

THE HELLENISTIC FAR EAST: ARCHAEOLOGY, LANGUAGE, AND IDENTITY IN GREEK CENTRAL ASIA. By RACHEL MAIRS. Oakland: University of California Press. 2014. Pp. xvi, 234.

CLASSICISTS OFTEN LABEL BACTRIA and northwestern India as the “Greek Far East.” In this thought-provoking book, Mairs proposes the more appropriate “Hellenistic Far East,” challenging the traditional perspectives expressed in the very titles of the two main works referencing the question: William Woodthorpe Tarn’s *The Greeks in Bactria and India* (Cambridge 1938), and Awadh Kishore Narain’s *The Indo-Greeks* (Oxford 1957). The former considered these regions as the outpost of Hellenism, while the latter claimed them as parts of Indian history. Arguing that “this material is exotic in a double sense” (3), Mairs proposes a more complex approach, focusing on the interaction between the Greeks and their neighbors after Alexander. In her criticisms she mostly takes aim at the traditional attitude of classicists. However, some late twentieth-century approaches, espousing acculturation, also need revision. Mairs’s methodological observations give a welcome complement to the more traditional, comprehensive monograph by Omar Coloru, *Da Alessandro a Menandro: Il regno greco di Battriana* (Pisa and Rome 2009).

The book is structured as a sort of matryoshka doll. After a methodological “Introduction” (1–26), two historical chapters provide the opening and the closing (Chapter One, “Administering Bactria: From Achaemenid Satrapy to Graeco-Bactrian State,” 27–56; Chapter Four, “Waiting for the Barbarians: The Fall of Greek Bactria,” 146–176), whereas the central chapters focus on two expanded case studies (Chapter Two, “Ai Khanoum,” 57–101; Chapter Three, “Self-Representation in the Inscriptions of Sōphytos [Arachosia] and Hēliodōros [India],” 102–145). A brief “Conclusion” (177–188) sums up the methodological achievements of the book, followed by an “Appendix” (189–193) with the texts of three inscriptions discussed in Chapters Two and Three, a sizeable “Bibliography” (195–225), and a general “Index” (227–231). There is no source index.

Chapter One considers the continuity of Achaemenid institutions in Bactria, an aspect less developed by Coloru, who starts with the actual beginnings of the kingdom. Mairs draws on the archaeological and the epigraphic evidence, extracting “a few themes or pieces of pertinent information” (32). Some preserved administrative documents, still written in Aramaic, seem to show that Alexander’s conquest did not apparently produce an outright break, but no written evidence was found until the third century. The Seleucids may well have retrieved Achaemenid administrative know-how, but is it enough to label the Seleucid satrapy as a period of lengthy transition from the Iranian to the Hellenistic phase?

Chapter Two deals with the center of Āy Kānom (usually known with the spelling Ai Khanoum) in Arachosia, present-day Afghanistan.¹ Mairs criticizes an early article of the late Paul Bernard giving emphasis to the “Greekness” of the city, “whose colonists strove to maintain the integrity of the civilization they had brought with them” (91).²

¹Laurianne Sève-Martinez (in her review of the book in *TopoiOrOcc* 20 [2015] 579–588) suggests that this discussion ignores several relevant archaeological publications.

²P. Barnard, “Ai Khanoum on the Oxus: A Hellenistic City in Central Asia,” *PBA* 53 (1967) 71–95; cf. G. Traina, “Notes on Hellenism in the Iranian East (Classico-Oriental Notes, 6–8),” *Iran & the Caucasus* 9 (2005) 1–14.

To support her argument, Mairs proposes a new interpretation of the inscription of Klearchos with the sayings of the wise men from Delphi from the *pronaos* of the heroon of Kineas.³ Following Narain against Louis Robert, she dismisses the latter's identification of Klearchos with the philosopher Klearchos of Soloi, a pupil of Aristotle,⁴ and considers him a local citizen from the Bactrian-born generation. Refined texts such as Klearchos' inscriptions were meant to enforce Ai Khanoum's Greek identity in a sort of invention of tradition.

Chapter Three compares two apparently opposite cases, dating from the same chronological context (second century B.C.E.): Sōphytos, a poet of Arachosia bearing a local name, who composed an extremely refined Greek acrostic funerary epigram found in Qandahār (*SEG* 54: 1568; Rougemont, no. 84), and Hēliodōros son of Diōn, "Greek ambassador" (*yonadūta*) of king Amtalikita/Antialkidas from Taxila, who erected a *garuḍadhrvaḥa* ("flagpole") in honor of Vāsudeva.⁵ Mairs concludes that "To a classicist, Heliodoros will always look as though he has gone native, and Sōphytos will look at first glance like a try-hard *nouveau grec*. To an Indologist, however, both are equally foreign" (144).⁶ Mairs proposes an interesting parallel between the inscription of Sōphytos and the acrostic Greek inscription of the centurion Paccius Maximus from the temple of Mandoulis at Talmis (Kalābša, Lower Nubia), dating from the late first century C.E. (133–136; cf. *SEG* 48, 2044). In several contributions, Stanley Burstein studied the remarkable case of this apparently Nubian-born, Greek-educated, Roman officer;⁷ however, Mairs proposes a more cautious and nuanced approach. But similar situations may be also detected in the Caucasus, as the cases of Armenia or Iberia do not differ very much from the Hellenistic Far East. Another parallel might be drawn with the situation of the Greek colonies in the Western Mediterranean.⁸

Chapter Four revises the traditional paradigm of the arrival of the nomads based on the accounts in the eleventh book of Strabo's *Geography*. The analysis of Simā Qiān and Trogus/Justin, compared with the archaeological evidence (but most Soviet publications are neglected), suggests a more complex interpretation of the end of the Bactrian kingdom, using arguments similar to those expressed by Coloru.⁹ In fact, both Trogus/Justin and Strabo tend to simplify the events, giving the deceitful image of a single great invasion instead of a series of raids, whereas the accounts of the Chinese sources are often overrated.

³G. Rougemont (ed.), *Inscriptions grecques d'Iran et d'Asie centrale* (London 2012) no. 97.

⁴L. Robert, "De Delphes à l'Oxus: Inscriptions grecques nouvelles de la Bactriane," *Choix d'écrits* (Paris 2007) 533–565; A. K. Narain, "On Some Greek Inscriptions from Afghanistan," *AION(filol)* 47 (1987) 269–292; most recently see L. Boffo "Massime delfiche ad AiKhanum," *Axon* 1 (2017) 223–230.

⁵H. Lüders, *List of Brahmi Inscriptions* (Calcutta 2012) no. 669.

⁶The inscription of Hēliodōros and the English translation of the inscription of Paccius Maximus are reported respectively at 119 and 134–135; the Greek texts of Klearchos, Sōphytos (with the English translations), and Paccius are collected in an "Appendix" (189–193).

⁷S. M. Burstein, "Paccius Maximus: A Greek Poet in Nubia or a Nubian Greek Poet?," *CRIPPEL* 17/3 (1998) 47–51; *id.*, "A Soldier and His God in Lower Nubia: The Mandulis Hymns of Paccius Maximus," *Graeco-Arabica* 7–8 (1999–2000) 45–50.

⁸See, for example, F. Berlincani (ed.), *Convivenze etniche, scontri e contatti di culture in Sicilia e Magna Grecia (Aristonothos 7)*; Trento 2012).

⁹Coloru 2009: 123, 233.

In her conclusion, Mairs claims a place for the Hellenistic Far East in post-colonial studies and suggests a category of hybridity, a biological metaphor adapted from post-colonial studies (185).¹⁰ However, on the last page, she reiterates Tarn's wish to consider these areas as "integral part of the Hellenistic *oikoumenē*" (188). Given the problems of the evidence, a reference book on the Hellenistic Far East is still only a desideratum. Future research will benefit from Mairs's post-colonial revision of the evidence. Some dialogue with the Continental debate on "transferts culturels"¹¹ would be a useful next step.

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DIODORUS SICULUS AND THE WORLD OF THE LATE ROMAN REPUBLIC. By CHARLES EDWARD MUNTZ. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2017. Pp. xii, 304.

IT SEEMS THAT DIODORAN SCHOLARSHIP is finally thriving. Indeed, toward the end of the previous century, a series of studies undertaken by Catherine Rubincam and Kenneth Sacks marked a welcome turn in the neglectful treatment of Diodorus.¹ Two more recent additions, Michael Rathmann's *Diodor und seine Bibliothek: Weltgeschichte aus der Provinz* (Berlin and Boston 2016) and the monograph under review here, further acknowledge, in varying degrees, the value of Diodorus and his *Bibliothek*.

In the opening chapter, Muntz explains his approach: in contrast to scholars who have focused on Diodorus' sources, he is interested in Diodorus' own contribution to the controversial debates of the late Roman republic, for example, on the origins of civilization, the relationship between myth and history, the nature of ruler cult, and the best form of government. In agreement with the opinion that the *Bibliothek* is much more than the sum of its sources,² Muntz explains that Diodorus employs various sources while discussing a single topic in Books 1–3 and, since selection and summarization "themselves are creative acts" (26), the author's own impact on his narrative must be considered. This impact, I might add, is also the result of the manner in which Diodorus collected his material and the types of sources that he used. His personal travels, for instance, are of great importance to Muntz's study, since they took place mainly in Egypt and therefore have a decisive influence on Book 1, devoted to the ancient Egyptians.

Chapter Two demonstrates convincingly that the first three books form a unit within the *Bibliothek*. Muntz claims that the historian showed originality in organizing his material in the absence of any precedent for a history that combines the variety of

¹⁰I discuss "hybridity" in the Roman context in G. Traina, "Romanizzazione, 'métissages,' ibridità: alcune riflessioni," *MEFRA* 118 (2006) 151–158.

¹¹B. Legras, *Transferts culturels et droits dans le monde grec et hellénistique* (Paris 2012) 7–14; F. Muccioli, "Transferts culturali e culturali nell'oriente ellenistico: A proposito di alcuni recenti modelli interpretativi," *Sileno* 43 (2017) 121–148.

¹For example, C. I. Rubincam, "The Organization and Composition of Diodorus' *Bibliothek*," *EMC/CV* 31 (1987) 313–328; K. Sacks, *Diodorus Siculus and the First Century* (Princeton 1990).

²See, for example, C. I. Rubincam, "Cross-References in the *Bibliothek Historike* of Diodorus," *Phoenix* 43 (1989) 39–61; K. Sacks, "Diodorus and his Sources: Conformity and Creativity," in S. Hornblower (ed.), *Greek Historiography* (Oxford 1994) 213–232; I. Sulimani, *Diodorus' Mythistory and the Pagan Mission: Historiography and Culture—Heroes in the First Pentad of the Bibliothek* (Leiden and Boston 2011).