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*Seleucid frontier policy in the East:
the nature and extent of imperial control*

KENNETH STEPHEN BELL

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the University of
London for the degree of master of Philosophy

May 2005

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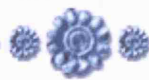
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To a considerable extent my approach has been influenced by my two supervisors, Amélie Kuhrt and Simon Hornblower, to whom I owe a great deal. Amélie Kuhrt's books first interested me in the Seleucid empire and encouraged me to embark upon this study of Seleucid frontier policy in the East. For much assistance and encouragement I express sincere gratitude to both Amélie and Simon, who painstakingly read and edited this manuscript and continuously reinforced my knowledge of the ancient Near East. I concede many good points of my work to both my supervisors and take responsibility for all errors.

All dates are BC unless otherwise indicated.

Finally, this Dissertation would not have been possible without the support of my wife, Jane. This work is dedicated to her.



ABSTRACT

Modern views of Seleucid control of the Eastern territories (Iran and Central Asia) have shifted in the last two decades as a result of excavation, and a re-evaluation of the nature of the Seleucid state.¹

In my thesis I will undertake a substantial and critical assessment of the primary sources² and will also demonstrate recent divergent approaches to numismatics in the Hellenistic East (Holt, 1999a; Bopearachchi, 1991; 1994). Although there is a great variety of literary evidence provided by later authors, none of them provide a complete account of the Seleucid monarchy, as the majority are of a fragmentary nature. I will examine the reliability and usefulness of these literary sources as well as the aims of the respective authors and their style of composition.

The nature and extent of imperial control of the Seleucids in the East is often agreed to contrast with that in the west. This historical background will be better understood by my outline of the known major events of their reigns.³ Also, I will emphasise the close trade links between the centre of the Seleucid Empire and the Eastern provinces by examining the evidence for merchandise unique to the East, appearing in the west, and vice versa.⁴

My research will pull together the primarily archaeological evidence now available not only from Ai Khanoum, but also Merv and Kandahar, with Lyonnet's (1997) study of Central Asian pottery forming a guide. The main aim will be to examine Seleucid frontier policy with regard to the Eastern part of the empire, indicating the regions under direct Seleucid control as well as explaining when, where and why frontier zones appear. Also, I will employ and illustrate the concept of frontiers, not as a line or simple zone, but as a series of overlapping zones in which the political, social, ethnic, religious, linguistic, economic and military boundaries all overlapped.⁵

¹ see Briant, 1982a and b; Kuhrt and Sherwin-White, 1987; Sherwin-White and Kuhrt, 1993; Holt, 1999a.

² e.g. literary texts, epigraphic and numismatic materials.

³ Sherwin-White and Kuhrt (1993) for the history and institutions of the Seleucid empire; Will (1979; 1982) for a political and military history, with full references.

⁴ e.g. the import of olives to the East and the import of Indian elephants to the west.

⁵ Elton, 1996.

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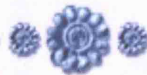
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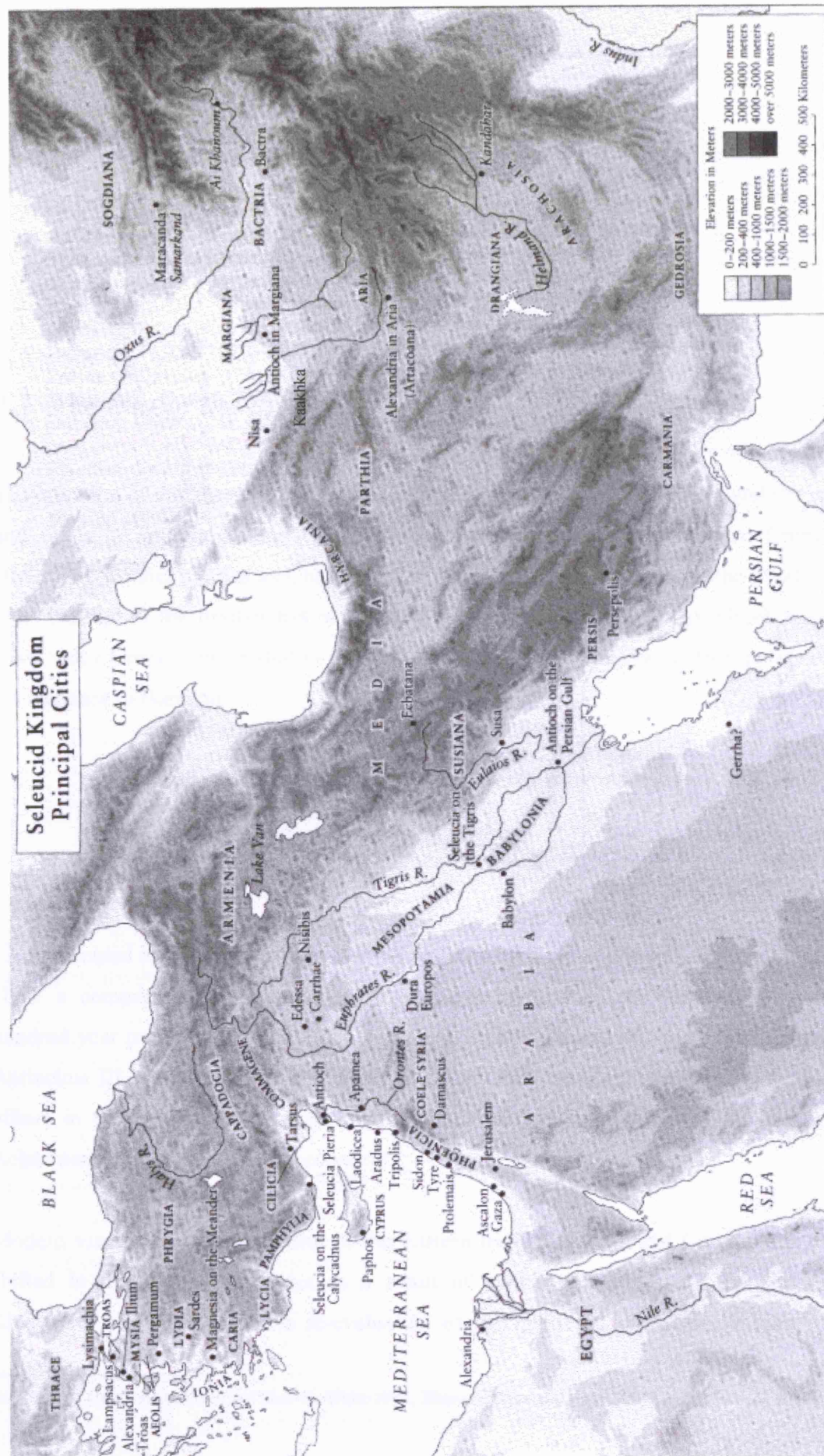


Fig 1: The Seleucid Kingdom (after Houghton and Lorber, 2001)

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 The aim of the thesis

The intention of this thesis is to examine Seleucid frontier policy in the East and the nature and extent of imperial control. There has been little academic research into Greek and Hellenistic frontier studies as Charles Edson noted when writing back in the 1960s, that “The concept of the frontier has rarely been associated with the study of Greek history.” Even today Greek frontier studies is an often ignored field of study, as Holt points out in his response to Burstein:

Greek frontier studies have failed to become a major field, quite unlike their well-developed, highly visible Roman equivalent. But while there may be no Hadrian’s wall in Hellenistic history, the frontier is clearly no less important to the Greek experience than to the Roman.

(Holt in Burstein, 1993: 55)

I have decided to concentrate my research on the late fourth and third centuries. This will allow a comprehensive examination of Seleucid involvement in the East, covering a hundred year period from the *anabasis* of Seleucus I Nicator (c.304/5) to the *anabasis* of Antiochus III Megas (c.204/5). In order to achieve a clearer understanding of Seleucid affairs in the East during this period it is necessary to place it in the context of the Achaemenid and Alexandrian occupation.

Modern views of Seleucid control of the Eastern territories (Iran and Central Asia) have shifted in the last two decades as a result of excavation (especially the site of Ai Khanoum, Afghanistan) and a re-evaluation of the nature of the Seleucid state.⁶ Two

⁶ see Briant, 1982a and b; Kuhrt and Sherwin-White 1987; Sherwin-White and Kuhrt, 1993; Holt, 1988 and 1999a.

features in particular which have helped to redefine perceptions of the Seleucid empire is a recognition that the centre of its power was firmly in Syria-Mesopotamia and the realisation that it modelled many of its imperial strategies on those employed by the preceding Achaemenid régime⁷. These developments allow the debate about Seleucid Eastern policy to move on from the earlier, mainly chronological discussions of Bactrian and Parthian secession, towards redefinition of the relations of the central power with the Eastern zone.

My research builds on these insights by pulling together the primarily archaeological evidence now available not only from Ai Khanoum, but also Merv (Turkmenistan) and Kandahar (Afghanistan); Bertille Lyonnet's study of the Central Asian pottery (1997) forms a crucial guide throughout. My aim is to define frontiers by exploring the interaction of kings, the nature and extent of control and by examining the concept of 'imperial periphery' in military terms; also by examining methods of establishing control effectively through garrisons, settlement, diplomacy and governmental structures.

A critical assessment of the primary sources is essential: literary texts, epigraphic and numismatic materials. The contribution of these sources has been extended by much valuable Near Eastern cuneiform documentation, throwing new light on the Seleucid empire. A number of studies have already pointed to continuity between Seleucid administrative practice and that of the Achaemenids.⁸ As civic/royal inscriptions were not a tradition in the Eastern provinces there is an imbalance with the Greek cities of western Asia Minor over-represented. Recent divergent approaches by Holt (1999a) and Bopearachchi (1991; 1994) to numismatics in the Hellenistic East are another area for debate. In order to gain an understanding of the nature of the problems related to the Seleucids in the East I examine the works of Tarn and Narain. This forms the basis for analysing the modern secondary sources, especially the more recent approaches by Kuhrt and Sherwin-White, Lerner and Holt.

⁷ cf. Briant, 1990.

⁸ see Briant, 1982a and b; 1990; Sherwin-White and Kuhrt, 1993.

At its peak the Seleucid empire stretched from the Aegean to India. In this vast area there existed regions with quite different physical characteristics and climates, which naturally had an impact on the nature of control by the Seleucid kings. The evidence as to whether the Parthians permanently occupied the area south of the Elburz in the third century or whether the settlement and development of Parthia was at this time restricted to the north of the Elburz mountain range⁹ is examined. If the Seleucids controlled the area south of the Elburz, the nature of the relationship between the Seleucids and the Bactrian kingdom requires reassessment. Seleucid control in the East during the third century needs to be set in historical context. Chapter 3 therefore, examines Seleucid history and events affecting the extent of their territory, or requiring considerable military effort in the Eastern provinces.

The concept of 'imperial periphery' will be discussed by examining ways in which the Seleucid kings of the third century took and established their 'territorial control', a term which in itself is inseparable from the control of peoples. Recent research on the frontiers of the Roman Empire (Elton, 1996) dispelling the idea of frontiers being a line or simple zone, but more as a series of "fuzzy" overlapping zones is relevant here. I also attempt to answer some major questions. For example, did the military-cleruch system, which is attested in the western provinces, also exist in the Eastern provinces? Did the Seleucid kings set up some other system of military conscription in the Eastern part of the empire, in which the soldiers were mainly intended to defend their provinces as a satrapal standing army?

Ethnic and cultural interrelations in the context of Seleucid imperial policy are considered. Although Alexander the Great introduced Eastern people into his army, armed and trained in the Macedonian fashion, did the native soldiers who were left in Central Asia preserve their own particular characteristics of warfare? These native soldiers may have been employed in satrapal service, leading to the large-scale employment of native contingents in Central Asia.

⁹ see Sherwin-White and Kuhrt, 1993: 89-90.

A picture of military settlement patterns in the Eastern provinces and examination of the rapid growth in Greek colonisation, which took place in the East during the reigns of Seleucus I and Antiochus I, is presented along with an assessment of the diplomatic relationships between the Seleucid kings and the Eastern frontier kingdoms. The use of royal marriages, treaties and the problems of secession are also examined.

1.2 The contributions of Tarn and Narain

The literary evidence for the Seleucids in Central Asia and the Iranian plateau is fragmentary and, at times, contradictory. Nevertheless, thanks to the valuable contributions of explorers and scholars such as Aurel Stein (1912; 1928; 1929; 1937), Edwyn Bevan (1902), M. Rostovtzeff (1922; 1928), Owen Lattimore (1928) and René Grousset (1929) it has been possible to shed some light on the Greeks in Central Asia. Standing upon the shoulders of such giants is William Woodthorpe Tarn's first edition of *The Greeks in Bactria and India* (1938), which became the first full account of the political history of the Greeks in Central Asia. With the limited resources then available, Tarn made use of numismatics, sculpture and the meagre literary evidence of the Chinese, Indian and Classical authors in order to produce a monumental piece of work which he expected to be built upon by later researchers. In a personal letter from Tarn to Professor Louise E. Lord of Oberlin College, he wrote of his use of evidence as "the bones showing through the skin" and "nearly all the book is spadework." (Romane, 1987: 22).

Tarn's work on *The Greeks in Bactria and India* produced a complex historical narrative emphasising the politics and personalities which caught the imagination of the reader, as Welles noted:

It has been his fortune to cast a kind of spell across the Hellenistic period, due in part to a vivid style which makes historical personalities come to life as he visualises them, in part to an unusual intensity of feeling.

(Welles, 1950: 53)

Tarn's approach to the study of coins was to examine the portraits of the kings on individual coins, such as the smile of King Antimachus, rather than the more informative die-links, weight standards and hoard evidence. His shortcomings in the field of numismatics was compensated by his ability to place Bactria in the context of the larger political events of the Hellenistic age (Holt, 1984: 3).

In Tarn's second edition (1951) he attempted to answer the criticisms of his work over the previous thirteen years.¹⁰ When Tarn died in 1957, A.K. Narain published his work entitled *The Indo-Greeks* which was based upon his Ph.D. thesis at London University.¹¹

Narain's history was designed to counter many of Tarn's views.¹² Indeed, these two great scholars arrived at different conclusions by approaching the history of Central Asia from different angles. Tarn regarded the Bactrian Greeks as a Hellenistic dynasty, believing that:

in the history of India the episode of Greek rule has no meaning, it is really part of the history of Hellenism, and that is where its meaning resides.

(Tarn, 1951: xx)

whereas Narain made extensive use of Eastern sources with an emphasis on numismatics (Samolin, 1960: 376). Narain argued against Tarn by focusing on new discoveries in order to place the Bactrian Greeks in an Indian perspective:

Their history is part of the history of India and not of the Hellenistic states: they came, they saw, but India conquered.

(Narain, 1957: 11)

Narain's viewpoint may well have been influenced by events during his own lifetime, with the withdrawal of the "British Raj" from India in the late 1940s reflecting an alien culture which came, saw, but in the end, was conquered by India. Yet, recent discoveries, such as

¹⁰ Welles, 1950; Edson, 1954.

¹¹ see Eggermont, 1961; Samolin, 1960; Walbank, 1958; Ojha, 1959; Phillips, 1950.

¹² Phillips (1959: 156) went as far as describing Narain's *Indo-Greeks* as "his work of destruction" of Tarn's work.

the bilingual edicts of Aśoka and the architecture and coinage from Ai Khanoum suggest that a more balanced approach is appropriate when examining the history of the Greeks in the East. Indeed, Bactria can be seen as a “fifth Hellenistic state” with an increasing Indian influence until eventually the Greeks become totally absorbed into the Indian culture.

In 1933, Tarn gave a lecture to the British Academy proclaiming that Alexander the Great believed in the equality of all men, “the brotherhood of man or the unity of mankind”. Holt (1984: 4) noted that the success of Greek rule “required the accommodation of non-Greeks no less numerous or civilised than they.” Tarn was aware of this co-operation, characterising Bactria under the rule of Demetrius as a “partnership between Greek and Indian inspired by the Alexander who had dreamt of a human brotherhood” (1951: 411). This alleged brotherhood of mankind, propounded by both Robinson (1949) and Tarn, was seen by Welles to be nothing but a “romantic” and “purely imaginary notion” (1950: 53), which has been demolished by the works of Badian (1958) and Bosworth (1980).

Since the publication of both Tarn’s second edition of *The Greeks in Bactria and India* and Narain’s *Indo-Greeks* in the 1950s, there have been many new discoveries in the fields of archaeology, numismatics and epigraphy. In 1966, George Woodcock wrote *The Greeks in India* which was an expanded version of an article entitled “The Indian Greeks,” written four years earlier. Woodcock’s book combined aspects of both Tarn’s and Narain’s books. Mortimer Wheeler’s “*Flames Over Persepolis*” (1968) assembled the archaeological evidence uncovered in Afghanistan and India, covering the period from the destruction of Persepolis to the absorption of Hellenism by the Kushans. The latest evidence has allowed scholars to account for some of the gaps in the fragmentary literary sources which are an inherent part of studying the Greeks in Central Asia. Both Tarn and Narain lacked this new evidence which led Tarn to comment that “the first half of the third century is still almost a blank” (1951: 5). One of the most important discoveries of recent times, following the publication of Tarn’s second edition and Narain’s book, was Ai Khanoum, a Greek city in Bactria situated at the confluence of the Kocha and Amu Darya (Oxus) River in Afghanistan. This find has also allowed scholars to study individual Graeco-Bactrian coins

and hoards in their archaeological context. Since the publication of Narain's *Indo-Greeks*, there has been a significant increase in the number of coins recovered, with a considerable amount of modern research being dedicated to the study of hoards and new coin-types recovered *in situ* and through stray finds (Holt, 1984: 7). The works of both Tarn and Narain suffered from the inclusion of a number of coin-forgeries and other incorrect information, which was used to support some of their main arguments. One such example is the group of Bactrian tetradrachms and gold staters revealed to be forgeries by G.K. Jenkins (1965) and mistakenly used by Tarn, Narain and the numismatist Newell.

Tarn's book was a landmark contribution to the study of Hellenism in the East, stimulating future historical and archaeological thinking. The latest evidence of archaeology, epigraphy and numismatics leads beyond the foundations set by Tarn and Narain, and as Burstein points out, "Only archaeology can provide historians with the necessary evidence for a new history of the Seleucid kingdom, and bad luck has seemed always to dog the archaeology of Seleucid Asia." (1992: 49).

Welles' (1950) review of Tarn (1938) exhibited an awareness of the strength of Near Eastern influences on the Seleucid kingdom, contrary to the traditional Aegeocentric view of Greece and Macedon. His insights are a precursor to the more radical re-assessment of the Seleucids in recent times, when he said:

By and large, the Seleucids continued the Persian arrangements, and if we are to understand the Seleucid administration, we must study Persia first, and go even further back, for the Persians too changed as little as possible. These kingdoms or empires, perhaps as far back as Sargon of Akkad, made no attempt to unify their subjects, as to language, religion, customs, or traditional form of government, but merely saw to it that there were no revolts, that the tribute was not withheld, and that military aid was furnished when required.

(Welles, 1950: 59)

Welles' observations of Middle Eastern influence have been taken much further thanks to the two most important scholarly works on the Seleucid empire by Amélie Kuhrt and

Susan Sherwin-White, published almost fifty years after the last major contribution to Seleucid studies, Bikerman's *Institutions des Séleucides* (1938).

1.3 A re-evaluation of the Seleucid kingdom

1.3(a) Sherwin-White and Kuhrt

Kuhrt and Sherwin-White's *Hellenism in the East* contains six articles by different contributors. Kuhrt and Sherwin-White here attempted to overcome current obstructions to understanding Seleucid history, as noted by Briant:

There is an unbridgeable schism which exists between studies centering on the Hellenistic epoch and studies of the Middle Eastern kingdoms before Alexander.

(Briant, 1990: 40)

Kuhrt and Sherwin-White (1987) and Sherwin-White and Kuhrt (1993) show that many institutions which were previously thought to be Hellenistic innovations actually exhibit signs of influence from the institutions of Babylonian society in the Achaemenid period. A closer examination of Eastern institutions, they state, is 'a fruitful method for re-evaluating the dynamics of the Seleucid empire in a way that has been singularly lacking in past treatments and has been profitably applied here, making use of new material from the Persian Gulf, Babylonia and Bactria' (1987: x-xi).

Recent advances in the fields of Babylonian and Achaemenid organisation such as the 'Achaemenid History Series' has allowed Near Eastern continuities to be observed in the institutions of the Seleucid kingdom. Kuhrt and Sherwin-White (1987: ix-x) point out how recent contributions to Hellenistic history have "grossly neglected" the Near Eastern background, whereas they emphasise "the fundamental importance of the traditions and institutions of the Achaemenid empire for understanding the system of Macedonian rule in

the East.” It is also possible to place the history of the Seleucid institutions in the context of the later Graeco-Bactrian and Parthian period, especially the 3rd-2nd centuries.

The study of the history and institutions of the Seleucid kingdom is now shifting from the traditional Europe-centered perspective as a result of the examination of Eastern sources. As Briant observed “The tendency now is to treat the Hellenistic period in the East as a particular phase of the history of Middle Eastern states and societies” (1990: 42). The Seleucid adoption of Achaemenid institutions, however, was not systematic, but more a process of adaptation and transformation of the existing practices (Stolper, 1989: 92).

With the approach of Kuhrt and Sherwin-White, the Seleucid kingdom can be observed in a new light. The non-Greek population of the empire can be seen to have played an important part in the administration as it had in the Achaemenid empire and the Seleucid kingdom now appears as a “somewhat ‘vertebrate’ state with some living tissue of a non-Greek nature” (Holt, 1999a: 26, rephrasing Tarn, 1951: 4).

1.3(b) Lerner

The publication by Jeffrey Lerner entitled “*The Impact of Seleucid Decline on the Eastern Iranian Plateau*” (1999) expands upon his previous article “*Seleucid Decline over the Eastern Iranian Plateau.*” (1995-6). He states in his introduction that he intends to re-examine the “traditional literary and numismatic evidence” (1999: 12) of the Hellenistic East up to the *anabasis* of Antiochus III in the late third century. Despite some interesting observations, his interpretation of the literary and numismatic evidence is not as reliable and conclusive as one might have hoped and unlike Holt’s “*Thundering Zeus*”, published in the same year, he makes insufficient use of the available archaeological evidence uncovered over recent years. Indeed, his emphasis and bias is clearly stated when he comments that “The majority of evidence for the history of Graeco-Bactria derives solely from coins”. In general, the greatest value is the use made of the numismatic evidence, demonstrating the use of two mints by the Graeco-Bactrians.

1.3 (c) Holt

Two important short publications concentrating on Bactria, by Frank Holt were published in 1988 and 1999. The first book examines Alexander's conquest of Bactria and Sogdiana in the context of Bactrian history, where he argues that a close link existed between the Achaemenid monarchy and Bactria. His conclusion is that Alexander was forced to reach a settlement in order to continue his march against India and that his "only real success lay in the fact that he was able, after two very difficult years, to extricate himself from a problem largely of his own making."¹³

The second book, though of modest size, is the first comprehensive socio-economic and political study of Hellenistic Bactria since the publications by Tarn and Narain over forty years ago. Holt's main thesis examines the gradual secession of the satrapy of Bactria and Sogdiana to the eventual independence of a Graeco-Bactrian kingdom under the reign of Diodotus I and II. The evidence suggests that the barbarian threat was more real than had previously been thought.

1.4 Conclusion

The works of Tarn and Narain provided an important starting point for considering the evidence relating to Hellenistic Bactria. Holt's use of a great variety of evidence, unavailable during Tarn's lifetime, has paid dividends with his valued additions to Bactrian studies. Holt's analysis of numismatics along with the re-evaluation of the Seleucid empire through the use of Near Eastern evidence by Kuhrt and Sherwin-White has highlighted the importance of the East. To conclude, the nature of any investigation into the history of Central Asia is susceptible to dramatic re-evaluations. As Holt acknowledges, "I present here my findings with full knowledge that the next museum, excavation, or book that I examine might alter everything. If that were not true, the subject would not be nearly so exciting for us to consider" (1999a: xv).

¹³ Holt, 1988: 69.

Chapter 2

Ancient Sources

2.1 Introduction

A major problem in studying the political events of the Seleucid monarchy is the lack of contemporary or near-contemporary literary evidence, with the exception of Hieronymus of Cardia and Polybius. Later authors, such as Diodorus, Strabo, Plutarch, Appian and Justin, throw light on various aspects, but none of them provide a complete account as they based their works on political events and regions far removed from the Eastern satrapies of the Seleucid Empire, such as the expansion of the Roman Republic; the geography of the known world; the biographies of the great leaders and generals of antiquity; or simply, significant parts of their works have not survived and only been handed down to us in a fragmentary state (Walbank, 1984a: 1). Austin (2001: 92) notes that the predominantly local character of the evidence “makes it easier to see Seleucid rule from a series of local perspectives than from a wider imperial view.” The reliability and usefulness of these writers depends largely upon the sources they used for their compositions, the aims of the respective authors, and their style of composition.¹⁴

2.2 Diodorus Siculus and Hieronymus of Cardia

The most detailed account of the reign of Seleucus I is provided by the first century BC Greek historian, Diodorus Siculus. His account contains excerpts from more contemporary historians. He would rewrite or abbreviate such works with minimal alterations. One

¹⁴ i.e. Universal history; annalistic history; biographies and geographical and ethnographical surveys.

important author used by Diodorus Siculus is Hieronymus of Cardia¹⁵ who has been described as “a shadowy literary colossus” (Bosworth, 2002: vi). The surviving later accounts of the life of Seleucus I and the other *diadochs* are thought to depend on him (Hornblower, 1981: 16-17; Billows, 1990: 329 and 331-332). Hieronymus was a Greek from Cardia in the Chersonnese; he is reputed to have lived to the age of 104 and recorded the death of Pyrrhus of Epirus in 272 (Hornblower, 1981: 102-4; Walbank, 1984a: 2). Hieronymus was close to the Greek general, Eumenes (Alexander’s Greek secretary), and was certainly in his entourage by 322. At the battle of Gabiene (317), between Antigonus and Eumenes, Hieronymus was captured by Antigonus. With the execution of Eumenes in 316, Hieronymus began to serve under Antigonus, his son Demetrius, and later his grandson Antigonus Gonatas. He was a contemporary eye-witness to many of the major events and even participated in some of them, as shown both by his closeness to Eumenes and by his presence at the battle of Gabiene. His work is heavily biased towards Eumenes, but then becomes more favourable towards the Antigonids, following the death of the former. Some of the fragments attributed to Hieronymus contain detailed digressions and his work is thought to have been of considerable length.¹⁶

It is the work of Hieronymus which constitutes the major part of Diodorus’ narrative in Books 18-20 where nineteen fragments are attributed to him, although none appear to be a direct quotation.¹⁷ As Hornblower remarks, “with Book 18 the reader at once feels that he is in the hands of a serious historian” (1981: 35). His bias was remarked upon by Pausanias (1.9.8):

This Hieronymus has above all a reputation of writing with hatred towards the kings except for Antigonus, to whom he shows favour unjustly.

¹⁵ see *FGrH*. 154 for relevant fragments and *testimonia*. A full account of Hieronymus’ life can be found in Hornblower, 1981.

¹⁶ On the detailed digressions of Hieronymus, see Hornblower, 1981: 16-7; Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*FGrH*. 154 T12) remarked on the length of Hieronymus’ works as follows, “No one can bear to read Hieronymus through to the end.”

¹⁷ *FGrH*. 154 F1-19. Although Billows (1990) follows Hornblower (1981) in believing that Diodorus used Hieronymus as his primary source for the reign of Seleucus I.

Diodorus (1.1.1) describes his own work of forty books as one of “the universal histories” stretching from times before the Trojan War up until the commencement of Julius Caesar’s Gallic War. Only Books 1-5 and 11-20 have survived intact, along with fragments of the remaining twenty-five books, mostly in the works of considerably later Byzantine authors. Of particular use for the study of the reign of Seleucus I are the intact Books 18-20, which cover the period from the death of Alexander in 323 until the beginning of c.302, after which only fragments are preserved. Diodorus was a citizen of Agrigento in Sicily and probably wrote his universal history between 56 and 52 (1.4.1; 1.4.4). Diodorus (1.3.7-4.3) claims that he sought to write an accessible account surpassing all others in its usefulness by reading the writings of other historians. He has, therefore, been criticised as an epitomiser of earlier sources, simply extracting whole passages and paraphrasing others (see Hornblower, 1981: 27-32). This also means that the quality of Diodorus’ narrative for the period from 323 to 302 depends upon the quality of his primary source, which, fortunately for the relevant books concerning Seleucus I, was Hieronymus.

Diodorus provides a detailed account of the wars of the Successors following the death of Alexander, although he does not give a consistent account of events in the East as this area was far removed from the main theatre of operations during the conflict of the Graeco-Macedonian rulers. For the reigns of the Seleucid monarchs after Seleucus I, the paucity of the literary evidence for the western regions of Asia Minor can be supplemented by an abundance of epigraphical evidence, which throws light on Seleucid activity in these regions.¹⁸ By comparison, this type of material scarcely survives to illuminate the situation in the Eastern part of the empire.

In addition, Diodorus also introduces other sources into his main narrative, and Hornblower believes that a pro-Ptolemaic source is being used in passages that are overwhelmingly flattering towards Ptolemy I Soter (Hornblower, 1981: 40-41; Billows, 1990: 344). A number of important events have been omitted in some of his more drastic abbreviations, such as the lead up to the Gaza campaign in 312, which consists of a handful

¹⁸ Ma (1999: 18) has counted forty-nine documents relevant to Antiochus III in Asia Minor alone.

of isolated events, and the campaigns of Seleucus against Antigonos between 311 and 308. Nevertheless, the account of Diodorus (i.e. Hieronymus) provides the only comprehensive account of events throughout a turbulent period.

From book 21 onwards the works of Diodorus have survived in fragments only, the most important of which come from Byzantine authors of the ninth century.¹⁹ Diodorus also drew on the works of Polybius and Posidonius of Apamea for the later history of the Hellenistic kingdoms.

2.3 *Polybius*

Polybius, a second century Greek historian from Achaia, was directly involved in the events he wrote about when he was taken to Rome as a prisoner after the battle of Pydna in 168 (Walbank, 2002). Here, he became a close friend of Aemilius Paullus and Scipio Africanus. Polybius provides the only extant historical narrative “in anything approaching a complete state” (Shipley, 2000: 7) for the political affairs of the Seleucid monarchy in the last quarter of the third and beginning quarter of the second century. His work has thus been described as “the most important source for the years 264 to 146” (Walbank, 1992: 20). Considered to be “a sane and balanced writer” (Walbank, 1992: 20), Polybius was not entirely free from prejudice. Although it is possible to use the *Histories* of Polybius for the period from 264 onwards, his contribution concerning the Seleucid Empire is essentially limited to the accession and reign of Antiochus III running parallel to Rome’s expansion against Hannibal in the Second Punic War and the ensuing conflict with Philip V of Macedon. This eastward expansion of the Romans culminated in the campaign and victory over Antiochus III between 192-188 and his death in 187. The exception to this focus on Roman affairs are his digressions on the revolt of Molon; the Fourth and Fifth Syrian wars in Coele-Syria between the Seleucids and the Ptolemies; and the surviving fragments of Antiochus III’s *anabasis* to the East.²⁰ Polybius’ work originally consisted of 40 books, of

¹⁹ Primarily, the epitome in the library of Photius of Byzantium (9th century AD).

²⁰ Polyb. Book 5: the revolt of Molon and the Fourth Syrian War - 219-217; Polyb. Book 16: the Fifth Syrian War - 202-198; Polyb. Books 10.27-31, 49; 11.39: the *anabasis* of Antiochus III.

which, only the first five have survived intact,²¹ the remainder being increasingly fragmentary from book seven onwards.²² Despite the fragmentary nature of his work, Polybius constitutes an important source for reconstructing some of the main events of Seleucid history. Ultimately, the problem with assessing the fractured history of the Seleucid kingdom is our excessive dependence on what survives of Polybius and our assessment of the value of his account.

Commencing with the 140th Olympiad' (220-216) (Polyb. 1.3.1), Polybius states that the aim of his work is to “discover by what means and under what system of government the Romans succeeded in less than fifty-three years in bringing under their rule almost the whole of the inhabited world” (Polyb. 1.1.5). From the time of the battle of Ipsus (301) there is no continuous account of Hellenistic history, let alone that of the Seleucid kings. Acting as a prelude to the rise of Rome, Polybius' introductory books follow on from where the works of Timaeus left off (264), which also marks the beginning of the First Punic War (264-241). Although he lived in Athens for fifty years, Timaeus (c.356-c.260), a Greek historian from Tauromenium in Sicily, wrote a 38-book history of his homeland. Polybius praised Timaeus, but also criticized him severely. As Polybius' concerns were with the city of Rome, he writes about the affairs of the Seleucid kings mostly when it has a bearing on Roman affairs in the area of the Mediterranean basin. Later on, we are drawn into the relationship between Antiochus III and Rome, leading up to and including the Roman-Seleucid war. This emphasis inevitably results in the focus of attention resting upon Antiochus' involvement in Coele-Syria, Greece and Asia Minor, far removed from the Mesopotamian-Syrian centre and the Eastern satrapies of the Seleucid empire.

Polybius chose 220 as his starting-point because it was a period in which his own experiences and the use of eyewitnesses could be used (Walbank, 1972: 42). The

²¹ Book 5 providing a considerable amount of evidence concerning the revolt of Molon and the Fourth Syrian War.

²² Livy and Appian later reproduced many passages of Polybius' *Histories*, some of which provide additional insights into Eastern affairs, such as Antiochus III sending one of his sons to guard the remotest part of his kingdom (Livy, 35.13.5); the appearance of Eastern troop types in the Seleucid army at Magnesia (App. *Syr*, 31-6; Livy, 37.40-1); the extent of Seleucus I's empire following the battle of Ipsus (App. *Syr*, 55); the founding of a number of cities attributed to Seleucus I (App. *Syr*, 57); the Parthian revolt (App. *Syr*, 66); Seleucus' division of his kingdom with his son, Antiochus (I) (App. *Syr*, 61).

importance of eye-witnesses to Polybius is highlighted in his description of the interrogating witnesses:

For since many events occur at the same time in different places, and one man cannot be in several places at one time, nor is it possible for a single man to have seen with his own eyes every place in the world and all the peculiar features of different places, the only thing left for an historian is to inquire from as many people as possible, to believe those worthy of belief and to be an adequate critic of the reports that reach him.

Polyb. 12.4c.3

In this respect his internment in Rome gave him access to exiles and members of foreign embassies frequently arriving in Rome, giving Polybius a valuable source of information on current and past events in the Hellenistic kingdoms. Indeed, he (29.8.10) quotes Perseus' friends as a source (Walbank, 1972: 10; 1957(i): 33-4).

For the period before 200 he refers to two historians for events in Greece, Aratus of Sicyon (2.56.2) and Phylarchus' *History* (2.47.11; 2.70.6; 5.35-9), which covered the period from 272 to 220/19 (Walbank, 1972: 77; 1957(i): 27).

For events occurring during the period of Polybius' works there is little evidence of his sources for Greece and Asia. Polybius criticised his contemporary, Zeno of Rhodes, for his accounts of battles and sieges, including his description of the siege of Gaza and the battle of Panium (16.18.1-19.11) during the Fifth Syrian War, yet he may have used him for other events in the East such as the battle of Raphia in 217 (Walbank, 1972:81; 1957(i): 30). An alternative source for the battle of Raphia has been suggested by Walbank (1967(ii): 570) who noted that the detailed information concerning the Ptolemaic forces at Raphia may have come from a "mercenary source" since many of the mercenary officers later deserted to Antiochus III (Polyb. 5.70.10-11). For the text on Antiochus' Eastern expedition, Walbank (1967(i): 232) suggested that Polybius made use of an eyewitness who took part in the expedition and who may also be identified with the aforementioned "mercenary source."

For the reigns following Antiochus III, in which Polybius explains how Roman intervention forced Antiochus IV to abort his invasion of Egypt (The Sixth Syrian War - 170-168) the evidence is fragmentary.²³ One of these fragments provides a fascinating glimpse of Polybius participating in the escape of the future Demetrius I from Rome to seize the Seleucid Syrian throne in 162.²⁴

Livy made considerable use of Polybius as a primary source for affairs in the East. He wrote his history in the reign of Augustus, and, his work has only survived in part, i.e. chapters 1 to 10 and 21 to 45. His account is Rome-centred and often distorted but does provide an insight into political events in the East up to the end of the Third Macedonian War in 168.

2.4 Justin and Pompeius Trogus

An intermittently useful source is Justin, who made an epitome of the lost *Philippic History* of Pompeius Trogus, probably dating to the reign of Augustus. Justin is generally thought to be an unreliable source. His work was described by Tarn (1948: 124), as a “mass of rubbish,” while Ager (2003: 35) refers to him as “one of the soapiest of the ancient writers.” Nevertheless, he does provide some information on the emergence of an independent Parthian kingdom and the secession of the Bactrians sometime in the middle of the third century. But, as Develin (1994: 2) notes, our knowledge of both Justin and Trogus is so limited that “there can be few cases in the field of ancient historiography where the sum of knowledge concerning the persons of two writers is so scanty.”

Trogus’ work was a universal history written in Latin with an emphasis on “Near Eastern and Greek affairs,” particularly the exploits and behaviour of kings (Develin, 1994: 7). Alonso-Núñez (1987: 58) has suggested that the *Philippic Histories* gained their title

²³ An ultimatum was forced upon Antiochus IV by the Roman delegate Popilius Laenas following on from the Roman victory at Pydna, over the Macedonian king, Perseus (The Third Macedonian War - 172-168) (Polyb. 29.27).

²⁴ Polyb. 31.11-21. The cuneiform evidence shows that Demetrius I was recognized as king as early as September 161: see

because the main subject of Trogus' work was the rise and decline of the Macedonian monarchy, which is covered from book 7 to book 33. The next seven books take us down to the end of the Ptolemaic monarchy, matching the size of other famous works before him, such as the 40 volume *Histories* of Polybius and Diodorus. The remaining four books can be seen as digressions on regions of particular interest to Trogus: books 41 and 42 are relevant for the Parthians; book 43 concentrates on Italy, Liguria and Massilia while his final book 44 looked at Iberia.

Nothing is known of Justin, other than that his compilation was collated in Rome, away from his home somewhere in the provinces of the Roman Empire; even his name is uncertain.²⁵ The date when Justin is thought to have created his epitome ranges from 144 or 145 AD to 395 AD (Steele, 1917: 19ff.; Syme, 1988: 358ff). A date prior to AD 230 can be argued as Justin refers to the world being divided between Rome and Parthia in Books 41 and 42, implying that he was writing prior to the period of Sassanid domination. However, a computer analysis of the language used by Justin suggests that he was writing in the later second century (Develin, 1994: 4; Alonso-Núñez, 1987: 61). In his preface, Justin says that he "excerpted" those items in Trogus, which he found "most noteworthy" (*Pref.* 4). Develin (1994: 6) argues that there appear to be many passages originating from Justin himself, especially those "statements in the first person singular or words such as "now" or "to this day"." Although Justin fashioned his own history out of Trogus' work, Develin (1994: 10) notes that some of his passages seem to "muddle events as well as skip over a long interval in a few words," particularly when he uses the term "meanwhile" to link his narrative despite the fact that "the events concerned are not contemporaneous at all."

Trogus, who wrote so that "Greek history should be as accessible in our language [i.e. Latin] as ours is in Greek" (*Just. Pref.* 1), describes the succession of world empires: Assyria, Media, Persia, Macedonia and concludes with the confrontation between Rome and Parthia from his own time (*Just. Epit.* 41.1.3-7). Trogus does not look upon the

Sachs and Hunger, 1996: no. –160 and van der Spek, 1997-1998: 168.

²⁵ This may have been either M. Iunianus Iustinus or as Develin (1994:3) prefers it, M. Iunaius Iustinus.

Parthians as a minor power, but a powerful empire that was able to contest Rome (Just. *Epit.* 41.1.7) for control of the world, partitioning it between them, Rome in the West and Parthia in the East (Just. *Epit.* 41.1.1). The significance of the Parthians can be seen in his dedication of two additional books (Books 41 and 42). The typical number of Books for general histories tended to be forty, as with Polybius and Diodorus.

Concerning the revolt of Parthia and Bactria, i.e. the sections of greatest relevance to this thesis, Justin provides unique information, perhaps from Apollodorus of Artemita (see 2.5.1), that we do not have from other sources, although Bosworth (2002: 23) notes that some of his epitome is “contracted to the point of unintelligibility.” Bivar (1983a: 22) believes that books 41 and 42 of the *Epitome* of Justin, are “indispensable” for historians examining the emergence of an independent Parthian kingdom as they have been attributed, not to Apollodorus of Artemita, but to another unknown Greek author who is believed to have been a more reliable source. But, Gardiner-Garden (1987: 8-10) and Nikonorov (1998: 107-8) both believe that Apollodorus served as a source for the 41st and 42nd books of Pompeius Trogus. In addition to Books 41 and 42, the prologues were compiled in order to indicate the contents of the individual books of Trogus’ history (Develin, 1994: 3).

2.5 Other Historians

In the examination of lost historians it is important to distinguish between those who have been preserved as fragments in the works of later writers and those later historians who have preserved them. I have already discussed one example, i.e. Hieronymus of Cardia, who was the main source for Diodorus’ books 18-20. Other cases include Plutarch²⁶ and probably Arrian, who both appear to preserve important fragments of Hieronymus (Walbank, 1984a: 2-3); the *Geography* of Strabo, which contains passages of Apollodorus of Artemita’s *Parthica*;²⁷ the second century author, Polyaeus wrote a book of military

²⁶ Plutarch’s biographies on *Eumenes*, *Demetrius* and *Pyrrhus*, made extensive use of the works of Hieronymus of Cardia; also on Plutarch, see Bosworth, 1992: 57

²⁷ see Nikonorov, 1998; Drijvers, 1998; Gardiner-Garden, 1987.

strategems, part of which is based on the strategems of Eumenes and Antigonus, possibly derived from Hieronymus of Cardia (Walbank, 1984a: 3 n. 2 and 1992: 20). The second century BC historian, Posidonius, is preserved in both Strabo and Athenaeus; a summary of Books nine to sixteen of Memnon of Heracleia Pontica's history of his native city, possibly from the first century AD, has survived in the *epitome* of the ninth century Byzantine theologian, Photius, providing useful information from the period of the *Diadochi* to the reign of Antiochus I;²⁸ fragments of Berossus, a Babylonian who wrote a history of Babylon in Greek, down to the period of Alexander the Great, known as the *Babyloniaka*, have also been preserved by later authors such as Josephus and Eusebius (Burstein, 1978; Kuhrt, 1987). In addition, information on the historical geography of the Eastern regions of the Seleucid empire can be gleaned from the works of Quintus Curtius Rufus, Pliny's *Natural history*, Arrian's *Anabasis*, Claudius Ptolemy's *Geography*, Ammianus Marcellinus' description of Sassanian Persia (Drijvers, 1999), and the *Ethnika* of Stephanus the Byzantine (Holt, 1988: 13).

2.5.1 *Strabo of Amasia*

Strabo was a historian and geographer, a Greek of Amasia (on the Black Sea coastline of Anatolia), who wrote a history, which is lost, although Plutarch and Josephus are known to have referred to it. He was born around 64 and is described as having lived at the time of Tiberius in the *Suda*, a reference to his time as a scholar (Dueck, 2000: 1-2). Strabo is known for his surviving work, known as the *Geography*,²⁹ which is the only extant work covering the whole range of peoples and countries known to both Greeks and Romans during the reign of Augustus (Dueck, 2000). Of particular relevance for the study of the Seleucid empire are books 11, on the Caspian Sea, Armenia and the Taurus mountains; books 12 to 14 on Asia Minor; book 15 on India, Bactria and Parthia; book 16 on Mesopotamia, Arabia and the Levant. One of Strabo's main sources for affairs East of the

²⁸ see Burstein, 1974 - The history of Heracleia can be traced from 364/3-47, and although the city of Heracleia is the main subject of Memnon's work, he provides an insight into the shady period of Antiochus I's confrontation with the so-called "Northern League," thought to consist of a number of the following cities in northern Asia Minor - Byzantium, Chalcedon, Heracleia, Ticium and Cierus.

²⁹ Dueck (2000: 125) refers to his work as "more of a tourist-guide with political orientation."

Euphrates was Apollodorus of Artemita who wrote around 50 BC and fragments from the lost *Parthica* of Apollodorus are frequently quoted in the *Geography* of Strabo.³⁰ Knowledge of the East was limited during the Parthian period, so that even the accounts provided by Apollodorus “apparently let him down, and did not enable him to extract from their works a clear impression of the geographical situation of Parthia” (Drijvers, 1998: 282). The contribution provided by Apollodorus’ *Parthika* must have been of limited use, as Drijvers (1998: 291-2) notes that Strabo has little to say on Parthia and what he does have to say is “feeble,” and shows a lack of knowledge concerning the region, so that “we should perhaps not think too highly of Apollodorus and his work.” Drijvers’ grounds for these remarks is the vagueness of Strabo’s location of Parthia, as well as its size and boundaries (1998: 282; also see Strabo, 11.9.1; 11.13.6; 15.2.9; 11.8.1; 15.2.14). It seems that Strabo did not make use of Isidore of Charax. The last account written by Isidore concerns Gaius Caesar's eastern campaign at the start of the first century, although Tarn (1953: 53-4) attributes him to the later 1st century AD, as Pseudo-Lucian refers to "Isidore of Charax the historian" as mentioning Artabazus, the king of Characene. If Tarn is right, then this would explain why Strabo did not make use of Isidore. Although Strabo was not writing a historical work, he does provide valuable information concerning Arsaces’ flight from the increasing power of Diodotus in Bactria (11.9.3) and writes that “Euthydemus” was the first satrap of Bactria to rebel and not Diodotus (11.9.2).

2.5.2 *Isidore of Charax*

Some time around the beginning of the first century AD, Isidore of Charax (Southern Iraq) wrote the *Parthian Stations* (Schoff, 1914) an itinerary from the crossing of the Euphrates at Zeugma to Arachosia, which probably originates from a longer work, the *Description of Parthia* referred to by Athenaeus (*Deipnosophistae* 3.93d). According to Drijvers, little was known of the Parthian Empire, which encouraged the Roman emperor Augustus to commission “Isidore of Charax to gather relevant information in the East when Gaius

³⁰ On Apollodorus of Artemita, see Nikonorov, 1998; Drijvers, 1998: 281; Gardiner-Garden, 1987.

Caesar was about to set out for his oriental mission” (Drijvers, 1998: 282; also see Plin. *HN*, 6.141).

2.5.3 Plutarch of Chaeronea

Plutarch of Chaeronea (c. 46 – c. 120 AD) visited Rome on a number of occasions and some of his friends were important senators, to whom some of his writings were dedicated. One of his friends, Lucius Mestrius Florus, had been a consul during the reign of Vespasian. Mestrius secured Roman citizenship for Plutarch, who became officially known as Mestrius Plutarchus. He wrote a series of *Parallel Lives of Greeks and Romans*, comparing notable men from Greek history with those of equally distinguished men of the Roman world, and at the beginning of his *Life of Alexander*, Plutarch states “My intention is not to write histories, but lives” (*Vit. Alex.* 1). Nevertheless, It is still possible to draw some valuable historical information from Plutarch’s *Lives of Alexander*, and *Demetrius*. His collection of 78 philosophical and ethical essays and other works, known as the “*Moralia*”, can sometimes provide occasional insights into Hellenistic history, particularly his essay, “*On the Fortune of Alexander.*”

2.5.4 Arrian of Nicomedia

The second century AD Bithynian historian, Arrian, governor of the Roman province of Cappadocia wrote the *Anabasis of Alexander* and made use of Hieronymus’ histories for his work on *Events after Alexander* in ten books, which supplements Diodorus’ account, as well as diverging from it on certain details (Stadter, 1980: 1-18; Goralski, 1989). He also wrote a history of the Parthians, the “*Parthica*,” in seventeen books (Stadter, 1980: 135-144). Only the first book of Arrian’s *Parthica* concerns events before Parthia’s contact with Rome, of which, two important fragments concerning the emergence of an independent Parthian kingdom under Arsaces I have been preserved by Photius (ninth century) and Syncellus (twelfth century) (Stadter, 1980: 135-144; Holt, 1999a: 59).

2.5.5 *Appian of Alexandria*

Appian, a second century AD Greek historian from Alexandria, wrote the *Syrian Wars*, which provides an outline of Seleucid history in relation to the Roman conquest of Syria (see Brodersen, 1989). He wrote a history of Rome following the histories of various peoples separately from when they came into contact with Rome to the point where they became subject provinces of the Roman Empire and it is Rome's involvement with the Seleucid monarchs that led Appian to write the *Syrian Wars*. It provides valuable information concerning the rebellion of Parthia (*Syr.* 65) and Seleucus I's co-regency with his son, Antiochus (I) (*Syr.* 59). The beginning of the *Syrian Wars* probably drew upon Hieronymus of Cardia, while the later sections made use of Plutarch, Timagenes, Polybius and a source which contradicted Polybius.

2.5.6 *Jewish Writers*

Jewish History provides some valuable evidence of Seleucid frontier policy against the Ptolemies in Palestine; the functions of Seleucid government in a peripheral province and how the Seleucids managed to tackle a rebellious people who made considerable use of guerrilla warfare. The main literary evidence for the region of Palestine comes from the Old Testament book of *Daniel* and the two apocryphal books of *Maccabees*. Also, Book 12 of the *Jewish Antiquities* of Josephus, a history written in twenty books during the first century AD, provides valuable evidence of Seleucid-Ptolemaic relations in Palestine.³¹ Although the Jewish sources can provide useful information on the Seleucid kingdom, it is focussed on a relatively small peripheral region of the Seleucid empire, which was not annexed by the Seleucid empire until the end of the third century BC (Sherwin-White and Kuhrt, 1993: 3).

³¹ Josephus drew on I *Maccabees*, Nicolaus of Damascus (Herod's court historian) and Strabo for his *Jewish Antiquities*; also see Walbank, 1992: 20.

The Jewish sources and the Roman focus of Polybius and Appian, have previously drawn the attention of scholars away from the Mesopotamian and Iranian heartland of the Seleucid empire towards the western regions of Palestine and Asia Minor. Also, these same sources draw our attention to periods of Seleucid failure, giving a false impression of what was actually happening within the Seleucid kingdom (Burstein, 1997: 48-9).

2.6 Babylonian Astronomical Diaries, Chronicles and “King List”

One way of obtaining a different perspective on the Seleucid monarchy is to examine the surviving Babylonian Astronomical Diaries, chronicles and “king list”. This allows some current views to be revised.

2.6.1 The Astronomical Diaries

A major contribution to the study of Seleucid history in recent years has been the publication, in three volumes, of the Babylonian Astronomical Diaries covering the period from 652 to 61.³² The Astronomical Diaries were written in Babylonian cuneiform; not only do they report the position of the stars, movement of planets, phases of the moon, solstices equinoxes, meteors, and comets, they also provide at times, historical information. There are references to visits of kings or royal officials to Babylon and its temples, to wars, offerings made by members of the royal family to Babylonian shrines and the suffering undergone by the population of Babylonia in times of conflict (Spek, R.J. van der, 1993a: 93). The Astronomical Diaries, as van der Spek (1993a: 94) explains, constitute a kind of “source-book for horoscopes and omina”; they also give varying commodity prices, river levels and the weather (Sachs and Hunger, 1988: 13ff). The purpose of the compilation of the Astronomical Diaries was the establishment of a set of data from which Astronomical predictions could be made and perhaps also forecasts of good or bad harvests. They were not interested in political or economic events as such but in their possible relationship with

³² see the publications by Sachs and Hunger (1988; 1989; 1996).

natural phenomena. If an event did not occur in Babylon itself, it was carefully recorded with the phrase “it was heard” (Kuhrt, 1996: 43). The compilers of the diaries almost certainly lived in Babylon and were linked to the temple. The compilers were not historians as the occurrences of historical events in the diaries are distributed unevenly, as Hunger notes, “sometimes they record events of ephemeral importance from the city of Babylon, in other cases events of political significance” (Sachs and Hunger, 1988: 36). It has been proposed that the diaries were used as one of the sources for the compilation of the Babylonian Chronicles, although this view is contested.³³

The importance of the Astronomical Diaries as a historical source has been highlighted by van der Spek, but he emphasises that:

The sections recording historical events are of course a matter of major importance for the assessment of historical developments. They must, however, be used with caution in view of their above-mentioned purpose as material for astrological research.

(van der Spek, 1993a: 94)

Although some of the diaries provide no historical information over a period of many years, there are also occasions when historical events are recorded frequently. The information provided may vary from a passing remark to the full and unique information on the First Syrian War (see Appendix 1).

2.6.2 The Babylonian Chronicles

A continuous series of Babylonian Chronicles, dating from the reign of the Neo-Babylonian King Nabonassar (747-734), moving through the Achaemenid period, Alexander’s reign, the Seleucid period, down to the rule of the Arsacids have survived and been published.³⁴ Despite the loss of political independence following the conquest of

³³ see Brinkman (1990) who believes that the closeness between the chronicles and the diaries are not as close as originally thought; also see Kuhrt, 1996: 43; Spek, R.J. van der, 1993: 94; Grayson, 1975: 12ff.

³⁴ *ABC*, nos. 8, 9, 10, 11-12, 13, 13a, 13b; Sachs, 1977; also see Sherwin-White, 1987: 15.

Babylon by Cyrus the Great (539), the Babylonians retained their literary and scholarly traditions and continued to produce a running account of Babylonian history in Akkadian (Grayson, 1975: 22). The importance of the Chronicles as historical evidence can be seen for example, in the account of Babylonian territory being ravaged by Antigonos between 311/10-308, valuably reflecting a Babylonian perspective of this brutal conflict.³⁵ As the compilers of the chronicles were from Babylon, much of the historical evidence was Babylon-centred although there are occasional references to cities and areas far away from Babylonia, such as Sardis in the west and Bactria in the East, showing how these locations on the periphery of empire were linked to the Seleucid centre (Sachs and Hunger, 1988: 36).

The *Chronicle of the Diadochoi* narrates events commencing with the death of Alexander, or sometime soon after.³⁶ The beginning of the text is missing so that the first surviving entry concerns Seleucus' accession as satrap of Babylonia (319) (*ABC*, no. 10; Sherwin-White, 1987: 14). Sherwin-White (1987: 15) stresses, "that foreign conquest and lack of political freedom did not stop this local tradition," which indicates an acceptance of Seleucus' position as satrap of Babylonia without any apparent opposition. This can be confirmed by Diodorus (19.91) who describes Seleucus receiving the active support of the local Babylonian population.

The text of another important Babylonian Chronicle is so broken that only a few references can be obtained from it. The obverse of this chronicle is dated to the thirtieth year of the Seleucid Era (282/281) and appears to be an account of the campaign of Seleucus I in Asia Minor, culminating in the battle of Corupedium. The reverse almost certainly refers to the thirty-first year of the Seleucid Era (281/280) and concerns the military campaign of Seleucus I, crossing from Asia Minor "to Macedonia his land" (*ABC* 12; Sherwin-White, 1983: 266-267). One chronicle fragment possibly refers to Seleucus III, "[Seleuc]us, son of Seleucus" (*ABC* 13) while another refers to the arrival of a brother of Seleucus III in

³⁵ *ABC* 10; also see Sachs and Hunger, 1988: no. –309; Sherwin-White and Kuhrt, 1993: 10.

³⁶ Sherwin-White (1987: 15) notes that the Chronicle "originally began either with Alexander's death or its aftermath, a fact not hitherto recognised."

Seleucia-Tigris from Syria in 224 (Kuhrt, 1996: 46; *ABC* 13b; Sherwin-White, 1983: 267-268). Another chronicle fragment may make a reference to construction in Seleucia-Tigris by Antiochus I (*ABC* 13a).

2.6.3 The Babylonian King List

In addition to the Astronomical diaries and chronicles is the “Babylonian King List,” a crucially important source, particularly for the period immediately following the death of Alexander the Great, which provides accurate information on co-regencies (Sachs and Wisemann, 1954; *Austin* 138). It covers the Hellenistic period and lists the reigns of the Macedonian kings who ruled over Babylon from the reign of Alexander the Great into the early period of Arsacid rule in Mesopotamia. The importance of this tablet lies in its provision of a reliable chronology for the Seleucid kings throughout the third and second centuries. The discovery of this text has led to the confirmation of some old dates and the revision of others, which had previously prevailed among classical historians, so that the date of the death of Seleucus I has been modified, and therefore, of the battle of Corupedium.

2.7 The Persepolis Archive

A considerable amount of evidence concerning the administration and economy of Achaemenid Persepolis has appeared following the discovery of a large number of clay tablets, which were recovered and gained their name from two structures on the palace terrace, the “Treasury” and the Fortification wall (Brosius, 2000: 1). During the early 1930s over 30,000 clay tablets and fragments were discovered here. The tablets were written in Elamite cuneiform. The Fortification texts deal with the movement and expenditure of food commodities in the region of Persepolis during the reign of Darius I, between 509 and 494 (Hallock, 1985: 588). Expenditure noted in the Fortification texts was paid in kind, whereas the Treasury texts, dating from Darius I to Artaxerxes I, was made in silver. 2,087 Fortification texts (PF) were published by Hallock in 1969, who later

published a further 33 in 1978 (Pfa). Hallock also transliterated 2,587 texts, which have not yet been published (PF-NN) (Brosius, 2000: xix). The unpublished tablets and fragments are less legible. There are also around 500 unpublished Aramaic texts from the same archive (Lewis, 1990: 1). Only around a hundred of the Treasury texts, concerning the economy and payment of workers, have so far been published (Cameron, 1948).

2.8 Conclusion

These fragmentary glimpses of Seleucid history are often difficult to weigh-up in light of the long periods of darkness between known events. In order to provide a historical account of the Seleucid monarchs, it is, therefore, more appropriate to consider their history, region by region in Asia Minor; Coele-Syria; and the Eastern provinces, from 300 to the death of Antiochus IV in 164.

Chapter 3

Historical Background

3.1 Introduction

The nature and extent of imperial control of the Seleucids in the East during the third century seems to contrast with that in the west. This may be more fully understood against a background outlining the known events, particularly those relating to territory and military effort.³⁷ As discussed in chapter 2, the inadequacy of the literary evidence for the history of the Seleucid monarchy from the last quarter of the fourth century down to the death of Antiochus IV in 164 makes the writing of a coherent chronological narrative impossible. In this chapter, I discuss first the reign of Seleucus I, the only monarch of the dynasty covered in any detail by literary material.³⁸ For the monarchs after Seleucus I, the paucity of the literary evidence in Asia Minor is supplemented by an abundance of epigraphical evidence, which throws light on Seleucid activity in these regions, while those further East are only illuminated to 164. The rest of the chapter discusses the activities of the Seleucid monarchs region by region.

3.2 Seleucus I Nicator (r. 312-281)

After the death of Alexander the Great in 323, his leading generals tore apart his empire in a prolonged power struggle for control. One of these generals was Seleucus, who had married Apame, the daughter of the Sogdian satrap Spitamenes at Susa in 324. At the Triparadisus conference of 321,³⁹ Seleucus received the satrapy of Babylonia to govern. In his initial period of governing Babylonia (319-315) (*ABC* 10, obv. 9), Seleucus seems to

³⁷ Sherwin-White and Kuhrt (1993) for the history and institutions of the Seleucid empire; Will ((i) 1979; (ii) 1982) for a political and military history, with full references.

³⁸ see chapter 2.2.

³⁹ see Errington 1970; Schober 1981.

have created a system of political patronage in order to gain the support of the Babylonians (Diod. Sic. 19.91; Sherwin-White and Kuhrt 1993: 10). In 315, Antigonus Monophthalmus forced Seleucus to flee to the court of Ptolemy I of Egypt, and in 312, Seleucus aided Ptolemy to victory over Antigonus' son, Demetrius Poliorcetes, at Gaza. In return, Ptolemy equipped Seleucus with a small force, with which he was able to seize Babylonia, receiving significant support from the Babylonian population. Antigonus' officers were forced to withdraw into the citadel of Babylon because of this popular outburst. Diodorus' account may incorporate elements of Seleucus' propaganda, but Seleucus' ultimate success suggests that some of this support was a reality (Briant, 1990: 56).

Seleucus then had to face Antigonus, who had just concluded a peace treaty (311) with his major rivals, Ptolemy, Cassander and Lysimachus, so that he was now free to turn his attention eastwards. The account of the conflict between Seleucus and Antigonus' son, Demetrius, has not survived in the classical texts, but a Babylonian chronicle gives an insight into the devastating effects and length of the war.⁴⁰ In 309, Demetrius departed from Babylonia and marched to Syria and then on to Asia Minor, leaving behind his general, Archelaus, in command of Babylon.⁴¹ Seleucus launched a campaign of reconquest against Archelaus, which was victorious,⁴² probably allowing him to extend his rule over northern Mesopotamia.

Cassander killed the last member of the Argead dynasty, Alexander IV (c.310) (Diod. Sic. 19.105), signalling the establishment of new royal dynasties.⁴³ Within a few years of the death of Alexander the IV, the Successors assumed the royal diadem for themselves on the basis of their military achievements and popular support. In 306, Ptolemy's fleet was defeated off the coast of Cyprus by Demetrius Poliorcetes, which encouraged his father and himself to assume the royal title (Plut. *Vit. Demetr.* 16-17. also see, Diod. Sic. 20.47-53, Polyaeus, *Strat.* 4.7.7). Soon after, the rest of the Successors followed the example set

⁴⁰ ABC 10 rev. 15-25; Diod. Sic. 19.100.5-7; Plut. *Vit. Demetr.* 7.2; also a possible reference to the war can be found in Sachs and Hunger 1988, no. -309, 1,14; see Bosworth, 2002: 21, 217 and 244; Billows, 1990: 141-2. Also, Polyaeus, *Strat.* (4.9.1) reports a decisive victory by Seleucus over Antigonus, possibly towards the end of the campaign.

⁴¹ Diod. Sic. 19.100.7; Plut. *Vit. Demetr.* 7.2-3; ABC 10 rev. 30-31.

⁴² ABC 10 rev. lines 34-41.

⁴³ Diod. Sic. 20.53.2-4; Plut. *Vit. Demetr.* 17-18, Just. *Epit.* 15.2.10. App. *Syr.* 54. Austin 36.

by Demetrius and Antigonus. Ptolemy appears to have taken the royal diadem following his defence of Egypt against the invasion forces of Antigonus and Demetrius in 305 (Diod. Sic. 20.76.6), while Seleucus took the royal title in 305/4 as a result of his campaigning in the Upper Satrapies.⁴⁴

It is not known precisely when the Eastern provinces were incorporated. In a peace treaty (c. 305) (App. *Syr.* 55; Strabo, 15.2.9; Just. *Epit.* 15.4.21), the Upper Indus, Gandhara and at least parts of Paropamisadae, Arachosia and Gedrosia, were ceded to Chandragupta, founder of the Mauryan empire, and Seleucus received (possibly) 500 war-elephants in exchange (Strabo 15.2.9; 16.2.10; Plut. *Vit. Alex.* 62).⁴⁵ These war elephants proved to be the decisive factor at the battle of Ipsus (301), as a result of which they appear on the coins of Seleucus, struck at the Eastern mints in Bactria, Susa and Seleucia-Tigris (Polyaenus, *Strat.* 4.9.3; Krittr, 1996).

Strengthened by the resources of both his recent acquisitions in the East and the elephants, Seleucus moved west to join the coalition of Lysimachus, Cassander and Ptolemy “compelled by the fears each had” because Antigonus “undertook to bring unjustly into his own hands the kingdoms of all the others” (Diod. Sic. 21.1.4a). In 301, Antigonus and Demetrius were defeated by the grand coalition of kings at the decisive battle of Ipsus. Antigonus was killed on the battlefield while Demetrius fled with a small number of troops. This victory resulted in Seleucus obtaining northern Syria as his prize. Coele-Syria (i.e. Southern Syria, Palestine and Phoenicia) should also have been part of the fruits of victory, but Ptolemy I had pre-emptively occupied the region and Seleucus was reluctant to dispute it then ‘because of their friendship’; this would lead to conflicts between Seleucid and Ptolemaic kings later, which lasted for almost two centuries (Polyb. 5.67).

In the 290s, Seleucus made a (temporary) alliance with Demetrius Poliorcetes, cemented by the marriage of Seleucus to Stratonice, the daughter of Demetrius (Plut. *Vit. Demetr.* 32-3; App. *Syr.* 59-62). This alliance was of benefit to Seleucus because “Lysimachus had

⁴⁴ Sachs and Wiseman, 1954: 203 and 205, obv. 6-7; *Austin* 138.

⁴⁵ also see Tarn 1940; cf. Cary 1951, 41 n. 1; Scullard 1974, 96ff. and 269 n. 46; Hornblower, 1981: 110-1.

just married himself to one daughter of King Ptolemy and his son Agathocles to another” (Plut. *Vit. Demetr.* 31). Demetrius was hostile towards both Ptolemy and Lysimachus as Ptolemy still coveted Cyprus, which was in the possession of Demetrius, while Demetrius still had ambitions in Asia Minor against Lysimachus. From the marriage between Seleucus and Stratonice, Demetrius gained the region of Cilicia (Will, 1984: 104). Not long after, Seleucus gave Stratonice to be the wife of his son, Antiochus, who governed in the Upper satrapies. One reason may have been that, as Demetrius had fled from Macedonia with the intention of seeking a kingdom in the East based on Media and the Upper Satrapies, it removed her to a safe distance (Plut. *Vit. Demetr.* 46; Sherwin-White and Kuhrt, 1993: 25). The subsequent conflict between Seleucus and Demetrius ended with the defeat and capture of Demetrius at Cyrrhescia in Syria (286/5) (Plut. *Vit. Demetr.* 46-8; Bar Kochva, 1976: 111-116). Demetrius, held in captivity, allegedly died of drink in 283.

With the removal of Demetrius from the military and political stage, Seleucus had to contend against one of his former allies, Lysimachus, whose territories included Macedonia, Thrace and much of western Asia Minor. Seleucus occupied Cilicia *c.*294 and then proceeded to seize most of Asia Minor following his victory over, and death of, Lysimachus at Corupedium in 281. Crossing the Hellespont, with the aim of reconquering Macedon, Seleucus campaigned in the Thracian Chersonesus (281), only to be assassinated by Ptolemy Ceraunus (Thunderbolt), the refugee son of Ptolemy I and Eurydice (*ABC.* 12, rev. 1-3; see Sherwin-White, 1983: 267-8). At the moment of his death in August or September 281 (Sachs and Wiseman, 1954: 203; 205), the Seleucid Empire had reached its greatest extent, incorporating western Asia Minor, the northern parts of Syria and Mesopotamia, the southern parts of Cappadocia and Armenia, along with the Eastern provinces from his campaign in *c.* 307-302.⁴⁶

In the 290s Seleucus had appointed Antiochus co-regent and sent him to govern the provinces of Upper Asia (Plut. *Vit. Demetr.* 38). He may have lived in Bactria⁴⁷ (Balkh or

⁴⁶ On the Eastern provinces acquired by Seleucus, see App. *Syr.* 55.

⁴⁷ Strabo, 16.1.5; Will, (i) 1979: 267ff.

Ai Khanoum) for some time, as implied by a coin series bearing the names of both Antiochus and Seleucus, minted at Bactra.⁴⁸ This co-regency not only allowed Antiochus to consolidate the Upper Satrapies, but also strengthened the succession (Sherwin-White and Kuhrt, 1993: 24). A Babylonian chronicle fragment (*ABC 11*) referring to Antiochus (I) as crown prince, establishes an institutional connection with a practice used by the Neo-Assyrians, Neo-Babylonians and the Achaemenids, to be distinguished from his later role as co-regent. Astronomical diaries show that both Antiochus (I) and Seleucus I are referred to as king as early as 18th November 294. (Oelsner, 1986: 271 (cuneiform tablet, *BM 109941*)).⁴⁹ It would appear that the presence of Seleucus was needed in the west to deal with the problems of Demetrius, Lysimachus and Ptolemy, which could explain the appointment of Antiochus to the upper regions. Antiochus' maternal background, being the son of Apame, the daughter of the Sogdian chieftain Spitamenes,⁵⁰ placed him in a good position to rule over both the Graeco-Macedonians as well as the peoples of Central Asia.⁵¹ The status of Antiochus as the intended successor can also be deduced from Seleucus' actions when handing over Stratonice, his own wife, to be his queen (Sherwin-White and Kuhrt, 1991).

Seleucus and Antiochus consolidated their rule by a prolific programme of city foundations. The greatest of these foundations, Seleucia-Tigris, 52½ km away from Babylon, was founded as a capital *c.*306/305⁵² at the time when he took the royal title for himself. The Syrian tetrapolis of Antioch,⁵³ Seleucia-Pieria, Laodicea and Apamea was created after 301 along with numerous other foundations over the empire (Strabo, 16.2.4-7; 8-10). The Seleucid empire was considered retrospectively to have been founded in 311/10, with the reconquest by Seleucus Nicator of Babylonia. The Seleucid Era follows the Babylonian calendar, commencing on 1 Nisan (April), so that year one of the Seleucid

⁴⁸ Newell, 1978: 231-6; Briant, 1990: 49; Bernard, 1996a: 90; Bernard, 1985: 36-40.

⁴⁹ Originally the date of the co-regency was thought to be 291/0 as an Astronomical Diary refers to Seleucus I as sole ruler, but this could be the result of an abbreviation (Sachs and Hunger, 1988: No -292; Kuhrt and Sherwin-White, 1994: 323). The Astronomical Diary recorded by Oelsner (1986: 271) confirms that the co-regency occurred earlier in 294.

⁵⁰ Arr. *Anab.* 7.4.6; Plut. *Vit. Demetr.* 31.

⁵¹ Wolski, 1984: 10-11; Bernard, 1985, 38.

⁵² Sherwin-White, 1983: 270; Invernizzi, 1993: 235; *Suse*: 31, 297.

⁵³ Near the site of Antigonea, the city founded by Antigonus, giving him access to the Mediterranean and Asia Minor (Diod. Sic. 20.47.5).

era falls into 311/310.⁵⁴ Unique among the Hellenistic kingdoms was the introduction by Antiochus I, of a dynastic era, continuing the regnal calendar of his father instead of starting a new one for himself, which helped to consolidate his dynastic right (Sherwin-White and Kuhrt, 1994: 324; Sherwin-White and Kuhrt, 1993: 27).

3.3 Anatolia and the Levant

A variety of inscriptions and literary sources make it possible to follow some, but not all, of the political history of the cities and regions of Asia Minor during the third century. The available evidence fitfully allows an insight into the fortunes of many regions, illuminating the emergence and expansion of the Attalid dynasty, the establishment of the independent kingdoms of Bithynia and Pontus along the northern coastline of Anatolia, and the shifting fortunes of Heracleia Pontica, Miletus, Ephesus and Sardis. From this a picture of the instability in the region can be pieced together.

In the last years of Seleucus I, his *dioiketes* (financial officer) for the ‘cities of Phrygia and along the Black Sea’ reported that Heracleia was hostile towards Seleucus (Memnon, 7.1). An inscription from the Pisidian city of Aspendus shows that it was ruled by Ptolemy I of Egypt, and also refers to Pisidian, Pamphylian, Lycian, Cretan and some unidentified Greek troops enrolled in the royal army, indicating the extent of Ptolemaic involvement in southern Asia Minor by Ptolemy I (*SEG* 17.639; also see Kosmetatou, 1997: 20). Following Mithridates I of Pontus’ military victory over Seleucus’ general, Diodorus (c. 281) (*Trog. Prol.* 17), or as a result of the death of Lysimachus or Seleucus,⁵⁵ an issue of royal Pontic gold staters with the head of Athena on the obverse, and on the reverse a standing Nike with the legend “of Mithridates King,” were minted as a clear declaration of independence.⁵⁶ According to Strabo (12.1.4), “the Macedonians willingly allowed one part of the country, but unwillingly the other, to change to kingdoms instead of satrapies”; that is, the change of Pontus from satrapy to kingdom is indicated by the minting of gold

⁵⁴ Sachs and Wiseman, 1954: 204; *Austin* 138.

⁵⁵ For the adoption of kingship following a military victory, see Sherwin-White and Kuhrt, 1993: 32 and Heinen, 1984: 426.

⁵⁶ McGing, 1986: 19; Heinen, 1984: 426; Bevan, 1902 (i): 153.

coins with the legend of a king, while Cappadocia did not produce gold coins as it was a satrapy of the Seleucid kingdom.⁵⁷

The assassination of Seleucus on the periphery of the empire coinciding with its only very recent acquisition led to Antiochus' struggle to recover western Asia Minor over a period of a decade, before he was able to consolidate his rule in the region. The vast extent of the empire and the hard fought campaigns undertaken by Antiochus were understood by Memnon (9.1)⁵⁸ when he described Antiochus' attempt at restoration as leading to recovery, "not in its entirety, with difficulty and only by many wars."

3.3.1 Philetaerus of Pergamum

Seleucid power in Asia Minor needs to be seen within the context of virtually incessant struggles for pre-eminence between the Ptolemies and the Seleucids. Inextricably bound up in these struggles was the Attalid dynasty of Pergamum in western Asia Minor. Lysimachus had entrusted his treasury of 9,000 talents to his financial administrator, Philetaerus, who was based in the city of Pergamum. In 283,⁵⁹ Philetaerus acknowledged the superior strength of Seleucus I by defecting to him. Two years later Lysimachus was defeated and killed at Corupedium. Following the death of Seleucus I in 281, Philetaerus' loyalty towards the Seleucid dynasty was manifested by ransoming the body of Seleucus I from Ptolemy Ceraunus. Once Philetaerus had acquired it, he cremated the remains and sent the ashes to his son Antiochus I (App. *Syr.* 63). As well as Philetaerus of Pergamum's acknowledgement of Seleucid authority during the turbulent years after the assassination of Seleucus I, the colonists of Lemnos erected temples to Antiochus and his father (Bevan, 1902 (i): 130), and the Ilians offered prayers and sacrifices on the accession of Antiochus I (Austin, 139).

⁵⁷ But McGing (1986: 20) warns that the attribution of these gold coins to Mithridates I cannot be confirmed.

⁵⁸ also see Bevan, 1902 (i): 131; Sherwin-White and Kuhrt, 1993: 30.

⁵⁹ Calculated by examining the chronology of the Attalid dynasts, as provided by Strabo (13.4.1-2, 623-4); see Allen (1983: 9-11).

Between c.279-274, Philetaerus issued a series of coins portraying Alexander the Great, but with the legend of Seleucus I. Mørkholm (1991: 128) thinks that this series of Alexander type coins was intended to show Philetaerus' acknowledgment of Seleucid suzerainty, while not displaying any loyalty to Antiochus I, whose portrait or legend does not appear on any Pergamene coinage. From c.274, Philetaerus minted coins bearing his own name while still depicting the head of Seleucus I, reflecting a discreet statement of political independence from the Seleucids, which may have been as a consequence of "Attalid successes against the Gauls."⁶⁰ McShane (1964: 33) believes that the marriage alliance between Attalus, the nephew of Philetaerus,⁶¹ and the niece of Antiochus I, indicates that Philetaerus would have been regarded as "more of an independent ally than a subject." There is no evidence of Philetaerus acquiring any possessions outside of Pergamum and he is described by Strabo (13.4.1-2) merely as "master of Pergamum and its wealth."

3.3.2 *The Syrian War of Succession (c. 280/279)*

Upon hearing of the death of his father, Antiochus, who was then in the Eastern provinces of the Seleucid empire, hurried westwards, but was prevented from conducting military operations against Ceraunus who was already at war with Antigonus Gonatas⁶² because of a revolt in Syria.⁶³ Taking advantage of the upheavals within the Seleucid kingdom, Ptolemy II managed to acquire overseas possessions in Western and Southern Asia Minor,⁶⁴ in a conflict known today as the Syrian War of Succession (c. 280/279).⁶⁵ The conflict between Antiochus I and Ceraunus did not last long as both had more pressing problems to deal with (Trog. *Prol.* 17; Just. *Epit.* 24.1). Ptolemy II also took over many of

⁶⁰ McShane, 1964: 39; also see Heinen, 1984: 427.

⁶¹ Despite Strabo (13.4.2 (624)) stating that Attalus father of Attalus I was the brother of Philetaerus, Hanson (1971: 26 n. 2) argues that he must have been his nephew; *Austin*, 193.

⁶² For Ceraunus' operations against Antigonus Gonatas, see Just. *Epit.* 17.2.10; 24.1.8; Trog. *Prol.* 17.

⁶³ For the revolt in Syria, see Sherwin-White and Kuhrt, 1993: 29; Heinen, 1984: 413; *OGIS* 219, *Austin* 139.

⁶⁴ An inscription (*Burstein* 25) shows Antiochus I as *stephanophoros* of Miletus in 280/79 and Ptolemy II in the following year, suggesting a change of control. The recovery of Miletus by Antiochus I is suggested in his giving of a *stoa* to the city (*Austin* 119); also see Holbl, 2000: 38.

⁶⁵ This period is clouded to the point where Ager (2003: 37) doubts the existence of the Syrian War of Succession, believing it to be a fabrication and an "ephemeral non-event." Indeed, the date of the inscription from Ilium (*OGIS* 219, *Austin* 139) is uncertain with Piejko (1991) arguing for the inscription to be dated to the reign of Antiochus III. More recently, Ma (1999:

the Greek islands and mainland coastal cities of Asia Minor, previously under the control of Lysimachus.⁶⁶ Although Ptolemy II may have been able to extend Ptolemaic possessions in western and southern Asia Minor, this was undermined by Antiochus I's successes, signalled by the establishment of Sardis⁶⁷ as his western residence and centre of Seleucid authority (see Appendix 1; Heinen, 1984: 415). This conflict may have ended with a formal peace, leaving Antiochus in control of much of the interior of Asia Minor.

3.3.3 The First Syrian War (274-271)

Within the Ptolemaic empire, Magas, the governor of Cyrene, had declared himself independent from his half-brother, Ptolemy Philadelphus.⁶⁸ Magas was married to Apame, the daughter of Antiochus I, and “persuaded Antiochus to break the treaty which his father Seleucus had made with Ptolemy and to attack Egypt” (Paus. 1.7.3). The First Syrian War (274-271)⁶⁹ began with the forces of Antiochus I and Magas of Cyrene aligned against those of Ptolemy II, but a nomadic rising forced Magas to abandon any attempt of invading Egypt (Paus. 1.7.2).

A Babylonian Astronomical diary (see Appendix 1) provides us with the only comprehensive account concerning the First Syrian War between 7th October 274 and 1st April 273. The document (our only reliable source) commences with Antiochus I leaving Sardis (275/4) in order to confront the Egyptian forces, reported to have invaded Syria. The satrap of Babylonia sends supplies as well as forwarding 20 elephants despatched from the satrap of Bactria to Antiochus in Syria. Babylonia seems to have suffered at this time, whether as a result of the war requisition is unclear. The document also indicates an Egyptian retreat in 274/3. The presence of Antiochus I in Syria is also attested by another diary from 271/270 (Sachs and Hunger, 1989: No. –270, Rev' 18'). Van der Spek (1993a:

254-9) has argued that the inscription should be dated to the reign of Antiochus I.

⁶⁶ Austin 218 and *Burstein* 25. also see Sherwin-White and Kuhrt, 1993: 34.

⁶⁷ see Appendix 1: Rev 29'.

⁶⁸ This occurred after the Galatian invasion of Asia Minor, as Ptolemy II had managed to recruit some Galatian mercenaries.

⁶⁹ Tarn (1926) believed that the First Syrian War lasted from 276-1, while Otto (1928: 1-29) argues for the period 274-1. The Babylonian Astronomical Diary entry covers the years 275/4-274/3 (see Appendix 1).

99) argues that a confusing line in the diary (Rev. 38.) could be interpreted as a war tax in preparation for war against Egypt.

3.3.4 The Northern League and the arrival of the Galatians in Asia

In 281, the king of Bithynia, Zipoetes, invaded and devastated the lands of Heracleia Pontica (Memnon, 6.3). In response, the city of Heracleia sent embassies (281) seeking help from Byzantium, Chalcedon and Mithridates of Pontus (Memnon, 7.2), which was the beginning of the “Northern League,” consisting of Byzantium, Chalcedon, Heracleia, Tieium and Cierus, and as an ally, Mithridates I of Pontus. In 280, Heracleia assisted Hermogenes of Aspendus, the lieutenant of Antiochus’ general Patrocles, enabling him to attack Bithynia on the north coast of Asia Minor, where he was defeated and killed by Zipoetes (Memnon, 9.2) As a result of the defeat of Hermogenes, Antiochus I invaded Bithynia, campaigning against Zipoetes’ successor, Nicomedes I. Unable to fight Antiochus alone, Nicomedes made an alliance with Heracleia (Memnon, 9.3-4), becoming a member of the “Northern League” and it appears that Byzantium, an ally of Nicomedes I, followed suit as Heracleia assisted Byzantium in 279/8 while it was being besieged by the Galatians (Memnon, 11.1). The war between Antiochus I and the “Northern League” started with an indecisive naval encounter in the Bosphorus. The relationship between Antiochus I and Antigonus Gonatas worsened to such a level that Antigonus joined with the “Northern League” against Antiochus (Memnon, 18; Trog. *Prol.* 24). Nothing further is known of this conflict in northwestern Asia Minor, but Antigonus and the “Northern League” made their peace with Antiochus prior to the Galatians arriving in Asia Minor (278/277).⁷⁰

In Macedon, Ptolemy Ceraunus was defeated while fighting the Galatians (Just. *Epit.* 25.2.8), who swept down from the north in 280/279 overrunning Macedon and Thrace

⁷⁰ For the chronological problems in accommodating so many events in the first few years of Antiochus’ reign, see Bevan, 1902 (i), Appendix F: 324.

before being repulsed by the Greeks at the sanctuary of Delphi in 279. One group of Galatians crossed over into Asia Minor in 278/7 at the invitation of Nicomedes of Bithynia to fight the pretender, Zipoetes. The Galatians “filled the whole of Asia like a swarm” (Just. *Epit.* 25.2.8) and terrorised the Greek cities and countryside of Asia Minor, extracting a tribute from them (Memnon, 11).⁷¹

Antiochus imposed a tax (the *Galatikon*)⁷² for the war against the Galatians and acquired the cognomen “saviour” (*Soter*) because “he drove out the Galatians who invaded Asia” (App. *Syr.* 65). But the Galatians were not driven out of Asia. Antiochus’ victory over the Galatians at the ‘Elephant battle’ (c. 269) allowed him to confine them to a region within the Halys area.⁷³

3.3.5 The Chremonidean War (267-261)

The very incomplete sources give the impression that the following decade (260s) was a time of relative peace in the Seleucid kingdom, allowing time for Antiochus I to consolidate his empire while Antigonos and Ptolemy II became embroiled in the Chremonidean War (267-261) in Greece and the Aegean islands. Sherwin-White and Kuhrt (1993: 36) propose that Antiochus was not drawn into this war as a major player because his empire was “based on the Middle East” and that Greece and the Aegean were peripheral to his concerns. Ptolemy II had allied himself with Athens and Sparta against the growing Macedonian influence of Antigonos Gonatas in Greece. There is a good possibility that Antiochus I took advantage of Ptolemy’s preoccupation in the war against Antigonos to make his own gains in Asia Minor. In 265, the Egyptian fleet withdrew its support for Athens and Sparta against Antigonos Gonatas following the death of the Spartan king, Areus, in a battle at Corinth and the commencement of the Macedonian siege of Athens.

⁷¹ An inscription from Priene honours a citizen named Sotas for his actions against the Galatians (*OGIS* 765; *Burstein* 17); *Austin* 140.

⁷² *OGIS* 223 (*Burstein* 23); Spek, R.J. van der, 1993b: 68; Sherwin-White and Kuhrt, 1993: 34.

⁷³ Lucian, *Zeuxis* 8-11; App. *Syr.* 65. There is considerable dispute over the location and date of this battle - see Bar-Kochva, 1973: 5, who dates it to April 272 and Ma, 1999: 34, who tentatively dates the battle to c. 269, while Heinen (1984: 416)

While Antigonus Gonatas and Ptolemy II were involved in the Chremonidean War, Antiochus I decided to confront the growing influence of the Attalid dynasty, Eumenes I (263-241), the successor, nephew and adopted son of Philetaerus who is described by Strabo (13.4.2) as the “sovereign of the places round about.”⁷⁴ In 263/2,⁷⁵ Antiochus I was defeated by Eumenes in a battle near Sardis (Strabo, 13.4.1-2; *Austin* 193). The break with Seleucid authority is indicated by Eumenes’ minting of coins replacing the portrait of Seleucus’ head with that of Philetaerus wearing a diadem, although Eumenes I never adopted the title of “king.”⁷⁶

3.3.6 The Second Syrian War (260-253)

The Egyptian fleet under the command of Ptolemy, the son and co-regent of Ptolemy II,⁷⁷ began military operations against the cities along the Ionian coast, capturing Ephesus and probably other smaller cities (262/1), which became the preliminary stages of the Second Syrian War (260-253) against Antiochus II, who had recently (1/2.6.261) succeeded to the throne (Parker and Dubberstein, 1956: 21). The death of Antiochus I presented an opportunity for Ptolemy II to attack the Seleucids, and the war was fought in both Syria and Asia Minor. Ptolemy II lost Ephesus and Miletus when they both revolted; Ephesus under the leadership of Ptolemy ‘the Son’ and co-regent of Ptolemy II,⁷⁸ who allied himself with Timarchus, an Aetolian, who became tyrant of Miletus (Trog. *Prol.* 26; Heinen, 1984: 418-419). Antiochus II appears to have been largely successful in the face of the Ptolemaic attack, recovering much of coastal Asia Minor,⁷⁹ including Miletus in 259/8 (App. *Syr.* 65) as well as Samos⁸⁰ and Ephesus around the same time. As a result of the

suggests a date of either *c.*275 or *c.*270. Meanwhile, Ager (2003: 37) favours a date of *c.* 270, or a little later.

⁷⁴ Epigraphic evidence for Eumenes as “sovereign of the places round about” can be found in his assumption of direct control of the city of Pitane, see Allen, 1983: 21.

⁷⁵ Eumenes I came to power in 263, whereas Antiochus I died in 261 - see Allen (1983: 20-1) for the date of the battle between Eumenes I and Antiochus I.

⁷⁶ Mørkholm, 1991: 128-9; Heinen, 1984: 428; McShane, 1964: 42.

⁷⁷ Trog *Prol.* 26. *RC* 14 - Ptolemy, the son of Ptolemy II, was in command of the Egyptian fleet attacking the Ionian coastline.

⁷⁸ On Ptolemy ‘the son’, see Ager (2003: 42).

⁷⁹ Antiochus II’s successful Carian campaign resulted in the capture of Alabanda/Antiocheia, Alinda, Mylasa, Bargylia and the foundation of Stratoniceia. He may also have acquired Iasus and Heraclea under Latmus (Ma, 1999: 42).

⁸⁰ *SEG* 1.366; Timarchus killed the Ptolemaic general at Samos – Frontinus, *Str.* 3.2.11.

liberation of Miletus the citizens pronounced Antiochus “God” (Theos) (App. *Syr.* 65) while Ephesus became a Seleucid royal base.⁸¹ After the defeat of Ptolemy’s fleet near Cos (255) by Antigonos Gonatus,⁸² Antiochus II recovered all of Ionia⁸³ as well as parts of Pamphylia and Cilicia, reaching as far as Byzantium.⁸⁴ Ager (2003: 41) has shown that Rhodes may have been allied with Antiochus II during the Second Syrian War, as recorded by the literary sources (Frontin. *Str.* 3.9.10; Polyaeus, *Strat.* 5.18) while an inscription records a war between Rhodes and Ptolemy II (*Burstein* 46).

Some years before the death of Antiochus II, a peace was made with Ptolemy II, which was cemented by the marriage of Berenice, daughter of Ptolemy II, to Antiochus II (252).⁸⁵ Early in 246 Ptolemy II died and by July/August of the same year (Sachs and Wiseman, 1954: 206) Antiochus II had died in suspicious circumstances at the royal residence of Ephesus. Present at this deathbed was his former wife, Laodice, who claimed that Antiochus had appointed one of their two sons, Seleucus (II), as his successor (App. *Syr.* 65; Phylarchus in Athenaeus 13.593c-d). The foundation for dynastic strife was set in motion with the birth of a son from the marriage of Antiochus II and Berenice.

3.3.7 The Third Syrian War (246-241)

Following the deaths of both Ptolemy II and Antiochus II in 246, Seleucus II (*r.* 246-225) succeeded his father to the throne, although he faced the immediate and serious threat of a dynastic conflict with a rival claimant to the throne (see above, 3.3.6). Berenice appealed to her brother, Ptolemy III, providing an opportunity for his intervention, which led to the outbreak of the “Third Syrian War” between 246 and 241, also known as the Laodicean War.⁸⁶

⁸¹ Frontin. *Str.* 3.9.10; Phylarchus in Athenaeus 13. 593b; Heinen, 1984: 418-419; Bevan, 1902 (i): 175.

⁸² Plut. *Mor.* 183C, 545B; Ath. 5. 209e, 8.334a.; see Holbl (2000: 44) for the date of 255.

⁸³ Coins of Antiochus II were minted in Smyrna, Phocaea, Cyme, Ephesus, Aegae, Myrina, Lampsacus, Abydos, Ilium, and Alexandria-Troas. Holbl (2000:44) notes that epigraphic evidence attests that Ephesus was taken by 254/3.

⁸⁴ Referred to by Theocritus (17.88) - these regions are no longer listed as possessions inherited by Ptolemy III – *OGIS* 54; also see, Ma (1999:41-2). Also, there is a possibility that Samothrace was captured (Welles, *RC*, 18: line 30).

⁸⁵ Ptolemy II accompanies Berenice to Pelusium in the spring of 252, having brought great quantities of silver and gold as a dowry, possibly as an indemnity marking the end of the Second Syrian War - Porph. *FGrH.* 260F 43.

⁸⁶ On the Third Syrian War, see the Gurob papyrus (*FGrH.* 160) (*Austin*, 220); *OGIS* 54 (*Austin*, 221); *OGIS* 56 (*Austin*, 222);

Ptolemy III made spectacular gains in Asia Minor securing Cilicia, Pamphylia, and many cities in Ionia, the Hellespont and Thrace.⁸⁷ Sophron, the Seleucid *strategos* for Ephesus, managed to incur the displeasure of Laodice (Ath. 13.593c) who was holding court away from Ephesus, possibly at Sardis. Sophron next appears as the commander of a Ptolemaic fleet (Trog. *Prol.* 27) and may also have been involved in the capture of the city by Ptolemaic forces a few years later, as attested by the presence of a Ptolemaic garrison. Ephesus remained an important naval base for Ptolemaic influence and control of the Aegean until 197. Samos appears to have become Ptolemaic once again, as attested by an inscription dated to c. 246-243 (*Austin* 113).

Ptolemy III also made inroads into the Seleucid heartland of Syria and Mesopotamia, capturing Seleucia-Pieria and even Antioch for a short period, reaching as far as the Euphrates.⁸⁸ Seleucus II managed to regain what he had lost during the early phase of the war, with the exception of the area around Seleucia-Pieria, which was held by the Ptolemies down to 218.⁸⁹

Ptolemy III recorded the initial stages of the “Third Syrian War” in a papyrus discovered at Gurob. The account starts with Berenice’s dispatch of a naval expedition to Cilicia, capturing the town of Soloi with the assistance of the citizens. The Seleucid *strategos* of Cilicia, Aribazus, had planned to send 1,500 talents of silver from Soloi to Laodice in Ephesus, but this was also seized with the capture of Soloi, and then transported to Berenice in Seleucia-Pieria. While attempting to escape across the Taurus to Ephesus, Aribazus was beheaded by the local population. Ptolemy then arrived in Seleucia-Pieria to popular acclaim (The Gurob papyrus (*FGrH.* 160) - *Austin* 220; App. *Syr.* 65).

Just. *Epit.* 27.

⁸⁷ *OGIS* 54, lines 14-15 (*Austin* 221); Will (i) 1979: 259-61.

⁸⁸ Ptolemy III led a fleet to Seleucia-Pieria, and then marched on Antioch; Gurob papyrus (*FGrH.* 160) (*Austin* 220); *OGIS* 54, lines 14-20 (*Austin* 221).

⁸⁹ Seleucus II recognized as ruler in Babylon by July, 245 – Hauben, 1990:32. Capture of Seleucia-Pieria by Ptolemy III - Polyb. 5.58.10.

Moving quickly to Antioch, Ptolemy received an even more enthusiastic welcome, including the presence of a number of Seleucid satraps, possibly summoned by Berenice. The papyrus goes on to say that Ptolemy went to his sister, Berenice, who ancient authors assert, had already been murdered by the friends of Laodice and Seleucus II, along with Berenice's child, whose name has not been recorded (Just. *Epit.* 27.1.7; Polyaeus, *Strat.* 8.50). This may be true, as Berenice was not present in the welcome party for Ptolemy III at Antioch. He may have concealed the deaths of Berenice and her child so that he could take up official duties on their behalf, thereby establishing himself in power.

According to Polyaeus (8.50), Ptolemy succeeded in gaining control over the regions from the Taurus to India without having to fight a single battle. The Adulis inscription (*OGIS* 54), a propagandist account of the conquests of Ptolemy III, claims that he reached as far east as Bactria. But any attempted Eastern expedition had to be aborted because "he had been recalled to Egypt by a domestic rebellion" (Just. *Epit.* 27.1.9; also see, Porph. *FGrH.* 260F 43). That Ptolemy did start on an Eastern expedition and reached as far as Mesopotamia is attested by Jerome (*Commentary on Daniel*, 11.8).

His power in the region was sufficiently strong enough to leave behind Antiochus as governor of Cilicia and Xanthippus as governor of the provinces beyond the Euphrates,⁹⁰ and to return to Egypt, goods supposedly looted by the Persians.⁹¹ The Adulis inscription lists Cilicia, Pamphylia, Ionia, the Hellespont and Thrace as having been acquired and even more specifically as having been won back during the Third Syrian War. With the exception of Pamphylia, Ptolemy III managed to hold on to all of these coastal acquisitions for the rest of his reign.

From his base in western Asia Minor, Seleucus was able to launch a counter-offensive assisted by the uprising in Egypt and eventually recover the lost provinces in Asia Minor. He crossed the Taurus mountains and successfully overcame those forces left behind by

⁹⁰ Jerome (*Commentary on Daniel*, 11.7-9) records "Ciliciam autem amico suo Antiocho gubernandam tradidit et Xanthippo alteri duci provincias trans Euphraten."

⁹¹ The Adulis inscription (*OGIS* 54); *OGIS* 55; the Canopus decree (*OGIS* 56); Jerome, *Commentary on Daniel*, 11.8.

Ptolemy. In his reconquest of northern Syria, Justin (27.2.1-3) records that Seleucus II assembled a large fleet to recover the coastal cities, which had revolted from him. The fleet was lost in a storm and Seleucus barely escaped with his own life. Nevertheless, the coastal cities which had defected from him began to, “put themselves under his authority once more” (Just. *Epit.* 27.2.3). According to Justin (27.2.4) Seleucus II even attempted an attack on Egypt, as he “assumed he could match Ptolemy’s strength and attacked him.” But he was defeated and fled towards Antioch “with no more of a retinue than he had enjoyed after his shipwreck” (Just. *Epit.* 27.2.5). In order to continue the war against Ptolemy III, Seleucus had had to pay a price, for he needed financial support to recruit mercenaries. Therefore, he had to turn to his younger brother, Antiochus Hierax, “offering as remuneration for his aid the portion of Asia within the boundaries of the Taurus range” (Just. *Epit.* 27.2.6).⁹²

Toward the end of the war (242/1) there was some fighting near Damascus, the outcome of which is unclear (Porph. *FGrH.* 260F 32.8). As well as having to cope with the uprising in Egypt, Ptolemy III now had to take into account the alliance between Seleucus II and Antiochus Hierax, and in order “to avoid fighting both at the same time, he made a ten-year peace treaty [in 241] with Seleucus” (Just. *Epit.* 27.2.9). Polybius (5.58.10) records that the most significant loss for Seleucus II in the Third Syrian War was Seleucia-Pieria, the port of Antioch.

3.3.8 The War of the Brothers (240/39- c. 237)

By 240/39 Antiochus Hierax (‘the Hawk’, 246-226) was claiming authority over Asia Minor, culminating in the so-called War of the Brothers (240/39- c. 237), which destabilised Seleucid authority in Asia Minor for years. At the same time, Attalus of Pergamum⁹³ imposed his authority on Seleucid possessions in western Asia Minor and took the important step of assuming the royal title between 238-35,⁹⁴ following his victory

⁹² i.e. co-ruler over cis-Tauric Asia Minor.

⁹³ Following the death of Eumenes I in 241, his adopted son Attalus I came to power.

⁹⁴ On Attalus’s assumption of the royal title, see Allen, 1983: 195-9.

over the Galatians in Mysia.⁹⁵ Seleucus marched into Asia Minor where his brother at the battle of Ancyra (239) defeated him.⁹⁶ The extent of Hierax's authority following his victory can be observed in the striking of his own coinage found in the Troad, Ilium, Alexandria-Troas, Abydus, Lampsacus, Parium, Lysimacheia and Sardis (Ma, 1999: 45, n.67). The two brothers reached some kind of peace prior to 236 (Just. *Epit.* 27.2.6-7).⁹⁷ This allowed Antiochus Hierax to concentrate his forces against Attalus I of Pergamum in an attempt to reimpose Seleucid control on Asia Minor, while Seleucus II campaigned against the Parthians in the East.

Hierax made use of a large number of Galatian mercenaries in his campaign against Attalus I, but was nevertheless defeated by him in a series of three battles.⁹⁸ Further battles between Hierax and Attalus I, followed by an attempted invasion of Mesopotamia (Just. *Epit.* 27.3.3-7; Lerner, 1999: 30) resulted in repeated defeats for Hierax, who was eventually forced to flee to Ptolemaic territory (Just. *Epit.* 27.3.9-11; Trog. *Prol.* 27).⁹⁹ Here, he was held captive but managed to escape, only to be killed in Thrace (227) (Polyb. 5.74.4; Trog. *Prol.* 27; Justin, *Epit.* 27.3.11).

The situation in Asia Minor was further upset by the involvement of Antigonos Doseon, guardian of the future Macedonian king, Philip V, who was at this stage a minor. Antigonos launched a campaign into Caria in the Spring or Summer of 227, establishing a Macedonian influence in south-western Asia Minor (Trog. *Prol.* 28; Polyb. 20.5.11).¹⁰⁰ The Seleucid satrap of Caria, Olympichus, appears to have passed into the service of Antigonos. An inscription records the city of Priene acknowledging Macedonian authority about the time of Antigonos' Carian campaign, as it mentions both "king Antigonos" and "the heir to the kingdom, Phi...", which must be a reference to Philip (V) (*I Priene* 37,

⁹⁵ Polyb. 18. 41.7-8; Strabo 13.4.2, 624; Paus. 1.25.2; *OGIS* 269. Allen (1983: 34) places the date of Attalus I's victory over the Galatians between 238-235.

⁹⁶ Just. *Epit.* 27.2.10-12; Ath. 13.593e; Plut. *Mor.* 184a, 489a-b.

⁹⁷ For the date of 236, see Bikerman, 1943-1944: 77-78.

⁹⁸ On the battles between Attalus I and Antiochus Hierax, see *Austin* 197; *Burstein*, 85; *OGIS* 273-9; Just. *Epit.* 27.3.1-6. Will (i) 1979: 298) argues for two wars between Attalus and Antiochus Hierax. The first war may have taken place around 238/7, as Attalus had taken the title of king before 236. A second war is proposed between 229-227, after which, he invades Mesopotamia.

⁹⁹ Green (1990: 264) suggests that Hierax fled to Ephesus, which was then under Ptolemaic control.

¹⁰⁰ also see Heinen, 1984: 430, Will, (i) 1979: 366-71 and Bevan, (i) 1902: 205.

II.136ff.; Walbank, 1984b: 460). Walbank (1984b: 460) suggests that the Carian campaign was an opportunistic exploitation of the situation in Asia Minor following the defeat of Antiochus Hierax by Attalus I of Pergamum.

3.3.9 Seleucus III (226/5 – 223)

Seleucus II had two sons, the elder of which, Alexander (Porph. *F.* 32.9; Euseb. *Chron.* 1.40.11), succeeded to the throne and assumed the name of Seleucus (III), acquiring the cognomen Soter,¹⁰¹ although his troops gave him the nickname Ceraunus (Thunderbolt).¹⁰² The attempts to restore the lands of western Asia Minor lost by Antiochus Hierax was continued by Seleucus III as soon as he came to power (Polyb. 4.48.7), although a defeat of his generals, possibly including his relatives Andromachus¹⁰³ and Achaeus, may be recorded by Attalus I.¹⁰⁴ He was prevented from completing his task due to a conspiracy against him, involving a Macedonian officer and a Galatian chieftain, which led to his assassination in Phrygia¹⁰⁵ in the summer of 223 (App. *Syr.* 66; Polyb. 4.48; Trog. *Prol.* 28).

3.3.10 The accession of Antiochus III and his dealings with Achaeus (223-216)

In the space of a few years (223-221) three young kings acceded to their thrones - Philip V of Macedon (221), Ptolemy IV in Egypt (221), and the younger son of Seleucus II, Antiochus III (223) in the Seleucid empire. Upon the accession of Antiochus III, his cousin (Polyb. 4.51.4; 8.20.11; Ma, 1999: 54 n. 7), Achaeus, who held the position of *strategos* under Seleucus II (Polyaenus, *Strat.* 4.17), was now in the position of governor “on this side of Taurus” (Polyb. 4.2.6; 4.48.3; 8.20.11), that is of Seleucid Asia Minor. Achaeus

¹⁰¹ Probably from some initial success in his campaigns in Asia Minor.

¹⁰² Porph. *F.* 32.6. also see Bevan, (i), 1902: 204; Green, 1989: 265 and Grainger, 1997: 63

¹⁰³ Andromachus was captured by Ptolemaic forces at some point - Polyb. 4.51.1

¹⁰⁴ On the defeat of Seleucus' generals to Attalid forces, see *OGIS 277* (Austin 197).

¹⁰⁵ N.B. Coinage in the name of Seleucus III was minted in Phrygia (Mørholm, 1969: 14-15).

was initially successful against Attalus I, managing to capture all of his possessions apart from the city of Pergamum itself (Polyb. 4.48.11). In 220, Byzantium appealed to both Achaeus and Attalus I of Pergamum for assistance in a war against Rhodes, implying that the two foes had managed to reach an accord (Polyb. 4.48.1-3).¹⁰⁶

In the same year, Achaeus reached Laodicea in Phrygia, where “he assumed the diadem and for the first time ventured to take the title of king” (Polyb. 5.57.5), claiming as his kingdom all of the Seleucid possessions in Asia Minor. Advancing on Syria, Achaeus took advantage of Antiochus’ absence on an expedition against Artabazanes, ruler of the independent realm of Atropatene, located on the southwestern coast of the Caspian Sea (Polyb. 5.57.3). The troops of Achaeus realised that they were going to war against “their original and natural king” (Polyb. 5.57.6) and mutinied. Achaeus was forced to cover his real intentions by launching a plundering campaign against the Pisidians in order to appease them, telling them that he had had no intention of invading Syria (Polyb. 5.57.6-8).

An alternative and credible interpretation of Polybius’ text concerning the march of Achaeus on Syria, is presented by Will (1982 (ii): 19), who argues that the usurpation of the royal title by Achaeus was directed against Hermias, viceroy of Syria under Seleucus III, who continued in this capacity while Antiochus III was away fighting against Artabazanes (Polyb. 5.55.4-5). Anxious not to see the state fall entirely into the hands of Hermias, Achaeus resolved to seize Antioch. Will (1982 (ii): 18) notes that Polybius does not say that Achaeus marched on Syria with the intention of seizing the throne, but in matters of the “business” of kingdom (Polyb. 5.77.1), i.e. of the government. Will proposes that the decision of Achaeus to proclaim himself as king was determined either by the false news of Antiochus’ death or Hermias’ designs against Antiochus.

The respective position of the two kings is difficult to define. Antiochus viewed Achaeus as a usurper, and as such, was not able to tolerate him. On the other hand, the mutiny of

¹⁰⁶ Ma (1999: 58 n. 22) argues that Achaeus and Attalus were not reconciled when they were both approached by the Byzantines, since Attalus was still confined to the immediate area of Pergamum.

Achaeus' troops in Lycaonia suggests that he lacked the necessary support to take control of the rest of the Seleucid empire. Antiochus III was aware of Achaeus' situation and far from taking measures to rid himself of the usurper immediately, he dedicated himself entirely to the struggle against Ptolemy IV without concerning himself with Achaeus in his rear. In order to do this, Will (1982 (ii): 20-21) suggests that Antiochus may have temporarily agreed to a sharing of royal power, not dissimilar to the situation tolerated by Seleucus II in relation to his brother Antiochus Hierax. In fact, it could be argued that in the period 220-218, Achaeus supported Antiochus III by conducting operations, which threatened Ptolemaic possessions along the southern coast of Asia Minor (Polyb. 5.77.1).¹⁰⁷

3.3.11 Antiochus III in Western Asia Minor (216 - 188)

3.3.11(a) The First Expedition into Western Asia Minor (216 - c. 213)

In 218, Attalus launched a campaign against Achaeus, forcing him to turn north to save his holdings (Polyb. 5.77.9). Between 220-216, Antiochus III limited himself to reproaching Achaeus for his behaviour, while engaging in the Fourth Syrian War (219-7). Once Antiochus III's Syrian campaign against Ptolemy IV came to an end, he crossed the Taurus at the beginning of the following summer (216) and came to an understanding with King Attalus, to co-operate in a joint campaign against Achaeus.¹⁰⁸ This agreement seems to have become a formal alliance four years later, with Antiochus III recognising the sovereignty of Attalus I (Polyb. 21.17.6; App. Syr. 38). Achaeus was driven from the field and forced to withdraw to the city of Sardis, where he was besieged by Antiochus III (Polyb. 7.15.1 - 7.18.10; Ma, 1999: 61), before being captured in autumn 214 or winter 214/13 and executed as a traitor.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷ cf. Will (ii), 1982: 18, 38-9. Ma (1999: 56-7) notes that the coinage of Achaeus made use of the Seleucid anchor symbol suggesting that he thought of himself as belonging to the Seleucid dynasty.

¹⁰⁸ Polyb. 5.107.4 – That this understanding between Attalus I and Antiochus III involved territorial concessions on behalf of Antiochus has been disproved by an inscription from northern Mysia – SEG 37.1010 – Ma, 1999: 19; 288-292; Malay, 1987.

¹⁰⁹ For date of capture, see Ma, 1999: 57.

After the capture and execution of Achaëus, Antiochus brought most of Mysia back under Seleucid rule, although it appears that King Prusias of Bithynia held on to northern Mysia for a few years, before Seleucid control was re-established (Polyb. 5.111.6; Livy, 28.7.10; Ma, 1999: 60). Before the end of 213, Antiochus had recovered Pamphylia and the lands from the Cilician gates in the East to Mysia in the west. Although many events are unclear, the Seleucid hold was clearly firm enough for Antiochus III to entrust Asia Minor to Zeuxis (Ma, 1999: 62; 284-5) and depart (winter 213/2) for his campaign to the East.

Ma (1999: 70) attempts to account for the loss of Antigonid control in northwestern Caria towards the end of Ptolemy IV's reign (*d.* 204) (see 3.3.8) by suggesting a Ptolemaic recovery of the region, as the later Seleucid governor of Asia Minor, Zeuxis, refers to the *status quo*, which had prevailed under Ptolemy in a letter to the Amyzonians (*RC* 38, line 5; Ma, 1999: 292-294).

3.3.11(b) The Second Expedition into Western Asia Minor (204-202)

In late 204 or in spring 203, Antiochus III crossed the Taurus mountain range, where he was met by a Ptolemaic ambassador who requested that Antiochus remain on friendly terms and keep to the treaty struck with Ptolemy IV in 217 (Polyb. 15.25.13). Nevertheless, Antiochus conducted military operations in Asia Minor, dispatching Zeuxis to make a number of significant gains in the Carian interior (Ma, 1999: 66-7), recovering Alabanda/Antiocheia (Ma, 1999: 67-8; 305-8), Alinda (Ma, 1999: 68; 297-8), Amyzon¹¹⁰ and Mylasa (Ma, 1999: 68; 304-5). The coastal cities were left to Philip V, who managed to capture Heracleia under Latmus, Iasus and Bargylia by 201 (Ma, 1999: 68). Three Teian inscriptions indicating a peaceful takeover of Teos testify to Antiochus' presence on the western coastline of Asia Minor in 203 (Ma, 1999: 72-3; 260-5; Herrman, 1965).

The expansion of Macedonian interests in the Eastern Aegean brought Philip V into contact with Antiochus III, leading to an alleged pact between them in the winter of

¹¹⁰ A letter to the Amyzonians indicates that it was taken by the Seleucids, probably by Zeuxis in May 203 (*RC* 38; Ma, 1999: 66; 292-4; Ma, Derow, and Meadows, 1995).

203/2.¹¹¹ Despite the close proximity of Antigonid and Seleucid possessions and forces in western Asia Minor, Ma (1999: 75) notes that there were no hostilities between them, suggesting at least “an agreement of non-interference between the two kings.” While Philip V continued to conduct military operations across western Asia Minor,¹¹² Antiochus turned his attention towards Coele-Syria around 202.

3.3.11(c) The Third Expedition into Western Asia Minor (197-188)

Strengthened by the conquest of Coele-Syria during the Fifth Syrian War (see 3.3.12(b)), Antiochus III turned his attention towards Asia Minor with a campaign against the Ptolemaic coastal cities of southern Asia Minor (197) (Livy, 33.19. 8-11).

Antiochus captured the Ptolemaic possessions along the coast of Asia Minor, apart from a small Attalid enclave, proceeding to recapture Ephesus in the autumn of 197 (Jerome, *in Daniel*, 11). Antiochus wintered (197/6) at Ephesus before despatching some of his forces against Smyrna and Lampsacus in early 196 (Polyb. 18.40a; Livy, 33.38.1-7). The expansion of Antiochus III to the Hellespont region brought him into conflict with Rome. Already in 197, Lampsacus had turned to the Romans for help against him (*Austin* 155; *Syll.*³ 591). He then crossed the Hellespont in the spring of 196, acquiring a foothold in Thrace and bringing the territorial extent of the Seleucid empire back to what it had been at the end of Seleucus I's reign (see 3.2). Once he had crossed the Hellespont Antiochus started to rebuild Lysimacheia, which had been destroyed by the Thracians when Philip V withdrew his forces from the city (Livy, 33.38.8-14).

In 193 a conference between Roman envoys and Antiochus' courtier, Minnio, was held at Ephesus. At this conference, Minnio appealed to Antiochus' inherited rights over the cities of Ionia and Aeolis and his right to exact tribute from them, because these cities “were

¹¹¹ Polyb. 3.2.8; 15.20.2-6; 16.1.8; Livy, 31.14.5; Trog. *Prol.* 30; Just. *Epit.* 30.2.8; App. *Mac.* 4; *Austin* 152. For an overview of recent discussions concerning the alleged pact, see Ma, 1999: 75-6.

¹¹² Particularly against Ptolemaic possessions (Ma, 1999: 78).

conquered in war by his ancestors and made to pay tribute, [Antiochus] has recovered their ancient status” (Livy, 35.16.6).¹¹³ Antiochus’ reassertion of Seleucid claims in Europe and Asia brought him ever closer towards conflict with Rome (192). A number of independent states, such as Pergamum and Rhodes, appealed to Rome for protection. Antiochus’ unsuccessful expedition to Greece, culminating in the defeat at Thermopylae (191) followed by the defeat in Asia Minor at Magnesia (190/89), which put an end to Seleucid ambitions in Europe, with the subsequent loss of all the lands west of the Taurus mountain range.¹¹⁴ But this setback did not cripple the military forces of the Seleucid kingdom as attested by the Daphne parade some twenty years later (c. 165), where an army of 50,000 men is attested (Polyb. 30.25.3-11). The Peace of Apamea in 188 divided the former Seleucid possessions of Asia Minor between Eumenes II of Pergamum and Rhodes.¹¹⁵ Also, Grainger argues that the fact that the Romans did not impose harsher terms is, “a testimony to the continued military and political power of Antiochos locally and in the rest of his kingdom; it is evidence that he had recovered enough of his military power that the consul did not feel it possible to push any harder” (Grainger, 2002: 335).

3.3.12 Antiochus III and Coele-Syria (221-198)

3.3.12(a) The Fourth Syrian War (221-217)

With the failure of Achaeus to march against the rightful king, Antiochus could concentrate on his campaign against Ptolemy IV in Coele-Syria (The Fourth Syrian War, 221-217). The war started with the recapture of the strategically and dynastically important port of Seleucia-Pieria in the spring of 219 (Polyb. 5.59.1-61.2). The Ptolemaic *strategos*,

¹¹³ Ma (1999: 29-30) also notes two other inscriptions from Asia Minor, which refer to Antiochus III recovering cities. The first is a letter from Laodice III to the city of Iasus (Ma, 1999:329-335; *Austin*, 156; *SEG* 26.1226), in Caria (c. 195) which recalls Antiochus ‘re-acquiring your city.’ The second inscription appears in Zeuxis’ letter to Herakleia under Latmos (Ma, 1999:340-345; *SEG* 37.859), dated between 196 and 193, ‘as we had recovered for the king the city, which originally belonged to his ancestors.’

¹¹⁴ The Peace of Apamea – Polyb. 21.43; Livy, 38.38.4-5; *Austin* 161.

¹¹⁵ Polyb. 3.2.8; Livy, 31.14.5; App. *Mac*, 4. also see, Magie, 1939; Errington, 1971; Walbank, 1940: 113; Allen, 1983: 66, note 108. Ma, 1999: 74-76, points out that the Seleucid advance in Caria stopped at untaken cities, such as Euromus, which were left to Philip.

Theodotus, betrayed Ptolemy IV by delivering Coele-Syria over to Antiochus III (Polyb. 5.40.1-3). Diplomatic negotiations allowed Ptolemy IV to build up an army with which to counter Antiochus III, culminating in the defeat of the Seleucid army at Raphia (217) (Polyb. 5.84-86), which forced Antiochus to cede the newly acquired gains in Coele-Syria, with the exception of Seleucia-Pieria.

3.3.12(b) The Fifth Syrian War (202 – 198)

The death of Ptolemy IV and the alleged arrangement with Philip V allowed Antiochus III to launch his second campaign against Egypt (The Fifth Syrian War, 202 – 198). Once again the Ptolemaic *strategos* of Coele-Syria surrendered his region to Antiochus III.¹¹⁶ The Aetolian general, Scopas, in the employment of the Ptolemaic king, recovered most of the lost territory in Coele-Syria during the winter of 201-200 (Polyb. 16.39.1), but Antiochus III defeated Scopas at the battle of Panium (200) and annexed the province to the Seleucid kingdom.¹¹⁷ He thus gained control, at least, of the territory allotted to Seleucus I a hundred years earlier (see 3.2).

A recent examination of the epigraphic evidence has shown that Antiochus III took on the title “Great King” only after the conquest of Coele-Syria in 200, and not, as has previously been thought, as a consequence of his successful Eastern expedition.¹¹⁸ The two civic decrees from Amyzon of 202 and 201¹¹⁹ agree with Appian’s (*Syr.* 1) statement that Antiochus was called “Great” after his Eastern expedition, referring to the epithet, but not the title “Great King,” which is the Greek title for the Achaemenid king, as the “Lord” or “King” of Asia.

¹¹⁶ An inscription, discovered near the town of Scythopolis attests correspondence between Antiochus III, Ptolemy, son of Thraseas, and other Seleucid officials in the region. see Sherwin-White and Kuhrt, 1993: 48-50; Gera, 1987.

¹¹⁷ Polyb. 16.18-19; 16.22a; 16.39.1-5; Will, (ii) 1982; Gera, 1998:20-34.

¹¹⁸ Ma, 1999: Appendix 4: 272-6.

¹¹⁹ Robert, J. and L., 1983: 146-54, nos. 14 and 15.

3.4 The Eastern Satrapies under the first Seleucids

We are informed by Pliny (*HN*, 6.18.49) and Strabo (11.10.2) that the generals of Seleucus I and Antiochus campaigned deep into Central Asia. A naval expedition under the command of Patrocles (Plin. *HN*, 6.36; Strabo 11.6.1, 7.3, 11.5) explored the lower Oxus and the Caspian Sea, while the land forces under the command of Demodamas crossed the Jaxartes River (Syr Darya), creating the two new provinces of *Seleucis* and *Antiochis* on the northern edge of Iran (see 5.7). The campaigns leading to the foundation of these two new provinces support Wolski's (1999: 24) argument against the "alleged neglect by the Seleucids of the defense of Iran's northern border" and provide "some sense of the sheer size of the resources" at the disposal of the Seleucids in order to conduct their campaigns in Central Asia. Wolski (1999: 24) speculates that the destruction of several cities in northern Iran could be associated with an invasion from outside and not a native revolt as proposed by Will (1979 (i): 243), so that the campaigns led by Seleucus I and Antiochus to Central Asia could be seen as being "inextricably bound up" with the threat of external invasions. Following the invasion from outside, Antiochus I refounded the cities of Artacoana and Heraclea in Aria, along with the city of Antioch-Margiana (Merv). A Babylonian Astronomical diary records the movement of military supplies and war elephants from the satrap of Bactria via Babylonia to Antiochus I (274/3) for use against Ptolemy II in the First Syrian War (see 3.3.3). The text certainly provides evidence of Antiochus' grasp of the East and the strategic key satrapies from Media through to Bactria plus Babylonia with its rich resources (see Appendix 1) (*cf.* Bernard, 1989: 303-7). Next, it is important to examine the secession of Parthia and Bactria in order to track changes and analyse problems of Seleucid frontier control, which might be comparable to the problems faced in the west (Asia Minor / Syria).

3.5 The Secession of Parthia and Bactria

3.5.1 Introduction

In the East, the chronology of the Parthian and Bactrian secessions is obscure due to the conflicting literary evidence¹²⁰ and it is only numismatics that is likely to shed any light on this highly controversial area. The initial move towards independence by Arsaces in Parthia and Diodotus, satrap of Bactria-Sogdiana, may have started during the reign of Antiochus II (the ‘high’ chronology)¹²¹ or during the reign of his successor, Seleucus II (the ‘low’ chronology).¹²² As Holt (1999a: 58) remarks, “Nowhere do we find a complete, unified account; we have only a medley preserved in different keys,” while Sherwin-White and Kuhrt (1993: 107) say that the secession “presents a mess hardly capable of being unravelled.”

3.5.2 The origin of Arsaces

Evidence for the origin of Arsaces and the Aparni that led to the foundation of the Arsacid kingdom in Parthia, comes from Justin (41.4.7), who says they were originally exiles from Scythia, and Strabo (11.9.3), who says, “Some say that Arsaces derives his origin from these Scythians (i.e. Aparnian Dahae); on the other hand, others believe that he was a Bactrian who having escaped the expansion of Diodotus and his followers caused Parthia to revolt.”

Lerner (1999: 14) believes that Strabo confuses Arsaces as both a Scythian and a Bactrian as the result of a Parni invasion of Margiana, which was repulsed by Diodotus leading to

¹²⁰ Just. *Epit.* 41.4.1-20; Strabo, 11.9.2-3; Amm. Marc. 23.6.2-3; Herodian, *History of Rome after Marcus Aurelius*, 6.2.7; Arr. *Parth.* (FGrH. F30A-Photius and FGrH. F31-Syncellus); App. *Syr.* 65.

¹²¹ As advocated by Musti, 1984: 219-20; Bopearachchi, 1991: 41-3; 1994: 513-9; Bernard, 1994: 473-511 (esp. 476-7) and 1996a: 95.

¹²² The ‘low’ chronology as argued by the numerous works of Wolski (e.g. 1957: 35-52; 1976: 439-57; 1999:43-56). also see Bivar, 1993: 28-31; Frye, 1984: 207-10; Brodersen, 1986: 378-81 and 1989: 203-6; Wiesehöfer, 1994: 179-82; Lerner, 1999; 1995-96: 103-12; Drijvers, 1998: 283-6, with Holt (1999a: 101-3) arguing for a ‘low’ chronology for Parthia of 240 or the early 230s, and a very ‘low’ chronology c. 235 for Diodotus II.

Arsaces' migration from Bactria to Parthia. The Dahae tribal confederacy had migrated southwards, with the Parni tribe settling along the northern borders of Hyrcania, and the regions lying north of Parthia and Margiana (Strabo, 11.8.2), stretching from the Caspian to the Tejend (Ochus) river. They may be identified as the nomads who perhaps attacked Merv during the reign of Seleucus I (Plin. *HN*, 6.47). Drijvers (1998: 285) accepts the view that Arsaces was a Scythian who led the Aparni against Parthia, possibly as a consequence of migratory pressures to the north, forcing them to move southwards from the region of the River Ochus.

According to Strabo (11.9.3), Diodotus does not appear to have gained the royal title at the time of the Parthian revolt and he is not referred to as a rebel against the Seleucid monarch. Strabo's reference to "the enlarged power of Diodotus and his followers," may refer to the extension of Diodotus' rule over Margiana and Aria, as interpreted by Lerner (1999: 13-4). Certainly, the influence of the Diodotids in Margiana is borne out by the numismatic evidence, which has revealed bronze coins dating from the time of Diodotus to that of Eucratides (Loginov and Nikitin, 1996; Nikitin, 1996).

3.5.3 Overthrow and death of Andragoras

The first evidence for the conquest of Parthia by nomads is their seizure of the satrapy, which may already have claimed some independence under its Seleucid satrap, Andragoras. Bernard (1994: 488) believes that this secession of the satrapy of Parthia was not very distant in time from that of the secession of the Seleucid satrap for Bactria, Diodotus.

According to Justin (41.4.6-7), when Arsaces heard about the defeat of Seleucus II by Antiochus Hierax and the Galatians at Ancyra (*c.* 239) (see 3.3.8), he invaded Parthia and killed Andragoras. It is not known for certain whether Parthia fell quickly to Arsaces or if there was a protracted war. Certainly, Strabo (11.9.2) suggests a drawn out war, "At the outset Arsaces was weak, being continually at war with those who had been deprived by

him of their territory..... In the end, however, Parthia fell into the hands of the Parni aristocracy, headed by Arsaces.”

A Greek inscription from Gurgan (Hyrcania) which bears the name of Andragoras, sometime prior to the death of Antiochus I in 261,¹²³ may refer to the same person recorded by Justin, who later became the satrap of Parthia or Hyrcania. Also, a small number of staters and tetradrachms with the legend ‘of Andragoras,’ but no royal title, were found in the Oxus Treasure.¹²⁴ Noteworthy, are the two staters bearing an Aramaic legend on the obverse,¹²⁵ possibly an attempt by Andragoras to create a closer tie between himself and the local population (Lerner, 1999: 24-6). According to Wolski (1957: 45), the numismatic evidence of coins bearing the name of Andragoras is sufficient evidence to identify him as the last Seleucid satrap of Parthia, since no coins have been discovered bearing the names of Pherecles or Agathocles.¹²⁶

3.5.4 The secession of Bactria and Parthia

3.5.4(a) According to Justin

A passage of Justin’s (41.4) referring to the secession of Bactria and Parthia is full of inaccuracies and internal inconsistencies, which has led to considerable confusion. Nevertheless it is the most complete literary account we have concerning the breaking away of Parthia and Bactria, along with Strabo. Justin says that “at this same time” the Parthians claimed their independence, while Diodotus of Bactria seceded from the Seleucid empire and took the royal title for himself. This implies that both the Parthians and Bactrians rebelled at the same time, or alternately, that Diodotus seceded in c.256,

¹²³ Bivar, 1983a: 186-7; 1983b: 29; Frye, 1984: 168; 208 n.10; Mørkholm, 1991: 119-120. This Andragoras, who was killed by Arsaces, has been linked to the coins bearing the same name.

¹²⁴ also see Holt, 1999a: 96-7; 1988: 96-98; Lerner 1999: 23-25; 1993: 29. Sidky, 2000: 141; Bivar, 1983b: 29; Frye, 1984: 163-168

¹²⁵ The Achaemenids wrote their Persian instructions in Aramaic and as Sherwin-White (1987: 24) remarks, “the Seleucids ‘allowed’ Aramaic to continue to be used for administrative and legal purposes as an ‘official’ language...”

¹²⁶ Photius (*FGrH*. F30A) indicates that Pherecles was the last satrap of Parthia, appointed by Antiochus II, while Syncellus (*FGrH*. F31) indicates that it was Agathocles, appointed by “Antiochus, the one called Callinicus and also Seleucus,” which could be a reference to either Antiochus II or Seleucus II.

followed closely by the Parthians in *c.*250.¹²⁷ Justin states that it was during the reign of Seleucus II that the Parthians first revolted, during the consulship of Lucius Manlius Vulso and Marcus Atilius Regulus, in 256.¹²⁸ Justin's remarks have aroused much debate about the chronology of Parthian and Bactrian independence as this date falls outside the period of Seleucus II's reign (246-226) and into that of Antiochus II (261-247/6).¹²⁹ The Capitoline Fasti records A. Manlius Vulso and Q. Caedicus as consuls for 256, with Caedicus being replaced by Marcus Atilius Regulus upon the death of the former. An alternative date may be obtained by assuming an error by Justin, as the Fasti also record the consuls for 250 as being Lucius Manlius Vulso and Caius Atilius Regulus.¹³⁰ But this date too, falls outside Seleucus II's reign and into that of Antiochus II. Both dates coincide with Antiochus II's war with Egypt (see 3.3.6). A further date is proposed by Luther (1999: 10-3), who notes that the censors for 247 (i.e. the start of the Arsacid era) were an Atilius and a Manlius Torquatus Atticus. Although it is not acceptable to assume that either Justin or Pompeius Trogus would have dated an historical event after the censors for 247, Luther (1999: 10) believes that one of them has inadvertently given the names of the censors instead of the consuls. But the discrepancy between the names provided by Justin and the names of the censors for 247 are sufficient to discount this proposal.

3.5.4(b) According to Arrian's Parthica

In addition to Andragoras, Arrian's *Parthica* also throws in two other possible candidates as satraps of Parthia during the period of Arsaces' rise to power, Pherecles (in Photius' *epitome*, *FGrH*. F30A) and Agathocles (in Syncellus' Summary, *FGrH*. F31).

¹²⁷ see Narain, 1957: 14 n. 4-5; Schmitt, 1964: 73ff.

¹²⁸ see Broughton (1951: 208-9; 1986: 137) for the evidence concerning this date.

¹²⁹ For the most recent discussion, see Sidky, 2000: 140-1; Lerner, 1999: 14-6; Holt, 1999a:63-4; Musti, 1984: 219-20.

¹³⁰ The date of 250 is argued by Broughton, 1951: 213-4; Scott 1854: 132-3; Narain, 1957: 13-4 and n.4; Tarn, 1951: 72-4.

3.5.4(c) According to Ammianus Marcellinus

A brief account of the defection of Parthia is presented by Ammianus Marcellinus (23.6.2-3). Here, Ammianus describes the rise of Arsaces during the reign of Seleucus Nicator, who he appears to have mistaken for a later Seleucid king with the name of Seleucus and not Antiochus. There is only one Seleucid monarch of this era that could fit into Ammianus' text and that monarch is Seleucus II Callinicus.¹³¹

3.5.5 Dating Arsaces' invasion of Parthia

The account of the foundation of the Parthian kingdom proposed by Wolski¹³² emphasises the importance of Apollodorus of Artemita on whom Strabo and Justin based their accounts of the early years of the Parthian kingdom (see 2.5.1; 2.4). Therefore, Wolski (2003: 23) maintains that it is not possible to combine all historical traditions into a consistent entity, distinguishing the tradition of Apollodorus of Artemita¹³³ (Strabo and Justin) from those of Arrian's *Parthica* (Photius and Syncellus). Wolski (1957: 41-2) convincingly argues that, as in his later account, Arrian, "put no historically verifiable facts into his story, we may suspect that it is not really trustworthy, and not much more than a piece of fiction" borrowed from an earlier tradition, which reduplicated the plot of Darius I against Gaumata (in 522). The account of Apollodorus refers to the revolt of Bactria and the Parni invasion under the leadership of Arsaces I, leading to the creation of an independent Arsacid-Parthian kingdom, whereas Arrian only refers to a revolt by the brothers, Arsaces and Tiridates.

Although those advocating a "high dating," such as Musti (1984: 219-220), make use of Arrian's (Photius) reference in an attempt to date the overthrow of Pherecles sometime during the reign of Antiochus II, Brodersen (1986: 379) noted that the text only refers to

¹³¹ see Holt, 1999a: 59. Ammianus is clearly referring to a specific monarch and not generalising about the Seleucid line of monarchs.

¹³² Wolski, 1957: 35-39; 1959: 222-225; 1974: 159ff.; 1976: 439-444.

¹³³ see Nikonorov, 1998: 107-8; Bickerman, 1944: 79.

the *appointment* of Pherecles in the reign of Antiochus II, which does not necessarily mean that the murder took place during that king's rule. Even if Arrian's account is taken at face value it is possible to argue against the overthrow of the Seleucid satrap during the reign of Antiochus II. Wolski (1999: 31, n.6) argues that although Arrian dates this crisis to the reign of Antiochus II (see 3.5.4(b)) "no one can cite any external events that would give credence to this date" and the acceptance by some modern scholars of Arrian's date is seen as "proof of the desperation of historians."

Wolski (2003: 25) notes the close similarities in both Strabo and Justin, starting with the revolt in Bactria by the satrap Diodotus; then the Parni invasion of Parthia under Arsaces I; and finally the death of Andragoras as a result of Arsaces' invasion. Also, Wolski (2003: 41-2) supports his argument against Arrian's fictional "Tiridates" by referring to a passage from Cassius Dio concerning a speech made by the Arsacid, Tiridates, who was about to be crowned king of Armenia by the Roman Emperor, Nero, in 64 AD. In it, Tiridates claimed to be a descendant of Arsaces and brother to King Pacorus and King Vologeses I. Further evidence appears in the archive from Nisa, which provides an extract from the family history of the Arsacid dynasty, making no reference to a Tiridates. An ostrakon shows that after the death of Arsaces II the royal line was continued through those descended from a cousin of Arsaces I (Wolski, 2003: 42). Further, the Atrak hoard (Abgarians and Sellwood, 1971) contains coins attributed to Arsaces I and his son, Arsaces II, but none bearing the legend of Tiridates (Wolski, 2003: 31-2). Finally, the cuneiform evidence from Babylonia uses a dating system based on the throne name "Arsaces." (Wolski, 2003: 20 n. 32; 22; 27), not that of Tiridates.

Wolski (1999: 35) maintains that by following the account of Justin (41.4), supported by those of Strabo (11.9.2-3), Isidore of Charax (Isidore of Charax, *Parthian Stations*, 57), and Appian (*Syr.* 65), it is possible to observe the process of the breakdown of Seleucid rule in the Eastern territories at the time of the crisis in Seleucus II's reign. Justin (41.4.7) claims that Andragoras, the satrap of Parthia, was the first to revolt, but was later killed in a *coup d'état* led by Arsaces, who seized power and set up the independent kingdom of Parthia. Shortly after, Diodotus II of Bactria followed suit, openly declaring his

independence, as shown by the numismatic evidence. Lerner (1999: 85) dates the loosening of ties between the satraps, Andragoras and Diodotus, and the Seleucid kingdom to the period of the Third Syrian War, and Arsaces' conquest of Parthia to the Brothers' War in c. 239/8.

In his writings on the Syrian Wars, Appian (*Syr.* 65) states that Parthia revolted as a result of Ptolemy III's invasion of Seleucid territories during the Third Syrian war: "Ptolemy [III], son of Philadelphus, killed Laodice, invaded Syria, and advanced to Babylon. And the Parthians at this time began their revolt because of the turmoil in the Seleucid empire."

Wolski (2003: 28-9) argues that there was "only one Parthian rebellion" noted by Appian and Justin, followed by the invasion of the Parni under Arsaces a few years later. The rebellion in question is that of the Seleucid satrap Andragoras in c. 245. Wolski (1999: 56, n.31) believes that the secession of Andragoras occurred during the Third Syrian War. Wolski (1999: 44; 122) notes that the "final break" from Seleucid authority occurred during the reign of Seleucus II, c.238. At the same time, Arsaces, at the head of the Parni invaded Parthia upon receipt of the news of Seleucus II's defeat at Ankyra (Wolski, 1999: 49; 122).

To conclude, the chronology of events as set out by Wolski, starts with the secession of the Parthian satrap, Andragoras (c. 245) followed by the Bactrian satrap, Diodotus during the reign of Seleucus II (c.238). At the same time (c. 238) the Parni, under Arsaces invaded the satrapy of Parthia and Andragoras was killed, allowing Arsaces to establish his own independent kingdom.

3.5.6 The death of Diodotus I and Arsaces' alliance with Diodotus II

Following Arsaces' conquest of Parthia and Hyrcania, he found himself caught between the two powers of Seleucus II and Diodotus I. According to Justin (41.4.8) Arsaces responded to the situation by raising a large army "fearing as he did both Seleucus and Theodotus, king of Bactria." The passage suggests that Diodotus I had declared himself

king and was hostile towards Arsaces. Soon afterwards, Justin describes a change in these circumstances:

Theodotus' [Diodotus I] death, however, soon delivered him from that fear; and he made a peace treaty with the late king's son, who was also named Theodotus. Shortly afterwards he fought a battle with King Seleucus [II], who had come to suppress the rebellion, and emerged the victor. The Parthians have ever since commemorated that day as being the start of their independence.

(Just. *Epit.* 41.4.9-10)

From the above passage it is possible to conclude that Diodotus I died before Seleucus II was able to launch his expedition to recover the Eastern satrapies. His son, Diodotus II, who may have been co-ruler with his father, succeeded him.¹³⁴ With the accession of Diodotus II, a change in policy occurred, as he made an alliance with Arsaces (Bevan, (i) 1902: 288-289). According to Justin (41.4.9) the alliance was made prior to Arsaces' conflict with the army of Seleucus II. Holt (1999a: 105-6) argues that the alliance between Diodotus II and Arsaces was aimed at gaining Parthian support against a local rival, Euthydemus I. The more generally accepted view follows Justin's remark that Seleucus II "had come to punish those who had seceded" (i.e. the Parthians and Graeco-Bactrians), thereby bringing about an alliance between Diodotus II and Arsaces I against Seleucus II (Lerner, 1999: 34).

3.5.7 The secession of the East according to Strabo

The account of events as recorded by Strabo differs slightly from that of Justin:

But when revolutions were attempted by the countries outside the Taurus, because of the fact that the kings of Syria and Media, who were in possession also of these countries, were busily engaged with others, those who had been entrusted with their government first caused the revolt of Bactriana and of all the country near it, I mean Euthydemus and his followers; and then Arsaces, a Scythian, with some of the Däae (I mean

¹³⁴ Holt, 1999a: 101; Sidky, 2000: 151.

the Aparnians, as they were called, nomads who lived along the Ochus), invaded Parthia and conquered it.

(Strabo, 11.9.2)

According to Strabo, the Seleucid monarchs were prevented from dealing with the revolt of the Eastern satrapies because of affairs elsewhere.

There are two main arguments concerning Strabo's reference to Euthydemus. The first argues that the reference to Euthydemus was a mistake (Rawlinson, 1969: 64) and the passage refers to the secession of Diodotus, by interpreting the extract "those who were in possession of Syria and Media" as a reference to the Seleucid monarchy (Wolski, 1956: 40).¹³⁵ It is, therefore, possible to interpret Strabo's comments about the kings being "busily engaged with others" as a reference to the "Brothers' War" between Seleucus II and Antiochus Hierax. In which case, Strabo is following the same events as set out by Justin. Likewise, the description of the nomadic invasion of Parthia can be observed in both Strabo and Justin.

Strabo goes on to say that the first to rebel was Euthydemus and his followers in Bactriana. This passage has aroused considerable discussion by associating the "kings of Syria and Media" with either Antiochus Hierax or Antiochus II as the king of Syria and Seleucus II as the king of Media. This leaves no place for the name of Euthydemus in the passage due to the obvious chronological problems. Lerner's approach is to follow Altheim's proposal that Strabo 'telescoped' two different events into this passage, therefore, it is possible that Strabo is referring to the war between Antiochus III, king of Syria, and Molon, king of Media (222-220), while Euthydemus overthrew Diodotus II in Bactria (c. 221). This is a difficult passage to untangle and Lerner's argument relies upon his identification of the two kings as Antiochus III and Molon while still holding on to the reference to Euthydemus. Sidky (2000: 142) doubts Lerner's interpretation, arguing that "Euthydemus was never "entrusted" with the government of Bactria, rather he violently seized the throne."

¹³⁵ Strabo (11.14.14) uses this term elsewhere; also see Schmitt, 1964: 70.

Wolski¹³⁶ argues that this passage from Strabo is the most important and reliable piece of evidence concerning the beginnings of the Parthian kingdom under Arsaces I, as he believes that it is based entirely upon Apollodorus of Artemita. But a major problem with the passage is that Arsaces' invasion of Parthia is said to have followed the revolt of Euthydemus' revolt in Bactria. If one accepts that the revolt of Arsaces I took place *c.* 238 and the revolt of Euthydemus occurred between 226 and 221 (see below 3.5.9), then the passage is chronologically wrong.¹³⁷ Nevertheless, caution is needed, as Strabo's reference (11.9.2) to the kings of Syria and Media need not refer to any specific kings, with one of them ruling in Syria and the other in Media. Instead, it may be a generalised reference to the Seleucids. The remaining Eastern satrapies that "defected from Macedonia" (Just. *Epit.* 41.4.5) may have included Aria, Drangiana, and Carmania.¹³⁸ Numismatic evidence suggests that both Margiana and Sogdiana were under the control of Diodotus.¹³⁹

3.5.8 The evolution of Bactrian coinage

3.5.8(a) Bopearachchi's numismatic thesis

According to Bopearachchi (1994: 515-17) the numismatic evidence suggests that Diodotus took the title of king sometime between the peace treaty concluded in 253 and the death of Antiochus II in 246 (the 'high' chronology), possibly *c.* 250.¹⁴⁰ He also notes that it is on the Bactrian issues of Antiochus II and not those of Seleucus II that we can observe the gradual emancipation of the satrap of Bactria.

¹³⁶ 1976, 444; also see Drijvers, 1998: 283.

¹³⁷ also see Sidky, 2000: 143.

¹³⁸ Sidky, 2000: 141; Lerner, 1999: 22; Wolski, 1960: 117-118; 1947: 49-60. On the rise of the Parthian kingdom, see Wolski, 1947, 1956, 1959, 1960, 1982; Bivar, 1983: 28-30; Frye, 1984: 207-208; Gardiner-Garden, 1987: 13; Musti, 1984: 213-220.

¹³⁹ Loginov and Nikitin, 1996; Nikitin, 1996.

¹⁴⁰ Bopearachchi, 1994: 514 and 517; Bopearachchi and Pieper, 1995: 26; Bopearachchi and Pieper, 1998: 200.

Bopearachchi proceeds to identify three distinct groups:

- 1) The first consists of the standard Seleucid coinage with the portrait of Antiochus II to the right, while on the reverse is the protective divinity of the Seleucid dynasty - Apollo on the omphalos - with the Greek legend "of King Antiochus."
- 2) In the second group, the head of Antiochus II is replaced by the portrait of someone else, who must be royal since he wears a diadem. Also, a naked Zeus advancing while throwing a thunderbolt has replaced Apollo, but the coins have the same Greek legend as Group 1.
- 3) A third group has the same portraits as Group 2, but now bears the legend "of King Diodotus."

Bopearachchi assigns the last two of these groups to Diodotus, as his portrait replaces that of Antiochus II. It is clear that the third group was struck by a satrap of Bactria who was challenging the authority of his legitimate sovereign by showing his own portrait and the thundering Zeus reverse type, as well as the name being that of Diodotus. With the coins of the first two groups the satrap still shows a formal attachment to the Seleucid sovereignty by minting in the name of Antiochus II, then the secession is completed with the third group of coins when Diodotus adds his own name with the royal title. The numismatic data shows that the emergence of the Graeco-Bactrian kingdom went through a period of transition during which the satrap of Bactria created a distance with regard to the Seleucid king, followed by a total independence when the satrap overtly took the royal title. Bopearachchi (1994: 516) argues that this series of coins clearly shows that the defection of Bactria from the Seleucid Empire took place during the reign of Antiochus II and not Seleucus II. He (1994: 515) supports his argument by noting that there are no known Bactrian strikings of Seleucus II or any importation of his currency to Central Asia. Finally, Bopearachchi and Rahman (1995: 27) propose that later, "Diodotus was succeeded by a son of the same name *c.* 239/8 and he was in turn overthrown by Euthydemus I."

3.5.8(b) Holt's numismatic thesis

According to Holt the numismatic evidence suggests that the coins attributing Diodotus I with the royal title are posthumous issues minted by his son Diodotus II, dating the secession to *c.* 235 (i.e. the 'low' chronology). Holt provides a model for the sequence of silver and gold coinage during the lifetime of Diodotus I and Diodotus II based on a parallel series of coins issued at two mints, Mint A and Mint B. Holt (1999a: 91) constructed six series of coins organised according to the legend of Antiochus and Diodotus by the age of the portraits and the position of the reverse inscription, either aligned under the arm of Zeus (Diodotus I) or outside it. He shows that by placing them in progression they do not follow the expected chronological order, but seem to be a parallel output from two mints (Holt, 1999a: 91). The linkage between the coins stems from a progression of control marks; variation in the die axis and a die linkage which show a progressive change from a coinage bearing the name of Antiochus to a coinage bearing the name of Diodotus. Holt (1999a: 92) notes that the wreath symbol appears on the coinage prior to the change of name from Antiochus to Diodotus. Further, he notes the much reduced output of coinage in Bactria during the reign of Antiochus II (261-246), which can be observed in the coin finds at Ai Khanoum where Antiochus I accounted for sixty-two coins, while for Antiochus II there were only two, followed by twenty-six Diodotid coins (Holt, 1999a: 95). It was during the reign of Antiochus II that Diodotus, still nominally accepting Seleucid suzerainty, changed the coinage by replacing the image of Apollo with that of a "thundering Zeus" and a change to a different portrait. Holt (1999a: 96) suggests that this is a depiction of Diodotus I and provisionally dates it between 255 and 250. The next change appears with the introduction of a younger portrait, "marking the viceroyalty of his son Diodotus II" possibly at the time of the accession of Seleucus II and the commencement of the Third Syrian War (*c.* 246). Again, the name of Antiochus is retained on the coinage, indicating an acknowledgement of Seleucid authority.

Interpreting the numismatic evidence in relation to Justin's statement (41.4.5) concerning Diodotus I's claim of the royal title, it is possible to conclude that the coins with victory

wreath, a portrait of Diodotus, and the name “Diodotus” were posthumous issues struck by his son. Holt (1999a: 100) notes that this was a common practice amongst the Hellenistic monarchs. This would therefore show that Diodotus I never took the royal title for himself and that Justin was mistaken, possibly taking his statement from one of the later Bactrian traditions, which backdated the official regnal period, as did the Attalids, who backdated their regnal line to Philetaerus in 283 (Strabo, 13.4.1-2; Shipley, 2000: 312).

Shortly after the death of his father (*c.* 235), Diodotus II minted his own coins, replacing the legend “of King Antiochus” with “of King Diodotus.” Since no coins of Seleucus II were ever issued in Bactria it is suggested that he cannot have reigned there.¹⁴¹ It seems possible that the Diodotids kept the name of Antiochus II on the coins following Seleucus II’s accession to the throne as a discreet statement of their growing independence. A similar situation is suggested by the example of Philetaerus of Pergamum who continued to mint coins during the reign of Antiochus I, bearing his own name while still portraying the head of Seleucus I, as a statement of his growing independence (see 3.3.1).¹⁴²

On the later coins of Diodotus I, a victory wreath appears (Holt, 1999a: 97-99). That this victory wreath represented the defeat and expulsion of Arsaces from Bactria, as noted by Strabo (11.9.3), has support from the coinage of Diodotus II. Holt (1999a: 105) argues that Diodotus II abandoned the victory wreath in favour of an alliance with Arsaces of Parthia, as noted by Justin (41.4.9), not against Seleucus II, but against Euthydemus I.

I am inclined to follow Holt (1999a: 64) who concluded that there is no trustworthy date for the satrapal revolt in Parthia and all that can be safely alleged is a “process of growing independence among the Eastern satraps” during the reign of Seleucus II. A further point may be that Arsaces was driven out of Bactria during the early 230s and then went on to invade Parthia and Hyrcania.

¹⁴¹ As noted by Sidky, 2000: 144; Lerner, 1999: 29-30; Boppearachchi, 1994: 516-7; Musti, 1984: 213-6; 219-20 and Frye, 1984: 179.

¹⁴² Holt, 1999a:99-100; Mørholm, 1991: 128-129; Frye, 1984: 168; Newell, 1936. A similar situation can be observed with Antiochus Hierax who initially placed the portrait of either Antiochus I or II on his coinage, before substituting his own portrait – Lerner, 1999:103.

3.5.9 *Seleucus II's Eastern expedition (c. 237 - 227)*

No exact date for the Eastern expedition of re-conquest mounted by Seleucus II can be obtained from the literary sources. Many scholars believe that the expedition took place sometime between *c.* 237, following the peace settlement between Seleucus II and Antiochus Hierax, and 227.¹⁴³ In the aftermath of his defeat at Ancyra (*c.* 239), Seleucus II would have needed to concentrate his forces on maintaining his control over the Babylonian heartland. The Astronomical diaries record that “there was fighting in the area of the palace which is in Babylon” (Sachs and Hunger, 1989, no.-237, obv., line 13) and on the 2-3 July 238 “when troops came out of the palace, [they fought] with the guard troops of the king” (Sachs and Hunger, 1989, no.-237, obv., line 13). This revolt may have been a result of intrigues initiated by Antiochus Hierax or another figure in a high position trying to take advantage of Seleucus’ diminished prestige and influence. Van der Spek (1993b: 73-4) has proposed that this incident records the seizure of the palace by the supporters of Antiochus Hierax, who were defending it against the royal troops of Seleucus II. The text suggests that he was still not firmly in control of the centre of his kingdom.

Wolski (1999: 76) believes that the primary source accounts for the expedition of Seleucus II Callinicus are so limited that “it is very difficult to reconstruct the course of events during the expedition, or to estimate its results.” Will (1979 (i): 278-280) argues that this margin can be reasonably tightened to *c.* 230 – *c.* 227. The recent publication of a cuneiform tablet attests the presence of Seleucus II and his sons in Babylon or in Babylonia, “on the left bank of the Euphrates” in March 228 (Sachs and Hunger, 1989: No. 229 B, right, l. 10). Therefore, the expedition against Parthia could have taken place shortly after this date (Bernard, 1994: 490).

¹⁴³ Wolski (1999: 56; 1974: 159ff.) believes that the Eastern expedition of re-conquest, mounted by Seleucus II, probably started in 232/1, whereas Lerner (1999: 33) is more cautious, claiming that the campaign could have started at any point between *c.* 236, following the peace settlement between Seleucus II and Antiochus Hierax, and 229/8; Drijvers (1998: 285) prefers a date between 231 and 227.

Josephus (*Ap.* 1, 206) quotes the second century historian and geographer, Agatharchides of Cnidus,¹⁴⁴ on the affairs of Stratonice, the aunt of Seleucus II. The passage shows Stratonice fomenting unrest in Antioch while Seleucus II was “raising an army at Babylon,” which Bernard (1994: 490) firmly believes is a reference to Seleucus II’s expedition against the Parthians, allowing the disturbances caused by Stratonice to be dated to the same year, i.e. soon after 228.

Other than Justin’s (41.4.8-10) remarks about Seleucus II’s Eastern expedition, the main literary evidence is Strabo (11.8.8) “...and later Arsaces, when he fled from Seleucus Callinicus, withdrew into the country of the Apasiacae.” This passage shows that Seleucus was successful in chasing Arsaces out of Hyrcania and Parthia, forcing him to seek refuge with the Apasiacae, a tribe living beyond the river Oxus, near Chorasmia. Seleucus was unable to obtain a decisive result, being “recalled to Asia by fresh troubles” (*Just. Epit.* 41.5.1).

Therefore, it seems most likely that it was during the reign of Seleucus II, and as a result of the Third Syrian War, followed so closely by the “War of the Brothers”, that Parthia and Bactria seceded from Seleucid authority, sometime between c.240-235. The secession of Parthia and Bactria was a major loss to Seleucus II, so much so, that he attempted a reconquest of the Eastern provinces.

At some date after the Eastern expedition of Seleucus II, Euthydemus overthrew Diodotus II, but when? Lerner (1999: 58) believes that Strabo’s reference (11.9.2) to Euthydemus’ rebellion occurred at the time of Molon’s revolt (c. 221) (see 3.5.7). According to Holt (1999a: 54; 62-3) the reign of the Diodotids can be seen through the use of archaeological evidence to have been uneventful until around 225, when Ai Khanoum suffered a fierce military assault which he links with the end of the Diodotid dynasty and the rise of Euthydemus. There is insufficient evidence to date this rebellion with any certainty, although a date between 226-221 is a possibility since Euthydemus’ son, Demetrius, is

¹⁴⁴ On Agatharchides of Cnidus, see Burstein (1989).

described by Polybius (11.39.9) as being a “young man”¹⁴⁵ in his encounter with Antiochus III (c. 206), so Euthydemus may have been middle aged. Also, the coins of Euthydemus portray him progressing from a young man (aged 25-30 years) through to old age (aged about 60 years), indicating that he had a long reign, lasting about 30 years (Sidky, 2000: 164).

3.6 The confinement of the Parthians to the mountains and oases on the north side of the Kopet Dagh during the third century

The secession of Bactria is linked to the view taken of the extent of the Parthian Kingdom in the third century. As Sherwin-White and Kuhrt have put it:

As to the question of the eventual secession of Bactria from the Seleucid kingdom, which, it should be noted, was not final until the second century, many scholars see a sort of external pressure for its lasting in the supposed consequences of what is seen as a total cut-off from the Seleucid empire by Parthia. But this view is untenable : there was no impenetrable barrier erected between these regions [...]. Secondly, it misconstrues the gradual course and nature of the impact of the Parthians' capture of Parthyene and of their *temporary* incursions into Hyrcania [...]. Only in the course of the second century did the Parthians gain control of the southern side of the Elburz mountains, winning control of the Caspian Gates [...], and begin territorially to occupy it by settlement”

(Sherwin-White and Kuhrt, 1993: 110)

In 208-206, Antiochus III came at the head of a military expedition with the intention of confirming his suzerainty over the province and in the view of Sherwin-White and Kuhrt it was only after the death of Antiochus III that Bactria would have become definitely independent:

...there was real substance to the achievements of Antiochus III's *anabasis* Parthia and Bactria were back under Seleucid suzerainty for another quarter of a century.

(Sherwin-White, and Kuhrt, 1993: 200)

¹⁴⁵ Tarn (1951: 73 n. 7) suggested that the term used by Polybius would make Demetrius about 19 or 20 years of age.

Sherwin-White and Kuhrt maintain that during the whole course of the third century the Seleucids would have undergone no territorial loss of importance in the East. To support this thesis, Sherwin-White and Kuhrt make two propositions. The first, which I have already examined (3.5.8), is that the secession of the Bactrian satrapy from about 240 to 235 was not as total as has been thought. The second is that the Parthians were confined during the whole period of the third century to the mountains and oases at the foot of the north side of the Kopet Dagh in Khorassan without descending to the southern foothills of the Elburz and occupying Comisene and Hecatompylus, other than through occasional raids against the province (Bernard, 1994: 484). It is indeed by the chain of oases of Comisene and notably Hecatompylus, identified today as the site of Shahr-i Qumis, 32 km to the south-west of Damghan, that the great Eastern route passed through Media and the Caspian Gates linking Seleucia-Tigris to the main centres of Central Asia: Bactra, Antioch-Margiana, Herat (Alexandria-Aria) and Kandahar (Alexandria-Arachosia), Alexandria Prophtasia, Alexandria-Caucasus, Alexandria-Oxus, Alexandria-Eschate, to name only the foundations of Alexander and the first Seleucids. The control of the southern road that crossed Comisene became more than ever indispensable for the Seleucid rulers if they wanted to maintain open lines of communication with their satrapies in Central Asia and preserve their integration within the empire. Bernard (1994: 485) believes that if this road had been in the hands of the Parthians it would not necessarily mean that commercial and cultural interchange could not have continued between the provinces of Greek Central Asia and the Seleucid empire. After all, the Parthians had an interest in not losing one of the most important trade routes of antiquity that contributed to the prosperity of the successive capitals of Comisene.¹⁴⁶ But this road was also the artery of the political unit between the Syro-Mesopotamian body of the Seleucid empire and Central Asia. The only other itinerary comes from Carmania and goes round by the South, skirting the central desert of the Iranian plateau, heading toward Seistan and is infinitely longer and more laborious. Is it possible to imagine that the royal couriers who travelled between Antioch or Seleucia-Tigris and Bactra had on a part of their itinerary, to cross a region controlled by a foreign sovereign? Sherwin-White and Kuhrt confine the Parthians on the northern slopes of the

¹⁴⁶ Tepe Hissar in the Bronze Age, then Hecatompylus in the Iron Age, finally Damghan in the Islamic period, not to mention Rhagae-Rey in Media of Rhagiene, of Nishapur, Meshed and Herat more to the East, in Khorassan.

Kopet Dagh for as long a time as possible away from Comisene, which is an essential piece of their reconstruction. They argue for a gradual expansion of the nomads in Parthia so that their occupation of the South side of the Elburz does not occur until after the reign of Antiochus III (Bernard, 1994: 486). This is not accepted by Bernard (1994: 487), who argues that the thesis rests on a tendentious interpretation of the historical sources and underestimates some of the historical and geographic realities of the region. However, I agree with the argument of Sherwin-White and Kuhrt and will set out my own supporting arguments in chapter 4.

3.7 The Eastern satrapies during the reign of Antiochus III

During the reign of Antiochus III, a revolt by Molon in Media and parts of Mesopotamia (222-220) was supported by Molon's brother, Alexander, satrap of Persis (Polyb. 5.40.7). After the failure of several expeditionary forces, Antiochus was compelled to take the field in person, leading the royal army against the rebels and decisively defeating them and punishing the city of Seleucia-Tigris for not holding out against them.

After Antiochus' expedition into Asia Minor (216-213) to suppress the rebel Achaeus, he turned his attention to grander designs, embarking upon his great *Anabasis* to the East with the intention of reimposing Seleucid authority. Antiochus (212-211) brought Commagene and northern Armenia under Seleucid rule by imposing his satraps, while Xerxes, the king of southern Armenia was forced to pay 300 talents as well as providing a considerable number of horses and mules, as part of his arrears of tribute. In return, Xerxes was allowed to retain his kingdom, which was consolidated by a marriage to Antiochis, the sister of Antiochus III (Polyb. 8.23).¹⁴⁷

Antiochus then gathered his forces in Media (Just. *Epit.* 41.5.7) for his "expedition to the Upper Regions" against Hyrcania, Parthia and Bactria. After an unsuccessful two year siege of the capital, Bactra, the local ruler Euthydemus seems to have acknowledged

¹⁴⁷ For a comprehensive examination of Armenia in the third century BC, see Sherwin-White and Kuhrt, 1993: 190-197.

Seleucid suzerainty, though this may have been short-lived (Bernard, 1994: 478; Sherwin-White and Kuhrt, 1993:198-9). As part of their agreement, Antiochus also received a number of war elephants and provisions for his army. The cavalry battle at the River Arius suggests that the Graeco-Bactrian kings may also have controlled Aria at this time.

Is there any truth in Polybius' account (11.34) of Euthydemus' threat to allow great numbers of nomads to overrun Bactria and barbarise the whole area? The investigations of Holt (1999a: 134; 1999b) have revealed signs of a growing independence of Sogdiana from Bactria which can be observed through the coinage consisting of "issues of barbarous imitations of the royal Bactrian currency." These earliest Sogdian imitations may now be dated to the period of Antiochus's siege of Bactria (Bopearachchi, 1991-92). Also, the archaeological record has revealed the construction of fortifications along the northern Bactrian frontier and at Ai Khanoum from around 200 (Leriche, 1986: 93-95).

From Bactria, Antiochus marched over the Hindu Kush mountain range into India. Sophagasenus, king of the Indians,¹⁴⁸ *renewed* his alliance with the Seleucids indicating that the alliance dated from before 206 (Polyb. 11.39.11). The return journey (206/5) provides important information on the Eastern frontier of the Seleucid empire:

He traversed Arachosia, crossed the river Erymanthus (the Helmand), passed through Drangiana (Seistan) and reached Carmania, where he established his winter quarters as winter was now at hand.

(Polyb. 11.39.13)

Polybius indicates that his return march went without incident, suggesting that these territories were under Seleucid authority. During 205, Antiochus marched westward towards the heartland of his empire, probably moving via Antioch-Persis¹⁴⁹ and eventually arriving in Babylon during the spring of 205, where he sacrificed at Esagil in Babylon on

¹⁴⁸ The Indus Valley, the Parapamisadae, Gedrosia, Gandhara, and as the presence of the Greek Aśokan edicts at Old Kandahar indicate, Mauryan rule covered the former Seleucid satrapy of Arachosia (see 3.2). Whether the Mauryan rule over Arachosia continued during the reign of Sophagasenus is difficult to ascertain.

¹⁴⁹ It is possible that a decree (*RC* 31; *OGIS* 31; *Austin* 184) was published because of the presence of Antiochus III in Antioch-Persis, when envoys arrived from Magnesia on the Maeander seeking recognition of the festival for Artemis Leucophryene – see Sherwin-White and Kuhrt, 1993:162-3; 199-200.

the 6th April 205 as part of the Babylonian New Year celebrations (Sachs and Hunger, 1989, no –204, C, rev., lines 14-18). He also led an expedition into the Persian Gulf asserting Seleucid power with the foremost Arabian city, Gerrha, which presented him with gifts and, more important, ensuring that the lucrative Arabian and Indian trade was channelled through Seleucid territory (Polyb. 13.9).

Following the defeat of Antiochus III by the Romans, the Armenian satrap, Artaxias, declared himself an independent ruler, assuming the title of King (*c.* 190) (Strabo, 11.14.15; also see Patterson, 2001). To Wolski (1999: 86) the Seleucid defeat at Magnesia and the secession of Armenia signified the demotion of the Seleucid kingdom from super-power status, although the Syrian-Mesopotamian heartland, which provided a considerable proportion of the financial and manpower resources of the Seleucid monarchs, remained intact. There is a case for accepting the severance of any ties of loyalty between Parthia and the Seleucid Empire in the aftermath of Antiochus III's defeat at the hands of the Romans by making a comparison, as Wolski (1999: 100) does, with the defeat of Seleucus II at Ancyra, which may have led to the Parthian rebellion of Arsaces I. But these losses did not mark the end of the Seleucids as a major power as has been sometimes suggested (Sherwin-White and Kuhrt, 1993: 218).

3.8 The Seleucids during the second century

In 168, Antiochus IV invaded Egypt in order to consolidate the gains made by Antiochus III in Coele-Syria and in response to an Egyptian invasion (Sixth Syrian War, 170-168). Roman respect for Antiochus IV can be observed in the support it gave for the much-weakened Ptolemaic kingdom, when the Roman envoy, Popillius Laenas, encountered Antiochus IV on his Egyptian campaign, demanding an end to the war and the complete withdrawal of Antiochus' forces (Polyb. 29.27.1-10; *Austin* 164). Despite this humiliation he was still the king of a wealthy and powerful kingdom, as demonstrated by his grand procession at Daphne (Polyb. 30.25.2-26.4) prior to his military campaign to the East

(165/4). The Eastern campaign of Antiochus IV started well, managing to restore Armenia to Seleucid rule, but he later died while on campaign.

Subsequently, there was a gradual loss of the Eastern lands to the Parthians. The Seleucid monarchs made repeated attempts to re-conquer the East, until the Parthians under king Mithridates I eventually conquered Seleucid territory in Iran and a Babylonian Astronomical diary attests to the temporary Parthian conquest of Seleucia-Tigris in 141 (Sachs and Hunger, 1996, no. -141, 'Rev. 1-10). After the death of Mithridates I in 138, Antiochus VII began a campaign to recover the Seleucid domains in the East. This campaign was successful until Antiochus VII lost his life in Iran in 129. His death ended Seleucid rule in Mesopotamia and marked the beginning of small principalities in both the south and north of Mesopotamia.

In conclusion, the secession of the Eastern satrapies can not be seen as a result of neglect by the Seleucid kings. In chapters 4 and 5 I will show that the importance of these satrapies is demonstrated by the continuous policy of the Seleucid kings to control Bactria and Sogdiana. This was achieved by the foundation of cities and the actions of Seleucus I in sending Demodamas of Miletus (Plin. *HN*, 6.49) to establish a Seleucid presence beyond the Jaxartes. The Seleucid kings after Seleucus I continued to make considerable investments in order to maintain control over the Eastern regions throughout the third century and later to continue close links with the Graeco-Bactrian kings during the second century.

Chapter 4

Seleucid Authority in the East

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter my intention is to explain how the Seleucids were able to wield authority over the Eastern provinces for a considerably longer period of time than has previously been supposed and that even when they no longer held direct control they were still able to maintain a close relationship with the Eastern provinces. Individually, each piece of evidence is insufficient to argue for a strong link between the Seleucid monarchs and the Eastern regions in the second half of the third and the first half of the second century. But taken together the evidence suggests that Seleucid authority, trade and diplomatic links with the Eastern regions to the middle of the second century were strong. The most important, indeed main, source in reconstructing the level of Seleucid authority and trade links with the East is numismatic ^{evidence}. Analysis of the iconography of coins minted in the Eastern part of the Seleucid Empire, chiefly in the Parthian and the Bactrian regions, allows us to gain some understanding of Seleucid control and influence through the third century.

Beyond this, it is possible to make use of an increasing amount of the archaeological record, as well as the fragmentary written evidence from antiquity. An additional source is Polybius' account of Antiochus III's *anabasis* between 212 and 206/05. On the basis of this diverse material I shall try to establish the existence of a stable trade link between the heartland of the Seleucid Empire and the Eastern provinces. In particular, I shall focus on the evidence for merchandise unique to the East appearing in the west and vice versa – namely the import of olives to the East and the import of Indian elephants to the west. I will also make use of the meagre literary material to support the numismatic evidence in

showing that the early kingdom of Parthia was territorially small, probably acknowledging Seleucid suzerainty through most of the third century. The classical literary texts are also important for the analysis of diplomatic relations between the Seleucid monarchs and the Graeco-Bactrian kings, especially when both kingdoms were losing out territorially by the expanding Parthian kingdom during the second century.

4.2 The Expansion of the early Parthian Kingdom

4.2.1 Early History (Literary survey)

Prior to the publication of Sherwin-White and Kuhrt's book in 1993, most scholars of the Hellenistic period argued that the Parthians managed to break away from Seleucid authority during the reign of their first king, Arsaces I, either in the 240s or in the aftermath of the battle of Ancyra (*c.* 239), and that he managed to create an independent kingdom centred on Parthia and Hyrcania.¹⁵⁰ This is believed to have led to the severing of "the umbilical cord" connecting the Seleucid empire to the Eastern satrapies and is believed to have led to the Seleucid loss of these Eastern regions forever.¹⁵¹ In trying to understand the character of Parthian penetration of Seleucid territory it needs to be emphasised that they only made gains with the greatest of difficulty, as attested by Strabo (11.9.2) who remarks, "At the outset Arsaces was weak, being continually at war with those who had been deprived by him of their territory." Also, it is inevitable that the nomadic background of the Parthians would have slowed their development and growth; certainly the literary sources suggest that this was not a fully developed political state along the lines of the neighbouring Hellenistic kingdoms (Sherwin-White and Kuhrt, 1993: 84-5). Strabo (11.9.1) reflects upon the difficult beginnings of the Parthian kingdom, pointing out its provincial status in the Achaemenid empire and Macedonian period. Drijvers (1998: 285) has noted that Strabo's statement concerning the long domination of

¹⁵⁰ Walbank, 1992: 123; Wolski, 1999; Tarn, 1951; Bivar, 1983a

¹⁵¹ Sherwin-White and Kuhrt, 1993: 85. More recently, Walbank (1994: 211) has re-evaluated his position, stating that "Bactria was not the 'back of beyond' nor was it cut off from the central parts of the kingdom by an early Parthian advance into Hyrcania and northern Iran."

the Macedonians suggests that there was “an extended - at any rate more extended than generally supposed - Seleucid domination over Parthia.”

Justin (*Epit.* Books 41-2), too, describes the conquest of the small region of Parthia by Arsaces I as the slow and difficult process of a gradually emerging power, which over a considerable period of time was able to consolidate itself in the foothills of the northern Kopet Dagh mountain range. Thus, the literary sources do not really support the view of Arsaces I as “a strong general and leader who founded his power in no time and consequently became a great threat to Seleucid rule” (Drijvers, 1998: 284). On the contrary, Drijvers (1998: 284) remarks that, “Arsaces and his successors were not very strong in terms of military power and met with great resistance in conquering territory in Parthia,” which is supported by Justin’s account:

Driven from Scythia by internal feuds, they [the Parthians] stealthily settled in the deserts bordered by Hyrcania, the Dahae, the Arei, the Sparni [or Apartani] and the Margiani. They then advanced their borders – initially without interference from their neighbours, and afterwards despite their efforts to stop them – to such an extent as to encompass not only the vast, low-lying plains, but also steep hills and towering mountain ranges. This is why most of Parthia experiences either extremes of heat or cold, since the mountains are beset by snow and the plains by heat.

(Just. *Epit.* 41. 1.10-12)

4.2.2 *The Arsacid Era*

Previously, Frye (1984: 208) had noted that neither Wolski¹⁵² nor any other academic had been able to explain satisfactorily “the ‘later’ adoption of an Arsacid era beginning in 247 rather than in 238.” The origin of the Arsacid era in 247 has been explained by scholars in a variety of ways, some of whom are cited by Bivar (1983a: 28), who suggests that the date may reflect either a Parthian revolt against Seleucid authority; the coronation year of Tiridates I, the second Parthian king; the actual enthronement year of Arsaces I; or, Bivar’s

¹⁵² Wolski, 1999; 1974: 197; 1959: 235; 1957: 35-52; Lerner, 1999: 14-17; Debevoise, 1938: 9.

own proposal, that the date of 247 marked the last year of legitimate Seleucid authority in Parthia, which ended with the death of Antiochus II and coincided with Andragoras' rebellion so that Arsaces subsequently backdated his regnal years to this event. According to Wolski (1999; 1957: 35-52), Arsaces established himself as ruler of an independent Parthia in 238, following the Bactrian secession from Seleucid suzerainty in the preceding year. Clearly, there is no certainty on this issue and in the present state of evidence there cannot be (see 3.5). However, I think that it maybe possible to link the dates of 247 and 238 by comparing it with the western Kingdom of the Attalids and the origins of their era. In the case of the Attalids, no ruler was proclaimed "king" before *c.* 240, yet the official regnal period was backdated to 283, the date when Philetaerus allied himself to Seleucus I (Shipley, 2000: 312). The reason for the late assumption of official royal titles by the Attalids appears to have been their vulnerable state between 283 and *c.*240 - i.e. the formative years - a prolonged period of time, during which they struggled to establish their independence from Seleucid authority. It was only sometime after 240, when they had gained enough strength to face the military might of the Seleucid monarchs successfully, that they were able to claim their independence officially by the proclamation of kingship of Attalus I following his victory over the Galatians (Mørkholm, 1991: 129; *cf.* 3.3.8). In conclusion, it can be seen that the Attalids established their independence after several decades of ambivalent relations with the Seleucid monarchs. Strabo's remark (11.9.2) that the Parthians were "continually at war" suggests that it would have taken a prolonged period of time for the Parthians with their nomadic background to have claimed their independence, following a period of considerable political uncertainty and struggle.

4.2.3. Subsequent attempts to expand

The subsequent expansion and consolidation of the Parthian kingdom occurred in several stages over a considerable period of time; nor was it without setbacks. First, Justin (41.4.4-5.6) links the rise of the Parthians with the secession of the Bactrian, Diodotus I, during the "War of the Brothers" (*c.* 241 – 235) (see also above, 3.3.8 and 3.5.4(a)). The expedition of

Seleucus II (*c.* 228) appears to have been initially successful¹⁵³ and was only thwarted by affairs elsewhere (i.e. his brother, Antiochus Hierax). Justin notes that at some point after Seleucus' expedition, Arsaces founded the city of Dara in modern-day Turkmenistan (i.e. the region of Parthia). Therefore, it appears that Arsaces was still in the process of consolidating his small kingdom north of the Elburz after *c.*228 (Sherwin-White and Kuhrt, 1993: 89).

The second stage, as proposed by Sherwin-White and Kuhrt (1993: 89) argues that Antiochus III's pre-occupation with events in Asia Minor, while the Seleucid king was campaigning against Achaeus (216-213), encouraged the Parthian seizure of Hecatompylus in Comisene. Another possibility is that Hecatompylus was captured soon after the news of Antiochus' defeat at Raphia (217) had reached the Eastern provinces. Therefore, the Parthian occupation of Hecatompylus would have extended from *c.* 217 - *c.* 209, allowing for a mere eight years of Parthian occupation before the city was retaken by Antiochus III.

Wolski (1999: 53) criticises Sherwin-White and Kuhrt (1993: 89) for disregarding the comments made by Polybius (10.28), who says that Hecatompylus was "in the centre of Parthia." But this remark by Polybius, who was looking back from the middle of the second century, could refer to the temporary Parthian occupation of Hecatompylus in the aforementioned period of eight years (217-209). Therefore, Polybius was actually establishing the immediate situation leading up to Antiochus III's campaign against Arsaces II. Hecatompylus is sometimes referred to as a Parthian capital by later classical sources (Polyb. 10.28; Plin. *HN*, 6.44) and has been identified with the site of Shahr-i Qumis (Hansman, 1968: 131-3; 1981: 3-9). But we should note that Bivar (1983a: 39) and Drijvers (1998: 287) argue that the site of Shahr-i Qumis became the royal residence "probably towards the middle of the second century."

Thirdly, as with the Parthian capture of Hecatompylus in the aftermath of the battle of Raphia, the defeat of Antiochus III by the Romans at Magnesia (*c.* 190/189), and his death

¹⁵³ Strabo (11.8.8) clearly states that Seleucus II was militarily successful against Arsaces.

shortly afterwards (187), may have encouraged the Parthians to follow the example set by the Armenian satrap, Artaxias, who declared himself an independent ruler, assuming the title of King after Magnesia (Strabo, 11.14.5). According to Justin (41.5.9) it was during the reign of Phraates I (c. 176-1) that the Parthians managed to assert control of the lands south of the Elburz, up to the Caspian Gates, for it was he who “vanquished in war the Mardi, a powerful nation.” Meanwhile Isidore of Charax (*Parthian Stations*, 7) remarks that Phraates I settled the Mardi at Charax, located at the western entrance of the Gates.¹⁵⁴ Thus it would be only during the reign of Phraates I that the possibility of a Parthian advance into the province of Media could take place, a satrapy centred on Ecbatana, which was still strongly held by the Seleucids. Mithridates I,¹⁵⁵ who ascended the Parthian throne in c. 171, was responsible for the most significant period of Parthian expansion with the seizure of the region known as Comisene, which lay south of the Elburz (Strabo, 11.9.1). It was also Mithridates who made the most important acquisitions from the Seleucid monarchs, eventually capturing the province of Media and all of Babylonia, albeit temporarily, up to the Euphrates by 141 (Sachs and Hunger, 1996, no-140).

4.3 The presence of Parthian troops in the Seleucid army

The appearance of Dahae troops in the Seleucid army at the Battle of Raphia in 217 (Polyb. 5.79) and also later at the Battle of Magnesia in 190/89 (Livy, 37.40), may reflect the expectation of Antiochus III, that the satrapy of Parthia was required to contribute auxiliary troops as though it were any other subject satrapy acknowledging the suzerainty of the Seleucid king. Indeed, Le Rider¹⁵⁶ argues that since the Dahae, of whom the Parni were a branch, served in the army of Antiochus III, the Arsacid rulers were, therefore, subject to the Seleucids and did not have the right to strike coins until their full independence under Mithridates I. Although some numismatists believe that the Arsacid coinage goes as far back as Arsaces I, they have to concede that a far greater number of

¹⁵⁴ Sherwin-White and Kuhrt, 1993: 89; also see Bivar (1983a: 33) for the late date of Parthian control up to the region of the Caspian Gates.

¹⁵⁵ Drijvers (1998: 287) argues that the main period of Parthian expansion occurred “either during the reign of Mithridates I (c. 171 - 139/8) or Mithridates II (c. 124/3 - 88/7).”; also see Wiesehöfer (1996: 132).

¹⁵⁶ *Suse*: 315-22; see also Drijvers, 1998: 285; Sherwin-White and Kuhrt, 1993: 89.

coins can be attributed to the reign of Mithridates I. Although Frye (1984: 211) finds it difficult to believe that the Parthians had no right to mint coins prior to the reign of Mithridates I and that the presence of Dahae cavalry in the army of Antiochus III provides no conclusive proof of Parthian subjection to the Seleucids, there is further numismatic evidence from the Atrak hoard (see Abgarians and Sellwood, 1971), which supports the arguments of Le Rider. The Atrak hoard has produced coins attributed to Arsaces I, declaring himself “autokrator” instead of “*basileus*” like the later Parthian kings, suggesting that he was not yet strong enough to break free from Seleucid authority. Nevertheless, one can agree with Frye’s (1984: 211) remark that the defeat of Antiochus III by the Romans at Magnesia in 190/89 makes it difficult to believe that the Parthians meekly continued to accept Seleucid suzerainty, especially when the secession of Armenia from the Seleucid Empire in the aftermath of Magnesia is taken into consideration (Strabo, 11.14.5). Another argument put forward by Bernard (1994: 497), is that during the fourth century, Achaemenid recruitment of foreign troops did not necessarily mean that they were subject to the Persian king, but merely that some form of agreement existed, requiring their assistance during periods of war. Bernard (1994: 497) proceeds to state that a good proportion of these foreign troops were mercenaries employed by the Persian king, as were the large number of Greeks by Darius III. Nevertheless, these mercenary troops recruited by the Persian king from mainland Greece were not under Persian rule. On the other hand, at the time of Antiochus III’s Roman war, Livy (35.49.8) refers to the Dahae in his list of Eastern auxiliaries who were “far better fitted to be slaves, on account of their servile dispositions.” These auxiliaries included the Medes, Cadusians and Elymaeans, whose lands were firmly under Seleucid control. Indeed, Livy (37.40.14) later refers to the Elymaeans as auxiliaries in his description of the Seleucid deployment at Magnesia. The evidence seems to suggest that the Dahae were auxiliary troops and therefore subject to Seleucid rule.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁷ also see Alram (1989) and Wiesehöfer (1996: 132), who says that the Parthians appear as ‘vassals’ under Antiochus III.

4.4 *The Atrak Hoard*

A hoard of early Parthian coins unearthed in the Atrak valley (ancient Hyrcania) (Abgarians and Sellwood, 1971: 103) is believed to have been buried during the reign of Antiochus III while he was marching through Hyrcania on his Eastern expedition (212-206/05). The Atrak valley hoard contains one tetradrachm and approximately 1,500 drachms; of which approximately 600 drachms are lifetime and posthumous issues of Alexander the Great, along with a number of drachms belonging to Philip Arrhidaeus and Lysimachus. Golenko¹⁵⁸ believes that the wide circulation of posthumous coins portraying Alexander, as well as the issues of Lysimachus and Philip Arrhidaeus, managed to spread eastwards through the mediation of the markets of Syria and Mesopotamia. The wide circulation of the Alexander-type coins is evident in the issues minted at Susa during the early years of Antiochus III's rule. According to Golenko (1995: 192), Antiochus III later stopped the issues of Alexander-type coins as "a political act aimed at the unification of the royal coinage." The Atrak hoard also contained four drachms belonging to Antiochus II, struck at the mint of Bactra and another unknown mint. The latest non-Parthian coin belongs to Diodotus of Bactria, with the remaining 900 drachms belonging to Arsaces I and his son, Arsaces II of Parthia (Golenko, 1995: 192).

4.4.1 *Arsaces I*

The earliest group of Parthian coins can be distinguished by their poor state of preservation. These coins portray a beardless head wearing a diadem-bound *bashlyk* on the obverse, with the reverse showing the typical portrayal of an archer in Parthian/Iranian dress seated on a stool.¹⁵⁹ The archer of the reverse appears on all Parthian drachms and Brindley (1972: 320) has shown that there are parallels with Achaemenid satrapal coinage. In the Achaemenid period the *bashlyk* was a satrapal head-dress and its diadem binding

¹⁵⁸ For posthumous Alexander type coins and the coins of Lysimachus, see Golenko (1995: 189); for Philip Arrhidaeus, see Golenko, (1995: 192).

¹⁵⁹ Sellwood, 1983: 279.

was retained on the coinage of the later Parthians (Sellwood, 1983: 279). As a result, some scholars argue that the Parthians considered themselves vassals of the Seleucids because of the appearance of the satrapal headdress on the issues of Arsaces I.

On one of the Parthian drachms identified as belonging to Arsaces I (Fig. 2), the Greek legend has been replaced by an Aramaic inscription, interpreted by Sellwood as *krny* (the Karen)¹⁶⁰ (Fig. 3). According to Bivar (1961: 123, n. 5) it was used by the earlier Achaemenids as an equivalent to the Greek military rank of *strategos* (*karanos*) Another unusual feature of this coin is the reverse inscription “of Arsaces, autokrator.” Bevan (1902 (ii): 302) interpreted this inscription as meaning “elected general,” which fits with the position of Arsaces I, suggesting that these coins may be attributed to him. If this is right, then the fact that Arsaces made use of the terms “autokrator” and “*krny*” instead of “*basileus*” as used by the later Parthian kings, would indicate that he was not yet strong enough to declare himself as king, independent from the Seleucid empire.

Fig. 2 - Parthian drachm of Arsaces I

¹⁶⁰ Later, to become one of the seven most powerful families in Parthia.



Fig. 3 - Computer enhanced picture of an Aramaic inscription on the Parthian drachm attributed to Arsaces I. Extracted images from <http://www.parthia.com>

However, Bernard (1994: 500-502) argues that the absence of the royal title *basileus* on the early Parthian coins did not necessarily mean that they considered themselves as vassals of the Seleucids. He (1994: 502) notes that some of the Parthian kings, such as the Indo-Parthian king, Gondophores, titled themselves on their currencies “*autokrator*” at the same time as “Great King” or “King of Kings.” But, in the *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea* (Paragraph 38), the town of Minnagar, near the mouth of the Indus River, is noted as being subject to Parthian princes who were constantly driving each other out of the Indus valley. Frye (1984: 201) infers from this, “that in the lower Indus valley area Iranian chiefs fought with each other,” which implies that these princes, or “*autokratores*,” were competing amongst each other to become the “Great King”, thereby explaining the coin legends.

Following a similar line of thought to that of Sellwood (1983), Frye (1984: 198) remarks that the use of two titles on the coinage of the Indo-Parthians, one in Greek on the obverse and in Kharoshthi on the reverse, “show a subordinate relationship.” As an example, Frye (1984: 198) uses the coins of Indravarna and Aspavarna “who are called *strategos*, the Greek word for ‘general’ in the Kharoshthi script, but ‘great king of kings Azes’ in Greek on the obverse.”

Bernard (1994: 501) notes that the Kushan Chief Heraios, expressed the nature of his power on his coinage with the Greek legend *tyrannountos*, which he suggests is a close equivalent to the *autokrator* of the early Parthian currency, without the need to adopt the

royal title of the former Greek sovereigns. But, as with the aforementioned Indo-Parthian princes it is possible to compare the Kushan leader Heraios (who was not a king but *tyrannountos*) with them. So perhaps we should follow Frye (1984: 202), who noted that the period of the Sakas, Indo-Parthians and early Kushans “was one of independent ‘sub-kings’ and satraps, a ‘feudal’ society with much warfare and lack of central control.”

Bivar (1983b: 203) too, notes that there may have been one or two lesser, or subordinate, Kushan kings ruling the lands East of the river Indus. In summary, the titles of “*autokrator*” and “*karanos*” may well denote something less than the Greek “*basileus*,” perhaps carefully chosen by vassals anxious not to provoke their suzerain rather than a title of independent Parthian authority, although Bernard’s demonstration of the uncertainty of titles as safe indicators of political status needs to be remembered.

The monogram “**M**” which appears later in the series of coins attributed to Arsaces I has been connected to Mithradadkart, the citadel of Nisa, possibly named after Mithridates, a member of the Achaemenid family (Sellwood, 1983: 280). Galle (1982: 175-180) has pointed out a discrepancy in Sellwood’s interpretation of the monograms as a mintmark of Mithradadkart-Nisa. Galle notes that archaeological exploration has dated the city’s oldest remains to the late third or second century,¹⁶¹ creating a strong likelihood that it was named after, and founded by, Mithridates I (171-138), the only king by that name in that era. If true, he reasons, Mithradadkart could not have functioned as a mint for Arsaces I. Clearly, the site of Nisa is ruled out as the origin of the early Parthian coins if the city was indeed founded by Mithridates I. Nevertheless, it is possible that the original satrapal capital, wherever it was located, could have been named after the Achaemenid family of Mithridates, and that the coins were issued from this mint.

¹⁶¹ see Invernizzi, 1998: 45-46.

4.4.2 *Arsaces II*

Following Antiochus III's successful campaign against Arsaces II *c.* 209, Justin (41.5.7) mentions that Arsaces II was accepted by Antiochus III as an ally:

His son, who succeeded to the throne, was thus called Arsaces. He fought with admirable gallantry against Antiochus, son of Seleucus, who was equipped with a force of 100,000 infantry and 20,000 cavalry, and finally was accepted by him as an ally.

This statement indicates that the Parthian king was the inferior partner and also suggests that Arsaces was, as yet, unable to establish an independent kingdom.¹⁶²

The coins of Arsaces II can be distinguished by a reduced inscription on the reverse that reads "Arsakou," while the monogram is replaced by the possible mint-marks "A" or an eagle (Sellwood, 1983: 280). Following Antiochus' success against Parthia, Arsaces II was forced to acknowledge Seleucid suzerainty, possibly leading to the closure of his mint(s). This would help to explain the rarity of this type of coin until the discovery of the Atrak hoard (Sellwood, 1983: 281).

Certain scholars¹⁶³ have attributed some of the Parthian drachms found in the Atrak hoard to the Parthian king, Mithridates I, thereby changing the burial date of the hoard to *c.* 150. But, as Golenko (1995: 191) and Abagarins and Sellwood (1971: 108) point out, this would make it difficult to explain the absence from the Eastern territories of some widely circulated issues of the former Seleucid kingdom from the mid-second century, especially the late Seleucid issues and the issues of Graeco-Bactrian rulers after Diodotus, who is the only Graeco-Bactrian ruler represented in the hoard. By dating this hoard to *c.* 209 (Abgarins and Sellwood, 1971: 103-119; *IGCH*, No. 1798) the sample of coins from this

¹⁶² Drijvers, 1998: 285; Sherwin-White and Kuhrt, 1993: 89-90.

¹⁶³ see Frye, 1984: 211 and Mørkholm, 1991: 120.

hoard provides a good representation of what would be expected during the period of Antiochus's Eastern campaign.

4.4.3 Antiochus III

The Alexander drachms have been attributed to the reign of Antiochus III since the other known Eastern coin hoards of earlier Seleucid monarchs contained very few drachms (Golenko, 1995: 191). It would appear that the use of small denominations in this hoard is linked to the reduction in silver to the Eastern regions following the attempted re-conquest of the Eastern regions by Seleucus II. Golenko (1995: 192) suggests that the presence of Alexander-style drachms in the Atrak coin hoard during Antiochus' Eastern campaigns shows that the process of penetration of this type of drachm started prior to Antiochus's Eastern expedition, possibly during the reign of Seleucus II. The large quantity of Parthian drachms would be indicative of the increasing influence of the Parthians between the years 217-209.

Despite the arguments of Bernard, the drachms from the Atrak hoard, depicting Arsaces I wearing satrapal head-dress and lacking the royal title, still indicates that he was not strong enough to break away from Seleucid authority. Nevertheless, the use of Aramaic (as opposed to Parthian or Greek) on the drachms of Arsaces I may indicate the early stages of a gradual move towards independence.

4.5 Seleucid authority in the East following Antiochus III's Anabasis

Whether the *anabasis* of Antiochus III was a genuine attempt to reimpose Seleucid power in the East has been contested recently by a number of scholars such as Holt (1999: 130, n. 18)¹⁶⁴ who believes that Antiochus III was forced “to accept a compromise that left the Seleucids little (or no) actual control over the region,” whereas Sherwin-White and Kuhrt (1993: 200) believe that “there was real substance to the achievements of Antiochus III’s *anabasis*.” The latter view gains support with the appearance of the Seleucid anchor symbol on Euthydemus’s coinage, which Holt (1999: 132) dates to *c.* 206 and can be seen to represent a recognition of the suzerainty of Antiochus III. Further evidence indicating that Euthydemus recognised the authority of Antiochus III emerges from the text of Polybius (11.34), who informs us that after the siege of Bactra was lifted, Euthydemus handed over an unknown number of elephants and provisioned Antiochus’ army. The provisioning of the Seleucid army must have been a severe burden following the two-year siege of Bactra, during which time, Antiochus would already have been supplying his army from the surrounding countryside.

Antiochus III imposed the same form of settlement on Arsaces II of Parthia (Polyb. 10-28-31), Euthydemus (Polyb. 10.49; 11.34.1-11) and Sophagastenus (Polyb. 11.34.12-14), king of the Indians, as he did on other satrapies within his empire. As Ma (1999: 64) rightly notes, Antiochus’ involvement with these three Eastern regions offers “parallels and contrasts with the negotiations between the king and the cities of western Asia Minor,” which can also be observed in his dealings with Xerxes of Armenia (Polyb. 8.23.4). These negotiations frequently took the following form:

1. A grant allowing the ‘subject’ kings’ right to rule.
2. The exaction of arrears in the form of a tribute, gift or payment of ransom-

¹⁶⁴ also see Lerner, 1999:52; and Wolski, 1999: 92, n.17.

money, which helps to establish the idea of a continuous period of Seleucid rule, despite the interruptions (Ma, 1999: 52).

Again, in the aftermath of Antiochus' successful campaign against the Gerrhaeans on the Arabian coast, Antiochus received a gift of silver and spices in exchange for their freedom (Polyb. 13.9).

Further numismatic evidence has been analysed by Kritt (2001: 154), who has attributed two bronze coins to Antiochus III on the basis of the reverse type depicting a tripod and the symbol of a vertical anchor,¹⁶⁵ which had not previously been seen on Seleucid coins of Bactria. Also, the obverse portrait of Apollo bears a remarkable resemblance to other issues minted at Apamea *c.* 223-208, and attributed to Antiochus III by Newell (1977: 1187-1188). Kritt acquired these two coins from Pakistan along with some other early Seleucid bronze coins, which are all attributed to the site of Ai Khanoum by the characteristic red-brown patina on the coins. Also, the thickness and shape of the flans, as well as the angle of the bevelled edges of Euthydemus bronzes originating from Ai Khanoum are extremely similar (Kritt, 2001: 154).

The two Seleucid coins of Bactria thus appear to be imitations of the "Apamea" coins, which, according to Kritt (2001: 154), make use of "the fabric of the contemporary Ai Khanoum bronzes of Euthydemus." The implications of these two coins, assigned to Antiochus III, are of great importance when assessing the impact of Antiochus' *anabasis* and Seleucid authority in the East. The mint of Bactra was unlikely to be the source of the coins since Antiochus had failed to capture the city (*c.* 206). Kritt (2001: 156) proposed that the citizens of Ai Khanoum may have accepted Antiochus III as their true and rightful king, following the example set by the troops in the army of the rebel, Molon, in 221 (see 3.7). A further proposal by Kritt (2001: 156), is that the archaeological evidence dating a siege of Ai Khanoum to *c.* 225 should be changed to the period of Antiochus' siege and, hence, capture of Ai Khanoum.¹⁶⁶ If Antiochus was diverting some of his forces to Ai

¹⁶⁵ The anchor on the reverse and the portrait of Apollo both being symbols of the Seleucid dynasty.

¹⁶⁶ For archaeological evidence of a siege dated to *c.* 225, see Leriche, 1986: 82.

Khanoum and other regions of Graeco-Bactria, this might explain why he was unable to capture Bactra after besieging it for two years - he simply did not have the military resources for both operations.

Although many modern scholars believe that the achievements of Antiochus III during his Eastern campaign amounted to little, Strabo (11.14.5) suggests that Antiochus had plans for a more lasting conquest as shown by his assignment of two generals - Artaxias and Zariadris - to govern Armenia. Ultimately, the problem with assessing the success or otherwise of Antiochus III's *anabasis* is our dependence on what survives in Polybius' Books ten and eleven, and the importance given to his account.

Numismatic evidence can help us to appreciate the restoration of Seleucid trade links with the Eastern regions as a result of Antiochus III's *anabasis*. Following Antiochus III's campaign against Armenia in 212 trade between the Seleucid kingdom and the Armenians appears to have been revitalised, as shown by a hoard of coins discovered at Amida, dated to *c.* 205 (*IGCH* 1736). Over half of these coins were issued by the Seleucids, with the tetradrachms of Antiochus III being minted at both Antioch on the Orontes and Nisibis (Golenko, 1995: 187). Golenko (1995: 174) notes that among the royal bronze coinage of Seleucia-Tigris is an issue depicting Hermes on the obverse, with an elephant on the reverse (Newell, 1978: 97), which he interprets as a possible symbol of the restored Eastern trade resulting from Antiochus III's Eastern *anabasis*.

It is clear that the *anabasis* of Antiochus III had a significant impact on the East. If Kritt's interpretation of the bronze coins from his own collection is correct, Antiochus III may well have captured the city of Ai Khanoum and therefore, most of Bactria, as Ai Khanoum is situated in the north-east. Meanwhile, Euthydemus was confined within the mud-brick walls of Bactra and it was only the threat of the nomads overrunning the region that prevented him from losing everything. As already seen, Euthydemus was forced to accept a grant from Antiochus III, allowing him to rule as king, which at the time, suited both parties. The numismatic evidence also shows a restoration of Eastern trade as a result of

Antiochus' Eastern campaign, which was to have a lasting effect up to the middle of the second century.

4.6 The Elephant trade

The delivery of war elephants by the Indians to the armies of the Seleucid monarchs seems to have been the result of treaties between the two powers. They valued elephants highly, as they helped to provide military superiority when facing other armies who lacked them. But when elephants arrived in Mesopotamia, Syria, or elsewhere in the Seleucid Empire, who drove the elephants, and who maintained them? Taking care of elephants requires the special skills and knowledge of the Indian elephant drivers or "mahouts." As Salles (1994: 603) argues, Indian "mahouts" must have accompanied the delivery of elephants to the west.

4.6.1 Numbers and sources of elephants

Previously the Achaemenids, under Darius III, had made use of a small number of elephants at the Battle of Gaugamela (331) against Alexander the Great, which appear to have had little or no effect upon the outcome of the battle.¹⁶⁷ Alexander the Great collected a force of 200 elephants while campaigning in India and sent them westwards by an alternative route to his own across the Gedrosian desert, which would undoubtedly have proved disastrous for the elephants. Likewise he never contemplated transporting his force of elephants through the Arab-Persian Gulf by ship, as this would also have been impractical.¹⁶⁸ Instead, it is reported that on his return from India, Alexander placed a large column of veterans under the command of Craterus and despatched them by way of

¹⁶⁷ 15 elephants according to Arrian (*Anab.* 3.8).

¹⁶⁸ Although there are instances of elephants being transported by ship, the numbers of elephants tended to be small in number and the journey was frequently short with the possibility of many stops on the way (e.g. Antiochus III transported 10 elephants from Asia Minor, across the Aegean, to be used against the Romans in Greece – Livy, 35.43.6). The Ptolemies sent elephant hunting expeditions to the south of Egypt, setting up a number of coastal stations on the Red Sea coastline. In order to transport these beasts back to Egypt, the Ptolemies constructed the 'elephant-carrier' (Casson, 1993: 253). Casson (1993: 248) also notes that the Ptolemies were unable to obtain Indian elephants as "the overland routes passed through Seleucid territory" and "the ships that could transport elephants long distances over water were yet to be invented."

the Bolan Pass (or Mulla Pass), Quetta and Kandahar into the Helmand valley from where they were to make their way through Drangiana to Carmania and then unite with the main forces on the Amanis (mod. Minab) River. This was a fairly strong force comprising three phalanx battalions, cavalry, a large number of sick and wounded troops, the baggage and siege train, and the whole of the 200 strong elephant corps.¹⁶⁹

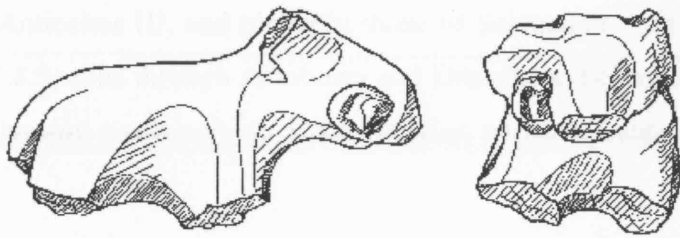


Fig. 4 Figurine of an elephant from Old Kandahar (c. 260-200 BC) (after Helms, 1997: 386)

The next significant acquisition of elephants occurred during the reign of Seleucus I. Seleucus received (possibly) 500 war-elephants from Chandragupta after the treaty (c. 305),¹⁷⁰ which proved decisive at the battle of Ipsus in 301.¹⁷¹ During Antiochus III's *anabasis* to the East he managed to procure a total of 150 elephants from Euthydemus of Bactria and Sophagasenus (Polyb. 11.39.10-12; also see 4.5), which accompanied his army back to the centre of the Seleucid Empire, probably along a similar route to that traversed by Craterus. This route may have been the main thoroughfare in the trade of elephants, suggested by the discovery of a figurine of an elephant at Old Kandahar, (Fig. 4) dated between c.260-200, when Arachosia shows a very strong Indian presence in the region (Helms, 1997: 91; 386). The discovery of this elephant figurine further supports the transportation of such beasts overland, rather than by sea. The elephants obtained by Alexander the Great, Seleucus I and Antiochus III were safely accompanied homewards by the respective armies.

¹⁶⁹ Arr. *Anab.* 6.17.2; Strabo, 15.2.5; Curt. 9.8.16.

¹⁷⁰ For the date of the treaty between Seleucus I and Chandragupta, see Salles, 1994: 600 and 603.

¹⁷¹ Strabo 15.2.9; 16.2.10; Plut. *Alex.* 62; Plin. *HN.* 6.61; App. *Syr.* 55; Just. *Epit.* 15.4.21; Scullard 1974, 96ff. and 269 n. 46.

A Babylonian Astronomical diary dated to 274/3 (SE 38), records the movement of military supplies and war elephants from the satrap of Bactria via Babylonia to Antiochus I for use against Ptolemy II in the First Syrian War (see Appendix 1). It is not known who accompanied this small force of twenty elephants on their journey from Bactria to Babylonia, nor by which route they travelled. One possible route can be followed by traversing the southern satrapies of Drangiana and Carmania, following in the footsteps of Craterus, Antiochus III, and probably those of Seleucus I. An alternative route given by Strabo (11.8.9) runs through Arachosia and Drangiana, before heading north through Aria and then turning westwards to Hecatompylus and the Caspian Gates, heading towards Media.

Later, during the reign of Antiochus III, an important point that is often overlooked by historians is the sudden and unexplained appearance of 102 Indian elephants in the Seleucid army, some time between 221 and 217. Whereas Antiochus III only used ten elephants in his battle against the rebel, Molon (Polyb. 5.53.4), three years later he used a force of 102 elephants at the battle of Raphia (Polyb. 5.79.13). Scullard (1974: 138) attempts to explain this discrepancy in the number of elephants by suggesting that Antiochus may have either judged ten to be an adequate force to deal with Molon or they may have been all he had. If the force was larger, Scullard (1974: 138) proposes that part of the elephant herd may have been in Syria and that Antiochus III was unable to bring them over for use against the rebels in time for the decisive battle at Apollonia. That Antiochus III was already in possession of a larger force of elephants at the time of Molon's revolt and failed to make use of them appears unlikely and lacks any supportive evidence.¹⁷² On the other hand, Antiochus' father, Seleucus II, is said to have lost most of his elephants to Ptolemy in 246 (*OGIS* 54; *Austin*, 221; also see Scullard, 1974: 134-135). Any surviving elephants in his service would surely have declined in numbers over the intervening 25 years, leaving Antiochus III to inherit a herd of elephants which numbered a

¹⁷² Antiochus had already despatched generals at the head of smaller expeditions to deal with the rebel, Molon. After these had failed, it was up to the king to confront Molon in person at the head of the royal army. The presence of the full royal army is attested by Polybius' reference to the Royal bodyguard regiment of Companion cavalry (5.53.4), while Bar Kochva (1976: 59) believes that the *Argyraspides* were present amongst the phalanx (Polyb. 5.53). Therefore, if Antiochus had mobilised the full royal army, as recorded by Polybius, there is no reason to believe that he would have left the greater part of his elephant force behind.

mere 10 by 221.¹⁷³ I would, thus, agree with Scullard (1974: 138) who believes that it is most unlikely that Antiochus III had such a large herd in Syria in 221, as well as his opinion that Antiochus must have traded briskly with India in order to raise his force to 102 within four years. Further evidence from the reign of Antiochus III may also be the royal bronze issues of Seleucia-Tigris, which portray Hermes on the obverse, a symbol of trade, with an elephant on the reverse (Newell, 1978: 97; Golenko, 1995: 174; also see 4.5).

The unexplained appearance of elephants in the armed forces of the Seleucid monarchs did not stop with Antiochus III. Under the terms of the Treaty of Apamea (188), Antiochus III lost all of his possessions west of the Taurus and was forced to surrender all of his elephants, as well as being forbidden to make use of them in future (see 3.3.11(c)).¹⁷⁴ Once Antiochus III had handed over his elephants to the ten Roman commissioners they then handed them over to Eumenes of Pergamum as a gift for his services in the war against Antiochus III (Scullard, 1974: 181). But despite the terms of the Treaty of Apamea, Antiochus IV managed to acquire a herd of Indian war-elephants and made use of them during his first invasion of Egypt in 170, when he advanced “with chariots, and elephants, and horsemen, together with a great fleet” (1 *Macc.* 1.17) and their presence is also attested following the Roman ultimatum on the “day of Eleusis.” Polybius (30.25.11) records that there were 40 elephants in the procession at Daphne in 166, and in the following year, Antiochus IV is attested as dividing his force of elephants so that he was able to take a number with him on his Eastern expedition, while leaving behind the remainder for Lysias to campaign against the Jews in Palestine.¹⁷⁵ It appears that the Romans did not enforce the terms of the Treaty of Apamea, possibly because they needed to concentrate all their military resources on the war against Perseus without antagonising Antiochus IV into a possible alliance with the Macedonian king. In fact, according to Polyaeus (4.21), Antiochus IV despatched a number of Indian elephants to assist the Romans in their

¹⁷³ i.e. at the battle of Apollonia between Antiochus III and the rebel, Molon.

¹⁷⁴ Polyb. 21.43.12; Livy 38.38.8; Diod. Sic. 29.10; App. *Syr.* 38; also see Gera, 1997: 92 and Scullard, 1974: 181.

¹⁷⁵ Elephants split between Antiochus and Lysias - 1 *Macc.* 3.34; Joseph, *AJ.* 12.295. According to 2 *Macc.* 11.4, Lysias used his elephants against the Jews in 165, but this is not corroborated by the other sources for this campaign, 1 *Macc.* 4.28, and Joseph. *AJ.* 12.313s; also see, Gera, 1997: 206 and Scullard, 1974: 185.

campaign against Perseus, which were probably mixed together with the African elephants supplied by King Masinissa of Numidia.¹⁷⁶

Following the death of Antiochus IV, the Seleucid general, Lysias, accompanied by the boy-king, Antiochus V,¹⁷⁷ is said to have employed a force of elephants in his second campaign against the Jews in 162. In the same year the Romans decided to enforce the Treaty of Apamea and the Senate dispatched Cn. Octavius to burn the Syrian warships and to hamstring their elephants.¹⁷⁸ According to II *Maccabees* (15.21), the Seleucid general Nicanor, is reported to have used elephants at the battle of Adasa against Judas Maccabaeus (March 161), one year after the Romans had supposedly hamstrung all of the Seleucid elephants. Scullard (1974: 188)¹⁷⁹ describes this passage from II *Maccabees* as “highly suspect” because “it is difficult to see where he could have obtained any [elephants].” Nevertheless, there may have been an additional number of elephants stabled in Mesopotamia so that the Romans only managed to hamstring those stationed in the royal elephant stables at Apamea. Alternatively, it may have been possible to evacuate some of the elephants from Apamea once the purpose of Cn. Octavius’ mission had become apparent (Sekunda, 1994: 27). Even if the Romans had been successful in hamstringing all of the Seleucid elephants, there is no reason to doubt the ability of the Seleucid monarchs to acquire more elephants from the Graeco-Bactrians or Indians. Scullard (1974: 188) and Bevan (1902 (ii): 290) both believed that Demetrius II was the only Seleucid monarch to possess a herd of elephants following the Roman enforcement of the Treaty of Apamea in 162. Josephus, referring to the battle of the Oenoparus in 145, informs us that Ptolemy VI was killed from head injuries after the noise of an elephant caused his horse to shy and throw him,¹⁸⁰ and that after the battle, “Demetrius (II) kept his elephants” (Joseph. *AJ.* 13.120). But new evidence from a recently published Astronomical diary, dated to 150/49, provides new evidence to allay Scullard’s doubts concerning the appearance of elephants

¹⁷⁶For the elephants of Antiochus IV, see Scullard 1974: 181-88.

¹⁷⁷ Antiochus V was aged either 9 or 12 years old – see Bar Kochva, 1976: 174.

¹⁷⁸ Elephants in Lysias’ second campaign: 1 *Macc.* 6.30, 6.34-37, 6.43-46; 2 *Macc.* 13.2 and 15; Joseph. *AJ.* 12.366, 12.371-74. Octavius’ embassy: Polyb. 31.2.9-11; App. *Syr.* 46; also see, Gera, 1997: 207; Bar Kochva, 1976: 174; Scullard, 1974: 186.

¹⁷⁹ also see Bar-Kochva (1989: 366), who has reservations about the passage from II *Maccabees*.

¹⁸⁰ Joseph. *AJ.* 13.58-61; 1 *Macc.* 10: 49-50; App. *Syr.* 67; Diod. Sic. 33.20.1 also see Sekunda, 2001: 136-137; Green, 1990: 444-445; Tcherikover, 1959: 232-233; Bevan, 1902: 210-211.

in the Seleucid army of Nicanor in 160. The diary describes the struggle between Alexander Balas and Demetrius I, which led to the defeat and death of Demetrius I:

3' [That month (III 162 SE = June/July 150) I hea]rd as follows:
In the city of Antioch [the royal city(?), which is on the] sea,
(there was) a grave famine. The troops of the k[ing, the ...]s
and the people who (are) from the cities belonging to(?) the
royal troops of D[emetrius (?) A]lexander, the king, to
Seleucia which is on mount P[ieria(?)] and situated on the
seacoast (?), crossed over. That month I he[ard as follows:]
King Demetrius with 25 elephants and the troops [...] went out
from Antioch and [...]
10' [...] brought about their defeat. The 23rd, the troops [of
And] the elephants defeated each other. [That] mo[nth]
numerous troops of Deme[trius entered (?) The city of
Sel]eucia, the royal city [...] xx [...].

(Sachs and Hunger, 1996, No. –149 A 'Rev.' 6'; also see van der Spek, 1997-1998)

Of particular note in this passage is the reference to a force of 25 elephants in the army of Demetrius I. This record of Demetrius I's possession of a herd of 25 elephants, twelve years after the Romans had enforced the terms of the treaty of Apamea, and ten years after Nicanor's use of Indian elephants is a confirmation of the acquisition and use of these beasts by the Seleucid kings after 162.

Given the continued deployment of elephants by Seleucid kings in the second century, the question of how they were acquired needs to be examined. Since Antiochus III had previously handed over his force of elephants to the Romans, as a result of the terms of the Peace of Apamea, Scullard (1974: 186) notes that there is a problem in identifying where Antiochus IV managed to obtain his elephant force, "since the growth of the Parthian kingdom is generally thought to have cut off the supply from India for the Seleucids, but apparently he had succeeded in getting round the Parthians, physically or metaphorically."

What we must conclude then is that Antiochus III managed to obtain between 92 and 102 Indian elephants, while Antiochus IV acquired 40 Indian elephants, sometime before 170.

Where did these elephants come from? The only two kingdoms capable of supplying Indian elephants were those of Bactria and India. In 274/3 the Seleucid satrap of Bactria was only able to supply twenty elephants to Babylon, to be forwarded on to Antiochus I to be used in the First Syrian War. When Antiochus III campaigned against Euthydemus of Bactria, there is no reference to elephants being used in combat against the Seleucid king. It was only after the siege of Bactra had been lifted that Euthydemus is said to have handed over an unknown number of elephants to Antiochus III. Antiochus III later received a further number of elephants from the Indian king, Sophagasenus, so that he was able to return home with a total of 150 elephants (Polyb. 11.39.10-12). Since India is the indigenous homeland of the elephants, it is perhaps safe to assume that the majority of Antiochus' elephants came from Sophagasenus. Also, when Antiochus III was laying siege to Bactra and the surrounding countryside (Kritt, 2001: 156) it would have been extremely difficult to feed and maintain a significant force of elephants. Therefore, if the source of Antiochus III's 102 elephants was India, how was the delivery of such a large force negotiated? Here, it is worth noting that the text of Polybius (11.39.11) states that Antiochus "renewed his alliance with Sophagasenus the Indian king." This suggests that an alliance between the Indian king and the Seleucid ruler already existed. There is no reference to Antiochus III renewing the alliance previously set-up between Seleucus I and Chandragupta, or any of the other previous Seleucid monarchs. Therefore, it is possible that Antiochus III had made diplomatic contact with the Indian king prior to their meeting around c. 206 and this earlier treaty between 221 - 217 may well have included a deal concerning the delivery of elephants.

The source of the elephants obtained by Antiochus IV is difficult to assess, as he only managed to obtain 40. A further problem is the fact that the Graeco-Bactrian kings of the second century successfully expanded into Indian territory, so that Justin (11.6) was able to call Demetrius, "king of the Indians," while Isidore mentions the town of Demetrias-in-Arachosia, implying that Demetrius had conquered Arachosia. The coinage of Demetrius portrays him wearing an elephant-scalp headdress (Fig. 5), confirming his success against the Indians and probably his acquisition of elephants. From c. 171, Eucratides came to power in Bactria and according to Apollodorus (Strabo, 15.1.3; also see Just. *Epit.* 41.6),

he became master of a “thousand Indian cities.” Therefore, the link between the Seleucid kingdom and that of the Indians would have been severed, so that the Graeco-Bactrian kings would control the supply of elephants to the Seleucid kings. This would suggest that the relationship between the two kingdoms continued to be close.



Fig. 5 Portrait of Demetrius Aniketos (commemorative coin of Agathocles). Extracted image from <http://www.thebritishmuseum.ac.uk/>

4.6.2 Logistics of Elephant Transport

How were the elephants delivered from India to the centre of the Seleucid Empire? In order to understand how a large herd of Indian elephants could be delivered overland from India to the elephant stables of Apamea in Syria, their feeding and maintenance needs to be assessed. By far the most important study on the logistics of ancient armies is the pioneering work by Donald Engels (1978). Engels recognises the importance of supply in gaining a fuller understanding of Alexander’s successful military campaigns, presenting a systematic study of the Macedonian army’s logistical problems. A more recent study by John Shean (1996: 159-187) follows the formulae originally set-down by Engels, but applying it to Hannibal’s army during the Second Punic War.

The daily supply needed for the aforementioned force of 102 elephants received by Antiochus III between 221 – 217 would have been considerable. The formula used by Engels to determine the provisioning of Alexander’s forces can be applied to determine the grain requirements for Antiochus’ elephants. One person would require a ration of at least 3 lbs. of grain and 2 qts. of water per day, whereas a horse or a pack-animal (either a mule or a horse) would require 10 lbs. of forage (straw or chaff), 10 lbs. of grain and 8 gallons of water per day. It thus becomes possible to calculate the amount of provisions needed to feed Antiochus’ herd of elephants and accompanying guard by multiplying the above figures by the total number of individuals and animals (Shean, 1996: 168).

Throughout antiquity, animals were employed more often to carry loads rather than pull wagons. Camels, mules and horses could each carry a different maximum load, so an estimate of how much the average pack-animal could carry will follow the figure of 250 lbs, as suggested by Engels (1978: 15). Pack-animals, rather than wagons, would be preferable when traversing the difficult terrain encountered from India to Babylonia. Next, it is possible to estimate the total number of pack animals used by multiplying the 250 lb carrying capacity by the daily and weekly supply needs of the herd (Shean, 1996: 170). The total number of pack-animals needed for carrying provisions can be estimated by dividing the daily grain requirement for the men and animals involved in the transportation of the elephant herd by the average carrying capacity of each of the pack-animals. This needs to be reduced for each day on which they carry their own provisions. Based on the aforementioned data it is possible to create a table showing the supply needs of the elephants, Indian mahouts, guards, horses and the number of pack-animals required by the herd (Table 1). Shean (1996: 174)¹⁸¹ noted the problem caused by Hannibal’s considerably smaller force of 37 elephants, which “placed a severe burden on Hannibal’s logistical system.”

¹⁸¹ Bosworth (2002: 108) also quotes a consumption of 45 kg (99.2 lbs) during periods of activity.

According to Scullard (1974: 20) a wild African elephant can consume as much as 300-350 lbs. of forage per day, whereas Bosworth (2002: 108) quotes an amount of 270 kg (595 lbs) of green vegetation per day. The minimum amount of food required for elephants held in captivity or during periods of inactivity is about 100 lbs. of hay, with some supplementary forage (Scullard, 1974: 20). A glimpse into the organisation required to provide hay for a large force of elephants can be observed in the Ptolemaic kingdom. An excerpt from a papyrus document, dated to 218,¹⁸² refers to a merchant ship being commandeered from the Fayum port of Ptolemais Hormus, because “there was need of it for the voyage downstream to deliver hay to the elephants at Memphis” (Casson, 1993: 259). Grain, forage, and water requirements for Antiochus’ elephant force, as well as an accompanying guard travelling through an area from which water and forage could be obtained locally for one day, is calculated in Table 1:

Table 1: Food supply for the 102 elephants of Antiochus III

	<i>Total Number</i>	<i>Daily Ration</i>	<i>Weight (lbs.)</i>
MAHOUTS	102 people	3 lbs grain (or equivalent)	306
ACCOMPANYING GUARD	800 people	3 lbs grain (or equivalent)	2,400
	500 horses	10 lbs grain	5,000
ELEPHANTS	102	100 lbs hay and forage (straw or chaff)	10,200
NON-COMESTIBLE BAGGAGE ANIMALS	18	10 lbs grain	180
ANIMALS CARRYING PROVISIONS	79	10 lbs grain	790

GRAND TOTAL = 18,876 lbs [8.42 tons]

¹⁸² *P.Petr.* II 20 col. iv - see Casson, 1993: 259. This excerpt refers to the build-up of forces for the Fourth Syrian War, culminating in the Battle of Raphia (217), which involved a confrontation between Ptolemy IV’s herd of African forest elephants and the Indian elephants of Antiochus III.

How many troops would have been required to guard the elephants on their journey westwards? The elephant hunters of the Ptolemies, included among their personnel, a body of soldiers, as recorded in the Pithom Stele (Casson, 1993: 254). The size of this body of soldiers is unknown, but there is one account of elephants being accompanied by a body of guards. Following the assassination of Porus in 318, the Macedonian commander, Eudamus, took 120 of Porus' elephants westwards, escorted by a force of 800 Indian troops led by a Cathaeon prince: 500 horsemen and 300 footmen (Diod. Sic. 19.14.8). Therefore, I would suggest a similarly sized accompanying guard of 800-armed troops, providing a force sufficient to deter brigands from attempting to seize such a valued prize.

From the figures in Table 1 it is apparent that a major demand was placed on the system of provisioning the elephant force and its accompanying guard. Assuming that water (a major problem at times) and forage for the elephants could be acquired locally, the grand total is 18,876 lbs per day. Each pack animal can carry 250 lbs, but will itself consume 10 lbs = 240 lbs; so the total number of pack animals needed to carry one day's supply of grain = $18,876/240 = 79$. But for one week ($18,876 \times 7$), we need to divide 132,132 lbs by 180 lbs (each animal will now eat 70 lbs of the 250 lbs carried) = 734 pack animals. The number of pack animals required to carry a 15-day ration would be 2,832, and for a 20-day ration, an incredible 7,551 beasts would be needed. In addition to the pack-animals required for carrying provisions, an additional pack-animal for every fifty individuals (Engels, 1978: 18) is needed to carry the non-comestible supplies (e.g. tools, medical supplies, tents and fuel).

It is possible to conclude that the delivery of such a large number of Indian elephants with a considerable entourage of pack animals and guards would be a major operation requiring communication between Antiochus III and Sophagasenus, which suggests a close diplomatic link along the same route.

4.7 *Incense and Olive Oil*

4.7.1 *The Archaeological Evidence*

Inscriptions found on a number of pitchers unearthed at Ai Khanoum have revealed inventories of the treasurers of the city, providing evidence concerning the storage of certain natural products of high value. Two of the pitchers refer to the import of highly prized incense, usually assumed to come from southern Arabia. Salles (1994: 606), however, suggests that the incense from Ai Khanoum may have had its origins in India. The *Kautiliya Arthaśāstra*, an analysis of the Mauryan empire of a later date, refers to a type of incense known as *tailaparnika*, which was stored in the public treasury. But, there is also strong evidence of incense being traded through Gerrha, on the Arabian coast, as recorded by Aristobulus (in Strabo, 16.3.3), “Aristobulus says on the contrary that the Gerrhaeans import most of their cargoes on rafts to Babylonia, and thence sail up the Euphrates with them (to Thapsacus), and then convey them by land to all parts of the country.” And Salles (1994: 605) admits that it would be possible for the incense to have reached Ai Khanoum by following the route of the “Parthian Stations” as described by Isidore of Charax.

Two further labels concerning the “delivery and decanting of olive oil” were found on a pitcher and its lid (Rapin, 1996: 15). Olive oil, being the mainstay of life in the Mediterranean, was extremely precious at Ai Khanoum, as Rapin (1996: 15) has noted, “because it had to be imported from the Mediterranean region, Bactrian winters being too harsh to allow the culture of the olive tree.” Strabo (11.11.1) also notes that the Eastern regions of the Seleucid empire did not produce olive oil, “As for Bactria, a part of it lies alongside Aria towards the north, though most of it lies above Aria and to the East of it. And much of it produces everything except oil.”

He (15.2.14) makes a similar remark about the region of Kirman (*anc.* Carmania), “Carmania grows everything and provided grand fruit-trees, except olives.” As the Eastern

regions of the Seleucid empire did not grow the olive, the only possible source for the stored olive oil found at Ai Khanoum is the West (i.e. the Mediterranean basin).

4.7.2 *The Trade*

Year 24, the ...;
(content) in olive oil; (the vase)
A partially empty (of the reserve) of a
(*stamnos*) and a half (contains) the oil
decanted from two jars by Hippias ; and have sealed
Molossus (?) the vase A and Strato (?) the
vase B (?).

(Rapin, 1996: 15-16)

The above label concerning the storage of olive oil was recovered from the treasury building at Ai Khanoum and is of prime importance in the analysis of trade contacts between the Seleucid Empire and the Graeco-Bactrian kingdom. Also, it is the only piece of archaeological evidence unearthed from the excavations at Ai Khanoum with a date, “year 24.” Rapin¹⁸³ citing Bernard, argues that this date refers to the regnal year of the Graeco-Bactrian King, Eucratides. According to Justin (41.6), both Mithridates I of Parthia and Eucratides of Bactria, came to power in their respective kingdoms “at about the same time”, therefore, Eucratides would have acceded to the throne around 171. This would mean that the 24th year of Eucratides’ reign would have been about 148.

The numismatic record suggests that a northern route through Media and Hyrcania was still in operation at the time of the Eastern campaign of Antiochus III, as attested by the influx of Alexander-type drachms, which “had started before Antiochus’s expeditions, probably even during the reign of Seleucus II” (Golenko, 1995: 192). This would allow for the movement of valued commodities such as olive oil and incense into Bactria from the West. The increased output of silver coinage from the mint at Nisibis, combined with the geographic distribution of its coins, has led Golenko (1995: 188) to argue that throughout the reign of Antiochus III the “northern trade route bringing Eastern goods through Media

¹⁸³ see Rapin (1996: 16), referring to Bernard (1985: 97-105) who identifies the king as Eucratides I.

to Syria increased in importance,” which might account for the reduced role played by the Babylonian mints during the same period. According to Golenko (1995: 188) the most important Babylonian mint, Seleucia-Tigris, issued only 9.6% of Antiochus’s silver coinage, while Nisibis, situated close to Media, accounts for 16% of Antiochus’s silver coinage. Golenko (1995: 188) speculates that the coinage of the Babylonian mints, like the Ecbatana mint, was intended to supply the Eastern campaign of Antiochus III and also “to stimulate the restored Eastern trade.” Golenko (1995: 190) goes on to say that the coin hoards of Syria, Phrygia and Lydia, which contain many silver issues of Antiochus III, struck at Ecbatana, indicate “that Media had active trade connections, carried out through the mediation of the trading cities of northern Mesopotamia (Nisibis), whose issues usually accompanied those of Ecbatana outside Media.”

Therefore, it is possible to observe a close trade relationship between the Seleucid kingdom and the Graeco-Bactrian kingdom from the third to the second centuries, down to the reign of King Eucratides I. The numismatic record suggests that the northern trade route through Media, Hyrcania and then on to Bactria was not severed by the Parthians. There is no reason to doubt that the southern route through Carmania was also in use. Craterus, when acting on the orders of Alexander the Great, took this route. The discovery of the elephant model at Kandahar may also suggest that this route was operative during the middle of the third century. Also, the continued acquisition of elephants from the East by the Seleucid kings, Antiochus IV and Demetrius I, suggests a close relationship between the two kingdoms.

4.8 The History of Seleucid Relations with the East after Antiochus III

4.8.1 Timarchus and Eucratides I

According to Appian (*Syr.* 45) Antiochus IV (*acc.* 175) appointed Timarchus, as satrap of Babylon and his brother, Heraclides, as treasurer, whereas Diodorus (31.27a) states that

Timarchus was satrap of Media, and that his principal cities were Ecbatana and Seleucia-Tigris. Houghton (1979: 216-217) has argued that two examples of a bronze coin from the mint of Nisibis can be attributed to Timarchus and show that his control extended to the borders of Armenia.¹⁸⁴ Bevan (1902 (ii): 158) had explained the discrepancy by claiming that Appian and Diodorus are both referring to Timarchus as the governor of the Eastern provinces. Following the death of Antiochus IV in 163, Timarchus declared himself King of Media in 162 or 161 (Narain, 1989: 401 n.69), while Demetrius was securing his position as king in Syria and was therefore unable to prevent Timarchus from rebelling.

Timarchus appears to have been able to maintain some kind of contact with the Graeco-Bactrian ruler, Eucratides I, as is evident by the close similarities between their coins.¹⁸⁵ Tarn (1951: 196-8) devised an elaborate scheme in which Eucratides expelled the Euthydemid dynasty from Bactria, while Antiochus IV installed Timarchus as governor of Media who later made an alliance with Eucratides.

Tarn (1951: 196) based his argument on a commemorative silver tetradrachm struck by Eucratides I with the legend “king Eucratides the Great, [son of] Heliocles and Laodice” (Fig. 6). The coin depicts a bare-headed Heliocles, while Laodice is depicted wearing a diadem. As the name “Laodice” was a common name in the Seleucid dynasty, Tarn (1951: 197) argued that Laodice was a daughter of Seleucus II, not recorded by the ancient texts. Hollis (1996: 162), while still giving credence to Tarn’s overall argument, amends the lineage of Laodice. He (1996: 162) argues that Antiochus III married his daughter, named Laodice (App. *Syr.* 4-5), to Heliocles, who must have been man of consequence, probably a satrap. As Laodice had previously been married to her brother, Antiochus (App. *Syr.* 4), who died in the summer of 193, this would mean that she was married to Heliocles shortly afterwards in 192. She could thus have given birth to Eucratides around 191 so that he would have been around twenty years of age when he came to power in Bactria c. 171.

¹⁸⁴ Diodorus (31.27a) notes that Timarchus made an alliance with the Armenian king, Artaxias.

¹⁸⁵ see Bivar, 1983a: 33; Torday, 1997: 348; Oikonomides, 1984: 34; *Suse*: 332-4; Houghton, 1979: 216.



Fig. 6 - Tetradrachm of silver of Eucratides commemorating his parents Heliocles and Laodice (c.165) (Extracted Image of www.historicalcoins.com).

Hollis (1996: 163) postulates further that around 170, Antiochus IV gave his able young relative, Eucratides, “money and troops, so that he would not have to be feared as a rival in Antiochus’ own kingdom.” Holt (1999: 71) dismisses Tarn’s reconstruction of the Graeco-Bactrian family tree as an invention of personalities nowhere referred to in the classical texts, so that Tarn is playing an “elaborate chess game with imaginary chess pieces.”

Timarchus declared his independence by issuing a gold coin in imitation of a twenty-stater piece, the largest known coin from antiquity, belonging to Eucratides I of Bactria. The legend on the obverse declares him to be “Great King,” accompanied by an image of the mounted Dioscuri (Narain, 1989: 402). Since Timarchus revolted around 162, Torday (1997: 348) argues that Eucratides’ twenty-stater issue “must already have been well known in Media.” Further, Oikonomides (1984: 34) notes that the frontlet of Timarchus’ helmet imitates the frontlet depicted on the coins of Eucratides (Fig. 7), but not his personal emblem of two plumes held together in crest form.

If the proposal put forward by Hollis is correct, and Eucratides was the son of Antiochus III’s daughter, Laodice, then this would suggest significant Seleucid political involvement



Fig. 7 - Silver tetradrachm of Eucratides I of Bactria (Extracted Image of www.historicalcoins.com).

in the affairs of Bactria. But, Hollis attempts to identify the Laodice portrayed on the commemorative tetradrachm of Eucratides with the known daughter of Antiochus III. This must be treated with extreme caution as there is no reference in the classical literary sources to a family connection between the daughter of Antiochus III and Heliocles or Eucratides. Nevertheless, the coinage of Timarchus, with its close similarities to the coinage of Eucratides, attests to the closeness between the Graeco-Bactrian kingdom and that of the rebel satrap of Media.

4.8.2 The Diffusion of Graeco-Bactrian coins outside of Central Asia

Of importance to the understanding of relations between the Seleucid kingdom and that of the Graeco-Bactrian kings is the analysis of Graeco-Bactrian coins outside of Central Asia. Several hoards attest that the issues of Graeco-Bactrian coinage circulated beyond their own kingdom and were accepted as an international currency. In Parthia the treasury at Nisa contained two tetradrachms of Euthydemus I. Also, at the Parthian site of Gyaur-Kala, a tetradrachm of Eucratides II was discovered along with Parthian drachmas dating from 171 to 123. The Atrak hoard of Greek and Parthian currencies (see 4.4) contained a

Diodotid drachm with a legend in the name of Antiochus II, and another with the legend of Diodotus (*IGCH* 1798). Among the Graeco-Bactrian coins published by H.H. Wilson in 1841 in *Ariana Antiqua* are several coins belonging to Eucratides I and II bought by English collectors in Persia. Father Clemens Sibilian of Vienna came across a number of coins belonging to Eucratides in the bazaar of Hamadan (Bernard, 1985: 108). A gold stater of Eucratides I, as well as a gold octadrachm of Euthydemus I in the Cabinet des Médailles probably had their origins in the northeast or the East of Iran.

In 1923 an enormous hoard of more than 1,600 coins, known as the Tehran hoard, was discovered in the region of Media. Of the Seleucid and Parthian coins the most recent date to the end of the reign of Mithridates II (128-87). The hoard contains 16 tetradrachms of Eucratides I (and II?), 2 of Euthydemus I, 2 of Demetrius II and 7 of Heliocles (*IGCH* 1813). In Gedrosia, a hoard contains six Graeco-Bactrian obols: 1 Demetrius I, 1 Euthydemus II, 1 Antimachus Theos, 1 Pantaleon and 2 Eucratides I (*IGCH* 1803). An important hoard discovered in the region of Susa is composed of pseudo-Alexander (Seleucid) coins, coins of the kings of Elymais, tetradrachms of Mithridates I, 5 of Euthydemus I, 9 of Eucratides I, 3 of Eucratides I or II and 10 of Heliocles (*IGCH* 1804, 1805, 1806 and 1809; Mørkholm, 1965). In northern Phoenicia, in the Ansarie mountains, the treasure of Baarin contains a tetradrachm of Eucratides I (*IGCH* 1567). To the northwest of Iran, in Caucasian Albania, the large hoard of Kabala¹⁸⁶ contains some Hellenistic Greek and some Arsacid coins and numerous local imitations of Alexander types and Seleucid coins. There are also five Graeco-Bactrian tetradrachms: 1 Diodotid, 2 Eucratides I and 2 Eucratides II. In the same Transcaucasian region, but more to the west, the former Iberia (Eastern Georgia), Graeco-Bactrian coins have been discovered, although there is no other precise data concerning this hoard. On the northern coast of the Black sea, at the lower basin of the Dniepr, a tetradrachm of Eucratides has been found (Bernard, 1985: 109). Finally, a tetradrachm of Eucratides has been found among Hellenistic currencies from Asia Minor and Syria in the treasure of Battaglia, close to Ascoli Piceno, in central Italy (*IGCH* 2057).

¹⁸⁶ Kabala (*IGCH* 1737) - The remainder of the hoard discovered in 1966 near the settlement of Kabala, capital of Caucasian Albania, includes 1 tetradrachm of Diodotus I and 4 tetradrachms of Eucratides I - see Babaev and Kaziev, (1971).

4.8.3 Bactrian Support against Parthia

In 140, Demetrius II is reported by Justin (36.1) to have used Bactrian troops against Mithridates I of Parthia during a military campaign in Media (see Torday, 1997: 350). Why should Bactrian troops appear in the army of Demetrius II? One explanation is the increasing threat of Parthian expansionism, since King Eucratides of Bactria is reported by Strabo (11.11.2) to have lost two of his satrapies, Turiva and Aspionus, to the Parthians (i.e. Probably Mithridates I). Loginov and Nikitin (1996: 40) also argue that the satrapy of Margiana was probably taken from the Graeco-Bactrian rulers by the Parthian king, Mithridates I, around 150, since the numismatic evidence from Merv has revealed Hellenistic issues belonging to Antiochus I, Diodotus, Euthydemus, Demetrius and Eucratides, covering a period from *c.* 281 – 150, but not beyond. Further, Jenkins (1951: 18) noted similarities between the helmeted obverse of a bronze coin portraying Demetrius II, from the mint at Seleucia-Tigris, and Bactrian types portraying Eucratides, which he links with Demetrius having Bactrian allies in his campaign against the Parthians in 140.

That the Bactrians continued to support the Seleucid kings against the Parthians even after 140 may be inferred from yet another passage by Justin (38.10.5-6), who reports that in 130, Antiochus VII sought revenge against the Parthians for their capture of Demetrius II, and on his approach:

.....many Eastern princes came to meet him, surrendering their persons and their thrones with curses on the arrogance of the Parthians. The first encounter took place forthwith. Victorious in three battles, Antiochus seized Babylon and began to be dubbed “the Great.” Thus, as all the peoples were defecting to him, the Parthians were left with nothing but the lands of their fathers.

In the above passage, Justin notes that Antiochus VII had captured Babylon, and that after this the neighbouring people joined him, perhaps referring to all the peoples who had previously supported Demetrius II, and were now on Antiochus VII’s side. If the Parthians were indeed confined to their own country, as stated by Justin, this could even imply that the Bactrians had briefly re-occupied Margiana.

4.8.4 The Parthian occupation of the regions south of the Elburz Range

The *anabasis* of Antiochus III had prevented the Arsacids from taking control over the region lying south of the Elburz Range, particularly the areas surrounding Damghan and Shahrud. Following the defeat of Timarchus (Sept/Oct 161),¹⁸⁷ a strong Seleucid presence is still observable in Ecbatana, through the number of coins minted there by Demetrius I (161-150) and also during the early years of the reign of Alexander Balas (150-145) (Jenkins, 1951: 8; *Suse*: 338-40). It was not until 148 that Mithridates I managed to overrun Media and capture Ecbatana. This date finds support in a Greek inscription from Bisitun:

In the year 164 and the month Panemos
Hyacinthus, son of Pantauchus
[erected this statue of]
Heracles Triumphant
for the safety of Cleomenes,
Viceroy of the Upper Satrapies
(Robert, 1963: 76)

The inscription bears the date of 164 (Seleucid Era), in the Macedonian month of Panemos, which corresponds with a date of June 148 (Bivar, 1983a: 33). The inscription notes some concern for the safety of the Seleucid Viceroy, Cleomenes, who was still in charge of the province of Media. The numismatic record, as analysed by Mørkholm (1984: 93), dates the fall of Ecbatana to *c.* 147, during the reign of Alexander Balas. After the capture of Seleucia-Tigris in 141 (Sachs and Hunger, 1996, no. -141, 'Rev. 1-10.) the numismatic evidence suggests that Susa was captured by the Parthians in 138, while Nisibis remained in Seleucid control up until *c.* 120 (Mørkholm, 1984:93).

¹⁸⁷ A cuneiform tablet records the offerings to Babylonian gods made on behalf of Demetrius I in September/October 161, which suggests that Timarchus had already been defeated by Demetrius (Spek, 1997/98: 168).

vs. der

4.9 Conclusion

It is evident that in addition to the limited amount of literary evidence available many other problems complicate our picture of Seleucid relations with the Eastern provinces. Particularly problematic are the difficulties of untangling the early stages of Parthian chronology. On the whole, the evidence suggests that throughout the third century, Parthia was a small kingdom confined to the area north of the Kopet Dagh mountain range. This fits with the image of Parthian development painted by Sherwin-White and Kuhrt (1993: 89) who see it as a series of “wearisome, hard struggles,” before the Parthians were in a position to expand gradually from their homeland. In the 3rd century they should not be viewed as the large and firmly established power that opposed the later Roman Empire across the Euphrates. The unsatisfactory literary sources, ambiguous numismatic evidence and the geography of Parthia, suggest that the Seleucid monarchs were able to maintain control of the northern route to the Eastern provinces throughout the third century and were still capable of trading with the Eastern regions. Further, they were able to raise a military force including Bactrians, in order to campaign against the growing threat of Parthia up until the middle of the second century.

Since the Bactrian satrapies of Turiva and Aspionus, lost to the Parthians by Eucratides, were separated from Parthia by the region of Margiana (Rtveladze, 1995: 184), which was probably captured *c.* 150, these two satrapies must also have been captured by the Parthians sometime around that date or later. Given the strong connections I have argued for between the Seleucids and the Graeco-Bactrian rulers well into the second century, it is certainly not beyond the realms of possibility that the two kingdoms made an alliance at this point to counter the growing power of Mithridates I. Shortly after his conquests in Central Asia, Mithridates captured Media sometime after June 148, before finally being received as king in Seleucia-Tigris in 141 (Sachs and Hunger, 1996, no. -140).

With the support of recent archaeological and numismatic findings it is possible to make a convincing case that the Seleucid Empire, centred on Syria and Mesopotamia, was active

in encouraging trade with the Eastern kingdoms of Bactria and India. Until the time of Eucratides the Graeco-Bactrians continued to import olive oil and incense from the west, while the Seleucids acquired elephants from the East throughout the third and second centuries. The numismatic evidence, through coin hoards and the distribution of coin finds, suggest that trade continued without any significant interruption in the third century and beyond. The presence of coins from the mintage of Eucratides on the Iranian plateau and in Mesopotamia is the natural consequence of the economic prosperity that Bactria knew under this sovereign and appears in the setting in circulation of a large amount of coinage of which the treasure of Qunduz is a striking demonstration. Part of this money was surely attracted by the commercial circuit with the Seleucid Near East. The Parthian conquest of Media, some time after 148, does not seem to have been an obstacle to the economic exchange since it continued under the reign of Heliocles. Indeed, the tetradrachms of Heliocles are as numerous as those of the two Eucratides in the treasury of Tehran and Susa, whereas Ecbatana and Seleucia-Tigris were already in the hands of the Arsacids (Bernard, 1985: 110).

Chapter 5

The Archaeology of Seleucid and Graeco-Bactrian frontier policy in Central Asia

5.1. Introduction

This chapter sets out Seleucid frontier policy with regard to the Eastern part of the empire, indicating the regions under direct Seleucid control as well as explaining where and why frontier zones appear and the reasons for their fluctuations over time. The archaeological record of Central Asia is still incomplete, which creates difficulties when trying to assess which sites were under Seleucid authority and when. Nevertheless, the increasing amount of archaeological evidence from the former Soviet Central Asia provides a much clearer picture so that it is now possible to put forward a reconstruction of Seleucid frontier policy in Central Asia. Since much of the archaeological evidence refers to the “Hellenistic period,” it is sometimes difficult, if not impossible, to separate the Seleucid period from the Graeco-Bactrian period, particularly with the ceramic, architectural¹⁸⁸ and artefact evidence. This is why I intend to overlap the Seleucid period with that of the Graeco-Bactrian period. In order to carry out my original proposal, I will employ and illustrate the concept of frontiers, not as a line or simple zone, but as an area in which the political, social, ethnic, religious, linguistic, economic and military boundaries all become blurred. These blurred boundaries changed over time, creating a more fluid frontier concept (Elton, 1996: 4).

Alongside the standing army, Seleucid and Graeco-Bactrian authority was assisted by a network of fortified garrisons and guard posts to control strategically important places

¹⁸⁸ e.g. fortifications and public buildings built in the Hellenistic style.

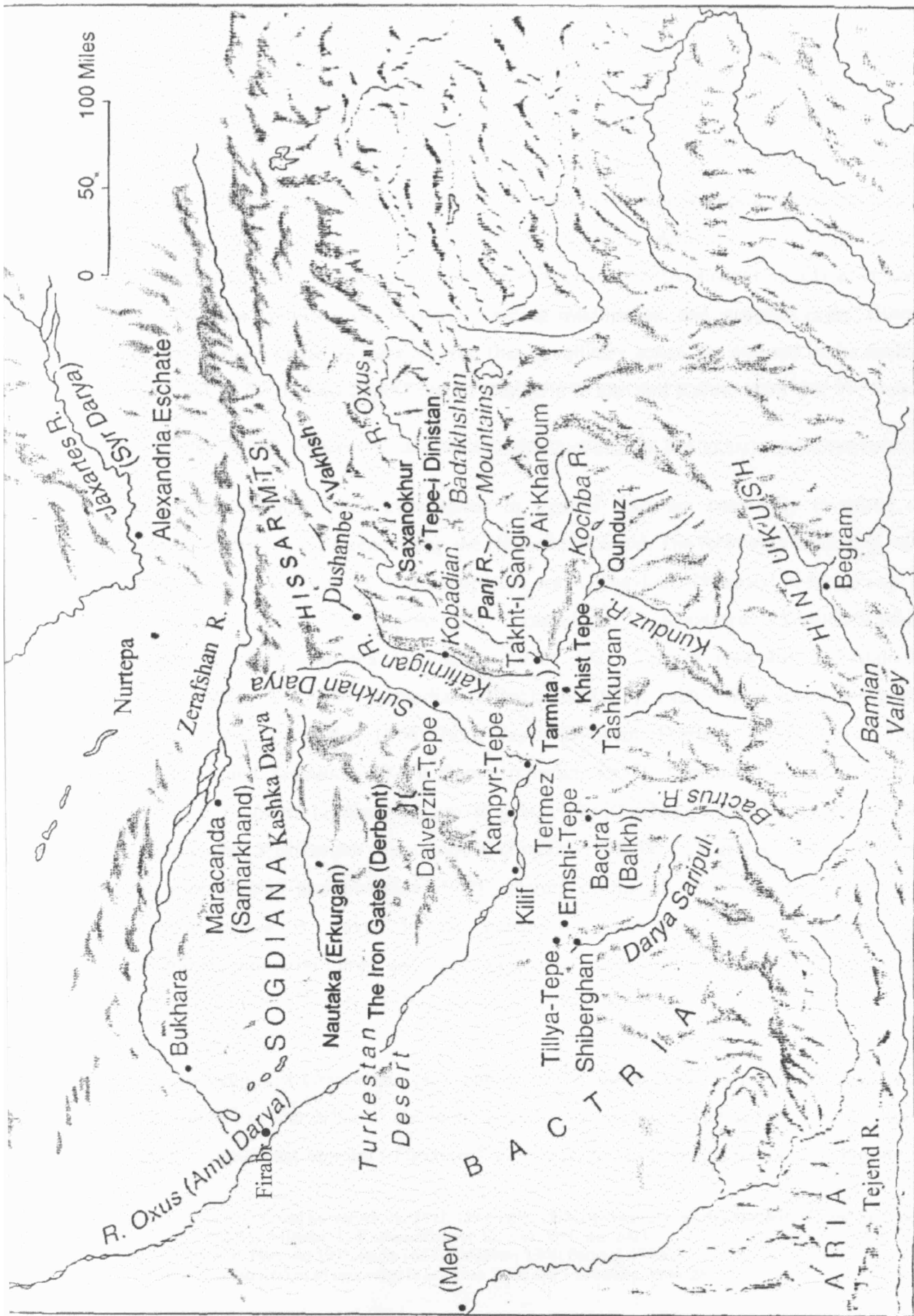


Fig.8 – Map of Central Asia

throughout Central Asia. These strategic places were located at the crossroads of trade routes (e.g. Bactra); at river crossings (e.g. Termez and Kampyr Tepe); on the borders of kingdoms (Antioch-Scythia - Khodjend) and at the confluence of two rivers (Ai Khanoum). According to Elton, the function of garrison troops situated on a frontier zone is threefold, for “policing the border, gathering intelligence, and stopping raids” (Elton, 1996: 4). Regions under military control, that is, military zones, are attested in the ancient sources and in the archaeological record (Sherwin-White and Kuhrt, 1993: 59; 77; Polyb. 10.27.3).

The ongoing archaeological excavations in Central Asia are constantly revealing an increasing amount of data concerning the Hellenistic period. The following main sites with evidence of a Hellenistic level of occupation are: Gyaur-Kala (Alexandria-Margiana)¹⁸⁹; Afrasiab (Maracanda in Sogdiana);¹⁹⁰ Saxonokhur;¹⁹¹ Khodjend (Antioch-Scythia) (Megmatov, 1986); Nurtepa (Litvinsky, 1996: 302); Termez (possibly an Antioch) (Bernard, 1982c: 236 n. 54); Kobadian (D'yakonov, 1953); Takht-i Sangin (Litvinsky and Pichikian, 1996; Litvinsky, 1996: 295); Tepe-i Dinistan (Denisov, 1975); Emshi-Tepe (Kruglikova and Sarianidi, 1971); Bactra (Gardin, 1957); Qunduz (Drapsaca/Adrapsa) (Bernard, 1975: 65 n.11); Shahr-i-Banu (Engels, 1978: 97 n.111), where Hellenistic pottery has been found; Tashkurgan (*anc.* Aornos) (Engels, 1978: 99 n.2); and, on the river Oxus, Khist Tepe (Curiel and Fussman, 1965). Dating of the above-mentioned sites to the Hellenistic period is proved by the ceramics, numismatics and architecture (e.g. fortifications, public buildings and the change from using large rectangular mud-bricks to square bricks in the 3rd century) (Pugachenkova, 1995: 6).

In this chapter I will concentrate on a sample of the above sites from northern Bactria as well as the site of Kandahar to the south and Merv to the west. The sample I have chosen has seen a significant amount of archaeological excavation in recent years allowing me to

¹⁸⁹ Bader, A., Gaibov, V. and Koselenko, G. 1992; 1994-1996; 1998; Herrmann, G., Kurbansakhatov, K., and Simpson, St. J., *et al.*, 1993 to 2001; Williams, T., Kurbansakhatov, K., *et al.*, 2002 and 2003.

¹⁹⁰ see Bernard *et al.*, 1990 and 1992; Rapin and Islamiddinov 1994; Bernard, 1996c.

¹⁹¹ A Graeco-Bactrian settlement uncovered in Southern Tajikistan - Litvinsky, 1996: 297.

make use of the results for a clearer understanding of Seleucid frontier policy. These sites are listed as follows: Antioch-Scythia / Alexandria-Eschate (Khodjend); Nurtepa (Ura-Tübe region); Maracanda (Samarcand / Afrasiab); the Iron Gates (Derbent); Nautaka (Erkurgan); Dushanbe; Takht-i Sangin; Kampyr-Tepe; Tarmita (Termez); Ai Khanoum; Alexandria-Margiana (Gyaur-Kala / Merv) and Alexandria-Arachosia (Kandahar).

5.2. Examination of Archaeological Evidence by site

5.2.1 Antioch-Scythia / Alexandria-Eschate (Khodjend-Leninabad)

The city of Antioch-Scythia is thought to be the re-foundation of Alexandria-Eschate on the Jaxartes by Demodamas when he was campaigning against the nomads.¹⁹² Some interesting material connected with the long-discussed problem of its location has been collected in Khodjend-Leninabad. Archaeological excavations have revealed that the settlement covered about 20 ha., which has been identified as the ancient city of Antioch-Scythia / Alexandria-Eschate, which lies under the present day city. So far, the site has revealed traces of the Hellenistic fortifications and the discovery of Ai Khanoum style ceramics (Litvinsky, 1996: 302; Negmatov, 1986: 44-45).

5.2.2 Nurtepa (Ura-Tübe region)

The site of Nurtepa, which occupies an area of about 18 ha., has revealed the remains of fortifications and it is known to have been occupied from the end of the 7th to the 2nd centuries. Litvinsky (1996: 302) is convinced that it was “one of the seven fortified cities of Ustrushana mentioned by ancient authors.”

¹⁹² Steph. Byz. *Ethnica* - Antioch no. 10; see Fraser, 1996: 33; Bernard, 1996a: 91; Holt, 1999a: 27; Tarn, 1951: 83, n.3; cf. 3.4.

5.2.3 *Maracanda (Samarcand / Afrasiab)*

Maracanda is the site of the most important of all the settlements in the Sogdian valley of the river Zerafshan. Maracanda occupies a strategic position on a hilly plateau, covering an area of 220 ha., with the fortification circumference being 5.5 km long (Bernard, 1996c: 348; Shishkina, 1994: 83). According to the literary sources, the city was a “royal residence of the region” (Arr. *Anab.* 3.30.6) with a walled circumference of 70 stades (Curt. 7.6.10) at the time of Alexander’s arrival in Central Asia. Recent excavations of the Hellenistic city show that a rampart with a corridor inside, follows the “irregular contours of the Achaemenid city” (Bernard, 1996a: 91) and has been dated by the pottery evidence to the first half of the third century, during the reign of Antiochus I. The construction of the new walls, surrounded by fosses, took place in the 3rd-2nd centuries (Pugachenkova, 1995: 16).

The archaeological evidence for Hellenistic Maracanda appears in a survey of the fortifications and ceramics (Bernard, 1996c: 348). The Hellenistic ramparts of Maracanda were inspired by the local tradition of fortifications, consisting of a wall with internal galleries of two or three levels, which Isamiddinov and Rapin (1996: 36) have confirmed as barracks for the housing of soldiers. Evidence of Greek architectural influence can be observed by the use of square bricks in contrast to the rectangular bricks of the Achaemenid period (Isamiddinov and Rapin, 1999: 36). Hellenistic characteristics can be observed at the nearby sites of Koktepe (some 30 km north of Maracanda) and at Shahr-i Sabz (Isamiddinov and Rapin, 1999: 37). The lack of monetary finds may show that the Sogdian economy remained local and was based on barter and under-developed compared to that of Bactria (Isamiddinov and Rapin, 1999: 37).

The last construction phase of the Hellenistic ramparts at Maracanda immediately precedes the nomadic attacks of the mid-2nd century. The quality and the care devoted to their completion reflects a period of prosperity rather than urgency of construction imposed by an external threat like that of the nomads at the time of the rivalries between Euthydemus I and Antiochus III at the end of the third century (Polyb. 11.39; also see 3.7; 4.5).

Isamiddinov and Rapin (1994: 558) believe that this program could have been started either before these events, or after, sometime during the third of a century that separates the reign of Euthydemus I from the first aggressions of Eucratides I to the north of his kingdom (i.e. sometime between 200 and the second quarter of the 2nd century). Nevertheless, Isamiddinov and Rapin (1994: 558) note that the lack of evidence means that it is not yet possible to determine the date with any precision.

The presence of a Greek population whose origins go back to the period of Seleucid rule is confirmed by Ai Khanoum-type ceramics and the discovery of two Greek graffiti: a vase engraved with the Greek name “Nikias” and a small bone with the first letters of the name Ktes-. Also, isolated Greek letters have been discovered as control marks on bricks.¹⁹³

The Seleucids founded other fortresses and towns in the Zerafshan valley, such as the fortified site of Durmen (about twenty kilometres to the west of Maracanda). The Greek settlement led to widespread city-building, as shown by the discovery of Ai Khanoum type ceramics (Shishkina, 1994: 86).

5.2.4 The Iron Gates (Derbent)

The defiles, also known as the “Iron Gates,” are particularly narrow passages, connecting the oasis of Kashka Darya in southern Sogdiana, with northern Bactria. They are located in the Bajsun Mountains of modern day Uzbekistan, on the road from Bactra to Maracanda. Although the literary evidence does not mention it, Alexander would have passed through the area, while on his military campaigns for the control of Sogdiana (328-327). Indeed, Rakmanov and Rapin (1999: 18) have suggested that the Achaemenids had built up a system of defence consisting of a network of fortresses and citadels, such as the famous “Sogdian Rock” of Choriene, or Sisimithres, mentioned by the literary sources (Curt. 8.2.19-23; Arr. *Anab.* 4.21.1-9 etc), as they followed the campaigns of Alexander. The passage of Derbent rests on a group of two steep defiles in the form of canyons. The one

¹⁹³ Bernard, 1996a: 91; 1996c: 347; Karttunen, 1997: 280.

located further to the East allows the waters of the River Shurob to flow through it, and is lined by a wall curving across the valleys for almost two kilometres (Rakmanov and Rapin, 1999: 18). The rampart of a wall of barbican construction, not only blocked the pass, but continued along the Bajsun mountain range. This wall has been dated to the Kushan period, as was another rampart located near the river Sina. Most likely, there were other such boundaries erected in other mountain passes, marking a frontier that divided southern Sogdiana from northern Bactria. A rectangular tower was discovered next to the gates, along with a section of the wall with an inner corridor. As well as ceramics from a later period, some Graeco-Bactrian ceramics were discovered in this corridor, suggesting that the wall was also built during the Graeco-Bactrian period (Pugachenkova, 1995: 11).

Despite the discovery of Graeco-Bactrian ceramics, Pugachenkova (1995: 11) has noted that the mud-bricks measure 32 x 32 x 9 cm, whereas in the Graeco-Bactrian period the usual dimensions were 40-45 x 48 x 10-14 cm. Pugachenkova (1995: 12), therefore, suggests that during the Graeco-Bactrian period, it may have been “a small guard station.” However, a recent survey of one of the sections of the great wall has revealed that the oldest monumental phase dates back to the Hellenistic period, above which are three architectural phases, the first in stone, the following ones out of square unfired bricks (Rakmanov and Rapin, 1999: 19).

The Hellenistic level has been dated to the 3rd and 2nd centuries, at a time when the pressure of the nomads to the north appeared to threaten the Graeco-Bactrian kingdom (i.e. at the time of Antiochus III’s siege of Bactra (208-206), when Euthydemus warned of the nomads to the north who could overrun the entire kingdom) (see 3.7; 4.5). Therefore, the original function of the wall may have been that of a border intended to protect Bactria from nomadic incursions. This type of threat continued with the invasions of the Yüeh-chi and Saka, so that the later Kushans were forced to re-fortify this same frontier on a regular basis. It is this Kushan wall, with its monumental base aligned on a broad external berm that forms the relief of the visible barrier today (Rakmanov and Rapin, 1999: 19). The discovery of a stone catapult ball at the “Iron Gates” has been described as perhaps “the

only weapon from Alexander's army ever recovered," highlighting the military significance of the site (Grenet, 2003; Holt, 2005).

5.2.5 Nautaka (Erkurgan)

The site of Erkurgan has been identified as ancient Nautaka, which lies on the right bank of the Kashka Darya (i.e. southern Sogdiana) (Pugachenkova, 1995: 13). The town was almost square in shape and had strong fortifications consisting of four thick mud-brick walls. So far, a palace from the upper town has been excavated, revealing a series of Hellenistic ceramics and a Graeco-Bactrian coin dated to the second century (Pugachenkova, 1995: 18). The earliest layers of the site have been dated to the 6th-4th centuries (Pugachenkova, 1995: 13).

5.2.6 Dushanbe

Graeco-Bactrian layers have been discovered at the site of Dushanbe (Litvinsky, 1996: 297). The site covers an area of about 60 or 70 ha. with a rectangular citadel (300 x 150 m). The western side of the site is protected by a steep cliff and the remaining sides by a large trench. In the middle, there is a wall 20 m long and 1 m thick, while the area to the south has a wall 60 m long and 1m thick (Litvinsky, 1996: 298). The series of ceramics from Dushanbe are of the Ai Khanoum type allowing the site to be dated to the 3rd-2nd centuries. Amongst the finds at Dushanbe are a number of bronze and iron arrowheads, as well as a number of objects of art, including a terracotta figure of a horseman and a Hellenistic ivory head (Litvinsky, 1996: 299). These excavations show the extension of Graeco-Bactrian influence, stretching north of the Amu Darya to the foothills of the Hissar Mountains. In respect of frontier policy it is noteworthy that Litvinsky (1996: 299) believes the region "can be taken in its cultural aspect as the second zone of Hellenistic influence with a definitely predominating Bactrian substratum."

5.2.7 *Takht-i Sangin (Tajikistan)*

The Hellenistic and post-Hellenistic site of Takht-i Sangin (“stone platform”) is situated on the right bank of the Oxus at the confluence of its tributary, the River Wakhsh. The site is located about 100 km downstream from Ai Khanoum (Bernard, 1994: 507) and according to Litvinsky and Pichikian (1996: 47) it may be identified as the ancient Oxiana (Ptolemy, 6.12.5-6; Strabo, 11.11.4). So far, there have been over 5,000 votive objects unearthed from the “Temple of the Oxus” (Litvinsky, 1994: 289), including a Hellenistic style ivory portrait of Alexander as Heracles, statues of Apollo, portraits of Seleucid governors made of clay and alabaster, and a huge quantity of Hellenistic weapons (Litvinsky, 1994: 295; also see Holt, 1999a: 41).

Takht-i Sangin, along with Takht-i Qohad 1 and Takht-i Qohad 3 protected the river crossing of the Oxus. The fortress of Takht-i Qohad 3 was situated on the left bank of the Oxus, opposite the site of Takht-i Sangin. Takht-i Qohad 1, located 5 km south of Takht-i Sangin protected the crossing from the south (Litvinsky and Pichikian, 1996: 47). The fortress of Takht-i Sangin (237 x 167 m)¹⁹⁴ was “stratigraphically placed to render it unassailable from dry land.” To the East the site was protected by the Oxus; to the west by a mountain ridge; and to the north and south by city walls 2 km apart (Litvinsky and Pichikian, 1996: 48).

The centre of the Temple is occupied by a square hall (about 12 x 12 m.) with four columns. The base of the columns are of classic Achaemenid type - two-step plinth, torus-shaped base, and smooth pillar, and are surmounted by Ionic capitals of the classical Asia Minor type (Litvinsky and Pichikian, 1996: 53; Litvinsky, 1994: 293). These Achaemenid base types have been typologically compared to those in western Iran of the sixth to fourth centuries, as well as the Hellenistic architecture from Ai Khanoum, dated between the third and second centuries (Litvinsky and Pichikian, 1996: 53).

¹⁹⁴ The city extended 1 km north and south of the fortress.

An Ionic capital from the Temple of the Oxus bears a close resemblance to those found at the Temple of Athena in Priene¹⁹⁵ and at the Temple of Artemis in Sardis (dated to 330-300) from the late fourth to early third century (Litvinsky and Pichikian, 1996: 54; Litvinsky, 1994: 293). This makes it possible to date the construction of the Temple of the Oxus to this period. The evidence of the artefacts from the temple, many comparable to the famous ‘Oxus Treasure’ now in the British Museum, also suggests that it was constructed in the late fourth or early third century.¹⁹⁶ The earliest group of offerings of the 6th-4th centuries consists of pre-Achaemenid, Achaemenid and Greek objects, similar to the contents of the Oxus treasure. Included in the offerings are an ivory *akinakes* scabbard, a gold plaque representing a camel being led by a Bactrian, an ivory rhyton, an ivory *machaira* (sword) hilt in the shape of a griffin, a bronze plaque depicting two panthers confronting each other. The second group of objects have been dated to the 4th-2nd centuries, including small statues, terracottas, as well as ivory and gold reliefs (Litvinsky and Pichikian, 1996: 55; Litvinsky, 1994: 295). There is a whole gallery of portrait sculpture and genre statuettes. The most important discovery is that of a bronze statue of Silenus-Marsyas mounted on a small limestone altar with a Greek inscription, “Atrosoces dedicated [his] vow to the Oxus”. This dedication to the Oxus has been argued to show that the temple of Takht-i Sangin combined the functions of a fire-temple and river-shrine. The plan of the temple and the altars suggests an association with fire worship.¹⁹⁷ Indeed, the “Atrosoces” of the inscription may have been a fire priest, as his “Bactrian” name can mean either “shines with sacred fire” or “is useful to the god of fire.”¹⁹⁸

Litvinsky (1994: 296-7) notes a close connection with the site of Ai Khanoum, stating that, “There is no doubt now that Hellenic influence spread beyond the limits of the Greek settlements and that there were several zones of Graeco-Bactrian integration.” The site of Takht-i Sangin clearly reveals a “zone of a most intensive cultural integration” (Litvinsky, 1994: 297).

¹⁹⁵ This is dated by a dedication of Alexander the Great.

¹⁹⁶ Litvinsky and Pichikian, 1996:54; Pichikian has proposed a date towards the end of the fourth century, while Litvinsky prefers a date towards the beginning of the third century - see Bernard, 1994: 508.

¹⁹⁷ Litvinsky and Pichikian, 1996: 57, argue that the “written sources attests to a dualistic notion of water/fire in Iranian (and Indian) beliefs and rituals.”

¹⁹⁸ Litvinsky and Pichikian, 1996: 57; Litvinsky, B.A. 1994: 295; Sherwin-White and Kuhrt, 1993: 185.

The temple provides a wonderful example of syncretism, displaying a combination of local Bactrian and Greek architectural elements, as illustrated by the “Ionic columns set on oriental bases.” The combination of a figure of the Greek god Marsyas (protector of streams) with a Greek inscription dedicated to the deified Bactrian river Oxus has led Litvinsky and Pichikian (1996: 58) to conclude that:

Such a doubling of mythological images from two different religions was not only designed to increase their sacral power but also intended for a culturally and ethnically mixed Graeco-Bactrian environment.

Of importance for the Seleucid period of rule is a pair of clay heads, probably originally part of full-length statues. Both wear the royal diadem and an analysis of their profile has confirmed similarities with the portraits of Seleucus I and Antiochus I depicted on coins found at Takht-i Sangin (Litvinsky and Pichikian, 1996: 61). Litvinsky (2003: 55) doubts that the heads from Takht-i Sangin portray kings, but instead may represent either governors of Bactria, relatives of a monarch or “friends of the king.” He has dated the heads to the 3rd or the beginning of the 2nd century following an iconographical analysis, which would mean that the clay-heads could not be used to confirm Seleucid authority in the region. Nevertheless, they could represent two Seleucid governors.

Amongst the archaeological material discovered at Takht-i Sangin there was a huge quantity of Hellenistic weapons, including a Greek infantry sword (*xiphos*) with a combat scene between Heracles and Silenus on its ivory handle, which has been dated to the fourth century (Litvinsky and Pichikian, 1996: 58). In conclusion, the evidence of the weaponry and the Ionic capitals from the temple suggests that Takht-i Sangin was under the authority of the early Seleucid monarchs, Seleucus I and possibly Antiochus I.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁹ Litvinsky and Pichikian, 1996: 54 and 61; Bernard, 1994: 508-9; Karttunen, 1997: 280.

5.2.8 *Kampyr-Tepe*

A settlement situated on the right bank of the Amu Darya was identified by Minorsky (1967) from its Sogdian name of '*Pardāgwī*,' which is derived from the Greek word *pandocheion*, meaning "inn" (Rtveladze, 1994a: 141; Bernard, 1996b: 104; 125). Rtveladze (1994a; 1994b) has identified the site with that of Kampyr-Tepe, in the Surkhan Darya district of Uzbekistan and located about 30 km west of Termez. The gate faces towards the river, highlighting the importance of Kampyr-Tepe as an important fortress that protected a crossing over the River Oxus, on the route from Bactria to Sogdiana by way of the Iron Gates (Rtveladze, 1994a: 141; 1994b: 159). So far, some 300 coins have been discovered at Kampyr-Tepe. From the Seleucid period, two chalkoi of Antiochus I have been found, while there have been eighteen coins from the Graeco-Bactrian period: two chalkoi of Diodotus, three chalkoi of Euthydemus, one dichalkos of Euthydemus II, two dichalkoi of Demetrius, one tetrachalkos of Eucratides, along with one drachm and six obols, one drachm of Heliocles and one chalkos of Heliocles II (Rtveladze, 1994a: 150-1). Therefore, the numismatic evidence makes it possible to date the settlement of Kampyr-Tepe from the third century onwards.

The discovery of three Greek inscriptions on potsherds and the side of a jar have provided the first epigraphic evidence of the economy north of modern-day Afghanistan. The first of these inscriptions is believed to read "fifteen drachmas." The second inscription refers to the liquid measurement "*choi*" (Rtveladze, 1994a: 147-9; Pugachenkova, 1995:12). The final Greek inscription on the side of a jar consists of four surviving letters: *K L E O* Rtveladze (1994a: 147-9) has proposed that these four letters may either be the beginning of a personal name or the word *kleuon*, meaning "prophecy," "rumour," "fame."

5.2.9 *Tarmita (Termez)*

Archaeological examination at the site of Termez has revealed a fortress guarding the western crossing point of the Amu Darya, which connected north and south Bactria, as well as being on the main route to southern Sogdiana through the “Iron Gates” (Pugachenkova, 1995: 12). Recently, some ceramics paralleling those at Ai Khanoum have been discovered at Termez (*anc. Termita*) (Sherwin-White and Kuhrt, 1993: 105; Karttunen, 1997: 154). Termez, on the right bank of the Oxus at the confluence of the Surkhan Darya, seems to be one of the ancient Antiochs (Bernard, 1982c: 236 n.54; Karttunen, 1997: 280) although it has been noted that this is not supported by the ancient texts (Sherwin-White and Kuhrt, 1993: 19). The stratigraphic level of Greek occupation lay on virgin soil, suggesting that Termez was founded in the aftermath of Alexander the Great’s campaigns, when the area was under Seleucid rule (Sherwin-White and Kuhrt, 1993: 105).

Also, in the region of Termez, a coin hoard dated prior to the reign of the Graeco-Bactrian king, Demetrius I, was discovered at the site of Ayrtaam, 18 km East of Termez (Fig. 9) (Sherwin-White and Kuhrt, 1993: 103). Elsewhere in the vicinity of Termez, is the site of Zar Tepe, some 26 km to the northwest, which has revealed Graeco-Bactrian coins and ceramics, attributed to the third and second centuries (Sherwin-White and Kuhrt, 1993: 107).



Fig. 9 - The Valley of Surkhan Darya (after www.ximebenj.club.fr/index.htm)

5.2.10 *Ai Khanoum*

The impressive discovery of a large Hellenistic city by King Zaher of Afghanistan in 1961 (Bernard, 1967: 73; Holt, 1999a: 16), led to extensive French excavations between 1965 and 1978, until the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 brought them to an abrupt halt. Daniel Schlumberger was the first archaeologist to start excavating at the site of Ai Khanoum and Paul Bernard continued his work.

Ai Khanoum is situated on the left bank of the Oxus (*mod.* Amu Darya) at the confluence of the Kokcha River in northeast Afghanistan (Rapin, 1990: 331; Holt, 1984: 6). The site is triangular in shape, measuring 1800 m from north to south and 1500 m from East to west and benefitting from the natural defences provided by the two rivers, as well as a hill, some 60 metres higher than the rest of the city, which became the acropolis where the citadel was erected. The defences were completed by the construction of huge ramparts using unbaked bricks and interspersed with rectangular towers (19 x 11m.), particularly at the vulnerable northern edge of the city, which lacked any natural defences (Leriche, 1986; Rapin, 1990: 331-2; Bernard, 1996a: 92).

The surrounding countryside was being cultivated by a network of irrigation canals long before the foundation of the Greek city at Ai Khanoum. Nevertheless, during the third and second centuries, intensification in cultivation and the irrigation system took place. Also, the discovery of a considerable number of sites from the Hellenistic period attests to a significant increase in population in the vicinity of Ai Khanoum (Sherwin-White and Kuhrt, 1993: 111).

The southern end of the acropolis shows signs of occupation during the Achaemenid period (Bernard, 1980; Rapin, 1990: 329). It contained all the buildings and institutions required by a Greek city. Apart from those buildings closely associated with Greek institutions and customs, there is also a significant amount of architecture displaying

Iranian influences (Bernard, 1976a). The population of the city probably included a considerable number of Greeks and Macedonians, as attested by the presence of a gymnasium (Bernard, 1976b: 301; 1978: 422-9; and 1996b: 112), a Greek theatre (Bernard, 1976b: 314-22; 1978, 429-41; and 1996b: 112), acropolis (Bernard, *et al*, 1980; Bernard, 1980 and Leriche, 1986), arsenal (Bernard, *et al*, 1980; Bernard, 1980 and 1996b: 113), temples such as the *Heroon* of Kineas (Bernard, *et al.*, 1973: 85ff. and Bernard, 1996b: 113), and a necropolis outside the city (with Greek funerary inscriptions) (Bernard 1972: 608ff.). Also of great importance are several Greek inscriptions, Hellenistic pottery, coins and other artefacts discovered at the site. Jean-Claude Gardin and Bertille Lyonnet have also provided valuable data on the survey of the plain of Ai Khanoum and its Hellenistic pottery (Lyonnet, 1997 and 1998; Gardin, 1999). Most of the residential area and public buildings at Ai Khanoum were close to each other in the lower town, which was less exposed to the wind and also benefited from the canals providing the water supply. The palace complex also housed the administration and treasury, and was inspired by Neo-Babylonian and Achaemenid architecture, occupying the entire width of the lower town (350 x 250 m.) so that it was not possible for the city streets to be laid out in the typical grid pattern. The palace followed the Achaemenid architectural composition of Susa, with an enormous courtyard, ringed by four porticoes with 118 columns a side (Bernard, 1996b: 110; Colledge, 1987 143ff.).

The structure of a monumental hall (27 x 17m.) has strong affinities with Achaemenid tradition, with an open façade and eighteen Corinthian columns arranged in three rows of six, resembling the columned halls of the Achaemenid palaces (Bernard, 1967: 82; 1996b: 110). Architectural designs and ornamentation follow the tradition of Greek, Achaemenid, Bactrian and Mesopotamian styles. The layout of the buildings were mainly inspired by Iranian and Central Asian architecture, although the décor followed the Greek style of Doric, Ionic and Corinthian columns. The construction technique of using baked bricks is very much an Achaemenid tradition, although not unknown to Greece. The use of flat roofs over a number of buildings was also typical of the East (Bernard, 1967: 78; 1982a; 1996b: 110-1; Colledge, 1987; Rapin, 1990: 336-7).

Bernard (1982b: 126; also see Bernard, 1967: 74 and Rapin, 1990: 331) argues that the location of the city is particularly suited for a military outpost, so that “a force stationed here could control the Eastern marches of Bactriana and block a potential invasion route southward along a left-bank tributary of the Oxus upstream from the city.” However, Torday (1997: 331) points out that the nomads preferred to invade far to the west, and that “no incursions of any significance have ever been recorded either from sparsely populated Wakhan or archaic Chitral.” Also, he noted that there is only one ford in northeast Badakhshan, at Ishkashim, which is “difficult of access from Transoxiana” (Torday, 1997: 331). To the west of Ai Khanoum are a few fords crossing the River Oxus, allowing any potential aggressor to bypass Ai Khanoum, en route to Bactra. Torday (1997: 332) concludes that Ai Khanoum was not strategically situated, rather it was tactically situated in order to take full advantage of the natural features.

Bernard (1967: 92; 1982b: 126; 1996a: 92) believes that the evidence from Ai Khanoum does not allow us to ascertain whether Alexander or Seleucus founded the city, but has noted that it was greatly developed under the first Seleucid monarchs. This view is supported by the numismatic evidence, which has shown that almost 40 per cent of all bronze coins discovered at Ai Khanoum were struck by the first three Seleucid kings (Bernard, 1996a: 95).

5.2.10.1 An examination of the ceramics of Ai Khanoum and Eastern Bactria

Ai Khanoum has provided a ceramic sequence, making it possible to date much surface material. Initially, Bernard undertook a survey of the ceramics at Ai Khanoum, allowing him to describe the types of pottery from the site, as well as establish its western character when comparing it with ceramics from Greece, Asia Minor or the Near East (Bernard in Schlumberger and Bernard, 1965). Later, Gardin produced a more detailed typology, although still incomplete, based on the abundant material that came out of the excavations (Gardin, 1973; Gardin and Lyonnet, 1976). The survey carried out at Ai Khanoum

established a chronological succession from the foundation of the city (late 4th century) until its fall (at the end of the reign of Eucratides (c.145)). Lyonnet (1997: 147) has presented an evolution of the Ai Khanoum ceramics, progressing over eight chronological periods (Ai Khanoum I to VIII), following on from each other at 25 year intervals. The variations from one period to the next are often minor and it was only by working on large quantities of sherds that it was possible to make very fine distinctions.

By conducting a regional survey of the site and region surrounding Ai Khanoum, Lyonnet has attempted to make a distinction between the occupation during the period of Alexander's conquest, the Seleucid colonisation, and the Graeco-Bactrian period. Lyonnet has also attempted to gain an understanding of the frontiers of the Greek kingdom of Central Asia in order to distinguish Sogdiana from Bactria.

Although the monetary finds were relatively numerous (Bernard, 1985), the issues found in stratified layers were extremely rare, making it difficult to date each of the eight periods with precision. At the temple with indented niches, the archaeological context of the currency of Diodotus I suggested a time between period V (Graeco-Bactrian period) and period IV (Seleucid period). In the treasury of the palace, an inscription provides one date for the end of the Greek occupation, c. 145 (also see 4.7.2).

The ceramics of the first three periods of the city, of white colour, are very close to those of Central Asia in the 1st millennium BC, but the shapes are Greek. Identical ceramics are attested at several other sites in Central Asia, some of which are located on the periphery of the Graeco-Bactrian kingdom and were probably founded by Alexander himself, like Alexandria-Eschate on the Syr Darya (see above 5.2.1). Nevertheless, according to Lyonnet (1997: 148), there is nothing to exclude the white ceramics from continuing down to the appearance of Seleucus I's coinage.

In period IV, it has been possible to observe considerable changes associated with a rebirth of Ai Khanoum based on the huge quantity of material and the number of new constructions, which suggests a strong growth in the population from this time. A renewal

of close ties with the Mediterranean world is indicated by the introduction of new Greek shapes, decoration, and black gray ceramics. Period IV has been associated with the Seleucids, particularly the reigns of Antiochus I and II, because of the abundance of their coinage in Ai Khanoum (Bernard, 1985: 7).

Only one indication permits the ceramic material of the Hellenistic period to be separated into two phases, one dating to the conquest of Alexander and the beginning of the Seleucid period, and the other to the Seleucid reconquest and the Graeco-Bactrian period. According to Lyonnet (1997: 148) these two phases can be separated with the appearance of the black gray ceramics from period IV at Ai Khanoum, *c.*260.

5.2.11 Antioch-Margiana / Alexandria-Margiana (Gyaur-Kala / Merv)

A broad belt of desert encircled the oasis satrapy of Margiana. The principal city, renamed Alexandria-Margiana, was destroyed by nomads and later refounded by Antiochus I as Antioch (Plin. *HN*, 6.47). In antiquity, the Merv oasis appears to have had closer contacts with Aria than with Bactria. Strabo (11.10.1) links Margiana with Aria, describing them together as follows:

Aria and Margiana are the most powerful districts in this part of Asia, these districts in part being enclosed by the mountains and in part having their habitations in the plains. Now the mountains are occupied by Tent-dwellers, and the plains are intersected by rivers that irrigate them, partly by the Arius and partly by the Margus.²⁰⁰

Following his description of Aria, Strabo (11.10.2) refutes the opinion of Deimachus in his description of the fertility of the area:

Admiring its fertility, Antiochus Soter enclosed a circuit of fifteen hundred stadia (about 173 miles) with a wall and founded a city, Antioch. The soil of the country is well suited to the vine; at any rate, they say that

²⁰⁰ The end of this part of the text containing the description of the borders of the regions is partly damaged.

a stock of the vine is often found which would require two men to girth it, and that the bunches of grapes are two cubits (about 3 feet).

The Merv oasis lies on the important trade route from Iran to Central Asia and China and provides a safe haven for caravans transporting their goods between the Iranian plateau, Bukhara and the Zerafshan valley (Frye, 1984: 18). The distance from Merv to the valley of the River Tejend is approximately 125 kilometres, whereas Merv and Bactra are separated by 200 kilometres of desert. There are two safe routes to Bactra, the first follows the route to Firabr, and then follows the course of the Amu Darya river until Bactria is reached; the second route follows the Murghab river upstream. Both routes, as Vogelsang (1992: 58) notes, cover three times the distance of the more direct route across the desert.

Excavation has revealed extensive irrigation networks in the Merv oasis (Bader, *et al*, 1996) and it was not until the period from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries, that Turkmen raiders destroyed the system of irrigation works linking the Tejend Valley and the Oxus (Engels, 1978: 89-90). That Margiana greatly benefitted from irrigation is evident from the remarks of Isidore (14), who refers to the re-foundation of the city of Alexandria by Antiochus I as “Antioch-in-the-waters.”

A further contentious description of Margiana, comes from Pliny (*HN*, 6.46-7):

Lying to the East of the Caspian is the region called Apavartene, in which is Dareium, a place noted for its fertility. Then there are the tribes of the Tapuri, Anariaci, Staures and Hyrcani, from whose shores beyond the river Sideris begins to be called the Hyrcanian Sea; while on the side of the Sideris are the rivers Maziris and Staor, all three streams rising in the Caucasus. Next comes the Margiana country, famous for its sunny climate - it is the only district in that region where the vine is grown; it is shut in all around by a beautiful ring of mountains, 1,500 stadia in circuit, and is difficult of access on account of a sandy desert stretching for a distance of 120 miles; and it is itself situated opposite to the region of Parthia. In Margiana Alexander founded a city bearing his name, which was destroyed by the barbarians, but Antiochus son of Seleucus reestablished a Syrian city on the same site, intersected by the river Margus, which is canalized into Lake Zotal; he preferred that the city should be named after himself. Its circuit measures 70 stadia.....

There are a number of similarities between the texts of Pliny and Strabo. Pliny states that a “ring of mountains” of some 1,500 stadia in circuit surrounded the oasis of Margiana, whereas the city itself had a circuit of 70 stadia. On the other hand, Strabo claims that the wall circuit of Antioch itself had a circumference of 1,500 stadia. Bader *et al* (1998: 160; 1995: 46-47) concluded that similarities between the texts of Strabo and Pliny are probably a result of both authors using the same literary source, Apollodorus of Artemita (see 2.5.1). It has been plausibly argued that Strabo misinterpreted the text of Apollodorus, so that the circuit wall of 1,500 stadia that he refers to, is the “ring of mountains” mentioned by Pliny. On the other hand, Pliny’s circuit wall of seventy stadia has been confirmed by the archaeological record. The excavations have revealed the remains of a massive unbaked-brick wall, which can be seen along the ramparts of Gilyakin-Chilburj and is attributed to Antiochus I.²⁰¹

In recent years, a British-Turkmen-Russian collaboration undertook two archaeological expeditions to the Merv oasis, the International Merv Project, working on the historic urban centres, and the Margiana Project, mapping archaeological sites in the north. Also, a joint Central Asian-Italian team has been preparing an archaeological map of the Merv oasis, based on information from a complete survey of the area (over 220 sites) (Gubaev, A., Koshelenko, G. and Tosi, M., 1998). The survey examined the structural transformation, which shows the shift of the centre of the oasis from north to south by the time of the re-foundation of Alexandria-Margiana, following its destruction by nomads, as Antioch-Margiana during the 3rd century (Koshelenko *et al*, 1994: 273; Bader, *et al*, 1998: 187). The Achaemenid citadel at Erk-Kala was transformed into Alexandria-Margiana, which was incorporated into the present day site of Gyaur-Kala surrounding the citadel of Erk-Kala. At the same time, the area to the north of the oasis was reoccupied by fortified settlements following the settlement, irrigation and cultivation of the south after the 1st century (Koshelenko, *et al*, 1994: 273). Apart from the sites of Erk-Kala, Gyaur-Kala and two segments of the Gilyakin-Chilburj wall there are only two other sites that can be

²⁰¹ Bader, A., Callieri, T. and Khodzhanizayov, T., 1998; Bader, A.N., Gaibov, V.A. and Koselenko, G.A., 1995; Bernard, P., 1996a: 91.

attributed to the Hellenistic period with any certainty; an unnamed settlement to the north of Gyaur-Kala and the fortress of Alan-depe in the southern part of the oasis (Bader, *et al.*, 1998: 187-188).

The archaeological record shows a great reduction in the inhabited and cultivated land of the Merv oasis during the Hellenistic period compared with the previous period (Bader, *et al.*, 1998: 187). Bader *et al.* (1998: 187) have proposed that the considerable reduction of this inhabited region was not due to a catastrophic reduction of the population, but “a higher concentration of population in a more limited territory,” which coincides with the sharp growth of both Gyaur-Kala and Erk-Kala.

The ancient literary texts do not make any reference to the annexation of Margiana by the Graeco-Bactrian kings in the 3rd century and the Arsacids in the 2nd century. Nevertheless, the archaeological surveys of Erk-Kala and Gyaur-Kala have, according to Smirnova (1996: 262), “enabled researchers there to link some of the buildings not only with the Graeco-Bactrian period, but also with Bactrian building techniques.” Where the literary evidence has left a gap, recent numismatic evidence has provided an insight into the political history of Merv. In Margiana, the currencies of Alexander and those of the Seleucids are evident, and of particular interest are a number of Hellenistic bronze coins, dating from the Seleucid period (Antiochus I) and the Graeco-Bactrian period (Diodotus, Euthydemus, Demetrius, and Eucratides). The evidence provided by these Hellenistic bronzes is more significant than the recovery of silver coins, as Holt (1999a: 108) explains, because, “bronzes were the elusive coinage of everyday life. They did not travel as far as silver and gold.” The coins of Antiochus I indicate a Seleucid presence in the region of Margiana, which is then followed by a succession of Graeco-Bactrian rulers, stretching from Diodotus to Eucratides. Loginov and Nikitin (1996: 40) argue that the region was probably captured from the Graeco-Bactrians by the Parthians *c.* 150, during the reign of Mithridates I of Parthia, and also believe that the Parthian take-over could be alluded to by Justin (41.4.1-3). How strong the Parthian hold over Margiana was not known, yet no Parthian coins minted in Margiana can be attributed to Mithridates I, and it is not until the reign of Phraates II (138-127) that drachms with the mint mark MAP (Margiana) appear.

5.2.12 *Alexandria-Arachosia (Kandahar)*

A British team directed by Svend Helms excavated the site of Shahr-i-Kohna (Old Kandahar) from 1976 to 1978. It uncovered both Achaemenid and Hellenistic remains, including a *temenos* with a Greek votive inscription of the son of Aristonax, which refers to a *temenos* of Alexander and the city of Alexandria-Arachosia dating to the early third century:²⁰²

...of the wild beast ... set up this in the sacred precinct, the son of Aristonax
Alex ... among his fellow-citizens and of my saviour ...

(SEG 30.1664)

The ancient site of Old Kandahar lies some distance from the modern city and is situated close to the Arghandab river, from which water was drawn in order to irrigate the surrounding land. The irrigation of the region was augmented by a system of qanats possibly dating back to the Achaemenid period (Helms, 1997: 3).

The archaeological aspect of Central Asian cities from antiquity, such as Balkh and Old Kandahar, are fundamentally different from the typical Greek city such as Ai Khanoum, where public buildings were stone built. Moreover, cities constructed of dressed stone represent a greater opportunity of discovering buildings and inscriptions in order to assist in identifying the historical periods of occupation (Helms, 1997: 3). The importance of Kandahar lies in its location on the East-west route where routes converge from Kabul and the lower Indus. These routes continued westward across the Iranian plateau and on to Babylonia. Bevan (1902: 271) proposed that the frontier between the satrapies of Arachosia and Drangiana was the Erymanthus river (*mod.* Hilmend) (attributed to both Drangiana (Arrian, *Anabasis*, 4.6,6; 3.27,4; Ptolemy. 6.19.4) and Arachosia (Polyb. 11.34)).

²⁰² Oikonomides, 1984: 145-147 and Fraser, 1979: 9-21. Whereas Fraser (1979) dates the text to before 260, Helms (1997: 91) favours a date of c. 200-150.

The site of Old Kandahar may be identified as the ancient Alexandria-Arachosia or the Alexandropolis of Stephanus and Isidore, founded on the site of an Achaemenid city. The archaeological evidence (including Elamite tablet fragments from the Achaemenid citadel) indicates that this settlement was originally founded in the first half of the first millennium BC. Before the arrival of Alexander the site may well have had an Iranian name similar to the Greek designation of Arachotoi, as attested by the ancient literary sources (Strabo, 11.8.9 and Plin. *HN*, 6.25.92). Isidore of Charax, writing during the first century BC, reports that Alexandropolis, the main city of Arachosia was still Greek, and that the region of Arachosia was referred to as “White India” by the Parthians (Isidore, *Parthian Stations*, 19).

5.2.12.1 The Aśoka Inscriptions

The Mauryan King Aśoka, ordered the engraving of fourteen rock edicts to promote the (Buddhist) *Dhamma* amongst the Greek and Aramaic population (Thapar, 1997: 173). Narain was only familiar with one such inscription in Afghanistan, the Aramaic (and Middle Indian Prakrit) fragment found in Laghman in 1932 (Narain, 1957: 28 n.5). Later, in 1969 and 1973 two Aramaic edicts were discovered in the same locality.

Three of Aśoka’s edicts were discovered at Old Khandahar (Shahr-i Kohna), with the first, discovered in 1958, being a bilingual inscription written in Greek and Aramaic (*Burstein* 50; Sherwin-White and Kuhrt, 1993: 101-2; Thapar, 1997: 274; Helms, 1997: 4). The inscription can be dated to 258, confirming a Greek presence at Old Kandahar in the mid-3rd century under Mauryan rule. Holt (1984: 9) argues that the location of these edicts at Kandahar “establishes the territorial extent of the Mauryan Empire and the importance of the Greek-speaking population of the area during the third century BC.” In 1963, another Greek inscription was discovered at Kandahar with the latter part of Aśoka’s rock edict XII and the beginning of rock edict XIII (Norman, 1972: 111-118; Thapar, 1997: 274). Aśoka’s rock edict XIII refers to the Greeks and Iranians (*Yonas* and *Cambojas*) of Old Kandahar being incorporated within the Mauryan Empire (Sherwin-White and Kuhrt,

1993: 101). Later in 1963, a further Indo-Aramaic fragment of Aśoka's edict VII was bought in the bazaar of modern Kandahar (Shaked, 1969; Holt, 1984: 9; Helms, 1997: 4).

On the thirteenth rock edict, Aśoka records his sending of missionaries to the major Hellenistic kingdoms to the west, with the intention of converting them to the *dhamma*:

where reigns the Greek king named Antiochus, and beyond [the realm of] that Antiochus [in the lands of the] four kings named Ptolemy, Antigonus, Magas, and Alexander.....'

(Rock edict 13, Prakrit – Thapar, 1997: 40)

The reference to these contemporary Hellenistic kings allows the edict to be dated, as the kings referred to are Antiochus II, Ptolemy II, Antigonus Gonatas, Magas of Cyrene and either Alexander of Corinth or Alexander of Epirus (Thapar, 1997: 40-1).

Helms (1997: 92) has provided a comprehensive pottery typology for the pre-Islamic period indicating traces of a Hellenistic presence sometime in the later 4th century, around the time of Alexander's arrival in Kandahar.²⁰³ The next phase shows an abundance of Indian pottery, probably marking Seleucus' ceding of Arachosia to Chandragupta around 305. At a later date there is evidence of a decrease in the amount of Indian pottery, along with the appearance of Hellenistic architecture, small finds and the Greek inscription concerning the son of Aristonax. This evidence has been attributed to the annexation of Arachosia and the re-Hellenisation of the city by Euthydemus of Bactria in the aftermath of Antiochus III's Eastern campaign, sometime after 200. Finally, Helms (1997: 92) has proposed that Eucratides took Arachosia in 170 and lost it to Mithridates I c.155.

²⁰³ The numismatic evidence has only produced a single coin of Alexander, which was minted after 334 (Helms, 1997: 92).

5.2.13 Conclusion

In Bactria and Sogdiana it appears that the Seleucid kings followed the practice initiated by Alexander the Great, of fortifying all settlements at strategic locations. The strong fortification of towns in Bactria and Sogdiana suggests that these settlements were essentially military foundations, benefiting from their location in rich agricultural areas such as the river valleys of the Oxus, Jaxartes and their tributaries.

The evidence of trade in the Oxus valley is evident from the identification of a caravan staging post at Kampyr-Tepe (See 5.2.7: '*Pardāgwī*,'). The abundance of ivory suggests that there was close trade and economic contacts with India (Litvinsky and Pichikian, 1996: 61). Imported ivory from India appears in Ai Khanoum, Takht-i Sangin, Dushanbe and Nisa in Parthia. Literary evidence shows that olives and incense were imported from the west (see 4.7) and that elephants (see 4.6) were exported via Bactria. That Merv and Kandahar were also stopping places for trade is suggested by Isidore (14 and 18), who refers to both places in his *Parthian Stations*. As Kandahar is located on the main East-West route where routes converge from Kabul and the lower Indus, it may also have been one of the main stopping off points in the export of elephants to the West (see 4.6.1). Also, Strabo (11.8.9) refers to a route through Arachosia (i.e. Kandahar), Drangiana, Aria, the Caspian Gates and then Media. The oasis of Merv was a rich agricultural area and due to its surrounding desert would have been a safe haven for caravans travelling between the Iranian plateau, Bukhara and the Oxus valley. Isidore (14-15) informs us of a trade route from Seleucia-Tigris, via Ecbatana and Hecatompylus to Merv. Whereas Isidore states that the caravan route from Merv went south through Aria, Arachosia and on to India, Vogelsang (1992: 57) notes that a series of wells would have allowed caravans to reach the Oxus from Merv. If Vogelsang is correct, it would have been possible to reach Bukhara and Maracanda, the settlements along the Oxus and then south to Bactra.

Ai Khanoum was not an important city in respect of commerce. Whereas Bactra linked the Indian city of Taxila to Seleucia-Tigris and the West, Ai Khanoum was located in the

eastern part of Bactria and had a mainly military function as a frontier fortress. As Rapin (1990: 331) points out, Ai Khanoum derived its revenues “mainly from agriculture and mining.” Ai Khanoum differs from the other sites along the Oxus by having its own mint, as attested by the presence of bronze blanks for coins not yet struck, as well as a treasury that contained a large hoard of Indian coins, fragments of agate and onyx and an Indian style mother-of-pearl plaque. The artefacts from India probably represent taxes collected from that country during the Graeco-Bactrian period. These finds have led to the suggestion that Ai Khanoum may have been the capital of King Eucratides (Bernard, 1982a: 129; Rapin, 1990: 336).

5.3 Organisation of Military Forces

What types of troops garrisoned the towns and fortresses of northern central Asia? Were the garrisons entirely composed of Graeco-Macedonians or local people or were they a mixture of the two? Or were they a mixture of both Graeco-Macedonians and local natives? What weapons were these troops equipped with? Also, is it possible to interpret the archaeological evidence to distinguish between the infantry and cavalry?

5.3.1 Graeco-Macedonians

New colonists, many of whom probably came from the Seleucid possessions of Asia Minor, strengthened the Greek presence in the Central Asian satrapies. Under Seleucid administration, the towns of these satrapies learnt how to reconcile the respect due to monarchical power and the practice of municipal institutions typical of a Greek city, within the limits of autonomy allowed by the royal authorities. The activity of the mints of Bactra and Ai Khanoum indicates the economic prosperity of the whole region. The mint of Ai Khanoum has accounted for almost 40 per cent of all bronze coins struck by the first three Seleucid kings, suggesting that the Seleucids were a major contributor to this economic prosperity (Bernard, 1996a: 95). The network of Greek military settlements and cities stretching from the Syr Darya to Mesopotamia kept the Seleucid kingdom together. A colony was generally established on royal land (*chora basilike*). Colonists received a land

allotment (*kleros*) in return for performing military service for the king. In the west, this obligation was handed down through the generations. These Greek *cleruchs* appear to have exploited the native population as a labour force to work on their allotments (Holt, 1988: 63-4). The city would be economically independent, controlling the surrounding territory, like those in the west (Nikonorov, 1997: 33; Bikerman, 1983: 8).

Nikonorov (1997: 33) speculates that there is sufficient evidence that the military-*cleruch* system also existed in the cities of the East, at least until the end of Seleucid authority (c. 235). It would seem most unlikely that the Seleucid kings would start a different system of recruiting their military forces. Nikonorov (1997: 33) has suggested that there might be one significant difference in the East, proposing that “the far Eastern *cleruch*-soldiers were mainly intended to defend their provinces, but not to join the royal troops for campaigning in the west.” Holt (1988: 68) notes that during this campaign the “countryside now contained thousands of new military colonists, reinforced by numerous garrisons.” Bernard (1996b: 105; 1982a: 154-57), Briant (1978: 77-78), Bosworth, 1980: 10-11) and Holt (1988:63) have all shown how these Greek colonists exploited the indigenous population as a workforce for their allotment-*cleruchs* (Alexandria-Caucasus - Diod. 83.2; Curt. 7.3.23; Alexandria-Eschate - Curt. 7.6.27; Justin, 12.5.12; the rock of Sogdiana - Curt. 7.11.29).

After Alexander, it is possible to observe the continuation of this Graeco-Macedonian exploitation of the indigenous population. Even though it is possible to see Bactrians working as minor officials at Ai Khanoum, the highest positions were still held by the Greeks. Also, the houses at Ai Khanoum indicate a segregated society with the élite Greeks living in grand Greek-style houses, while the local people appear to have lived in one-room houses on the acropolis, not being allowed to live in the lower town (Bernard, 1982a: 134). This would fit with the idea that the exploitation of the indigenous population as a labour force for the allotment-*cleruch* system may have continued through the Seleucid and Graeco-Bactrian period.

5.3.2 Local Bactrians

The work of Briant (2002: 748-50; 1984: 82-4) has made it possible to conclude that under the Achaemenid kings, Bactria was split into a number of administrative districts relating to mountainous regions and the extensive oasis lands. These districts were led by “chiefs,” called *hyparchoi* by Arrian (*Anab.* 4.21.2), and *satrapae* by Curtius (8.2.19; 8.4.21; 10.1.22.). These local chiefs provided contingents of horsemen, which they levied on receiving an order from the satrap, and assembled at Bactra. The rule of these chiefs can be seen by their imposition of duty on agricultural produce (for example, Curt. 7.11.1 and Arr. *Anab.* 4.21.1) and by their ability to gather their people into a militia. The territorial authority of the *hyparch* is referred to as *imperium* (Curt. 8.2.32; 8.4.21; Arr. *Anab.* 4.21.9). As Briant (2002: 748) points out, this confirms that these territorial regions were at the disposal of the local chiefs (also see Curt. 8.1.1).

The main assembly place (*sylogos*) was located at Bactra. Briant (2002: 749) argues that the Bactrian *sylogos* was an institution typical of what occurred throughout the Achaemenid Empire. Every hyparch raised his own contingent (Xen. *Cyr.* 8.8.20) and brought it to Bactra. The statement by Curtius (7.4.30), that “the cavalry of the Bactriani had amounted to 30,000” suggests that there was an administrative roll call at the assembly point of Bactra (Briant, 2002: 749; 1984: 83-4).

Following Xerxes’ withdrawal from Greece in 480, the Persian general, Mardonius, remained in Greece with the best quality troops, including the Bactrian contingent (Hdt. 8.113). Later, at the Battle of Gaugamela (331), the Bactrian cavalry gave a good account of themselves, showing that they were an important part of the Achaemenid army (Arr. *Anab.* 3.13.3).

Fig. 10 - Hunters from the silver disc of the Oxus Treasure (after Nikonorov, 1997: Fig. 3).



From this evidence it is possible to conclude that the native soldiers in Central Asia preserved their own particular characteristics of warfare (Fig. 10). These native soldiers were employed in satrapal service, which led to the large-scale employment of native contingents in Central Asia.²⁰⁴

5.3.3 The weapons evidence

Trying to estimate the number of troops used for the garrisoning of the sites of northern Central Asia during the period of Seleucid rule is not a feasible proposition. Nevertheless, it is possible to gain an impression of the size of the garrisons by the sheer quantity of archaeological finds of weapons and armour. As Litvinsky (2001: 521) notes, the sheer number of Greek sword scabbards “considerably exceed in quantity all the material obtained by the archaeologists for two centuries of the excavations from continental Greece and from beyond its borders.” This, he notes, is amazing, considering they have

²⁰⁴ Arr. *Anab.* 7.6; 8.2; 11.3; Curt. 10.3.10; 13; Plut. *Vit. Alex.* 47; Just. *Epit.* 12.12.4; compare Diod. Sic. 17.110.1-2.

been discovered “at the farthest periphery of the classical oikumene.”

The Graeco-Macedonian infantry from Central Asia do not appear to have followed the example of Alexander’s phalanx. Whereas Alexander’s phalangites were equipped with a small shield²⁰⁵ in order to hold the 18 foot long sarissa (Theophr. *Caus. pl.* 3.12.2.) with both hands, the archaeological evidence has overwhelmingly shown that the Graeco-Macedonian infantry of the East were equipped with the *thureos* type of shield, as witnessed at Takht-i Sangin (Litvinsky, 2001: Plate 107), Kampyr Tepe (Nikonorov and Savchuk, 1992: 50, Fig 2) and Ai Khanoum (Bernard, *et. al.*, 1980: pl. XXIII).

5.3.4 Cavalry forces

One of the major pieces of defensive equipment for Graeco-Macedonian cavalry is the helmet. The open-faced “Boeotian helmet” was only used by cavalry troopers and frequently appears in Graeco-Macedonian art, such as the portraits of kings depicted on coins (Figs. 6 and 7), the Alexander sarcophagus and a totally intact Boeotian helmet, recovered from the River Tigris (Snodgrass, 1967: Fig. 58).

Further evidence for the presence of cavalry troopers can be deduced by the discovery of various pieces of horse equipment, such as snaffle-bits, mouthguards and trapping ornaments (Bernard, *et.al.*, 1973: Fig. 43; Guillaume, 1985: Figs. 7-9, 11-15). Native Bactrian cavalry can be distinguished from those of the Graeco-Macedonian cavalry through their depiction on the sculptures at the Khalchayan palace (Mielczarak, 1993: Fig.14) and the discovery of cataphract armour at Ai Khanoum (Bernard, *et. al.*, 1980: pl. XXIII). This cataphract equipment does not appear in the forces of Alexander or his immediate Successors, and it was not until Antiochus III’s encounter with the Parthians and Graeco-Bactrians, during his eastern anabasis, that the Seleucids adopted cataphract equipment.

²⁰⁵ The shield of the phalangite was eight palms in diameter (i.e. about two feet across), as recorded by Asclepiodotus (*Tact.*

The sole use of a mobile cavalry force can be observed in the battle at the River Arius, between Euthydemus I and Antiochus III, where a force of 10,000 cavalry was used (Polyb. 10.49.1). This may not have been Euthydemus' entire cavalry force as, according to Curtius (7.4.30), "the cavalry of the Bactriani had amounted to 30,000" during the reign of Darius III.²⁰⁶

The type of cavalry used by the Graeco-Bactrian kings can be discerned from the eastern *anabasis* of Antiochus III. He was so impressed with the fully-armoured cataphract cavalry, he reformed his own cavalry along similar lines, as evidenced by their appearance at the battles of Panion (Polyb. 16.18) and Magnesia (Livy, 37.40; Mielczarek, 1998: 101; 1993: 46.). Euthydemus' cavalry fought in units Polybius (10.49.10) calls *hipparchias*. Antiochus III called on two thousand of his cavalry who were accustomed to fight around him (i.e. his élite Agema and Companion regiments). This force was capable of successfully fighting one such Bactrian *hipparchias*, but had difficulty when fighting three such units. This could mean that the Bactrian *hipparchias* was composed of 1,000 cavalry (Nikonorov, 1997: 44; Head, 1982: 27). If so, it would also suggest that the Bactrian cavalry with which Antiochus fought in close combat must have been heavily equipped, as a force of Bactrian light cavalry would surely not have presented such a difficulty to the élite regiments of the Seleucid cavalry. In the description of this battle by Polybius (10.49.13-14), he reports that Antiochus had his horse transfixed and killed, suggesting that a Bactrian horseman armed with a lance had killed his horse, the weapon associated with the cataphract cavalryman. Certainly, Polybius' account of Antiochus III's campaign against the Parthians does not report any encounter with Parthian cataphracts who might have inspired Antiochus' later cataphract reforms. On the other hand, it would appear that his battle against the Bactrian cavalry at the River Arius, and the hard-fought struggle involving himself at the head of his two élite cavalry regiments, would have had a great impact upon him. It thus seems more likely that it was the Bactrians, and not the Parthians, who influenced Antiochus III to make his cavalry reforms.

5.1).
²⁰⁶ also see Arr. *Anab.* 3.30.10-11.

5.4 Bactria and Sogdiana

Under the Achaemenid and Seleucid kings, both Bactria and Sogdiana were ruled together as a single satrapy (Briant, 2002: 746). What distinguished one from the other is unclear, but this distinction is important as Sogdiana gained some degree of independence from Seleucid and Graeco-Bactrian rulers during the third and second centuries.

In order to gain an understanding of the geographical extent of Sogdiana it is necessary to recall what Greek historians and geographers say about the border between Sogdiana and Bactria. It was not until the formal independence of the Graeco-Bactrian kings that Bactria was divided up into several satrapies. (Sherwin-White and Kuhrt, 1993: 103).

The information concerning Bactria and Sogdiana becomes more abundant from the time of Alexander's conquest, but is often contradictory. Whereas Strabo (11.11.2) states that "the Oxus River....forms the boundary between the Bactrians and the Sogdians," there is stronger evidence to suggest otherwise (Lyonnet, 1997: 154; Bernard, 1996c: 332). Modern interpretations concerning the border between Bactria and Sogdiana are still being debated. One interpretation argues that the region is characterised by the culture and the ethnic group of its population, while another recent interpretation argues that the origin of the term is merely geographical (Lyonnet, 1997: 154).

The first literary description of the "Iron Gates" (Dar-i-Ahanin) comes from Hiuen Tsiang, who records that the passage was extremely narrow and lay between unusually high mountains. Double wooden gates, bound with iron, blocked the way, giving rise to the name of the passage, the "Iron Gates" (Rtveladze, 1990: 29; see 5.2.4). Rtveladze (1990: 11) notes that "There is no doubt that it was a border wall, which defended the northern border of the Kushan state" and goes on to argue that the archaeological and historical evidence points to this region being the border between Bactria and Sogdiana. Staviskii (1977: 39) has shown that during the Kushan period, the area north of the Amu Darya, as far north as the Hissar mountain ridge, was a single historical and cultural area, with the

political border represented by a rampart that blocks the passage of the “Iron Gates.” Frye (1972: 12, 31, 234, 235) also believes that Bactria, as a cultural region, was surrounded to the North, East and South by mountains with the Amu Darya dividing the area into two parts; in the north (Tadjikistan) and the south (Afghanistan, Turkmenistan). Recent excavations at the “Iron Gates” (see 5.2.4) suggest that the wall acted as a border during the Hellenistic period (Rakmanov and Rapin, 1999: 19).

Of significance is Arrian’s (*Anab.* 4.21.1) distinction of a region known as Paraetacene from that of Sogdiana. He states that “having finished his business with the Sogdians, Alexander went to Paraetacae and, first of all, to the Rock of Chorienes, which was within their territory” Rtveldze (1990: 12) has located the region of Paraetacene between Sogdiana and Bactria, in the mountainous area of West Hissar and the adjacent valleys of Surkhan Darya and Sherabad Darya. A large number of Bactrian inscriptions have been discovered in this region, the language of which corresponds closely to the language of the inscriptions discovered on the left bank of the Amu Darya (Rtveldze, 1990: 13).

Archaeological excavation has revealed that, in the region of the middle Oxus, the valleys of the five tributaries on its right bank (from the west, the Kizil-Su, the Wakhsh, the Kafirnigan, the Surkhan Darya and the Sherabad Darya) are culturally connected, from the Achaemenid period to the Islamic period. The real cultural border between northern Bactria and Sogdiana is located along the Hissar mountain range to the north and to the west by the chains of the Bai-Suntau and the Kungitangtau (Lyonnet, 1997: 154; Bernard, 1996c: 332).²⁰⁷ Therefore, Sogdiana can be seen to commence from the South, with the valleys of the Kashka Darya and the Zerafshan, reaching up to the north as far as the northern slopes of the Turkestan mountains and the Syr Darya (Bernard, 1996c: 334).

²⁰⁷ Further literary evidence from a seventh century AD Chinese source, also supports the aforementioned view. Hiuen Tsiang, writing around 630 AD, recorded that a large river (Amu Darya) cut across the land of Tu-ho-lo, westwards, splitting the region of Bactria into two, with the Iron Gate being the border between Sogdiana and Bactria (Beal, 1906: 37-8; Bernard, 1996c: 334; Rtveldze, 1990: 14).

5.5 *The Border Satrapies of Turiva and Aspionus*

There is very little information concerning the satrapies of the East. The only literary evidence appears in the works of Strabo (11.11.2), who makes the following remarks on Bactria: “The Greeks took possession of it (i.e. Bactria) and divided it into satrapies, of which the satrapy Turiva and that of Aspionus were taken away from Eucratides by the Parthians.” The reign of the Bactrian king, Eucratides (c. 175-155), corresponds with that of the Parthian ruler, Mithridates I (r. 170-139). Exactly which area of Bactria was captured by the Parthians has, until recently, not been known for certain. The two provinces have been variously located, with Narain (1957: 17) placing them in Margiana, while Tarn put Turiva in the Elburz region of Tapuria (Tarn 1951: 87-88). On the other hand, Rtveladze (1995: 184) has argued that there may be a connection between the satrapy of Turiva and the city of Fariab, situated in northwestern Tokharistan, close to the border with Margiana. He arrives at this conclusion by noting that a region known during the Middle Ages as Fariab, has an area also known as Tariab, thereby allowing him to make the linguistic link “Turiva-Tariab-Fariab.”

It is possible that, given Strabo’s remark, the two provinces were adjacent to each other and that they would therefore, have been captured in quick succession. The province of Aspionus recalls the horse in its name (*asp*, a horse), as did the name of the city, Bactra-Zariaspa (golden horse) (also see, Bevan, 1902 (i): 276), also referred to by both Strabo (11.8.9) and Pliny (*HN*. 6.45). Rtveladze (1995: 184) believes that the linguistic similarities between the names of Aspionus and Bactra-Zariaspa is due to them both belonging to the same region. The Parthians, under Mithridates I, thus captured one of the richest areas of the Graeco-Bactrian kingdom from Eucratides, western Bactria, including the wealthy city of Bactra.

That the Parthians seized western Bactria during the reign of Mithridates I is also supported by the numismatic evidence of Margiana, an area which would have needed to be under Parthian control in order to capture and maintain control of the two regions

effectively. The recent coin finds from Merv covers the period from the reign of the Seleucid King, Antiochus I, through to the Graeco-Bactrian kings, Diodotus, Euthydemus, Demetrius and Eucratides, covering a period from *c.* 250 – 150. This has led Loginov and Nikitin (1996: 40) to conclude that the satrapy of Margiana was probably taken from the Graeco-Bactrian rulers by the Parthian king, Mithridates I, around 150. However, the numismatic evidence is ambiguous.

5.6 Interpretation of the literary texts and imitation Sogdian coinage as a Source of Evidence for Seleucid and Graeco-Bactrian Frontier Policy

5.6.1 Antiochus I

In contrast with Bactria, where Greek currencies are numerous, those in Sogdiana are extremely rare, to such an extent, that Bernard (1996c: 347) noted that one could doubt that the territories on the right bank of the Oxus had ever been occupied by the Greeks. Nevertheless, there are a number of Sogdian imitation bronzes of Antiochus I, which show a gradual decline of the Greek legend. These imitation bronzes, bearing a Sogdian legend, were struck in large numbers in Maracanda after the fall of the Greeks, and reveal the popularity of the Seleucid coinage.

The striking of imitation bronzes of Antiochus I does not necessarily mean that they were produced during the reign of Antiochus I. It is more likely that the Sogdians began to mint these imitation bronzes during the reign of the next king, Antiochus II. The production of these imitation coins as a sign of autonomy may well have followed as a result of the death of Antiochus I in 261.

5.6.2 Euthydemus I

The date at which the Greeks abandoned Sogdiana to the conquering nomads is not known precisely, but it cannot be later than the arrival of the Yüeh-chih nomads in Northern Bactria and the fall of Ai Khanoum (*c.* 145). More exposed than Bactria to the nomads, it would seem likely that the Greek occupation of Sogdiana collapsed earlier. Bernard (1996c: 347) proposes that the collapse of Greek authority occurred towards the end of the third century.

The abundance of imitation tetradrachms of Euthydemus from Sogdiana support a date towards the end of the third century. As well as the imitation Euthydemid tetradrachms, we have the literary evidence of Polybius (11.39.3-5), who records the reasons for peace between Antiochus III and Euthydemus I, following the two year siege of Bactra (208 to 206):

.....he (i.e. Euthydemus) begged Teleas to mediate between them in a friendly manner and bring about a reconciliation, entreating Antiochus not to grudge him the name and state of king, as if he did not yield to this request, neither of them would be safe; for considerable hordes of nomads were approaching, and this was not only a grave danger to both of them, but if they consented to admit them, the country would certainly relapse into barbarism.

The effect of these nomadic pressures to the north of Euthydemus' kingdom, while Antiochus continued to besiege Bactra, would undoubtedly have led to the loss of Sogdiana. Signs of the growing independence of Sogdiana from Bactria can be observed through the coinage, consisting of Sogdian imitations of coins originally issued by Euthydemus I. These earliest Sogdian imitations may now be dated to the period of Antiochus's siege of Bactria, between 208 and 206 (Bopearachchi, 1991-92: 12). Contrary to Mitchiner (1989), who believes that Sogdian independence took place after Euthydemus I's death, Bopearachchi (1991-92: 1) argues for the secession of Sogdiana from the Graeco-Bactrian kingdom during the lifetime of Euthydemus I, towards the end of his reign. He comes to this conclusion by following a systematic evolution of the coin legends.

Bopearachchi separates the silver tetradrachms of Euthydemus into two groups, distinguishing them from each other by their weight. Those following the Attic weight standard can be attributed to Euthydemus I, while those of a lighter weight standard are referred to as the “Sogdian imitations” and represent the coinage issued by the Sogdians following their secession from Graeco-Bactrian authority.

Bopearachchi divides the “Sogdian imitations” into three groups; the first imitations; an intermediate and a late group. The first imitations possess a Greek legend and can only be distinguished from the coins of Euthydemus I by their lighter weight of 12g. The coins of the intermediate group are identified by their Aramaic legends on either the left or right side of the reverse, with a corrupt Greek legend on the obverse side.²⁰⁸ These coins carry the anonymous legend “King of Sogdiana” or “king of kings” and then the name of two kings “Hasa” and “Kagaha” (Bopearachchi, 1991-92: 10).

The late group goes through a stage of increasing distortion, so that the coin portraits can be arranged according to their decreasing conformity (Bopearachchi, 1991-92: 10). The Greek legend is removed, so that the coins are classified by the circumferential Aramaic legend naming the three Sogdian kings, Kamasa, Hamasa and Malta. Bopearachchi (1991-92: 11) concludes that an anonymous king of Sogdiana issued the early “Sogdian imitations” bearing a Greek legend, while the Sogdian kings Hasa, Kagaha, Hamasa, and Malta issued the intermediate and late imitations

Bopearachchi (1991-92: 11; 13) has analysed the distribution of known find-spots to support his principal arguments for the Sogdians assuming their independence during the reign of Euthydemus. Likewise, a small bronze coin of the type of Euthydemus I and bearing an Aramaic legend has been assigned to a Sogdian chief proclaiming his autonomy from Graeco-Bactrian rule (Widemann, 1989). Widemann (1989: 196) has argued that this bronze coin could have been minted at the time of Antiochus III’s siege of Euthydemus I at Bactra. Bopearachchi (1991-92: 11; 13) argues that there is good reason to believe that this

²⁰⁸ e.g. Some coins have ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ on the right with an Aramaic legend on the left, whereas others have ΕΥΘΥΔΗΜΟΥ on the left with an Aramaic legend on the right.

independence took place between 208 and 206, with the Sogdians taking full advantage of the Graeco-Bactrian inability to intervene due to their involvement in the war against Antiochus III.

5.6.3 *Eucratides I*

The context of the passage below is Justin's comparison between the fortunes of Mithridates I of Parthia and Eucratides I of Bactria, in order to explain the reason for the decline of the Graeco-Bactrian kingdom. Here, Justin (41.6.3) recalls the fall of Graeco-Bactrian authority over the "Sogdians" to the north (Isamiddinov and Rapin, 1994: 558):

The Bactrians were buffeted in various conflicts and lost not just their empire but their liberty as well. Worn down by wars with the Sogdians, Arachosians, Drancae, Arei and Indians, they finally fell, virtually in a state of exhaustion, under the power of the Parthians, a weaker people than themselves.

Following the campaigning against Sogdiana, it appears that Sogdiana did not represent a major concern of Eucratides, since he then campaigned southwards. The conquest of these territories brought a new prosperity to Bactria, as observed in the later stages of architecture at Ai Khanoum. However, the abandonment of Sogdiana and the weakening of the northern borders of the kingdom made it open to attack from the northern nomads. It appears that Eucratides was wrong to ignore the threat to the north. After the fall of Maracanda, the capture of Ai Khanoum would have appeared to his army as a momentous military disaster, which resulted, as Justin (41.6.5) recalls, with the horrific execution of Eucratides by one of his own sons (Isamiddinov and Rapin, 1994: 559).

The Greek occupation appears to be divided into three phases, the first lasting from Seleucus I to a point shortly after the death of Antiochus I (c. 261). The second period, a Graeco-Bactrian reconquest under the Diodotids,²⁰⁹ occurred at some point during the middle of the 3rd century and the third and final period was a shorter period of reconquest

²⁰⁹ Diodotid coinage in a hoard found at Bukhara attests to the possibility of a reconquest of Sogdiana (Rtveladze, 1984).

under the Graeco-Bactrian king Eucratides. At some point, the Greek border appears to have temporarily shifted southwards to the defensive wall guarding the pass at Derbent.

5.7. Seleucid expansionist policy in the late fourth / early third century - Patrocles and Demodamas of Miletus

Seleucus I's reconquest of the "Upper Satrapies" (c. 305) strengthened the Greek presence in Sogdiana, bringing with it an influx of new settlers to the region. Later, he is reported (Plin. *HN*, 6.49; 58) to have despatched two of his most experienced generals, Patrocles and Demodamas of Miletus, to the East. The naval expedition of Patrocles was an exploration of the Caspian Sea, while the other was a land-based military campaign, which went beyond the Jaxartes River. What is the significance of these two expeditions for Seleucid frontier policy in the East?

5.7.1 Patrocles

Patrocles was one of Seleucus I's most important generals, who was left in command of Babylonia in 311, being entrusted with the defence of the province against Demetrius Poliorcetes, while Seleucus campaigned in the East. In 287, he advised Seleucus I not to allow Demetrius into his kingdom at the head of an army (Plut. *Demetr.* 47) and in 279 Antiochus I sent him to re-assert Seleucid rule over Asia Minor, following the murder of Seleucus I. Between these two events, he explored the Caspian Sea and the lower Oxus with the intention of discovering a link between the Caspian and the Oxus, which was later written up as a book.²¹⁰ Holt (1999a: 28) believes that Patrocles' explorations were "part of a larger Seleucid plan to develop and exploit these regions for the future." Pliny (*HN*. 6.58) states that Patrocles was despatched on this mission by Seleucus and Antiochus, which would date his explorations during their joint kingship, 294-281.

²¹⁰ see Sherwin-White and Kuhrt (1993: 19) who propose a date for Patrocles' exploration of c. 285-2; Grainger, 1997: 111.

5.7.2 *Demodamas of Miletus*

Pliny (*HN*. 6.49) tells us that either towards the end of the fourth century, or the beginning of the third century, the Seleucid general, Demodamas of Miletus, led a military expedition north of the river Jaxartes, which signified a northern frontier zone between the steppe nomads and the Seleucid kingdom. While at the Jaxartes, Demodamas set up altars honouring Apollo of Didyma, symbol of the Seleucid monarchs, affirming the authority of the Graeco-Macedonians (Bernard, 1996a: 90). Bernard (1996c: 340) believes that the Seleucid general, Demodamas, had intervened in the area around 294 in order to liberate the Greek colonists from an invasion of nomads, while Sherwin-White and Kuhrt (1993: 19) suggest that the operation may have been “a show of force” (also see, Sidky, 2000: 133) in order to prevent destructive nomadic incursions as happened in the case of Alexandria-Margiana (Plin. *HN*, 6.47), which was later rebuilt by Antiochus.

It is not possible to date the campaign of Demodamas with any accuracy, although it could have taken place as a sideline operation, during Seleucus I's Eastern campaign (c. 307-302). Also, an inscription (*OGIS* 213; *IDidyma* 480; *Burstein*, 2) indicates that Demodamas was present during Seleucus I's Eastern campaign (Sherwin-White and Kuhrt, 1993: 19; 26). Another possibility is to date Demodamas' campaign to the period of Antiochus I's co-regency, when he was appointed to govern the Eastern satrapies (294-281).²¹¹ It may have been during the campaign of Demodamas, that he refounded Alexandria-Eschate as Antioch-Scythia (Fraser, 1996: 33; Sidky, 2000: 133; Stephanus' tenth Antioch). There is also a possibility that Demodamas refounded Maracanda and Ai Khanoum, while Antiochus refounded Artacoana and Heracleia cities in nearby Aria (Holt, 1999a: 27), and the previously mentioned Alexandria-Margiana. That Demodamas' mission was more substantial than a mere show of force is indicated by the foundation of the two new provinces of *Seleucis* and *Antiochis*. As Wolski (1999: 24 n.10) points out, the policy of Seleucid expansion was still in full force and the result of Demodamas'

²¹¹ Wolski (1999: 25) can only infer that the expedition took place before 281. Without any supporting evidence, Lerner (1999: 29) dates Demodamas' campaign to c.280, while Sidky (2000: 133) and Fraser (1996: 33) both date it between 290 and 280.

victorious expedition was the acquisition of the border territories to the north of the Jaxartes, which were organised into these two new provinces.

If Demodamas is responsible for creating two new provinces north of the Jaxartes, what evidence is there to indicate any prolonged occupation of the region? Until recently, archaeological evidence attesting to the Graeco-Macedonian presence north of the Jaxartes was non-existent. But, recently, a joint Uzbek-Australian archaeological expedition is now exploring the history and archaeology of the Tash-k'irman oasis, located in ancient Chorasmia, close to where the River Oxus drains into the Aral Sea. The establishment of an independent kingdom in Chorasmia is represented in the archaeological evidence by the beginning of the "Kangiui" culture, possibly as early as the reign of the Achaemenid king, Artaxerxes I (*r.* 465-423) (Helms and Yagodin, 1997: 62). Thereafter, Chorasmia is never mentioned by the classical sources and is only alluded to in the Han Annals (Helms, 1998: 5). During the Hellenistic period, ancient Chorasmia appears to have stretched from the Oxus estuary, eastwards to the region of ancient Sogdiana, as implied by Ptolemy (Tarn 1951: 83). Also, there are some analogies between the ceramics of the region and Hellenistic pottery (Lyonnet, 1997: 153). Demodamas' expedition of conquest beyond the Jaxartes suggests that some, or all, of ancient Chorasmia came under the authority of the Seleucid kingdom.

Intensive excavations have so far focussed on two major sites in the Tash-k'irman oasis: the ancient city of Kazakl'i-yatkan, a large fortified enclosure and possibly the capital of an independent Chorasmian state during the Kangiui period.²¹² Also, excavations have taken place at the fire temple complex of Tash-k'irman-Tepe dating back to the seventh or sixth centuries.

Helms (1998: 6-7) has proposed that the site of Kazakl'i-yatkan was the capital of Chorasmia, due to the sheer size of the settlement (between 36 and 42 hectares). The settlement consists of massive fortifications of galleried mud-brick walls and elaborate

²¹² *c.* 5/4th centuries BC – 1st century AD (Helms and Yagodin, 1997: 49).

towers with ranks of arrow slits. There is also a 'sacred enclosure,' including a central mausoleum, a *temenos*, a temple or palace, and possibly other public buildings (Helms, *et al*, 2001: 138). Indeed, the major fortified settlements of this site, some of which still stand over 12 metres high have been dated to the fourth and third centuries and are considered to be contemporary with Hellenistic settlements, such as Maracanda and Ai Khanoum (Helms and Yagodin, 1997: 49). According to Helms *et al* (2001: 131), the mausoleum at Kazakl'i-yatkan has close parallels to the mausoleum at Ai Khanoum, consisting of two rectangular vaulted chambers with burials and a central barrel vaulted passage with a burial, blocked at one end.

The fortifications at Kazakl'i-yatkan have a system of outer defence beyond the curtain walls. This consists of an outer rampart added to the walls of a fortress, but lower in height than the main walls and preceded by a ditch. This would allow low level flat trajectory fire to bear on approaching troops and siege engines and to impede the movement and emplacement of these engines and artillery pieces. This type of defence is Hellenistic in style and is later described by Philo of Byzantium in his Greek military manual (Helms, *et al*, 2001: 125). Helms *et al* (2001: 139) believe that it is highly unlikely that Chorasmia would be the inspiration for Macedonian, Carthaginian and Syracusan military architecture, as this type of defence was a response to the powerful torsion artillery in Sicily, first attested in Greek sources around 390 and later adopted by Philip II and Alexander the Great (Helms, *et al*, 2001: 123 and 139). Helms *et al* (2001: 139) speculate that Pharasmanes took the idea back to Chorasmia after observing Alexander's siege train in Sogdiana, around 328. However, Kuhrt (2002: 3-4) has convincingly shown that the Achaemenids were familiar with torsion artillery from the sixth century BC onwards, and that "The torsion catapult may well have been borrowed by the classical world from the great empire(s) of the East, rather than the other way round."

Is it possible to date the origins of the Hellenistic influences at the archaeological sites in Chorasmia? Was it the expedition of Demodamas or the *anabasis* of Alexander? There are two reasons to prefer Demodamas' expedition to that of Alexander. Firstly, we know that Demodamas created the two new provinces of *Seleucis* and *Antiochis*, which implies a

prolonged period of occupation, contrasted with Alexander's brief foray in 328. Secondly, whereas Alexander campaigned up to the Jaxartes, Demodamas campaigned north of the Jaxartes, and was therefore, considerably closer to Chorasmia, if not actually occupying a part of Chorasmia itself. Although it is not possible to determine whether the inspiration behind Chorasmian fortification techniques was Achaemenid or Hellenistic, the ceramic typology and the architectural similarities between Kazakl'i-yatkan and Ai Khanoum indicate that they could have been the result of a prolonged encounter with the Graeco-Macedonian provinces of *Seleucis* and *Antiochis*.

In conclusion, the campaign of Demodamas was intended to incorporate Sogdiana within the Seleucid Empire. In this, Demodamas achieved his aim, encouraging the Greek population, culture and traditions through the foundation of new colonies, as well as the reinforcement of existing colonies: Antioch-Scythia (formerly Alexandria-Eschate) and Antioch-Tarmita (*mod.* Termez) (Bernard, 1996c: 341). Seleucid influence clearly extended beyond the Jaxartes, as attested by the archaeological record, as well as the literary account of Pliny.

5.8 The Frontiers of the Seleucid and Graeco-Bactrian kingdoms of Central Asia, from Seleucus I to Eucratides I: the contribution of the ceramic evidence

Thanks to the literary texts we have a certain amount of information on the conquest of the Bactrians and the Sogdians by Alexander and also on the reconquest of these regions by the Seleucids. The texts are not however always very precise in their definition of the frontiers of the Seleucid and Graeco-Bactrian kingdoms. One finds therefore, in the contemporary literature, a lot of contradictions. Up until recently, the only relevant evidence for the reconstruction of the history and frontiers of the Seleucid and Graeco-Bactrian kingdoms were based upon the discovery of Seleucid and Graeco-Bactrian coins. The discovery of coin hoards, as well as chance finds, in the settlements of Sogdiana attest to the inclusion of the region within the Seleucid and then the Graeco-Bactrian kingdoms.

One such hoard from Bukhara consisted of over 50 silver Graeco-Bactrian coins (Pugachenkova, 1995: 32). Besides the numismatic evidence, recent discoveries in the field of ceramics have brought about a re-evaluation of the frontiers.

In Lyonnet's (1997: 152-3) comparative study of the ceramics, she has been able to show that most of the shapes of Hellenistic pottery found in the region of Ai Khanoum at the time of prospecting had some parallels with sites in the valley of the Surkhan Darya, the Hissar, the Kafirnigan, the Wakhsh, the Zerafshan, the Kashka Darya, the Ustrushan (region of Khodjent-Leninabad), the region of the central Amu Darya, Merv and even in the region of Kaakhka, to the west of the Tejend. It was noticed that some of these sites offered datable material from the end of the 4th to the beginning of the 3rd centuries. The largest part of the ceramics, however, were associated with the grey-black sherds located somewhere between the Seleucid period (Seleucus I - Antiochus II) and the fall of the Graeco-Bactrian kingdom. According to Lyonnet, there is no difference between the left side and the right side of the Amu Darya. Indeed, all the important sites were more or less constantly occupied and the Graeco-Bactrian levels were difficult to reach, with the case of Ai Khanoum being quite exceptional. Finally, from the point of view of the pottery, it was noticed that there was a lack of Hellenistic material in the region of Bactra, where no one would doubt that there was successive reoccupations or insufficient research. Lyonnet's survey of the ceramics, therefore, indicates that Transoxiana, up to the Ustrushan, was controlled by the Greeks as much as Bactria.

The Greek kingdom of Central Asia, Seleucid then Graeco-Bactrian, was not therefore reduced to the left bank of the Amu Darya. It included vast territories, the richest of Central Asia: Bactria, Margiana and Sogdiana. Although, as Lyonnet (1997: 154) points out, Greek rule did not add more territory than had been ruled by the Achaemenids.

To the northeast, the Ferghana valley has been thought to be within the frontiers of the Graeco-Bactrian kingdom, conquered by Euthydemus (Tarn, 1951: 83). Archaeology does not confirm it insofar as the culture that develops at this time (culture of Shurabashat) is very different from the Graeco-Bactrian culture and of local origin (Lyonnet, 1997: 154).

5.8.1 *The Countryside*

Lyonnet (1997: 149) argues that an influx of colonists followed the Seleucid reconquest, as attested by the sudden proliferation of Seleucid ceramics, which ousted the local pottery completely. A lot of these new Greek shapes continue until the Kushan period, suggesting that the Kushan ceramics found their origins in the Greek pottery. Also, it is known that the Greeks imposed their language, which was also used by their successors, the Kushans, as the inscriptions of Surkh Kotal show (Schlumberger, *et.al*, 1983: 133). Lyonnet (1997: 150) has shown that the Greek domination in Bactria had an impact that is not evident for the Achaemenids. However, before the arrival of the Greeks, the country was already rich and developed and no doubt the Greeks would have adopted a number of local traditions, as previously observed in some of the architectural plans at Takht-i Sangin and Ai Khanoum. According to Plutarch, Alexander and his successors brought civilisation to the “Barbarians” of Asia in all areas, having “taught the Arachosians to till the soil” (Plut. *De Alex. fort.* I. 328 c). This passage from Plutarch could lead us to believe that the many systems of irrigation were a creation of Hellenistic times. The first French prospection of the channels on the plain of Ai Khanoum were initially thought to be Greek, but it has now been shown that the canals gradually developed from the Chalcolithic period, demonstrating that this was incorrect (Lyonnet, 1997: 150). From the agricultural point of view, therefore, there is nothing to say that there was a new impetus due to the arrival of the Greeks. Lyonnet (1997: 152) can only conclude that where there was an increase in irrigation, this was due to an increase in the population, in particular around Ai Khanoum.

What impact did the Greeks have upon the countryside? Referring to the Roman Empire during the first century AD, Elton (1996: 2) cites a discussion in 1989 with Roger Batty and Malcolm Todd, in which:

The question was raised that, if one were dropped by parachute in the first century AD into what is now Czechoslovakia, would one be able to tell if one was in the Roman Empire or not?

They concluded that it was not possible. Likewise, in Hellenistic Bactria, Lyonnet (1997: 149)²¹³ believes that apart from some of the major cities and their immediate vicinity, the new culture had minimal impact and the local inhabitants would have preserved their own traditions.

5.9 The Western anchor of the Eastern Seleucid frontier - Margiana

West of Bactria lay the region of Margiana, which had been conquered by Alexander and then became part of the Seleucid Empire, later of the Graeco-Bactrian kingdom. The region does not appear to have a clearly defined border, with the Merv oasis being separated from Bactria by about three hundred miles of desert. This has led Holt (1988: 24) to remark that “such a stretch of desert would again appear to be a likely borderland for the Graeco-Macedonians, but perhaps not for the indigenous population.”

The military significance of Margiana is highlighted in Curtius’ account of Alexander’s visit to the city of Margiana:

.... in the vicinity of which sites for six towns were chosen, two to the south and four to the east. they were spaced only a short distance apart so that mutual aid could be sought by them without travelling great distances, and all the towns were founded on high hills. At that time they served to check the conquered nations, but now their origins forgotten, they are subordinate to the people they formerly ruled.

Curt. 7.10.15-16

Hammond (1998: 255) believes that Alexandria-Margiana was not one of the six towns in Margiana but “the central city of the province.”

At some time after the Eastern expedition of Seleucus II (*c.* 228), Euthydemus overthrew the Diodotid dynasty. Not long after this expedition there is evidence that Ai Khanoum

²¹³ Also, Bikerman (1983: 8) has noted that the traditions of the Greek *polis* continued in the East, with the landowners living in the cities and not in the countryside.

was attacked (c. 225), which has led Leriche (1986: 91; cf. Holt, 1999a: 63) to suggest that it marked the emergence of Euthydemus and the end of the Diodotid line. This is supported further by new evidence from Merv, at a time when the walls of Merv needed to be strengthened. The discovery of a bronze coin buried deep in the wall of Merv, and attributed to Diodotus II, suggests that this period of refortification can be dated to his reign or shortly after (Herrmann, Kurbansakhatov, and Simpson, *et al.*, 2001: 16). The need for such an improvement of the city's defences may have been a response to nomadic attacks, which had previously been successful in capturing the city (Plin. *HN*, 6.47). A more likely possibility is that it represents the period when Diodotus II was in conflict with the usurper, Euthydemus, who appears to have established himself in northern Central Asia, possibly as satrap of Sogdiana (Lerner, 1999: 84).

Merv was particularly important as it was the gateway between Bactria and Parthia. Mithridates I not only overran Merv, but he also succeeded in capturing the satrapies of Turiva and Tapuria, located in western Bactria. It may even be possible that Mithridates I's lightning success had been an opportunistic attack, encouraged by the Yüeh-Chi attack on Ai Khanoum from the north.

5.10 Seleucid Frontier Policy

Was there an organised system of defence in Bactria and Sogdiana? Sherwin-White and Kuhrt (1993: 105) cite Paul Bernard, who has proposed the idea that the sites of Qunduz, Shahr-i-Banu, Tashkurgan and Khist Tepe were a line of Greek garrisons guarding the area of northern Bactria. As Sherwin-White and Kuhrt (1993: 105) go on to say, Bernard's proposal would suggest a "strong fortification from the centre against attacks." This does indeed complement the classical perception of Bactria as the "land of a thousand cities" (Strabo, 15.13; Just. *Epit.* 41.4.5), with many of the smaller sites being fortified garrisons. According to Arrian (*Anab.* 4.1.3), the foundation of Alexandria-Eschate was for purely military reasons, as it would:

....serve both as an excellent base for a possible future invasion of Scythia and as a defensive position against raiding tribes from across the river.

Indeed, Holt (1988: 23) argues that Alexandria-Eschate and the Jaxartes River “was a true frontier zone, but no precise border; it was a meeting place rather than a barrier” (*cf.* Arr. *Anab.* 3.28.8, 10). During the period of the early Roman Empire, Elton (1996: 4) notes that “rivers were accepted as borders between the Romans and another state or between Roman regions.” Examples include the Euphrates, which was seen as a border marker in the East, separating the Roman Empire from that of the Parthians. In the west, the Rhine and the Danube were also seen as symbols of Roman limits in Europe. For the early Hellenistic period, Hammond (1989: 20) notes that Philip II of Macedon realised “the importance of the Danube both as a tenable frontier and as a waterway for communication.” No doubt the Seleucid and Graeco-Bactrian monarchs would have also realised the importance of the Jaxartes and the Oxus rivers for the same reasons. Indeed, Arrian (*Anab.* 3.29.3-4; *cf.* Curt. 7.5.17) records how the Oxus River presented a formidable obstacle to Alexander the Great when he had to move his army across it:

Alexander had all the hides collected which served the men for tents, and gave instructions that they should be filled with chips and other dry rubbish, and then tied up and carefully sewn to make them water-tight. When they were filled and sewn, there were enough of them to get the men across in five days.

As previously discussed, there are now known to be many other fortified sites with evidence of Hellenistic levels of occupation located on the Oxus, Sogdiana and the Jaxartes. This density of Hellenistic military settlements suggests, what Luttwak (1976: 127ff.) referred to, as a defence in depth strategy. This strategy is used when faced “with an enemy sufficiently mobile and sufficiently strong to pierce a defensive perimeter on any selected axis of penetration” (Luttwak, 1976: 130). This would certainly seem to be an appropriate strategy to adopt when facing a highly mobile opponent, such as the Scythian horse archers north of the Jaxartes. Luttwak (1976: 131) defines the “defence in depth” strategy as being “based on the combination of self-contained strongholds with mobile

forces deployed between or behind them.” In the context of “defence in depth,” Luttwak (1976: 132) states that:

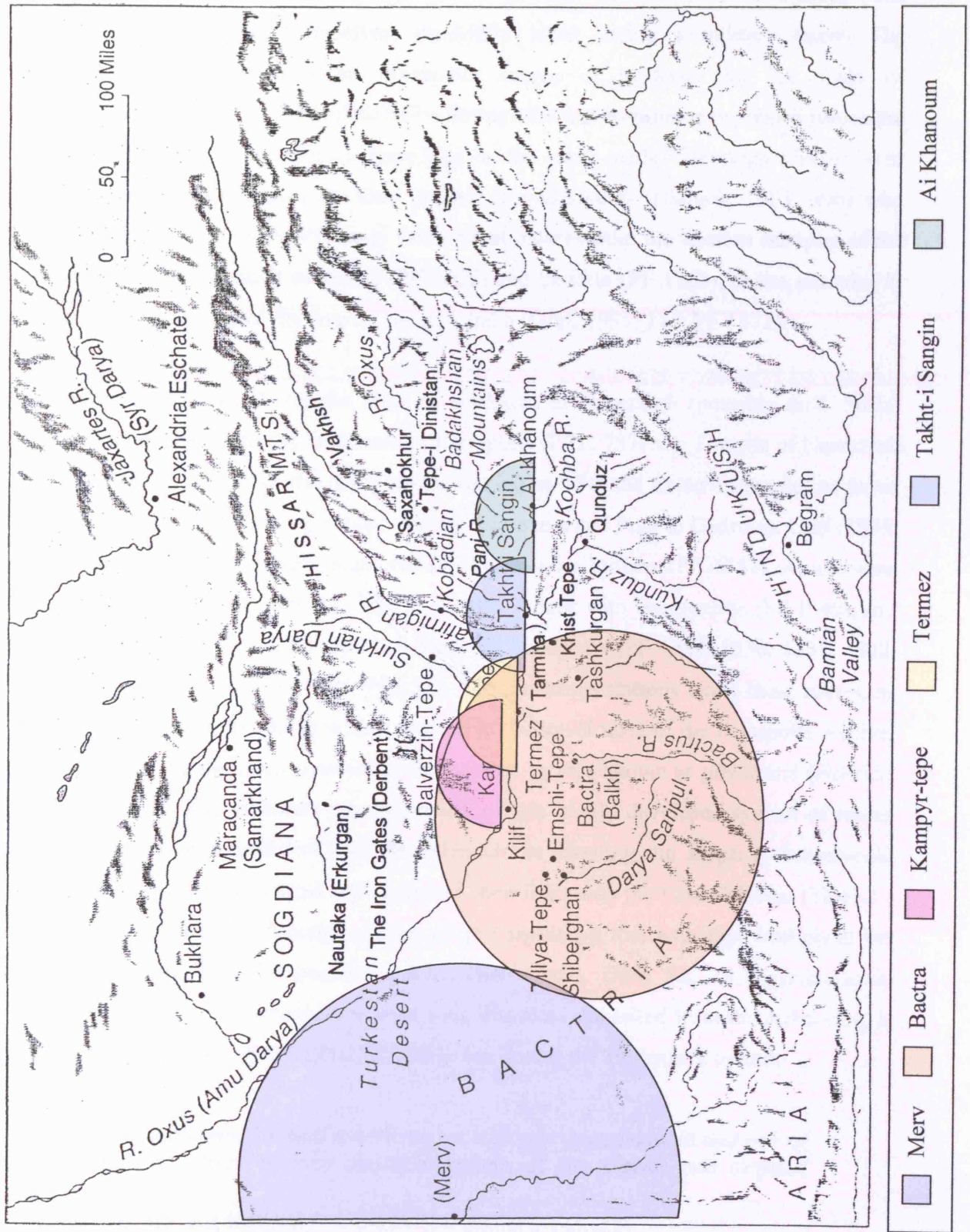
...the enemy would find itself in a peripheral combat zone of varying depth, within which strongholds large and small as well as walled cities, fortified farmhouses, fortified granaries, and fortified refuges would remain, each capable of sustained resistance against enemies unequipped with siege-machines. Within and beyond this zone were the mobile forces of the defense, deployed to fight in the open but with the support of the fortified places.

As Luttwak (1976: 136) remarks, this strategy “could survive even serious and prolonged penetrations without utterly collapsing.” It can be seen from figures 11 and 12 how the settlements along the Jaxartes and Oxus rivers were mutually supportive of each other. Their area of control would have extended northwards based upon the patrolling range of a cavalry troop (The areas of control in Fig. 11 having a range of a couple of days, whereas the areas of control in Fig 12 would be a single day for the smaller zones and three to four days for the larger zones of Bactra and Merv).

As with the late Roman Empire, in times of emergency it would not have been unusual to find the frontiers stripped of their garrisons to augment the central Seleucid field army or the later Graeco-Bactrian army. Indeed, it would appear that Euthydemus I stripped or severely reduced his garrisons in the north in order to face the army of Antiochus III between 208-6 (Polyb. 11.39.3-5). That the threat of a nomadic invasion was a grave cause for concern is attested through the archaeological evidence of new fortifications.²¹⁴ Leriche (1986: 94) has noted that towards the end of the 3rd century or at the beginning of the 2nd century, there appears to be a radical transformation of the systems of defence, with the introduction of a new design of defensive town planning. This consists of regularly spaced rectangular towers and outworks (*proteichisma*) including ditches (Helms, *et. al.*, 2001: 123).

²¹⁴ Leriche (1986: 93 n.1) believes that the town of Termez would have been founded only at the end of the 3rd century or at the beginning of the 2nd century; Holt, 1999a: 135.

Fig. 12 Possible areas of control in the Oxus river region from the reign of Antiochus II to the beginning of the reign of the Diodotids and also from the time of the *anabasis* of Antiochus III until the reconquest of Sogdiana during the reign of Eucratides I.



Another important aspect to be considered is how the garrisons in Central Asia communicated amongst themselves, especially when facing a military threat. The Persepolis archive provides an invaluable source of evidence for the study of communications with the Eastern satrapies through the travel-ration texts, which record the daily rations required by officials travelling on the royal roads.²¹⁵ Foreign visitors were escorted by officials known as ‘élite guides’ (*harrishdama*) (Hallock, 1985: 606) who protected the visitors on their journey to the royal palaces from the western satrapies of the Achaemenid Empire, such as Sardis (PF 1409) and Skudria (PF 1363), to the satrapies in the far Eastern regions of the empire, such as India (Graf, 1995: 174; PF 1572).

The ration texts from Persepolis refer to workmen at Narezzash (possibly mod. Niriz) situated some 150 km to the Southeast of Persepolis (PFT: 737s.v.). The site of Narezzash could, therefore, be one of the many stages linking up with the Eastern satrapies as far as the Indus valley, by following a route through Carmania and Pura in Gedrosia. Graf (1995: 187) argues that this southern route would explain why Indians (PF 1552), Arachosians (PF 1358, 1440, 1550) (Hallock, 1985: n. 4, 606), Arians with Harmozians (PF 1540), and Carmanians (PF 1398-99), all travel to Susa via Persepolis (PF 1289, 1330, 1332, 1348, 1377, 1398-99, 1436, 1439, 1466, PFa 35). The numerous stations along these routes, as described by Herodotus (8.98) is also attested in the travel texts of the Persepolis archive, which refer to the mounted couriers of the express service known as *pirradaziš* (Hallock, 1985: 606-607). The elaborate administration of this highly developed system of routes allows us to set up a model of how the Seleucids, in adopting and adapting Achaemenid institutions, may have managed and continued their links with the East. Polybius (10.43.1 - 10.47.13) describes the elaborate system of fire signalling that extended throughout the Hellenistic world, from his own time. Also, Hieronymus (Diod. Sic. 19.57) refers to an organised system of communication over long distances, inherited from the Achaemenids (Hdt. 8.98; cf. Brosius, 2000: 184-190) and in use during the Hellenistic period:

He [Antigonus] himself established at intervals throughout all that part of Asia of which he was master a system of fire signals and dispatch

²¹⁵ Hallock, 1985: 588; Graf, 1995: 168; PF 1285-1579, 2049-2057; PFa 12-23; cf. 30

carriers, by means of which he expected to have quick service in all his business.

Urgent messages could be sent with fire signals, whilst other messages could be delivered by a despatch rider.²¹⁶ It is possible to gain an understanding of the usefulness of fire signalling by noting distances between Hellenistic settlements in Central Asia:

- Qunduz is situated some 65 km from Ai Khanoum.
- Khisht Tepe is situated about 90 km northwest of Qunduz.
- Takht-i Sangin is situated about 100 km downstream from Ai Khanoum
- Kampyr-Tepe is situated about 30 km west of Termez.
- Zir Tepe is situated about 26 km northwest of Termez.
- The “Iron Gate” is situated some 150-60 km northwest from Termez.

6.1 Conclusion

Given their considerable commitments, political and military, in the west (cf. Ch. 3), it is perhaps on the face of it surprising the Seleucid kings paid as much attention as they did to the eastern frontier regions. Why did they? In part it was a continuation of Achaemenid and Alexander the Great’s policies: they couldn’t fall short of this legacy. But also these regions were perceived as (potentially) valuable in their own right (Margiana and Aria: Strabo, 11.10.1-2; Arachosia: Plut. *De Alex. fort.* I. 328 c; Ai Khanoum: see 5.8.1; Bactria: Strabo, 11.11.1; 15.1.3; Justin, 41.4.6), and for their control of important trade routes. For instance, the supply of Indian elephants (4.6), while not economically important within the

²¹⁶ Probably adopted from that of the Achaemenids (Brosius, 2000: Nos. 182-190.)

total volume of east-west trade, was seen as crucial to the prestige and military power of the Seleucid armies vis-a-vis their Ptolemaic rivals.

Was Sogdiana just a militarised frontier zone? According to Curtius (7.10.1) “Sogdiana is mainly desert: barren wastes cover an area some 800 stades wide,” whereas Bactria was described as “the jewel of all Ariana” (Strabo, 11.11.1) and the prosperous “land of a thousand cities” (Justin, 41.4.6; Strabo, 15.1.3). Yet there are signs that initial Seleucid ambitions were for a much further development and expansion in this region, which never came to fruition (see 4.7). The relative lack of prosperity of Sogdiana compared with Bactria, as well as the establishment of strong fortifications in the region suggests that Sogdiana was intended as a military frontier zone. But even further south, in Bactria and Margiana, strong defences were essential. The need for these strong defences became apparent when Alexandria-Margiana was overrun by nomads.

The sample of Central Asian sites on the northern frontier of the Seleucid kingdom indicates that a network of fortified towns and garrisons defended it. The sheer volume of military artefacts from the sampled sites highlights their importance as defensive strongholds. The location of many of these sites on the banks of the Oxus also indicates that the reason for their foundation was strategic. For example, some sites were either established at points along the river that provide easy ford crossings, or at strongly defensible positions, such as the confluence of a river (e.g. Ai Khanoum).

French archaeologists have noticed a maximum use of terrain in the construction of defences. When they investigated Ai Khanoum: “a system was chosen that was typical of all Greek ‘foundations’ of the fourth century B.C. - this exploited the natural relief, to which the line of the town walls was adjusted” (Rtveladze, 1994b: 160, n.1). The same considerations apply to many of the other archaeological sites in Central Asia, such as at Takht-i Sangin and Kampyr-Tepe, which made maximum use of their location for the purpose of defence.

The nature of the threat to the frontiers was from the nomads to the north, the rival kingdoms of the Mauryan Indians to the south and the newly emerging power of the Parthians during the middle of the third century. Evidence of the nomadic threat can be observed on three occasions. First, the destruction of Alexandria-Margiana by nomads, possibly as early as the reign of Seleucus I (Plin. *HN*, 6.47); the threat of a nomadic invasion between 208-6 while Euthydemus I was being besieged by Antiochus III (Polyb. 11.39.3-5) and finally the destruction of Ai Khanoum by the Yüeh-chih nomads (*c.*145) (see 5.6.2). Of the rival kingdoms, it was Parthia and not the mighty Mauryan Empire that proved to be the thorn in the side of the Seleucids, gradually eating away at its Eastern possessions over a period of nearly 100 years (*c.*239-141). Yet, it was not any deficiency of the frontier policy in Bactria that led to its loss, it was from within, when the Seleucid satrap, Diodotus I set in motion a process of gradual secession from the Seleucid kings, who were too preoccupied with events in the West to reassert their authority in the East.

The mixture of Graeco-Macedonian and Bactrian weaponry discovered at the sites of Northern central Asia attests to the co-existence of Graeco-Macedonians and the local Bactrian population, particularly at the sites of Takht-i Sangin and Ai Khanoum. Further, both the literary evidence and other archaeological evidence show that the native peoples of Bactria and Sogdiana lived alongside the Graeco-Macedonians in the towns of northern Central Asia. Although the literary evidence dates back to the time of Alexander's campaigns, there is no reason to suppose that broadly similar conditions did not exist during the period of Seleucid and Graeco-Bactrian rule.

At Takht-i Sangin there is evidence of a combination of local Bactrian and Greek architectural style. This is particularly true of the Ionic columns with oriental bases, and the combination of the Greek god Marsyas with a Greek inscription dedicated to the Bactrian river deity Oxus-Vakhsh, which reflects a culturally and ethnically mixed Graeco-Bactrian community (Litvinsky and Pichikian, 1996:58).

As previously noted the architectural designs and ornamentation at Ai Khanoum employ both Greek and Eastern traditions. The use of baked bricks and flat roofs was a local technique (Bernard, 1967: 78; 1982a; 1994:110-1; Colledge, 1987; Rapin, 1990: 336-7). At Erk-Kala and Gyaur-Kala too, some of the building styles clearly used Bactrian building techniques (Smirnova, 1996: 262).

The literary sources, too, indicate that in some towns at least, the Greek settlers lived alongside the native population. For example, the city of Alexandria-Caucasus (Begram), situated at the confluence of the Gorband and the Panjshir in the Hindu Kush, was founded by Alexander, with 3,000 Graeco-Macedonian settlers, along with 7,000 of the local Bactrian population (Arr. *Anab.* 4.22.5; Diod. Sic. 17.83.2; also see Bosworth, 1988: 247). This type of foundation, with a mixture of Graeco-Macedonian settlers and local peoples is also attested in the establishment of Alexandria-Eschate (Arr. *Anab.* 4.4.1; Curt. 7.6.27). The circumstances were similar at Ai Khanoum, where the presence of Bactrians in official positions at the palace treasury,²¹⁷ has led Bernard (1996: 105) to conclude that “the Greek colonists had managed to achieve a certain symbiosis with the local population.”

In conclusion, today, it is possible to see an overlapping of political, social, ethnic, religious, linguistic, economic and military boundaries. The Seleucid and Graeco-Bactrian kingdom’s control over Sogdiana and beyond was not consistent over a period of one hundred and fifty years (c. 305-145). The boundaries shifted, leaving Sogdiana sometimes on the inside, and sometimes on the outside - and occasionally a little of both. I suggest that this is what it means to talk about Sogdiana as a frontier zone during the period of Seleucid and Graeco-Bactrian rule.

²¹⁷ Names such as Oxybazos, Oxeboakes, Aryandes.

APPENDIX 1

rev.

29': That year (i.e. SE 38 = 274/3), the king left his (?troops or ?friends), his wife, and a high-ranking official in the land of Sardis to strengthen the guard. He went to (the province of) 'Beyond the River' (i.e. Syria) against the troops of Egypt

30': which were encamped in 'Beyond the River', and the troops of Egypt withdrew before him. Month XII, the 24th day, the satrap of Babylonia brought out much silver, cloth, goods and utensils (?)

31': from Babylon and Seleucia, the royal city, and 20 elephants, which the satrap of Bactria had sent to the king, to 'Beyond the River'

32': before the king. That month, the general gathered the troops of the king, which were in

Babylonia, from beginning to end, and went to the aid of the king in month I to 'Beyond the River'.

33': That year, purchases in Babylon and the (other) cities were made with copper coins of Ionia. That year there was much *ekketu*-disease in the land.

34': Year 37 (= 275/4), (kings) Antiochus and Seleucus, month XII, the 9th, the satrap of Babylonia and the appointees of the king, who had gone to the king to Sardis in year 36 (= 276/5),

35': returned to Seleucia, the royal city which is on the Tigris. Their message (written on a leather (scroll) came to the citizens of Babylon.

The 12th day,

36': the citizens of Babylon went out to Seleucia. That month, the satrap of Babylonia <...> the fields which had been given in year 32 (=280/279) at the command of the king for sustenance of the people of Babylon,

37': Nippur, and Cutha; bulls, sheep and everything of the (cities) and religious centres at the command of the king before the citizens

38': [...] of 'the house of the king' (i.e. royal treasury/property) he made. That year, a large number of bricks for the reconstruction of Esa[n]glia were moulded above Babylon and below Babylon [...]

(Sherwin-White and Kuhrt, 1993: 46-7; Sachs and Hunger 1988, no. -273; Austin 141)



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Abbreviations

ABC = Grayson, A.K. (1975) *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles*. Locust Valley, New York.

ActIr = Acta Iranica.

AJAH = American Journal of Ancient History

AJPh = American Journal of Philology.

ACSS = Ancient Civilizations from Scythia to Siberia.

Amm. Marc. = Ammianus Marcellinus.

AncSoc = Ancient Society.

App. *Mac.* = Appian, *Macedonica*.

App. *Syr.* = Appian, *Syrica*.

Arr. *Anab.* = Arrian, *Anabasis*.

Arr. *Parth.* = Arrian, *Parthica*.

Asclep. *Tact.* = Asclepiodotus, *Tactics*.

Ath. = Athenaeus.

AW = Ancient World

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BAI = Bulletin of the Asia Institute.

BCH = Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique.

BEFEO = Bulletin de l'Ecole Française de l'Extrême Orient.

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CR = Classical Review.

CRAI = Comptes Rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres.

CJ = Classical Journal.

CNG = Classical Numismatic Group.

Curt. = Quintus Curtius Rufus.

Diod. Sic. = Diodorus Siculus.

Euseb. *Chron.* = Eusebius, *Chronica*.

Frontin. *Str.* = Frontinus, *Strategemata*.

GJ = The Geographical Journal.

HCCA II = Harmatta, J., Puri, B.N. and Etemadi, G.F. (Eds.) (1996) *History of Civilizations of Central Asia - Volume II: The development of sedentary and nomadic civilizations: 750 B.C. to A.D. 250*. UNESCO Publishing, Paris

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JCA = Journal of Central Asia.

JHS = Journal of Hellenic Studies.

JNES = Journal of Near Eastern Studies.

Joseph. *AJ.* = Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities*.

Joseph. *AP.* = Josephus, *Against Apion*.

JRAS = Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society.

JRS = Journal of Roman Studies.

Just. *Epit.* = Justin, *Epitome*.

Just. *Pref.* = Justin, *Preface*.

1. *Macc.* = First Book of *Maccabees*.

2. *Macc.* = Second Book of *Maccabees*.

MDAFA = Memoires Délégation Archéologique Française à Afghanistan.

NC = Numismatic Chronicle.

OGIS = Dittenberger, W. (1903-05) *Orientalis Graecae Inscriptiones Selectae*. Leipzig.

Paus. = Pausanias.

Plin. *HN.* = Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*.

Plut. *Mor.* = Plutarch, *Moralia*.

Plut. *De Alex. fort.* = Plutarch, "On the Fortune of Alexander."

Plut. *Vit. Alex.* = Plutarch, *life of Alexander*.

Plut. *Vit. Demetr.* = Plutarch, *life of Demetrius*.

Polyaenus, *Strat.* = Polyaenus, *Strategemata*.

Polyb. = Polybius.

Porph. = Porphyry.

RC = Welles, C.B. (1934) *Royal Correspondence in the Hellenistic Period*. New Haven.

RN = Revue Numismatique.

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Theophr. *Caus. pl.* = Theophrastus, *De causis plantarum*.

Trog. *Prolog.* = Pompeius Trogus, *Prologue.*

Xen. *Cyr.* = Xenophon, *Cyropaedia.*

ZPE = Zeitschrift Für Papyrologie und Epigraphik.



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