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On Some Greek Inscription from Afghanistan

The discovery of the Bactrian Greek city at Ai Khanum is surely one of the most significant gifts archaeology has given to history during the last thirty years*. The French team of scholars led by P. Bernard verily deserve congratulations for their momentous findings and all praise for the series of publications arising out of their work¹. While the work at the site had to be stopped for reasons beyond control of the scholars and the

* ABBREVIATIONS USED: *BCH*: Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique; *BEFEO*: Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient; *CRAI*: Comptes Rendus des Séances de l'année, Académie des Inscriptions & Belles-Lettres; *Fouilles I*: Fouilles d'Aï Khanoum, I (Campagnes 1965, 1966, 1967, 1968), Paris 1973; *JA*: Journal Asiatique; *PBA*: Proceedings of the British Academy; *RN*: Revue Numismatique.

¹ For an up-to-date reference (to the best of my knowledge) to reports on Ai Khanum excavations and related studies see the following, some of which I have not been able to get hold of.

A. *Excavation Reports*: D. Schlumberger, *CRAI* (1965), pp. 36-46; P. Bernard and D. Schlumberger, *BCH* 89 (1965), pp. 590-657; *CRAI* (1966), pp. 127-133; Bernard *CRAI* (1967), pp. 306-324; (1968), pp. 263-279; (1969), pp. 313-355; (1970), pp. 301-349; (1971), pp. 385-453; (1972), pp. 605-632; (1974), pp. 280-308; (1975), pp. 167-197; (1976), pp. 287-322; (1978), pp. 421-463; (1980), pp. 435-459; Bernard, *PBA* (1967), pp. 71-95; P. Bernard and others, *BEFEO* 63 (1976), pp. 5-51; 68 (1980), pp. 1-103; *Fouilles d'Ai Khanoum I*, *Memoires DAFA XXI* (1973), 2 vols.; O. Guillaume, *Fouilles d'Ai Khanoum II* (1983); H.-P. Francfort, *Fouilles d'Ai Khanoum III* (1984). More volumes of *Fouilles d'Ai Khanoum* are yet to come out.

B. *Related Studies*: P. Bernard, *Syria* 45 (1968), pp. 111-151 (*Chapiteaux Corinthiens*), *Syria* 47 (1970), pp. 327-343 (*meubles en ivoire*); *Bulletin de la Société française Numismatique*, 34/5 (Mai 1979), pp. 517-520 (*inscriptions économiques sur vases*); P. Bernard et R. Audouin, *Revue Numismatique*, 15 (1973), pp. 238-289, 16 (1974), pp. 7-41 (*trésor de monnaies indiennes à poinçons multiples et de drachmes indo-grecques d'Agathocle*) 17 (1975), pp. 58-69 (*trésor de tétradrachmes*); Cl.-Y. Petitot-Biehler, *Revue Numismatique* 17 (1975), pp. 23-57; P. Bernard et O. Guillaume, *Revue Numismatique* 22 (1980), pp. 9-32 (*monnaies inédites*); H.-P. Francfort, *Arts Asiatiques* 32

complete report of the work done up-to-date is awaited, it is clear from the material remains at the site and the available publications that here we have substantial evidence for a meeting of the Greek, the Iranian—more specifically Bactrian or East Iranian—and the Indian elements. But statements made about the date of the foundation of the city and its identity do not appear beyond question. Much reliance has been placed on the palaeography, contents and interpretations of some of the Greek inscriptions found at the site. They belong in two groups, one, the earlier monumental ones and two, the later writings on the ostraca found in the “Treasury” of the city. I propose to discuss here only some of them².

In the first group the two epigraphs related to the temenos of Kineas and one which refers to a dedication made by two sons of Strato are relevant for our discussion³. The texts of these as read by L. Robert⁴ are as below:

1. Ἀνδρῶν τοι σοφὰ τὰντα παλαιότερων ἀνακεῖ [τα]ῖ
ῥήματα ἀριγνώτων Πυθοῖ ἐν ἡγαθέαι.
ἔνθεν ταῦτ[α] Κλέαρχος ἐπιφραδέως ἀναγράφας
εἴσατο τηλαυγῆ Κινέου ἐν τεμένει.

(See Plate I. 1 and *Fouilles I*, Plate 108)

(1976), pp. 91–98 (*Vases en Schiste*); P. Bernard, *Journal Asiatique* (1976), pp. 245–275 (*traditions orientales dans l'architecture greco-bactrienne*); “Problèmes d'histoire coloniale grecque à travers l'urbanisme d'une cité hellénistique d'Asie Centrale” in *150 Jahre, Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, 1829–1979, Festveranstaltungen und internationales Kolloquium 17–22, April 1979 in Berlin* (1979), pp. 108–120; P. Leriche, *Revue Archéologique* (1974), pp. 231–270 (*rempart Nord*); P. Leriche et J. Thoraval, *Syria* 56 (1979), pp. 171–205 (*fontaine du rempart ouest*); P. Bernard, *CRAI* (1976), pp. 299–302 (*le cadran solaire*); L. Janin, *L'Astronomie Astronom. Soc. Canada* 74 (1980), pp. 271–278; R.R.—J. Rohr, *J. Royal Astronomical Society of Canada* 74 (1980), pp. 271–28; S. Veuve, *BCH*, CVI (1982), pp. 23–51; C. Rapin, *BCH*, CVII (1983), pp. 315–371; F. Grenet, *BCH*, CVII (1983), pp. 373–381; J. Filliozat, *Arts Asiatiques* 26 (1973), pp. 113–121; A.K. Narain, “Two Hindu Divinities on the Coins of Agathocles from Ai Khanum”, *Journal of the Numismatic Society of India* 35 (1973), pp. 73–77; “On the Greek Epigraphs from Ai Khanum”, *Studies in Indian Epigraphy, Bulletin of the Indian Epigraphical Society*, vol. I (1975), pp. 97–103; P. Bernard, “Diodore XVII, 83, 1: Alexandrie du Caucase ou Alexandrie de l'Oxus?”, *Journal des Savants* (1982), pp. 125–138, pp. 219–242; F. Holt, *RN* 23 (1981), pp. 7–44, *American Journal of Archaeology* (1984), p. 248; P. Bernard and H.—P. Francfort, *Études de géographie historique sur la plaine d'Ai Khanoum (Afghanistan)*, Paris CNRS (1978); P. Bernard, *Scientific American*, Jan. (1982), pp. 148–159.

² I am thankful to Ms. Joyce M. Reynolds, C. Habicht and Jon D. Mikalson for their suggestions and criticism.

³ *Fouilles I*, pp. 207–237 and *CRAI*, 1968, pp. 416–457.

⁴ Cp. *Fouilles I*, pp. 208, 211 and 213.

2. Παῖς ὦν κόσμιος γίνου,
 ἡβῶν ἐγκρατής,
 μέσος δίκαιος,
 πρεσβύτης εὐβοθλος
 τελευτῶν ἄλυπος

(See Plate I. 2 and *Fouilles I*, Plate 108)

3. Τριβαλλός
 καὶ Στράτων
 Στράτωνος
 Ἑρμῆι, Ἑρακλεῖ.

(See Plate II. 2 and *Fouilles I*, Plate 109)

These texts may be translated as below⁵:

1. "These wise words of famous men of previous times,
 are dedicated in the holy Pytho.
 From where Clearchus inscribed them and
 set them up in the temenos of Kineas so
 that they shine far afield."
2. "Being a child, be well-behaved,
 young man, be master of yourself;
 In the middle of life, be just;
 old man, be of good counsel;
 On death, be without chagrin."
3. Triballos
 and Straton
 sons of Straton, [dedicated this]
 to Hermes [and] Herakles.

The second group consists of nine of the fragmentary inscriptions on the ostraca from the "Treasury" of Ai Khanum so far published. Their texts are as given below⁶:

1. Ετους κδ'. [- -]
 ἐλαίου ἐλαίνο[ν]
 ἀποδεῆς α' τὸ μεταγγιοθὲν
 ἀπὸ κεραμίων [- - -]
 τῶν ἡμιο[λ]ῶν χαί - - -

(See Plate III. 1 and *BCH*, 1983, p. 320, Fig. 3a-b)

⁵ Cp. translations by L. Robert in *Fouilles I*, pp. 211 and 213.

⁶ Out of more than two dozens of ostraca inscriptions in Greek read by Rapin (*BCH*, 1983, pp. 315-371) I have listed only nine here because I found them sufficient to represent the content and character of the group. I have followed in general the readings as given by Rapin. It may be noted that some ostraca have inscriptions in Aramaic which I have not included in our discussion here.

2. λη' παρὰ. [- - -
 ἀβυρ τὰ κερα[- - -
 ἔλασσον. [- - -

(See Plate III. 2 and *BCH*, 1983, p. 324, Fig. 6a-b)

3. Παρὰ Ζήνωνος
 ἡρίθμηται
 διὰ Ὁξηβοάκου
 καὶ Ὁξυβάζου δρχ φ'
 ἐσφράγισται Ὁξηβοάκης

(See Plate IV. 1 and *BCH*, 1983, pp. 325-326, Fig. 8a-b)

4. Παρὰ Τιμοδῆμον
 ἡρίθμηται διὰ
 Ὁξβοάκον καὶ
 Ἐρμαῖον ταξ[α]ηνά
 - - -

(See Plate IV. 2 and *BCH*, 1983, pp. 326-327, Fig. 9)

5. Παρὰ Φιλίσκου
 κασαπανα ταξηνά A
 διὰ Ἀρυάνδρου κα M
 Στρα.. - - -

(See Plate V. 1 and *BCH*, 1983, p. 328-29, Fig. 10a-b)

6. Παρὰ Φιλίσκου
 νανδαγαχωραγα
 ἡρίθμη[ητα] διὰ
 [... 7-8..]ς καὶ
 ἐσγ. α [] A
 M

(See Plate V. 2 and *BCH*, 1983, pp. 330-331, Fig. 12a-b)

7. [- - -]ετος τῶν δευτέρ - - - [- - -]
 [- - -] Ἐρμαῖου δρχ μδ' - - -
 [- - -].4-5 .α. καί. υ. νδου ζ'
 [- - -]σμασ.. τὰς ἀναφορὰς [- - -]
 [- - -]θ. ου ον. ανος δρχ η'
 [- - -]χζ'

(See Plate VI. 1 and *BCH*, 1983, p. 332, Fig. 13a-b)

8. Παρὰ Στράτωνος
 διὰ Μολοσσού καὶ
 Στράτωνος καὶ ἐσ - - - - -
 ...βαρα..δου καὶ τάρζου
 [κασα]πανα νανδηνά A
 M

(See Plate VI. 2 and *BCH*, 1983, pp. 333-334, Fig. 14a-b)

9. διὰ Κόσμου δοκίμον ἀργυρίον
 δεδοκίμασται διὰ Νικηρά[του]
 ἐσφράγισται αὐτὸς Νικήρατος

(See Plate VII. 1 and *BCH*, 1983, p. 338, Fig. 19a)

These texts may be translated as below⁷:

1. "Year 24, [---]
(contained) in olive oil
(the oil jar) partially empty—
? lacking a (stamos) and a half (contains
the oil) ? decanted
from two jars by [---]; [---].
 2. "38 (?); from [---]
? [---] minus [---].
?
 3. From Zenon.
It has been counted by
Oxèboakes and Oxybazos 500 drachms.
Sealed by Oxèboakes
 4. From Timodemos.
It has been counted by
Oxèboakes and
Hermaios (from?) Taxila (?) ---.
 5. From Philiskos
in *Karsapana* (from?) Taxila,
10,000; by Aryandes
and Stra[ton]; ---.
 6. From Philiskos,
Nandagakhoraga.
It has been counted by
[---] and [---] (?sealed)
10,000 (?)
 7. [---] of the second ---;
---] of Hermaios: 44 drachms;
[---] --- and of Aryandes (?): 7 (?);
[---] --- the revenue [---]
[---] ---: 8 (?) drachms (?);
[---] --- 60 (?) drachms (?).
 8. From Straton;
by Molossos and
? Straton; and ---
--- and of Tarzos;
[in *Karsapana* (from?) Nand (?): 10,000.
- By Cosmos []
in silver of good alloy; it has
been verified by Niker(atos).
Sealed by Nikeratos himself.

⁷ Compare translations by Rapin, *op. cit.*, pp. 315–371.

These documents no doubt relate to accounting and storage. Certain items of information strike us at first glance. They are personal and place names, the commodities counted or measured for deposit, and some numerals. Of the personal names, some are of "Greek" and others are of "Iranian" origins⁸. The place names appear to belong in the "Indo-Greek" political geography⁹. The commodities so far known to have been deposited in the vessels are generally olive oil and coins. The latter includes both the Indo-Greek drachms and Indian Karsapanas¹⁰. While some of the numerals might refer to the year of deposit¹¹ most of them refer to the coins. Rapin has discussed these inscriptions, along with others, very thoroughly and one must refer to his notes for a comprehensive treatment of the entire material. My comments in the later part of this paper is limited only to a few points for the time being.

First, let us discuss the three inscriptions of Group I.

Numbers 1 and 2 of this group are engraved on the base of a stele, forming part of a funerary monument. The first is an epigram which informs that a certain Clearchus had carefully recorded certain precepts of wisdom of the famous men of old which were exhibited in the holy Pytho, that is to say Delphi, and set them up, in the temenos of Kineas, so that they can be seen from afar. The second consists of the Delphic maxims to which a reference is made in number 1. This is inscribed on the right part of the same base which carries the text of the first one. The stele on which the whole text of the famous Delphic maxims might have been inscribed has not been found. But it has been suggested that since the stele did not have enough space to accommodate the entire text of all the maxims the last of them had to be engraved on the base itself¹². The text is an exhortation to acquire the fundamental qualities of man at each stage of life.

⁸ E.g. Greek: Zenon, Timodemos, Philiskos (also see Philoxenos in No. 19 of Rapin's list), Hermaeus, Strato, Nikeratos, Cosmos, and others; Iranian: Oxeboakes, Oxybazos, Aryandes, Tarzos and others like Xatrannos (no. 15 of Rapin list). Sosipatros (=Sašiputra) of No. 18 of Rapin's list may be an Indic name.

⁹ E.g. *ταχαινά* may refer to Taxila and Nandagakhoraga and Nanda-(?) of Rapin's list may also refer to an "agora" or "chora" in the Indo-Greek Kingdom, its identity being not clear. The fact that the Indian money Karshapanas are associated with these place names adds to this possibility.

¹⁰ *Kasapana* is the Pali/Prakrit version of Sanskrit *Karshapana*. These are known to have been minted in silver and copper from about the fifth century B.C. in India and they continued to circulate until the first two centuries A.D.

¹¹ E.g. 24 and 38 in Nos. 1 and 2 might refer to the year of deposit. See *infra*, p. 22. Other numerals clearly refer to the coins, drachms or Karshapanas.

¹² *Fouilles I*, p. 223, *PBA*, p. 89.

A fragmentary inscription, consisting of only seven letters, has also been found about one meter from the base of the stele; it is supposed to be the lower left angle part of the stele¹³. It has been suggested that this is a part of the text of the 48th Delphi maxim¹⁴.

Both L. Robert and P. Bernard find in these inscriptions substantial evidence for their theory that the city of Ai Khanum, which could be Alexandria Oxiana¹⁵, was founded by Kineas supposed to be a Thessalian¹⁶. Clearchus is identified with his namesake who was a well-known peripatetic (from Soli in Cyprus) and one of the direct or indirect disciples of Aristotle¹⁷. It has been interpreted that Clearchus travelled to Delphi on his mission to obtain a first-hand copy of the Delphic maxims for the purpose of getting them engraved on the funerary *herôon* of Kineas, "to whom was granted the privilege of being buried in the very heart of the city"¹⁸. This has been taken as indicative of the pious concern of the Hellenistic colonies for the preservation of their cherished goal¹⁹.

Kineas has been regarded as a Thessalian officer under Seleucus I, and he is supposed to have been the founder of the city (because his burial has been found in the heart of the city), either on orders from Alexander or from Seleucus I who reconquered the eastern provinces of the empire in the years immediately preceding 303 B.C.²⁰. This is not the place to go into the whole discussion of the foundation of Alexandrian cities. But suffice it to say that the myth of seventy Alexandrias has already been cut to size and archaeology has refused so far to oblige. We have yet to find satisfactory evidence for at least the far eastern ones among them. Also, there is hardly any reason to look for Alexandria Oxiana at Ai Khanum. Not only it is too far east for Alexander's route, but the only reference for Alexandria Oxiana in Ptolemy places it in Sogdiana, in the region which lay between the rivers Jaxartes and Oxus²¹. Bernard

¹³ *Fouilles I*, p. 216.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, *loc. cit.*

¹⁵ Bernard, *PBA*, p. 92; *Journal des Savants*, 1982, pp. 218–242, esp. 235–236.

¹⁶ *Fouilles I*, pp. 217–222.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 225–235.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 105; *PBA*, p. 90. He notes that Kineas "could have been simply some important *euergetes*, but I wonder if he might not have been the founder of the city".

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 225, 235–36.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 106; *PBA*, p. 92; *Scientific American*, 1982, p. 148. Robert, *op. cit.*, pp. 217–222.

²¹ Ptolemy, VI. 12.

is right in rejecting Tarn's proposal for Termez²² but not in suggesting that Ptolemy has "mistakenly made two cities of one"²³. So far there is hardly anything in the archaeological and literary evidence to link Ai Khanum with Alexander's invasion, his campaign route and foundation of a city by him in Badakshan. So also, the fate of Seleucus in his encounter against Chandragupta Maurya²⁴ hardly leaves ground for him to be so able as to order the founding of cities anywhere in Afghanistan, what to speak of so far northeast as Ai Khanum. Had he been strong he would not have lost four satrapies to the Mauryan king for a mere pleasantry gift of some elephants, and Stasanor would not have been allowed to remain untouched in Bactria²⁵. Whether or not Eucratides named or renamed the city as Eucratidia, as suggested by Bernard²⁶, too, needs more examination. There are only two references for the existence of Eucratidia, one in Strabo²⁷ and another in Ptolemy²⁸. Strabo does not give its exact or relative location. If at all, it might be in either of the two satrapies, Turiva and Aspionus, which were taken away from Eucratides by the Parthians²⁹. Ptolemy locates it in his map much west of Alexandria-Eschate³⁰, which, of course, is not of help because the identification of Alexandria-Eschate is not certain³¹. But if the latter has to be identified with the modern Chodjend on the Syr Darya³², one must find a location for Eucratidia west of it³³. In any case neither the numismatic evidence nor the historical factors justify associating the city

²² Tarn, *The Greeks in Bactria and India*, p. 525; Narain, *The Indo-Greeks*, p. 41; B. Stavisky, *East and West*, 23 (1973), p. 265.

²³ *PBA*, p. 92, note 4.

²⁴ Narain, *The Indo-Greeks*, p. 8.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 8-9; Diodorus, XIX. 48.

²⁶ *Scientific American*, 1982, p. 154.

²⁷ Strabo, XI.11.2.

²⁸ Ptolemy, VII.11.

²⁹ For the context of it see Strabo XI.11.2. Tarn, *op. cit.*, p. 88; Narain, *op. cit.*, pp. 17, 23. These satrapies must have been in Margiana.

³⁰ See the map in Italo Ronca, *Ptolemaios, Geographia 6, 9-12, Ostiran und Zentralasien*, Roma, 1971.

³¹ B.A. Litvinsky and N.O. Tursunov, *East and West*, 24 (1974), p. 89 f.; D.W. Engels, *Alexander the Great and the Logistics of the Macedonian Army*, Berkeley, 1978, p. 103 note 19. They do not think Alexandria Eschate lies in Chodjend.

³² Tarn, *op. cit.*, p. 118.

³³ I think one should look for it in Margiana or in the western parts of Bactria rather than in the far eastern parts of it. If in Margiana, Eucratides, might have renamed Antioch-Merve as Eucratidia. On the other hand Cunningham may be right in stating that Eucratidia corresponds exactly with Khulm (cf. *Numismatic Chronicle*, 1968, p. 108).

at Ai Khanum in any meaningful manner with Eucratides³⁴.

The evidence of a Thessalian origin for Kineas and his administrative relationship with Seleucus have been collected assiduously which only L. Robert could do. But he himself has noted that the name Kineas is not epichoric (*il n'est pas epichorique, lié à une seule région*)³⁵. Even if the Kineas of Ptolemaic Egypt was of Thessalian origin, and if Thessaly furnished a great contingent to Alexander's army, and if Robert's analysis of the Diodorus XVIII.7.2 is taken into account³⁶ there is hardly anything substantial to clinch his conclusion that our "Kineas was therefore a Thessalian, and not an Athenian or a man from the Cyclades, and that he was probably a Thessalian officer of Seleucus"³⁷. Be that as it may, and even if roots of Kineas go to Thessaly, what is there to place him under Seleucus? Hardly anything. Some Greek settlements in Bactria had taken place even before Alexander, in the Achaemenid times. Kineas, and for that matter others, may be considered as "Bactrian" or "Iranian" Greeks in the wider sense, whose ancestors from various Greek cities and nations vanquished by the Achaemenids, had been settled in the region³⁸. This is not to deny the importance of our Kineas. Whether or not a Thessalian, and an officer under, or a protege of, Seleucus, Kineas can still be recognised as a citizen of means, a dignitary of the city on account of this epigraphic evidence. It is surprising though that in a monument like the one we are dealing with his home and status are not specified. He might or might not have been the founder of the city.

So also, while the irresistible temptation to identify Clearchus as a disciple of Aristotle is understandable, there is no direct evidence to support it. The inscription only informs us that it was a Clearchus who had carefully recorded and engraved the maxims from holy Pytho and set them up in the temenos of Kineas in order that they could be seen from afar. The document does not say that this Clearchus was the well known

³⁴ Compare the list of all the coins found in Ai Khanum (*Fouilles I*, pp. 203–204; *RN*, 1974, pp. 6–41, 1975, pp. 23–57; see also Bernard's remark in *PBA*, p. 92 that coins of Euthydemus predominate. For a discussion on the use of Eucratides' era and related issues see *infra*, p. 22.

³⁵ *Fouilles I*, p. 217.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 218–222.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 222.

³⁸ Narain, *op. cit.*, pp. 2–6. It may be relevant here to note that Alexander had sent his Thessalian cavalry home after Ecbatana and even those of them who chose to enlist themselves voluntarily he sent them home before crossing the Oxus because their hearts were no longer in their work (cf. Arrian, *Anabasis of Alexander*, Bk III. 19; V. 27).

peripatetic Clearchus of Soli of the fourth–third century B.C.³⁹. He could very well have been a “friend, philosopher and guide” of Kineas who might have visited Delphi and copied the maxims there, or he was a master of the ceremony who had circumspectly or wisely copied the maxims and organised the engraving and setting up of the text. According to Robert this Clearchus had actually transcribed the maxims *at* Delphi and that “in this well–turned epigram, which is not banal, not just a space–filler, he has insisted that he had made this transcription with care and intelligence, and that since these Delphic maxims circulated with variance it was an act of conscience on his part to bring to his compatriot on the Oxus an authentic version of the text. (*C’est la conscience de philologue et dans un but moral et, pour ainsi dire, patriotique. Cléarque apporta à ses compatriotes sur l’Oxus un texte authentique, vérifié*)⁴⁰. But, while I can understand a layman, a “friend, philosopher and guide”, asserting this fact in a public document I am not inclined to accept that a philosopher of the eminence such as Clearchus of Soli would need to provide such an assurance. Moreover, what evidence do we have for a close association of Kineas with the well–known peripatetic? And, if Clearchus was really the famous peripatetic from Soli why should not the document, particularly the genre to which it belonged, say that? Announcement of this identity would have surely been of no less importance than the fact of careful copying of the maxim at Delphi. Unfortunately we have no evidence of the travels of the peripatetic Clearchus of Soli. Our Clearchus could be the master of ceremony and not his famous namesake in which case he would naturally take pride and announce the fact that the maxims had been carefully copied and engraved, emphasizing professional excellence.

The third epigraph of this group mentions the names of two brothers, Triballos and Strato, who were sons of a Strato. The short inscription does not give any other information about the individuals and the family but gives two more names which are of gods, Hermes and Herakles. L. Robert remarks that the elder son Triballos has a rare name but very normal (*L’ainé a un nom rare, mais très normal*)⁴¹. It is related to the name of a tribe of Northern Thrace. He notes that as a personal name this is attested for a slave in Athens in the list of sailors⁴² who died in the

³⁹ Robert is candid in admitting, “*après tout rien ne le dit ni ne l’indique*”, *Fouilles I*, p. 225.

⁴⁰ *Fouilles I*, p. 224.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 208.

⁴² *Ibid.*, *loc. cit.*, cf. *IG.*, II.2.1951, 23; F. Bechtel, *Die Historischen Personennamen des Griechischen bis zur Kaiserzeit*, Halle (1917), p. 543. (It is much disputed

battle of Arginusus⁴³. It is also known from the epitaph of another slave of the fourth century B.C. in Athens⁴⁴. He draws attention to Ἑρμόλαος Τριβαλλοῦ on the leg of one of the colossi of Abu Simbel in Egypt⁴⁵. On the basis of these references L. Robert thinks that *it is not impossible* that our Triballos in Bactria, like the father of the one from Abu Simbel was a descendant of a soldier, or of an officer, of the *people*, Triballes, conquered by Philip and Alexander⁴⁶. He does not think it adventurous (*il n'est pas aventureux*) to deduce the military character of a part of the colonizers of Ai Khanum and remarks that the name of Triballos and Triballes brings us to three different and contrasted extremities of the Hellenistic world,

à la limite dernière du monde grec de cette époque: les Triballes sont proches du Danube; Triballos fils de Straton a vécu dans l'Asie Centrale, sur l'Oxus, en bordure du Turkestan et en vue de l'Hindoukouch, du Caucase Indien; Hermolaos fils de Triballos inscrirait le souvenir de son passage sur le Nil aux frontières du Soudan. Ce sont les armées conquérantes qui avaient ainsi véhiculé ce nom, à la suite d'Alexandre. Tel peut être le pouvoir d'évocation historique qui repose dans un nom⁴⁷.

But this seems to be an ardent imagination. L. Robert does not provide any evidence to substantiate the linkages. And what is more, he does not take into account at all the two Stratos. If proper names must be discussed to find out the ethnic origin or a meaningful genesis of historical role of a family I do not see why we should be so selective in favor of one, even if it is exotic or rare, against two, for we have Strato, the son and Strato, the father. L. Robert dismisses consideration of the Straton in just a sentence in parenthesis "*car, en Bactriame, le nom n'a pas dû surgir dans la famille de Straton seulement à l'époque de cette inscription*"⁴⁸. If Triballos is linked with the tribe of Triballes do we have the evidence to link the Stratos, too, to the same people? It would be more significant to trace the origin of the senior Strato, the father of Triballos and Strato, the junior. On the other hand, Strato is a familiar name in the history of the Bactrian and Indian Greeks. Not only there were two

whether it refers to the battle at Arginusae, or whether the inscription is to be dated in the early fourth century B.C.)

⁴³ Robert, *op. cit.*, p. 209.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, *loc. cit.*

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, *loc. cit.*; cf. A. Bernard, *Rev. Ét. Gr.*, 1957, *Les inscriptions grecques d'Abou-Simbel*, p. 30, n. 22.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, *loc. cit.*

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 209–10.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 209.

Stratos among the Indo-Greek kings⁴⁹ but also there were others whose names have been read on the Ai Khanum "Treasury" ostraca⁵⁰. In the absence of any royal title attached to the name it is difficult to identify them with their royal namesakes. But surely they occupied a prominent status in the city of Ai Khanum. The Strato of the ostraca inscriptions too may be a later member of this family. But *if* the inscription can be dated in the middle decades of the 2nd century B.C., which is not out of the question⁵¹, their royal identity may not be ruled out, in which case Triballos would be the "left out" brother, who was either superceded in a succession struggle or who predeceased the brother Strato of the inscription.

It is true that Alexander's army included not only Macedonians but Greeks from various cities and nations as well as Iranians and mercenaries of different ethnic elements. Thracians were also part of it. But there is no evidence to indicate that the family of Strato, only one of whose sons had a Thracian name, was a part of the band wagon of Alexander. It is already known that there were people belonging to the various cities and nations from Asia Minor and Greece settled in Afghanistan even before Alexander, during the Achaemenid rule. Strato's family could be descended from either the pre-Alexander settlers or from the later wave of them; there is nothing to prove this way or the other. Generally the classical sources give the city, or national origins, of the key officers and prominent personnel related to Alexander's campaign and to the time of his immediate successors. It is not uncommon for the "new" or "recent" settlers to remember or mention their national affiliations. On the other hand the absence of such announcements is understandable in the case of descendants of old settlers who had lived in the region for several generations and had become a part of the local milieu. So, unless there is definite evidence to bring Triballos from Thrace, and Kineas from Thessaly, either as part of Alexander's army or in the time of Seleucus I, we have no alternative but to accept them as part of the Bactrian-Greek melting-pot, where names and identities of diverse nations had already been mixed up.

Thus the contents of these inscriptions do not provide definite connexions with known historical persons and their activities, or with known historical events and other prosopographical indications, and therefore some of the vital criteria for dating the inscriptions are lacking in our case. Even the character of the monument does not offer a definitive clue, for accor-

⁴⁹ Narain, *op. cit.*, pp. 102, 110-111, 146-148.

⁵⁰ Rapin, *BCH*, 1983, pp. 328, 334: cf. inscription nos. 5 and 8 in Group II above.

⁵¹ See *infra*.

ding to Bernard it is the inscription referring to Clearchus which “luckily for architecture offers a precious chronological benchmark”⁵², and not the other way round. The archeological contextualisation of Ai Khanum also is of no help. Bernard admits the uncertainties in both absolute and relative chronology of the different periods of Ai Khanum and notes “the extreme complexity of the stratigraphy and the architectural phases for the oldest period”⁵³.

On palaeographical grounds L. Robert dates the Kineas–Clearchus epigraphs “from the beginning of the third century B.C.”⁵⁴ and notes later “*On ne saurait dire de quand datait ce document. Du moins est-il assuré qu’il était en place au début du III^e siècle au plus tard*”⁵⁵. He dates the Strato–Triballos one “around the middle of the third century, not too early” (“*Je daterais cette inscription vers le milieu du III^e siècle, pas trop tôt*”)⁵⁶. I cannot agree more with Robert in dating the Strato–Triballos epigraph about fifty years later than the Kineas–Clearchus ones. But I find it difficult to agree with him in dating the latter from the beginning of the third century B.C.

L. Robert observes⁵⁷ that the cutting of the Kineas epigram is “assuredly of the late Hellenistic era”. Without going into the analysis of the form of each letter, as he did in the case of Aśokan inscription from Kandahar, he notes only that “for this epigram, as it happens and as Adolf Wilhelm has shown on several occasions, they chose a type of writing recalling the manuscripts, and that comparisons are to be made with the papyri”. He concludes that “this text must be from the beginning of the third century, well before the inscriptions of Aśoka and noticeably before the act of enfranchisement of Hyrcania”⁵⁸. Aware of the difference in the forms of letters used in the epigram and the maxims on the same base Robert notes that this difference is not on account of its chronology but because of its style, and that the maxims are not later in date. The epigram is in the lapidary style recalling the papyrus and that the maxims is in monumental⁵⁹. Robert seems also to give more importance to the similarity and purpose of the monuments at Miletopolis and

⁵² Bernard, *Fouilles I*, p. 105.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, *loc. cit.*

⁵⁴ Robert, *Fouilles I*, p. 213.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 223.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 210.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 213.

⁵⁸ For the Hyrcanian document see, *Hellenica*, XI–XII, chapter VII, pp. 85–91, plate V. This is date between 281 and 260.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 215.

Ai Khanum than to palaeographic comparisons⁶⁰. This is intricately linked with his assumptions of the identities and dates of Kineas and Clearchus⁶¹. But it is interesting to note a lurking ambivalence in his judgement when he concludes later⁶².

On ne saurait dire de quand datait ce document. Du moins est-il assuré qu'il était en place au début du III^e siècle au plus tard. Il est inutile d'exposer par quelles conjectures on pourrait le situer dans le cours du IV^e siècle, entre la date que je viens d'indiquer et la reconstruction du temple de Delphes après 373.

One may note here in passing that it is strange that in spite of this statement of Robert and Bernard's own observation about "the complexity of the stratigraphy and the architectural phases for the oldest period" and "the uncertainties in both absolute and relative chronology", the first stage of the temenos of Kineas has been dated in the last quarter of the 4th century B.C."⁶³.

About the writing on the dedicatory epigraph of Strato-Triballos Robert observes⁶⁴ that it is "*profonde, large et aérée*", and the points for comparison are inscriptions of Hyrcania dated between 281 and 260, the two inscriptions of Aśoka in Kandahar of about 250 and at the latest the two examples in Media of the edicts of Antiochus III in 193, both strictly contemporary and however much different in their writing (*si différents dans leur écriture*). He notes that this inscription is short; it does not have *pi*, a characteristic letter (*ainsi il n'y a pas de pi, lettre assez caractéristique*). Robert would date this inscription "around the middle of the third century B.C.; not too early (*pas trop tôt*)", and he cannot say "if it is still under the Seleucid regime or already when the kingdom of Bactria is installed".

The ambivalence noticeable in Robert's statements in respect of both the Kineas-Clearchus and Strato-Triballos inscriptions is understandable. Palaeographical evidence based primarily on letter-forms and style is far less precise and secure than often supposed and one must turn to

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 222-223.

⁶¹ For he dates Clearchus in the fourth or the beginning of the third century B.C. and feels assured that he was an immediate disciple of Aristotle. But see W. Walbank, *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, p. 248, where he dates Clearchus c. 340-250 B.C. If Clearchus had met Megasthenes and has read his *Indika* as is generally agreed it is most likely that Clearchus was closer to the middle decades of third century B.C. and was certainly not an immediate disciple of Aristotle. See Robert, *op. cit.*, pp. 233-34, note 167 for relevant discussion and sources.

⁶² Robert, *op. cit.*, p. 223.

⁶³ Bernard, *Fouilles I*, p. 105.

⁶⁴ Robert, *op. cit.*, p. 210.

it for dating only as a final refuge. As Woodhead has observed⁶⁵.

It is at its most valuable in the early period, in the seventh, sixth and fifth centuries, when the continual and rapid development of the epichoric alphabets and their gradual assimilation to an Ionic *koine* ——— make it possible to suggest, on the basis of the appearance of the letters alone, a date sometimes within a decade or two.

By the end of the fifth century the letters and technique of writing them had completed their necessary development.

The introduction of new letter-forms may be dated in a general way, on the basis of inscriptions showing the new forms which are themselves datable on other grounds. This helps to provide a *terminus post quem* which may prove useful in other cases in which no additional criteria will serve to suggest a date. There is, however, seldom a *terminus ante quem*. Styles once introduced tend to persist, side by side with both earlier and later fashions. The classical style of the fourth century B.C. was never wholly eclipsed, even though the decorated and baroque styles of the Hellenistic period exceeded it for a while in general popularity, and it had——a marked revival in the classicising movement of the time of Trajan and Hadrian. Monumental inscriptions on buildings or imposing statue-groups and memorials often favoured a purity and simplicity of style at a time when monuments of lesser moment rioted in a profusion of exotic by-forms and a tedious abundance of apices. Thus it has proved possible for the most eminent epigraphic authorities to be widely at variance on the date of a text as assessed by the forms of its letters.

Another point to remember is that a style is not everywhere uniform and contemporaneous. A fashion in one part of the Greek world does not necessarily permit a text from elsewhere, showing similar characteristics in its lettering to be assigned to the same period.

The problem indeed becomes more compounded when this comparison involves a vast geography and diverse cultural elements and transformations, which cannot be ignored in the case of the epigraphs from Ai Khanum. The factor of place is no less important than that of time. It has been noted that “Greek linguistic influence outside the centres of culture was variable and complex”⁶⁶, and “the knowledge and use of Greek differed sharply according to locality even in a homeland of the “oriental Greeks”⁶⁷. I have already discussed elsewhere the numismatic epigraphy of the Indo-Greek coins and shown how unreliable it is to base conclusions on it alone⁶⁸.

Something of a parallel to the letters of the Kienas-Clearchus inscription

⁶⁵ A.G. Woodhead, *The Study of Greek Inscriptions*, 2nd edn., Cambridge, 1981. Chapter V on “The Dating of Inscriptions”.

⁶⁶ R.B. Whitehead, *Numismatic Chronicle*, 1950, p. 209.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 1944, p. 104.

⁶⁸ Narain, *op. cit.*, pp. 156–159.

may be seen in O. Kern⁶⁹, *Inscriptiones Graecae*, No. 35 (from Tenos in the British Museum) published as *IG. XII. 5*, No. 872 where Hiller von Gaertringen compared papyrus hands of late IV–early III centuries, and then consulted M. Holleaux, who suggested late III or early II, and A. Wilhelm, who like Hiller, compared papyrus hands and opted for IV–III centuries⁷⁰. This is an example to bear in mind. Joyce Reynolds and I have compared the illustrations of the inscriptions referred to by Robert e.g. the Teheran text published in *Hellenica XI–XII*⁷¹, which has to be between 281 and 261. We can see many points of comparison and occasional differences (notably over *theta*) but doubt very much if the differences are in any way decisive.

In terms of geographical horizon it is realistic to compare the Ai Khanum inscriptions with the four other inscriptions recently discovered in Afghanistan and Soviet Central Asia, namely, the two Asokan texts⁷² and the fragmentary inscription of the hypothetical son of Aristonax at Kandahar⁷³, and the dedicatory one of Atrosokes at Takht-i-Sangin⁷⁴. The last is nearest in location to Ai Khanum and naturally attracts our attention first. Litvinsky and Pichikyan, date this dedication of Atrosokes on the altar “to the middle of the 2nd century B.C., that is to the last decades before the fall of Graeco–Bactria”⁷⁵. The two Kandahar inscriptions are separated by only a few hundred yards from each other. It is generally agreed that the Aśokan edict there date from about the middle of the third century B.C.⁷⁶. Fraser would like to propose a date of *ca* 275 B.C. for the

⁶⁹ O. Kern, *Inscriptiones Graecae*, Bonnae 1913, p. .xv.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ Cp. pl. V in *Hellenica XI–XII*. for ch. VII pp. 85–91.

⁷² *East and West*, 1959, pp. 185–191; *Journal Asiatique*, 1958, pp. 1–48, Pl. IV, 1964, pp. 137–157; *CRAI*, 1964, pp. 126–140; *JRAS*, 1972, pp. 111–118.

⁷³ P.M. Fraser, “The Son of Aristonax at Kandahar”, *Afghan Studies*, 2, 1979, pp. 9–18.

⁷⁴ B.A. Litvinsky and I.R. Pichikyan, “Monuments of Art from the Sanctuary of Oxus (North Bactria)”, *Acta Antiqua Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, XXVIII, 1980, pp. 25–83. Also, Litvinskiy and Pichikiyan, “The Temple of the Oxus”, *JRAS*, 1981, pp. 133–167, esp. p. 154. One may also recall here the 1947 discovery of the first Greek inscription in Bactria, at Nimlik-tepe, consisting of only five letters, ΑΤΡΟΣ on a potsherd (cf. D. Schlumberger, *CRAI*, 1947, kpp. 241–42). Could this be related to Atrosokos?

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 63, also note 214: V.A. Livshits and Ju. G. Vinogradov agree with Litvinsky and Pichikyan, but some Soviet scholars are inclined to an earlier date i.e. “turn of the 3rd century–beginning of the 2nd century B.C.”.

⁷⁶ Fraser dates the bilingual Aśokan edict of Kandahar in c. 258 and notes that “the date cannot be in doubt within more than a year so (259/8–285/7)”. He gives his reasons, *op. cit.*, 10 and note 18 on p. 15. But this is open to many questions. It


fragmentary inscription referring to Aristonax⁷⁷. But his ambivalence is clear when he observes that “dogmatism on this point would be rash”, that “a date between 300 and 275/250 seems likely to represent the overall limits”, and that “this cannot be regarded as providing a precise date for the interpretation and historical context of the inscription”⁷⁸. While I propose to deal with the content and interpretation of the historical con-

is true that the chronology of Aśoka's reign is fairly well settled, cf., P.H.L. Eggermont, *The Chronology of the Reign of Asoka Moriya*, Leiden, 1956, pp. 86, 144 ff. 161, and R. Thapar, *Aśoka and the Decline of the Mauryas*, O.U.P. 1961, pp. 32–33. But it is not so in the case of the engraving of his edicts, cf. D.R. Bhandarkar, *Aśoka*, University of Calcutta, 1955, pp. 244–253; R. Thapar, *op. cit.*, pp. 166 ff. The whole problem of the dating of the Aśokan edicts is being freshly examined in detail by me in a separate paper. It is clear that while the second Kandahar edict (the purely Greek one) of Aśoka is a part of the “corpus” known as the “Fourteen–Rock–Edicts”, the bilingual Kandahar edict does not belong in the category of “Minor–Rock–Edicts” but in the group of “independent” or “special” minor rock inscriptions (i.e. not like MREs I and II but like the Bhabru edict). The Fourteen–Rock–Edicts is a package of documents, copies of which were engraved in different scripts and languages in ten locations, so far known, spread out in the various regions of Aśoka's empire. So also copies of Minor Rock Edicts I and II were engraved in as many as thirteen (or 14) places. (D.C. Sircar, *Epigraphia Indica*, XXXVIII. p. 1). It is difficult to imagine that all the ten sets of copies of Fourteen–Rock–edicts were engraved at one and the same time. But there is no reason to doubt that an individual set of copies were engraved at one and the same time at a particular site selected for it. This is evident, on the one hand, from the sequential arrangement of the fourteen inscriptions of the corpus and on the other hand from the varying dates in five of them without conforming to any sequence. Rock Edict Nos. III and IV refer to the 12th year, V to the 13th, VIII to the 10th and XIII to the 8th year after the consecration of Aśoka. And these dates are not the dates of their engraving but of some significant events, royal proclamations or dictations. One can only fix the chronological limits within which they must have been engraved. If the earliest limit can only be the 13th year after Aśoka's coronation the latest can be the 27th year after his coronation, if we follow D.R. Bhandarkar's view that the Fourteen–Rock–Edicts were engraved after the Seven–Pillar–Edicts. This means that these Rock Edicts engraved between 256/5 and 242/1 B.C. Without going into the question of whether or not the Minor Rock Edicts and “independent/special” minor rock inscriptions were engraved before or after the Fourteen–Rock–Edicts and/or Seven–Pillar–Edicts, the internal evidence of the Kandahar bilingual text indicates only that it could not have been engraved *before* “ten years were completed from Asoka's consecration”. It is not clear how long *after* the moment of Aśoka's showing of *Dhamma* (Εὐσεβεία) to mankind was this inscription engraved at the far western end of his empire. Since this edict represents a summary of Aśoka's general principles of *Dhamma*, and recounts his own achievements and expresses hope for future, it is more likely that it was engraved in the later, rather than earlier, part of his reign. In any case I do not feel inclined to date it before c. 250 B.C.

⁷⁷ Fraser, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, *loc. cit.*

text of these three inscriptions in a separate paper, I still cannot see reason, at least on palaeographical grounds, to be so confident as Robert, and following him Fraser, in dating the Kineas–Clearchus inscription at Kandahar before that of Aśoka⁷⁹. Perhaps more discoveries and less subjective approach may help in fixing their chronology.

One small but very significant piece of evidence does not permit much speculation⁸⁰. Unfortunately it escaped the attention of Bernard. Among the bricks used in the construction of the tomb of Kineas there are some of exceptionally large size (53×49×9 cm.) which were used to cover the sarcophagus. One of these which Bernard has illustrated in his report has a Greek monogram and a Brahmi letter stamped on it. Both are juxtaposed in an incuse of rectangular frame. The monogram is  and the Brahmi letter is 𑀧 for *Jha*⁸¹. The monogram is very well known and has been a subject of discussion for long. It is agreed that it consists of three letters Δ | O which according to some stood for Diodotus and indicated that phase of his career when he was reaching out for independence of Bactria⁸². According to others it denoted the usual mint or moneyer's mark but did belong to the period of Diodotus⁸³. It was thought by some to represent Dionysopolis⁸⁴.

The Brahmi letter 𑀧 (*Jha*), though the standard and typical form known from the inscriptions of Aśoka, can be later than the time of Aśoka but not earlier. In Aśokan edicts this may be found in as many as thirteen places⁸⁵. But this letter–form hardly registers any change in the century following that of Aśoka⁸⁶. It is important to realise that Aśoka used

⁷⁹ Fraser notes that the second Kandahr edict of Aśoka is written in more cursive hand resembling in some respects the poem of Klearchos at Ai Khanum (*op. cit.*, p. 14, n. 3). It is not clear if he would date the Klearchos inscription, therefore, later than what has been proposed by Robert.

⁸⁰ I refer to the bricks described by Bernard in *Fouilles I*, pp. 9–10, 87–88. Bernard notes (p. 9) that the significance of 𑀧 on the brick escapes him (*La signification du second signe 𑀧 nous échappe*).

⁸¹ See pl. I a (pl. 97 in *Fouilles I*).

⁸² Tarn, *The Greeks in Bactria and India*, pp. 72–74; *contra*, Narain, *The Indo-Greeks*, pp. 14–15.

⁸³ Narain, *op. cit.*, pp. 14–15; Newell, *Eastern Seleucid Mints*, pp. 228–249, esp. 245–246.

⁸⁴ P. Gardner, *NC*, 1879, p. 12; *contra*, H. Howorth, *NC*, 1888, pp. 293–299.

⁸⁵ C.S. Upasak, *The History and Palaeography of Mauryan Brahmi Script*, Nalanda (Patna), 1960, p. 69. This is found in Rock Edicts of Girnar, Kalsi, Dhauli, Jaugada and Eragudi, Pillar Edicts of Delhi–Topra, Delhi–Mirath, Lauria–Araraj, Lauria Nandangarh, Rampurva and Allahabad–Kosam, and separate Rock Edicts of Dhauli and Jaugaa.

⁸⁶ See A.H. Dani, *Indian Palaeography*, Oxford, 1963, pp. 31–61, esp. 59–61 and

Kharoshthi script and not Brahmi for his edicts in Gandhara⁸⁷. It is only after him that Brahmi appears for the first time along with Kharoshthi, on some local "Negama" coins from Taxila⁸⁸, as well as on some bilingual coins of Pantaleon and Agathocles, who were the only Indo-Greek kings to use Brahmi instead of Kharoshthi, on them⁸⁹. These coins and their significance have already been discussed elsewhere⁹⁰. Bactria was not included in the empire of Aśoka, nor was it part of the territory ceded to Chandragupta by Seleucus. On the other hand, not only the bilingual coins, with Brahmi legend, of Agathocles have been found in Ai Khanum⁹¹ but the ostraca writings from its "Treasury" inform us about the Karshapanas from Taxila reaching there⁹². Use of Brahmi letter in Ai Khanum can hardly be dated before the time of Agathocles, who reigned from c. 185 to 165 B.C.⁹³. The Kineas-Clearchus inscription therefore can hardly be in any case earlier than Aśokan edicts from Kandahar. Most probably it dated from the third quarter of the third century B.C. and *not* in the beginning of the third century B.C. as Robert thought. Since Robert is right in dating the Strato-Triballos epigraph about fifty years later than that of Kineas-Clearchus one, we would date that inscription in the second half of the second century B.C.⁹⁴.

compare pl. V a No. 6 for an example from Barli fragmentary inscription of first century B.C., VI a No. 2 for Sanchi series No. 1 of early first century B.C., No. 6 for Bharhut series No. 1 of late first century B.C. It hardly registers any change until at least first century A.D. (See Dani, pl. VIIIa too).

⁸⁷ A.H. Dani, *op. cit.*, pp. 59–61, who states "it was influence of Greek writing and Greek technicians that gave a new face to Indian Brahmi" (p. 60). One may also recall the use of Brahmi by Heliodorus, an envoy of Antialcidas, king of Taxila, to Bhagabhadra in his Besnagar Pillar inscription.

⁸⁸ E.J. Rapson, "Counter-marks on early Persian and Indian Coins", *JRAS*, 1895, pp. 865–877.

⁸⁹ P. Gardner, *Catalogue of Indian Coins in the British Museum, Greek and Scythic Kings of Bactria and India*, Chicago, 1966, pp. 9, II and pl. III. 9 and IV. 9.

⁹⁰ Narain, *op. cit.*, pp. 59–60; these coins of Pantaleon and Agathocles are definitely later than the local Negama coins of Taxila (see also Dani, *op. cit.*, p. 60).

⁹¹ Bernard, *RN*, 1974, pp. 7–41; also Narain, *Journal of the Numismatic Society of India*, 1973, pp. 73–77.

⁹² Rapin, *BCH*, pp. 329–330. See *supra*, p. 5, No. 5 in Group II and my translation of it.

⁹³ See Narain, "The Earliest Brahmi Inscription outside India", *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, vol. 106, 1986, pp. 797–801. Also A.H. Dani, *op. cit.*, pp. 59–62.

⁹⁴ It may be noted that Strato I reigned from c. 130 to 95 B.C., see Narain, *op. cit.*, pp. 102, 110–111 and the chronological chart on p. 181. Also attention may be drawn to the Strato of Ostraca inscriptions of Ai Khanum.

Now returning to inscriptions which I have included in Group II, it is clear that they belong in a different category altogether. These writings on the ostraca, which were found in the excavation seasons of 1977 and 1978, are documents of administrative nature and deal with accounting in what the excavators call the "Treasury". The medium and technique of writing and the material on which they are written are different from the inscriptions of Group I⁹⁵. Comparatively they are larger in number⁹⁶ but they are so fragmentary that complete restoration of their contents is not possible⁹⁷. But the message of their content is evident from what has survived⁹⁸. While it is not assuring to comment on the nature, date and contents of these writings without examining the material first hand I cannot help making a few observations on some of them on the basis of the published information and illustrations.

The "cursive capital type" of these Ai Khanum documents have been compared with those of the Mediterranean world, particularly of Ptolemaic administration⁹⁹. Rapin however recognises that there is insufficient evidence to determine its typology¹⁰⁰. After making some specific comparisons he admits that "in spite of evident signs of kinship, the comparison with the Ptolemaic palaeography does not allow in itself to date exactly our texts"¹⁰¹. His statement that "let us say any way that they do not show any anomaly in relation to the writing current in the III century and in the first half of the second century B.C."¹⁰² is not only a

⁹⁵ Most of these inscription are written in Indian ink while some appear engraved (*gravées*) after baking. (Rapin, *op. cit.*, pp. 316–317.

⁹⁶ They are about forty in number written on thirty different vessels. They include 3 non-Greek writings, one graffiti and one estampage. As against these the monumental inscriptions number only four which include a fragmentary one consisting of only seven letters not included in our Group I above. In Group II I have included only nine of the forty from the ostraca.

⁹⁷ With the possible exception of No. 3 of Group II there is hardly any which is complete. Most of the selected ones in Group II have however only a few words missing. No. 2 has been selected in spite of its very incomplete nature because of the occurrence of the figure which may represent a date. About the fragmentary nature of these writings and their restoration see Rapin, *op. cit.*, pp. 315–349.

⁹⁸ Bernard and Rapin, *BEFEO*, 1980, pp. 10–38. Rapin, *op. cit.*, pp. 315 ff. Bernard and Rapin think that these vessels are part of royal treasury. But I think the possibility that they could be part of a merchant-banker's warehouse needs consideration.

⁹⁹ Rapin, *op. cit.*, p. 355.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 350, "nos textes sont en nombre insuffisant pour permettre de dresser une typologie".

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 350, "malgré des traits de parenté évidents, la comparaison avec la paléographie ptolémaïque ne permet pas, en elle-même, de dater précisément nos textes".

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 350, "Disons en tout cas qu'ils ne présentant aucune anomalie par

weak judgment indeed but it seems misleading. I do not see any reason to travel so far in the west to Egypt to explain the nuances of the writings so far in the east as Badakshan. Neither has any reason for the linkage between the two ends been given. I think the clues have to be found within closer geographical limits.

No doubt these inscriptions are palaeographically later than those of Group I¹⁰³. If the dates I have suggested earlier for the Kineas–Clearchus and Strato–Triballos inscriptions are accepted, these writings on the ostraca may be dated from the second half of the second century B.C. to the first quarter of the first century B.C., that is, a couple of decades later than what Bernard and Rapin would like us to accept.

Some of these inscriptions have been supposed to refer to a date. At least in one of them “year 24” is mentioned¹⁰⁴. Perhaps in another the figure 38 might also refer to a date¹⁰⁵. It is not clear whether these figures refer to a regnal year or a date in a calendrical reckoning system¹⁰⁶. But Bernard and Rapin suggest that the year 24 is related to an era named after Eucratides¹⁰⁷. This suggestion has already found support of Fussman and others¹⁰⁸. The problem of dates and identification of eras are so vexing that I would prefer not to make it unnecessarily more complicated by introducing a new candidate¹⁰⁹. Particularly, when the candidate is weak. I have already discussed the career of Eucratides in detail and have shown that the picture drawn of him by Tarn is not justified¹¹⁰. Since my last work on the subject I do not find any evidence

rapport à l'écriture courante du III^e siècle et de la première moitié du II^e av. J.-C.”.

¹⁰³ This is accepted by Bernard and Rapin too. Bernard & c., *BEFEO*, Tome LXVIII, 1980, pp. 15–19; Rapin, *op. cit.*, pp. 349–51.

¹⁰⁴ No. 1 of Group II; cf. Rapin, *op. cit.*, p. 320, fig. 3 a–b.

¹⁰⁵ No. 2 of Group II; Rapin, *op. cit.*, p. 323–324, No. 3, fig. 6. The last letter of ἔτους (=year) before the numeral figure 38 is faintly visible in the Fig. 6a; the sherd is broken at that point.

¹⁰⁶ Bernard & c., *BEFEO*, Tome LXVIII, 1980, pp. 24–27, consider both the possibilities but in both cases like to tie it to Eucratides. It may be noted however that quite unlike the usual practice the inscription does not give the name of the king to whose regnal year or to whose era it is supposed to refer. Even the one and only instance of dating in an Indo–Greek inscription, i.e. the Bajaur Inscription known before Ai Khanum, for example, the name of the king, Menander, is mentioned after a possible numeral figure (see, Narain, *op. cit.*, p. 144 and *Epigraphia Indica*, XXIV, 1–8).

¹⁰⁷ Bernard & c., *BEFEO*, Tome LXVIII, 1980, pp. 24–27; Rapin, *op. cit.*, pp. 367–370.

¹⁰⁸ Fussman, *BEFEO*, Tome LXVII, 1980, pp. 36–42.

¹⁰⁹ I have discussed the problem of eras in the Kharosthi inscriptions in detail in my forthcoming books on the Sakas and the Kushanas.

¹¹⁰ Narain, *op. cit.*, chapter III *passim*.

substantial enough to change the image of Eucratides; though it delinks him from the Seleucid designs, it does not deprive him of the qualities of military leadership, and of his successes, to entitle him to be one of the half-a-dozen Bactro-Indo-Greek kings, out of about forty, whose names alone have survived in whatever meager literary sources we have about them. The only new evidence brought to light is the reference in Aelian¹¹¹. It states, in connexion with the pearl-oysters of India, that there was "a city of which one Soras by name was ruler, a man of royal lineage, at the time when Eucratides was ruler of Bactria"¹¹². This is hardly more enlightening than the information we already have from Strabo¹¹³ and Justin¹¹⁴, sources much earlier than Aelian. In fact Eucratides' contemporaneity with Mithridates, known from Justin¹¹⁵, is more rewarding in fixing his date than Aelian's reference to Soras. For the identity and date of Soras, who must be one of the Chola kings of South India, are unknown¹¹⁶. If at all, a reference to Eucratides might help to locate the date of this Chola king but not *vice versa*. This hardly adds to our knowledge to justify Bernard's answer to his own question: "Who was then the Greco-Bactrian king powerful and ambitious enough to take around the end of the first quarter of the second century B.C. the decision of creating an era of his own? It cannot be anybody else but Eucratides"¹¹⁷. As we have noted, there were other "powerful" and "ambitious" kings also among the Greco-Bactrians in that period¹¹⁸. If we must look for a date in the first quarter of the second century B.C. for the beginning of an era to which the year 24 of the ostraca might belong there is more than one claimant, e.g. Demetrius I and II, who ruled from c. 200-185 and 180-165 respectively, Agathocles who ruled from c. 180 to 165 and even Antimachus I (190-180). All these kings who were members of the rival family of Euthydemus appear to have much better claims than that of Eucratides in almost every respect¹¹⁹. If it is a ques-

¹¹¹ Aelian, *On the Characteristics of Animals* (Loeb classical library series, ed. and translated by A.F. Scholfield in 3 volumes, London 1958) XV. 8. See also J.W. McCrindle, *Ancient India as described in Classical Literature*, pp. 143-44.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, XV. 8 (Loeb series, vol. 3, pp. 218-19).

¹¹³ Strabo, XI.11.2, XV.1.3.

¹¹⁴ Justin, xli.6.

¹¹⁵ Narain, *op. cit.*, p. 53.

¹¹⁶ Nikantha Sastri, K.A., *Foreign Notices of South India*, University of Madras, 1972, p. 61, note 1 according to whom Soras is from Sola (Tamil).

¹¹⁷ Bernard & c., *BEFEO*, Tome LXVIII, 1980, pp. 24-27.

¹¹⁸ Narain, *op. cit.*, Chapter III and V *passim*. It is relevant to recall here the statement made by Strabo (XI.11.1) about Menander.

¹¹⁹ For their dates and career see Narain *op. cit.*, Chapters II and III and p. 181.

tion of "ambition" and visibility, the number of commemorative medals issued by Agathocles¹²⁰ makes him too as a possible founder of the era used for the dating on the ostraca. A quantitative analysis of the Indo-Greek coinage found in Ai Khanum also favour the Euthydemids as effective masters of the city rather than Eucratides¹²¹, who was in fact an interloper, who, in spite of his success against Demetrius, was murdered in cold blood by either his own son¹²² or by a son of Demetrius¹²³. Starting of an era and its usage by those who follow depends much upon the popularity of the person or the event, and above all its acceptance by those who come after. A parricide would hardly be interested in either starting or using a reckoning system from the date of Eucratides' accession to the throne. Nor would the rival family of Euthydemus and Demetrius be interested in remembering him.

Moreover there is nothing in the inscription itself to link the name of Eucratides with the date. The only Indo-Greek king so far known to have been linked with a possible date in an inscription is Menander¹²⁴. We have the option of using the Yavana era starting in c. 155 B.C.¹²⁵ for dating the ostraca inscription. But we must wait for more evidence before we can exercise that option. Palaeographically though I do not think of any problem in doing so. The inscription will then be dated in 131 B.C. In fact the occurrence of the name of more than one Strato in the Gymnasium as well as on the ostraca is tempting to find linkages with

¹²⁰ See for a discussion on the importance and significance of these medals, Tarn, *op. cit.*, pp. 446-451; Narain, *op. cit.*, pp. 55-56. The recent discovery of a medal commemorating his elder brother Pantoleon, probably from Ai Khanum, further strengthens our belief (cf. Henri-Paul Francfort, "Deux Nouveaux Tétradrachmes commémoratifs d'Agathocle", *Revue Numismatique*, 1975, pp. 19-22 for this coin).

¹²¹ Compare the number of coins bearing the name of Euthydemus and those who may be associated with his family found at Ai Khanum with those bearing the name of Eucratides. In the 1973 finding there was only one coin of Eucratides (*Revue Numismatique*, 1975, pp. 23-57). Earlier in the campaigns of 1965-1968 at Ai Khanum there were 7 coins of Euthydemus against 2 of Eucratides (*Fouilles I*, pp. 203-5). See also the number listed in F. Holt, "The Euthydemid coinage of Bactria: Further Hoard Evidence from Ai Khanoum", *Revue Numismatique*, 1981, pp. 7-44.

¹²² Narain, *op. cit.*, pp. 70-71.

¹²³ Tarn, p. 220. See also, A.D.H. Bivar, "The death of Eucratides in Mediaeval Tradition", *JRAS*, 1950, pp. 7-13. Tarn's statement that he was killed by the Parthians is untenable, cf. G.K. Jenkins, *NC*, 1951, p. 16, Narain, *op. cit.*, p. 70.

¹²⁴ "Bajaur Casket Inscription", *Epigraphia Indica*, XXIV, pp. 1-8, XXVII. 52-58. Narain, *op. cit.*, pp. 79-80 and Pl. VI.1.

¹²⁵ Narain, *op. cit.*, pp. 143-144; also Narain, "Date of Kaniska" in A.L. Basham, ed., *Papers on the Date of Kaniska*, Leiden, 1968, pp. 208-243.

Menander's family. On the other hand the role and visibility of Agathocles in Ai Khanum, use of Brahmi letters by him and linkage with Taxila do not rule out Agathocles' accession and the occasion of striking the commemorative medals¹²⁶ as good reasons for starting a reckoning system. Be that as it may, either Agathocles or Menander, but certainly not Eucratides. Bernard has, of course, not ruled out the possibility of accepting the year 24 as simply a regnal year of Eucratides¹²⁷ instead of belonging to an era starting from his accession. But there again, it does not go with the evidence we have about the length of his reign. Twenty four years is more than our evidence permits¹²⁸. Moreover, there is the figure 38 in another fragmentary writing in Group II. If that too belongs to the same system we have to agree for at least 38 years of Eucratides' reign which is impossible. Whether or not Eucratides was the last king to have ruled over Ai Khanum before its destruction, and other details, are matters of more discussion, which I propose to do in another article. Suffice it to observe here that linking this issue with the year 24 with Eucratides is begging the question.

¹²⁶ Compared to Agathocles the commemorative medal issued by Eucratides commemorating Heliokles and Laodice is hardly impressive. The gold 20-stater is a freak issued to vaunt a sudden acquisition of wealth by an interloper. A later and not a very well known king Amyntas also issued large silver decadrachms and assumed the title of "autocrator".

¹²⁷ Bernard & c., *BEFEO*, Tome LXVIII, 1980, pp. 24-27.

¹²⁸ Narain, *op. cit.*, pp. 53-73, esp. p. 53 and 73.



[From P. Bernard, *Fouilles d'Ai Khanoum*, I,
Paris 1973, pl. 97]