directly concerned with three areas reflective of the imperial priority second after the military: monetary policy, the import and export of wealth, and taxation. Numismatic evidence relating to the first two categories reveals that India, of great ideological importance first as a *telos* for conquest and later a location of real imperial expansion, was also a major economic interest of Bactrian kings. The Bactrian system of mints, treasuries, and officials was regional in nature, corresponding to the satrapal structure of government, and in many aspects is comparable with the civil administrations of the western Seleucid and Ptolemaic empires, probably set in place during the years when Bactria was still part of the Seleucid empire.

Kingship in Hellenistic Bactria was a two-fold institution, dependent both on who kings were and what they did. It is tempting to blend the two aspects of Bactrian kingship and extrapolate personal qualities, to say that a king for whom more evidence of administration exists – such as Antiochus I or Antimachus – was peaceful and focused

more on consolidation of their kingdom, or that a king for whom more evidence of warfare exists – such as Euthydemus or Eucratides – concentrated his royal powers upon conquest. The personality of Antimachus or Eucratides, however, has not been sought; the personality evident from texts, iconography, and the assorted other physical materials available is that of the Bactrian king. He was a figure developed according to the templates of imperialism and legend, whose ideological and practical characteristics were neatly bound up in the diadem he wore, symbol of the claim to kingship and the authority and responsibilities attending that claim.

Though not a major focus of attention, the question of Hellenism in Bactria is answered in part by the history and nature of Bactrian kingship during what was, indeed, its Hellenistic period. Here the distinction between a given ruler's personal character as a man and his official personality as a king is important. From Diodotus on all the kings had Greek names and all wore the diadem, so while their individual ethnic identities are unknown, except for Euthydemus the Magnesians, as kings they were Hellenes. Similarly, the language of royal propaganda and administration was Greek, at least in the notational forms surviving on coins, the treasury ostraka, and the tax receipt. The assorted epigraphical texts, also in Greek, show that use of the language was not limited to royalty. The ideology of kingship was Hellenistic in its imperialistic and legendary roots and its expression through images and the kings' own actions, as in Diodotus I's hostility to the non-Hellenic Arsacids and Euthydemus' defense against barbarization. The royal administration, though the evidence for it exists in rather lower quantities, was also Hellenistic in its organization, and while probably a survival from the years of Seleucid control, its continued function on a level comparable with contemporary western

institutions shows that Diodotus' revolt did not bring about a separation from the Hellenistic world, rather a realignment of political authority within it.

There is great potential for closer study into the relationships between Hellenistic kingship in Bactria and that of Parthia, where the question of Hellenization is also important and encompasses a rather longer period of time. In terms of the relations between native inhabitants and Hellenistic colonizers – both the imperial regimes in charge and the actual colonists – further comparisons between Bactria and the western Seleucid empire and Ptolemaic Egypt will surely yield many similar social and economic patterns. In the area of Hellenistic kingship possibly the most interesting study awaiting the good fortune of discovery of new evidence is the extent to which rulers from the different kingdoms communicated with each other by means other than warfare. We know that the early Seleucids sent diplomatic missions to India via the Bactrian trade routes, and presumably such peaceful contacts occurred at other times and with other places, as suggested by the contemporaneity of Bactrian administrative palaeography and organization with western systems.

The focus of this study has been the history of Hellenistic Bactrian kingship, its character, and the ways in which ruling power was maintained. The account of the Bactrian kingship which we possess today concentrates upon royal conquest, both the achievements and territorial losses, though much more emphasis is laid on the former. On one hand, given that the Bactrian territory changed hands between kings fairly frequently in its history – from Alexander to his successors, to the Seleucids, to Diodotus, to Euthydemus, to Eucratides, to the Heliocles, and to various hostile neighbours – to understand Bactrian kingship as being concerned with warfare and conquest appears a

natural conclusion. On the other hand, this imperialistic narrative reflects upon the ideal character of the Hellenistic king and thus upon the nature of the Bactrian kingship. The kingship was an ideological construction of imperialism and legendary precedents, both of which shaped the literary descriptions of kings and their acquisition and maintenance of ruling power. These two aspects of royal authority came about through the kings' conformity to the Hellenistic systems of imperialistic control, propaganda, and administration.

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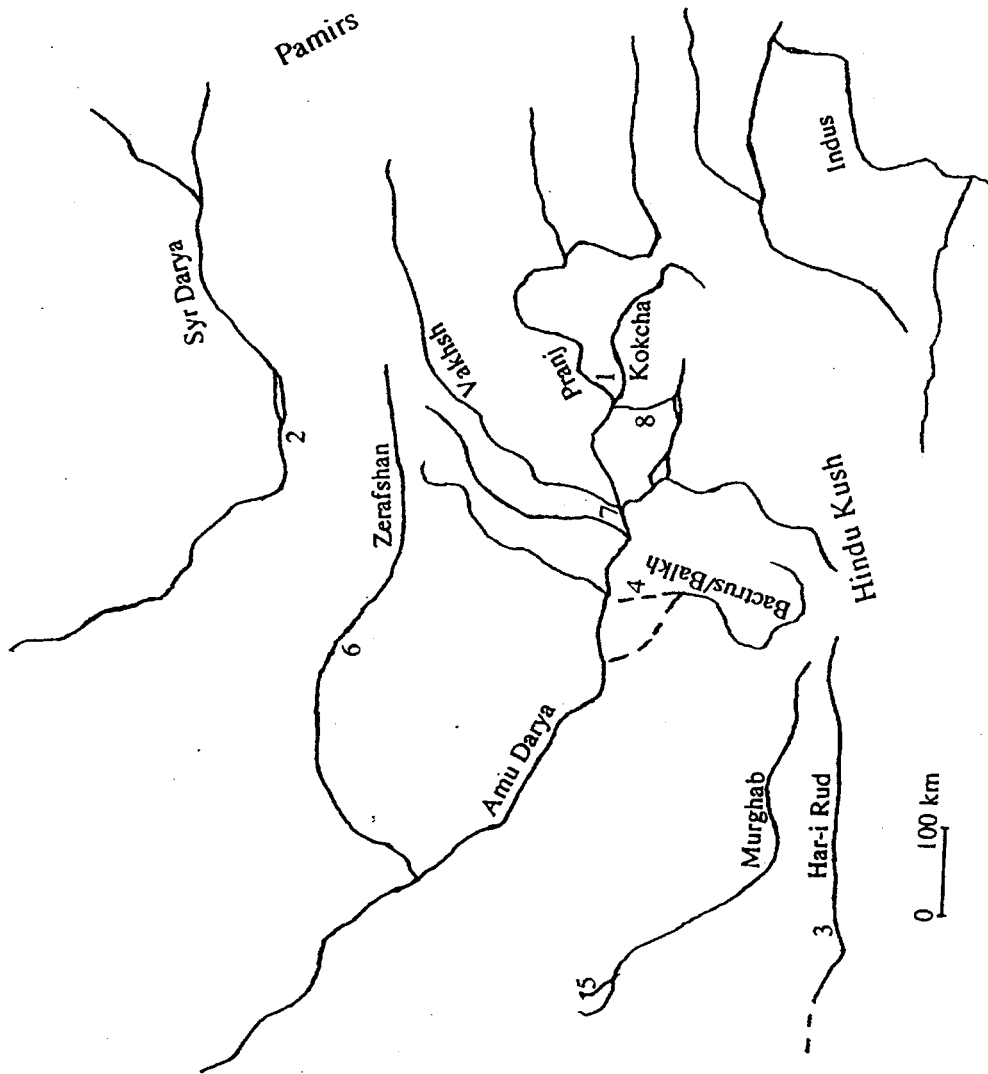
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Appendix 1 – Map of Bactria



- | | |
|---|----------------------------|
| 1 | Ai Khanoum |
| 2 | Alexandria Eschata/Khojent |
| 3 | Artacoana/Herat |
| 4 | Bactra/Balkh |

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| 5 | Margiana-Antiocheia/Merv |
| 6 | Marakanda/Samarkhand |
| 7 | Takht-i Sangin |
| 8 | Rud-i Sharawan |

Appendix 2 – Timeline

330/29	Alexander the Great enters Bactria
329 - 328/27	Bactrian/Sogdian rebellion
328	Amyntas replaces Artabazus as satrap of Bactria
328/27	Alexander marries Rhoxane
327	Macedonian army departs for India
326	veterans in Bactria and Sogdia revolt, Oxyartes appointed satrap of Paropamisadae
324	marriages at Susa, Seleucus marries Apama
323	death of Alexander
323/22	veterans in Bactria and Sogdia revolt again and are defeated by Pithon
321/0	Antipater appoints Stasanor satrap of Bactria and Sogdia and confirms Oxyartes in Paropamisadae
318	upper satraps oppose Pithon
317	upper satraps join Eumenes against Antigonus
316	Antigonus defeats Eumenes, kills Pithon, and confirms positions of satraps Stasanor and Oxyartes
308-303	Seleucus campaigns in the upper satrapies
c. 306-304	Demodamas campaigns for Seleucus in Sogdia and beyond, Seleucus fights Sandrocottus in India
292	Antiochus I made viceroy, city reconstructions in Bactria begin
274/3	unnamed Bactrian satrap supplies war elephants to Antiochus I
247	Androgoras, satrap of Parthia, revolts from the Seleucids

- 246 Diodotus, satrap of Bactria, revolts and claims kingship
- 246 Arsaces invades Parthia
- c. 238 Diodotus II succeeds and makes peace treaty with Arsaces
- c. 230 Euthydemus becomes king
- 208 Euthydemus invaded by Antiochus III, indecisive battle at river Arius
- 206 peace treaty between Euthydemus and Antiochus ends siege at Bactra
- 200 Sogdia separates from Bactrian kingdom
- 200-c. 175 reigns of Demetrius, Euthydemus II, Antimachus, Agathocles, Pantaleon, and expansion of Bactrian kingdom into India
- 171-150 reign of Eucratides
- c.165-160 Eucratides loses satrapies Aspionus and Tapuria to Mithridates I of Parthia
- c. 150 Eucratides at war with Demetrius of India and upon return is killed by son
- c. 150-140 reign of Heliocles
- c. 145 Ai Khanoum destroyed, nomad incursions into north Bactria increase
- c. 130-125 Yüeh-chih invade Bactria
- 128-127 Chang Ch'ien sojourns in Bactria