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Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Zentrale, Podbielskiallee 69–71, 14195 Berlin, Tel: +49 30 187711-0
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F. Widemann

Evolution of the Political Relations of the Greek with their non-Greek Neighbours in Central Asia and North-Western India (4th century BC – 1st century AD)



Fig. 1. Storage jar from the treasury of Ai Khanoum. It bears several cursive inscriptions written with ink. Translation: "From Zenon were counted by Oxyboakes and Oxybazos 500 drachmae; Oxyboakes sealed the jar". After Migeotte 1999. Photo DAFA.

Between the conquest of Alexander and the first decades of the common era, Central Asia and, save the interval of Maurya domination, also North-Western India, were dominated by Greek culture, and, due to the numerical ratio of populations, this

can be understood, because this culture was not carried only by the descendants of the Graeco-Macedonians settled there, but also by numerous natives or invaders. It supposes the presence of educational institutions, at least in cities, as found in Ai Khanoum, that were open not only to the Greek colons, but also to a certain part of local population. In the other hand, Greek culture did not annihilate local traditions and Greek individuals received more or less their influence. Ai Khanoum, which was excavated for years under the direction of Paul Bernard, was built as a purely Greek city, apart for some details of Persian architectural techniques. Greek was not only the official language: cursive inscriptions on jars, always in Greek, also mention Greek or native names of officers in charge of storage or treasury rooms after the middle of the second century BC. It shows that ordinary people were still using it almost two centuries after Alexander (fig. 1). This city gives the impression that cultures of that time existed side by side without any mixing. This may have happened locally (except for slaves and mercenaries) but not everywhere else, in Sogdiana, more persianised than hellenised, and especially in the regions with a dense urban population in India. Using some recent discoveries from excavations and numismatics, and putting together independent pieces of evidence, I will try to revisit the history of Greeks settled in those countries remote from Greece, emphasizing what we know about their external relations; they brought there a strong will of keeping in many aspects their Greek way of life, and nevertheless received the influence of local cultures, until their complete assimilation in the Kushan empire. Due to a soft, progressive disappearance of the last Greek power, allowed by political compromises passed by the last Indo-Greek kings and the first Kushan leaders before they could unify the Yuezhi under their authority, the Greek contribution appears in many aspects of Kushan culture.

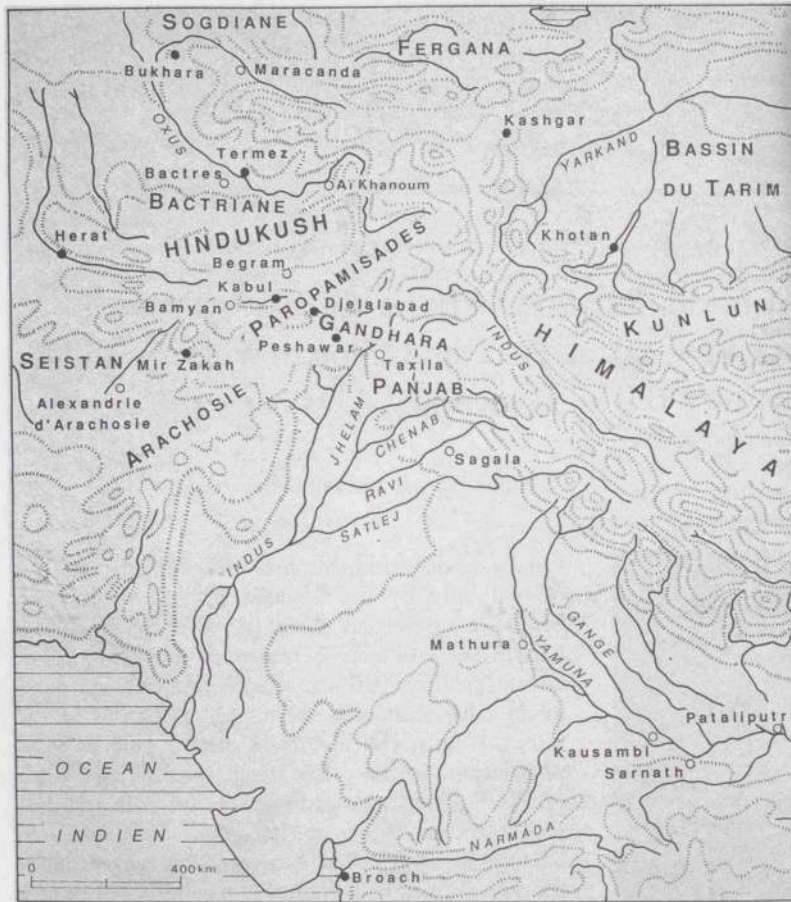


Fig. 2. Map of Central Asia and north-western India. After Bopearachchi 1991a.

The presence of Greek settlements prior to Alexander's conquest is attested to in Herodotus (IV, 164, 204; V, 17; VI, 9). It is a result of deportations of the population of revolted cities, Ionian and others, far away from their original *Heimat*, ordered by the Persian kings. The status of these deported people varied from individual slavery to a certain autonomy for some communities, which were deported as a whole and to which the Great King gave a place to settle in Bactria, Sogdiana, or elsewhere. This is the case of the inhabitants of Barké, rebel city of Cyrenaica who received from Darius I a city in Bactria and to which they gave the name of their former motherland (Widemann 2001). In this period, the dominant culture was the Persian one, the language of the administration was Aramean, but the economical importance of Greek trade is already sensible: Greek coins were circulating all over the empire, and satraps in search for autonomy coined imitations of Greek coins, generally of Attic tetradrachms (Schlumberger 1953; Mitchiner 1975).

Alexander took four years to accomplish the conquest of the western and central parts of the Achaemenid empire, from the Aegean Sea to the gates of Central Asia in Aria. In order to strengthen his occupation, according to Arrian, Alexander founded three cities during this first part of his

conquest. The conquest of Central Asia and north-western India took him about the same time and, according to the same author, Alexander decided that it was necessary to found 13 cities in this area, which was large but still much smaller than the rest of the empire (fig. 2)¹. The military difficulties Alexander met in those remote countries are well-known. A particularly significant indication for this being that Alexander, in his way for the conquest of the entire world, deliberately decided to stop on the Iaxartes and founded Alexandria Eschate, meaning the 'Ultimate Alexandria' on its southern bank. Alexander did not stop there to wait for better circumstances to extend his conquest towards North: this border of the empire was supposed to be definitive, just as the Achaemenids did before. This does not imply a lack of economical resources in the North: for instance, gold and other metals were abundant, and from there also came the best war horses. But there were also dreadful warriors that Alexander's army was

¹ The comparison between oriental and occidental parts of Alexander's conquest with data from other sources would give slightly different figures for the number of cities founded, but the general trend would be similar: much more foundations in the oriental part.

fighting since two years without any decisive result. Alexander took the decision to stop there without any revolt by his soldiers reported by the sources, unlike it was to happen later in India. Alexander changed his program after a long and bloody campaign, that awoke him from his dream of a universal empire, to the reality of a nomadic world that his army was not well-adapted to fight. He also certainly knew the story of Cyrus the Great, who was defeated and killed by the Massagetes to the North of the Syr Darya, shortly after having founded Cyropolis, located only a few kilometres from Alexandria Eschate. Alexander the Wise got the lesson.

The conquests of Alexander and the foundation of numerous cities, especially in Oriental satrapies, gave the Graeco-Macedonians a leading role, because their culture was supposed to be the standard one, allowing mixture and unity among the most different people of the empire. However, Alexander left in office several Persian satraps and hired Saka mounted archers to watch the Central Asian border, as Achaemenid kings have done before him². So, on this northern border, the only reasonable way to establish relations was to pay for mercenaries, by this way also encouraging important trade, for instance with gold, horses, also probably furs, wool, and textiles.

In spite of the short lifetime of Alexander and the succession wars that followed his death, Central Asia and north-western India show evidence for some Greek strongholds that kept their original Greek culture, even in the case of Alexandria Arachotis (Kandahar), which Seleucos I has been forced to abandon to Chandragupta Maurya in 303 BC. After three generations of Mauryan rule, Ashoka, in order to make his edicts understood in the area of modern Kandahar, had them written in Greek.

Under the Seleucids, numerous Greek colonies and mercenaries came to Bactria, attracted by the wealth of the country. This wealth and military power gave c. 250 to satrap Diodotos I the idea of resuming the general tendency of satraps of the former Achaemenid empire to act as independent rulers. A favourable circumstance was the almost contemporaneous secession of Andragoras, satrap of Parthia, who was later overthrown by Arsaces c. 239. The kingdom of Bactria (including Aria, Margiana, and Sogdiana³) developed an important trade with India, shown for instance by the coin hoard discovered at Vaisali in Bihar (Bopearachchi/Grigo 2001) that was composed of a large number of gold staters of the Diodoti and their successor Euthydemos. Bactrian gold was mostly coming from the Altai mountains (Lombard 1971). At that time, Bactrian trade was possible in practically all directions, even through areas controlled by nomadic people. The only exception was the western border with the Parthians. The only mention of a Bactrian or Indo-Greek king allied

with Parthians is Diodotos II, son of Diodotos I, who helped the Parthians against the Seleucid king Seleucos II (Justin XLI, 5, 9). If independence was well-accepted by Graeco-Bactrians, hostility towards Seleucid was not and Diodotos II was soon overthrown by Euthydemos. The relations of Greeks, from West or from East, with Parthians were practically permanently hostile. We shall see various alliances, agreements, and compromises that the Greek could make with their various neighbours, Indians, Sakas, and even Yuezhi, but Parthians, Arsacid and Indo-Parthians just as well, seem to have kept as a permanent aim to eliminate any Greek political power within their reach.

The Seleucid king Antiochos III organised an expedition in 209 BC to bring the eastern satrapies back to obedience. He was victorious of the Parthians, but Euthydemos, king of Bactria, resisted in Bactra during a two-year long siege and Antiochos had to recognize Euthydemos as king of Bactria. However, this political victory of Euthydemos had a high cost for the kingdom of Bactria. I proposed that Sogdiana took advantage of the long siege of Bactra to become independent (Widemann 1989), a chronological hypothesis accepted by Bopearachchi (1991b), but refused by Lyonnet (1998). An important consequence of the subsequent attempt to reconquer Sogdiana from Euthydemos' successors was the interruption of the gold route to the Altai, which made it impossible for the Bactrian kings to continue to use gold for monetary issues, until Eucratides I succeeded in reopening the gold route c. 165 BC. This interruption of gold monetary issues suffices to demonstrate that the gold used for the Bactrian coinage came from the North through Sogdiana.

The expedition of Antiochos did not only mean the loss of territories for Bactrian Greeks. Antiochos, instead of going back through Parthia, crossed the Hindukush and renewed, with Indian kings ruling parts of the disintegrated Maurya empire, the treaty of friendship Seleucos had made with Chandragupta. If the first treaty accepted by Seleucos has been a disaster for the Greeks, this time the disaster was for the Indian side: Antiochos took hundreds of war elephants and received as 'presents' treasures so large that he had to organise a special convoy to carry them back. Shortly afterwards, Euthydemos sent an army led by his

² For instance, about the presence of a Saka corps of mounted archers in Darius III Codoman's army at the battle of Arbelos: Arrian: *Anab.* III, 8, 3. Their chief is Mauakes. Arrian precises that those Sakas are not there as subjects of Bessus, satrap of Bactria, but for a treaty of alliance concluded with Darius.

³ For discussions on the frontier of the territories left to Seleucos after the treaty of 303 BC with Chandragupta see (Bernard 1985; Widemann 2001).



Fig. 3. Silver coinage of associated kings Antialcidas and Lysias (c. 110–100 BC). Obverses and reverses. After Bopparachchi 1991a.

son Demetrios, who conquered without difficulties these kingdoms that were left ruined and disarmed by Antiochos: Arachosia and Drangiana. Pushing forward his advantage, Demetrios went South on the tracks of Alexander along the Indus to Patalene and the seashore, and, according to Strabo (XI, 1, 1), he went on conquering "the kingdoms of Saraostis and Surashtra", much further than Alexander who never passed beyond the Indus in its lower course. The dates of these conquests are rather precisely known, because Strabo indicates that Demetrios accomplished them, not as king, but as son of the king of Bactria. So, they must have occurred between 206 BC, the end of Bactria's siege, and c. 200 BC, the death of Euthydemos⁴. The limits of the territories permanently kept by the Greeks after this brilliant expedition remain full of uncertainties due to the changes of the course of the River Indus, the lack of archaeological excavations, and the small number of Greek coins found in lower Indus region. Tarn (1951) has shown through consistent indications from Indian ancient literature and epigraphy that Demetrios founded a city on the lower Indus under the name of Demetrias in the Sind, which he identified with

Patala, where Alexander had ordered to build an important port (Tarn 1951, 142–149). Ptolemy (VII, 60) also mentions a city named Theophila near the Rann of Cutch. So, there are coherent, serious indications for Greek settlements on the lower Indus and the neighbouring seashore, not to despise, but they would need confirmation through archaeological excavations.

However, another group of independent evidence, also consistent with the existence of Indo-Greek territories on the lower Indus and seashore, appears much later, at the end of the 2nd and the

⁴ Some scholars, (Rapson, *CHI* p. 543 sq., Tarn (1951, 129 sq.), due to various interpretations of Strabo, and before the relative chronology of Graeco-Bactrian kings had been understood enough, attributed these conquests to Menander, considered to be contemporary with Demetrios I. The dates and the coherence of the situation after the return of the expedition of Antiochos make Demetrios the only possible conqueror in this Southern area. The distribution of the conquests among Demetrios and his successors is more uncertain in Gandhara, Panjab and further South-East. I provided detailed elements for the discussion (Widemann 2001).

beginning of the 1st century BC, the time of the migration of Sakas from Seistan towards the South (Tarn 1951, 320). The first one is a sort of coin commemoration of Demetrios' glory by Lysias. Lysias probably fought with only temporary success the Saka invasion of the lower Indus, a territory that was formerly conquered by Demetrios. He therefore took on his coins the aspect of a new Demetrios (fig. 3). At the same time, King Antialcidas, who was associated with Lysias, sent an ambassador to the king of Vidisha (Rapson 1922, 558), likely searching for allies among Indian princes also threatened by the Saka invasion. Only a few years later, Maues, Saka king of Taxila, celebrated the memory of Demetrios in imitating his most famous bronze coin (head of elephant/caduceus). The Saka nationality of Maues makes more ambiguous this imitation of Demetrios' coinage. But Maues was not the founder of a Saka empire: he probably let some Sakas settle in his kingdom, but wanted to keep its Greek character. His homage to Demetrios refers also to the hegemony that Maues could maintain as king of Taxila on the theatre of Demetrios' conquests, that was to become the new settlement land of migrating Sakas, namely the lower Indus region and the seashore on its left bank (Widemann 2003).

Coming back to Demetrios I, Bactrian Greeks after him extended their conquests in India to the South-East, in Gandhara and Panjab. The first Greek royal coinage issued in the city of Taxila, metropolis of western Panjab, bears the name of king Pantaleon, succeeded by Agathocles, his son or younger brother. The economical and cultural development, wealth, and the numerous population of Indian territories, especially Panjab brought specific problems to their new rulers. After the reign of Agathocles who issued bilingual Greek-Prâkrit silver coins (Brahmi writing) displaying Indian gods⁵, King Antimachos I established in c. 185 BC a *diarchy*: a main king residing in Bactria and a joint Indo-Greek king residing in Taxila or in Alexandria-Kapisi. His co-opted king Apollodotos I, at that time already a man of age according to the portrait on his rare Attic tetradrachms (fig. 4), took a decisive action towards creating a very successful monetary system, to the point of being adopted by Indian states, even outside territories under Greek domination. The huge number of bilingual 'Indian drachmae' of Apollodotos contrasts with the scarcity of coins from the previous successors of Euthydemus I. This monetary abundance, also observable during the reign of his Indo-Greek successors, Antimachos II and Menander, likely indicates the beginning of a time of stable prosperity for the Graeco-Bactrian empire, which then included large and rich parts of India without major conflicts.

In contrast with their usual behaviour, the Greeks accepted that their own language was not the only official one. Almost all inscriptions found



Fig. 4. Silver tetradrachm of Apollodotos I, from Ai Khanoum coin hoard 2. After Petitot-Biehler 1975, Pl. V no. 50.



Fig. 5. Sealing from Mathura with the name of Apollodotos in brahmi. S. Godbole private collection. Photo courtesy S. Godbole.

in Gandhara are in Prâkrit written in Kharosthi; for royal coinage, king Apollodotos (c. 185 BC) initiated a monetary system of bilingual coins Greek-Prâkrit (Kharosthi writing), calibrated in Indian weight measures. However, Indian 'drachma' could easily be converted into the Attic monetary system kept in Bactria, because its weight was exactly 1/7 of an Attic tetradrachm.

Apollodotos may have controlled an extended territory in India, up to the important city of Mathura, as is possibly indicated by the discovery of a clay sealing of this king in the city (Godbole 1993) (fig. 5). However, Apollodotos did not organise his conquest under a direct administration but left it as a sort of protectorate, as Alexander did for Poros' kingdom. We know from the *Yugapurana* that a Greek king, identified as Menander by O. Bopearachchi (1991a, 82), invaded the Ganga valley up to Pataliputra (mod. Patna),

⁵ Those Indian religious representations on coins, to be considered only as a sign of general favour Agathocles gave probably in other ways to Indian religion, were probably shocking for the Greeks and may have caused his fall in front of the opposition of Graeco-Macedonians (Widemann 2001).

leading a coalition of Indian states including Panchalas and Mathuras. So, at the time of the next generation after Apollodotos I, Mathura was at least formally independent as an allied kingdom of the Indo-Greeks.

A new period of successful Greek expansion, under Eucratides in Sogdiana, and under Menander in India, already mentioned, finished in disastrous, endless civil wars between the Greeks. Excavations by a French-Uzbek mission under the direction of Frantz Grenet in Afrasiab, the antique Samarkand, provided important results through the comparison of the stratigraphical distribution of pottery in Afrasiab and Ai Khanoum. Greek ceramics disappear from levels following the independence of Sogdiana. But it returns around 160–150 BC (Lyonnet 1998)⁶. This archaeological evidence for a second Greek occupation is certainly to be linked to the return of Graeco-Bactrian gold coinage under Eucratides I, c. 165 BC, a date that is in reasonable agreement with the dates proposed by Bertille Lyonnet (Widemann 2001). The resulting destruction of Sogdiana as a buffer-state against the nomadic tribes is very likely related to the subsequent invasion of Sogdiana and Bactria by the Yuezhi. This coincidence of dates is not the only argument for. Yuezhi invaders, coming from the northern bank of the Iaxartes river, passed close to the rich city of Maracanda without attacking it. They rather crossed directly through eastern Sogdiana to reach Ai Khanoum, a city where Eucratides stored plunder of his Indian campaigns. Grenet and Rapin (1998) suppose that Ai Khanoum, which was founded either by Alexander or, shortly thereafter, was founded again by Eucratides under the name of *Eucratidia*, a city name mentioned by Strabo (XI, 11, 2). The city was not only conquered and sacked, it was savagely destroyed. This relentlessness on a city that possibly bore the name of Eucratides, and, in any case, on a city Eucratides had particular attention for, may be the revenge of a rich Sogdian king, or his circle, expelled out of Maracanda through Eucratides' conquest. Those Sogdians may have suggested or paid for this very directed invasion. In the meantime, Arsacid Parthians under Mithridates I took the opportunity to conquer western provinces of the Bactrian kingdom of Eucratides, who was busy fighting Menander in India. After these territorial losses, Eucratides found Bactra possibly too close to a dangerous border and established his capital in Ai Khanoum. Back from India, Eucratides was murdered by his son c. 145 BC. Civil wars made the Greeks unable of resisting the Yuezhi invasion, and the Chinese traveller Zhāng Qiān relates that Bactria was entirely dominated by the Yuezhi in 129 BC. According to Plutarch⁷, Menander died on battle-field and his effects were divided among several sanctuaries as it would have happened for a Buddhist saint.

The weakening of the Greeks led them to look for alliances. In Gandhara, Antialcidas and Lysias were associated against a new danger coming from the Saka nomads settled in Drangiana (Seistan), but there is also evidence for their rivalry. I proposed as an explanation for the anomalies of religious representations on the coinage of Antialcidas, a Hinduist revendication of recognition, supported by Lysias, associated king of Antialcidas (Widemann 2001). A few years later, Maues, a Saka chief succeeded in taking over in Taxila. However, he did not want to overthrow the Greek kingdom by establishing a Saka kingdom. He merely tried to stop the endless rivalry within Graeco-Macedonian aristocracy, one of their factions being supported by an Indian revival. Maues abolished the traditional exclusive representation of Greek gods on monetary reverses, in use since Agathocles, and had represented Indian gods on exactly half of his bronze coin-types, 14 out of 28 types according to Mitchiner (1976). He very probably took in account a demand of the Indian population to see their religion considered as an official one, as Greek religion was. However, reverses of his silver coins still represented only Greek gods. Some Maues bronze coins also represent him as cataphract, armoured rider, the most characteristic Saka army corps. Indo-Greek successors of Maues were overthrown by Apollodotos II, member of the legitimate lineage of Menander⁸, who could for some years keep the Sakas back in their position of auxiliary troopers, as shown by a joint coinage of Apollodotos II and Azes (Widemann 2000). However, the establishment of the Sakas in the southern territories of the Panjabi Indo-Greek kingdom was already out of control for the Greeks, and soon Taxila became the centre of a large Saka empire under Azes, this time without any plan for a restoration of Greek power.

King Zoilos II, the first Indo-Greek king of Panjab after the loss of Taxila, took a last initiative towards Graeco-Indian alliance against the Sakas, expressed by his joint silver coinage with the Indian king Bhadrashya (fig. 6). The obverse of this coinage is alike a normal Zoilos' drachma and the name of Bhadrashya appears only on the reverse in a Kharosthi legend. Because the Greek legend is partly out of the blank in the first known specimen, Mitchiner (1976) presented this issue as a coinage of 'Bhadryasa' alone, and nobody could

⁶ However, Bertille Lyonnet (1998) believes that Sogdian independence began much earlier than I do, at the time of Antiochos I, i. e. c. 280 BC.

⁷ Plutarque: *Oeuvres morales*, XI,1 *Préceptes politiques* 28, 821D. Texte établi et traduit par Marcel Cuvigny 1984, 136.

⁸ Representing Athena Alkidemos on the reverse of their silver coins.

explain the presence of this Indian king with a coinage typical for the eastern Panjab Greek kingdom⁹. Zoilos II also issued a rare gold coinage (Bopearachchi 1999) known by only one specimen from the second Mir Zakah deposit (fig. 7). The scarcity and small denomination of this coinage shows that this issue may be interpreted as ambitious propaganda rather than real wealth. Zoilos II's failure in front of Azes is subsequently illustrated by the brutal reduction of the number of Greek monograms on coins, from three to one, traducing likely a crushing defeat and an important loss of territories after Zoilos. The quantity and quality of the coinage is also drastically reduced afterwards. Bronze coinage is practically abandoned¹⁰. Only a residual Greek kingdom in eastern Panjab could resist around Sagala until Rajuvula, satrap of Mathura, conquered this last Greek stronghold c. 10–15 AD¹¹.

The joint issue of Zoilos II and Bhadrashya is interesting from several points of view. It does not only help understanding with more detail the history of the decay of Greek domination in Panjab. It also opens a perspective to understand in a coherent way the nature and politico-religious orientation of Greek factions during the civil war through their external alliances. Zoilos II was most likely, according to his name, the son of Lysias, who probably was the son of Zoilos I since their common coin reverse type with Heracles (Widemann 2001). In the conflictual association of Antialcidas and Lysias, Antialcidas' policy was to maintain a predominantly Greek kingdom, and his army was composed, for an important part, of Saka corps. Lysias, on his coinage and on diverted coinage of Antialcidas, shows a disrespectful attitude towards Greek religion and uses the Indian symbol of elephant as emblem. He may have represented the Hindu pressure to get rid of the Greek as the only official religion. Only a few years later, Maues' coinage shows that he gave a partial satisfaction to this demand, but the restoration of Greek power by Apollodotos II, associated with the Saka Azes, again banned Indian religious symbols from coinage. The fall of Apollodotos' successor Hippostratos in front of Azes can be understood because he has lost both supports, Saka and Indian. Zoilos II, taking over in eastern Panjab, according to coin's monograms, after the fall of Hippostratos in Taxila, represents the return of the Indo-Greek kingdom to an indianophile policy, traditional in his family, but coming too late to allow him to regain Taxila.

Another Indo-Greek kingdom, centred on Alexandria-Kapisi, could resist the pressure of the Saka empire, of the Seistan-Arachosia Saka kingdom, which became an Indo-Parthian kingdom around the middle of the 1st century BC, and of the Yuezhi in the North. The long survival of this small Indo-Greek kingdom in the middle between these three



Fig. 6. Joint coinage of Indo-Greek king Zoilos II and Indian king Bhadrashya. Indian drachma from the Alpha Bank collection, Athens. Photo courtesy A. Tzamalís (50% enlarged).



Fig. 7. Gold coin of Zoilos II from the second Mir Zakah deposit. Riaz Babar private collection. After Bopearachchi 1999 (twice enlarged).

powerful enemies requires an explanation. Ludwig Bachhofer (1941, 239) tried to explain it by the equilibrium between external forces. In fact, there is numismatic evidence for a sort of alliance between this small Indo-Greek kingdom and the Kushan tribe of the Yuezhi not later than 30 BC, *i. e.* before the great monetary crisis due to the lack of silver, I refer to the so-called Heraus coinage. The Kushan leader took – or rather *received* – the title of *tyran*, not *basileos*, which can be interpreted as a sort of protectorate of the Kushans over the remaining Indo-Greek kingdom. Kapisi was conquered c. 20 AD, from an Indo-Greek king

⁹ I mentioned Bhadrashya (Widemann 2000, note 1), following Mitchiner (1976), before having understood the nature of joint issue of this coinage. I since had the opportunity of examining several other specimens.

¹⁰ No bronze coin of his successor Apollodotos is known. Only a unique square bronze coin of the following king Strato II was recently published by R. C. Senior (2003).

¹¹ A rude-styled representation of Athena Alkidemos was used in eastern Panjab also by kings who had obviously no family relationship with Menander's lineage: Zoilos II, Apollodotos, and even Rajuvula and Gondophares had Athena Alkidemos on the reverse of their local coinage when they occupied the territory. This representation, previously an emblem of a royal family, developed a local character.

named Hermaios, by the Indo-Parthian king Gondophares, who had recently unified the Indo-Parthian kingdom of Seistan-Arachosia with Azes II's kingdom, probably after the death of this last Saka king of Panjab and Gandhara. Some years later, the Kushan leader Kozoulo Kadphises unified the Yuezhi under his authority, took back Kapisu from the Indo-Parthians, and began the conquest of north-western India. The ethnic protagonists of these two conquests of Kapisene are both precisely mentioned in the *Hou Hanshu* Chinese chronicle (Narain 1957, 159–160), and several examples of monetary overstrikes confirm the chronological order of these two conquests (Widemann 1972; 2000). As I explained in the latter article, this reconstruction is in disagreement with the theory of Dobbins (1970) and Boppearachchi (1997) who supposed that there was only one king Hermaios and that a much earlier invasion of the Yuezhi destroyed this northern Indo-Greek kingdom c. 70 BC. The numerous coinage issued during a century in the name of Hermaios and of several other kings is considered by these authors as Yuezhi imitations. They proposed this theory in spite of the overlapping independent evidence referred to above. There is no evidence for a Yuezhi invasion in 70 BC.

Kozoulo Kadphises never took the title of basileos in the Greek legends of his coins, leading us to suppose that a Greek king may still have been left formally in place, in order to get the support of the Greek and of the hellenised population. In his late coinage the name of Hermaios is preceded in the Greek legend by the word 'Su', likely a Greek transcription of *shao* = king, which is found on later Kushan coinage. An inscription mentioning a king Su Theodamas (Konow 1929)¹², of whom no coinage is known, can be interpreted as a later, gradual reduction of the attributions of the Greek king, then deprived of coinage and kept for a representation role. Kozoulo Kadphises lived more than eighty years, according to the *Hou Hanshu* (*loc. cit.*) and it would not be surprising if he was contemporaneous with several Greek kings. The Kushan ruler could in this way pretend to be the legitimate successor of the Indo-Greek kings.

The son and successor of Kozoulo Kadphises, whose name, Wima Taktu, was revealed in the Rabatak inscription (Sims-Williams/Cribb 1996), finally used on his coinage the legend ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΝ ΣΩΤΗΡ ΜΕΓΑΣ, "the king of kings, the great saviour", cumulating Greek and Indo-Parthian titles. This formal end of the Indo-Greek kings thus took place only at the end of the reign of Kozoulo Kadphises, c. 60–70 AD. This soft transition was originally due to the convergence of interests of the ailing Greek kingdom with the early Kushans having not yet imposed their hegemony over the other Yuezhi. The Kushan ruler receiving the title of tyran and his successors were

introduced to Greek culture. The result of this extremely slow process – about a century between the tyran Heraus coinage and the first Kushan basileos – was probably to avoid panic and exodus of the Greek or hellenised, educated parts of the population. Wima Taktu conquered most of the Indo-Parthian kingdom, and reduced it to western Arachosia with Kandahar and Seistan. The progressive assimilation of Greek culture by the Kushans allowed them to keep Greek as an official language for almost a century until Kanishka decided, on the first year of his reign c. 120 AD, to use the Bactrian language written with a Greek alphabet. The strong Greek influence in early Kushan art is the result of this slow fusion of nomadic and Indian cultural backgrounds with a school of Greek origin.

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¹² Bajaur seal inscription of Theodamas (Konow 1929, 6 pl. 7.3).

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