

The Indo-Greeks

The Greek in Bactria

- Greek settlers were present in India, even at the time of Alexander's invasion of India.
- An example is the Greek colony at Nysa.
- On the death of Alexander, Asian territories, to the east of Asia Minor, which had been conquered by him, fell into the share of Seleukos.
- Parthia and Bactria formed two easternmost provinces of the Seleukid empire.
- Around the middle of the third century BC, Bactria revolted under its satrap, Diodotos I.
- About the same time, Parthia revolted under Arsakes I, a man of unknown antecedents.
- These revolts occurred during the reign of Antiochos II (261-246 BC).
- Neither Seleukos II (246-226 BC), nor Seleukos III (226-222 BC) was able to re-establish Seleukid authority over these provinces.
- Antiochos III (222-187 BC) marched against Parthia and Bactria.
- By that time, the reign of Diodotos I, and also of his son and successor, Diodotos II, had come to an end in Bactria.

The Family of Euthydemos I

- When Antiochos III besieged Bactria, it was being ruled by Euthydemos, who was, perhaps, responsible for the end of the reign of Diodotos II.
- Antiochos III laid siege to Bactria, which continued for a long time, but produced no result.
- Polybios : Euthydemos sent a proposal for peace, through his son, Demetrios.
- Antiochos III was informed that Euthydemos had obtained kingship, not by revolting against the Seleukids, but by putting to death, the descendant (Diodotos II) of the original rebel (Diodotos I).
- Antiochos III was so impressed by Demetrios, that he decided to marry his daughter to the prince.
- He returned to Syria, after virtually acknowledging the independence of Bactria.
- Euthydemos ruled over Balkh, Bukhara, Kabul, Kandahar, Seistan, southern Afghanistan, the adjoining parts of Iran, and parts of northwestern India.
- He was succeeded by Demetrios.
- According to Tarn, Demetrios I, the son of Euthydemos I, annexed Aria, Arachosia, and Seistan to his kingdom.
- But Aria was already a part of the Indo-Greek kingdom during the reign of Euthydemos I, who met Antiochos III on the river Arius.
- The suggestion of the conquest of Seistan by Demetrios is based on the evidence of the find of a few of his coins in that region.
- The conquest of Arachosia by Demetrios is proved by the reference to a city named Demetrias in Arachosia, by Isidore of Charax.
- He could also have occupied the eastern parts of Gedrosia.
- The conquests of Sogdiana, and perhaps Ferghana, also seem to have been achieved by Euthydemos II, during his reign.

- It was earlier almost universally believed that Demetrios crossed the Hindukush, and occupied the Kabul and the Indus valleys.
- This belief was based on two bilingual types, one each in silver and copper, bearing the name of Demetrios, believed to be the son of Euthydemos I by scholars like Cunningham and Whitehead.
- It was argued that after his conquest of the Indian territories, Demetrios was obliged to introduce the Kharoshthī legend for the benefit of his Indian subjects.
- But the bust of the king on the obverse of these coins is unlike the depiction of the king on the other coins of Demetrios I.
- Besides, on the bilingual coins, there occurs the additional epithet, *aniketos* (Kharoshthī, *aparajita*), which is not found on the other coins of Demetrios.
- On these grounds, scholars like Macdonald and Narain ascribe these bilingual coins to Demetrios II.
- Narain has pointed out that no coins of Demetrios, the son of Euthydemos I, have been found in the Kabul valley, or at Taxila, and there is no impact of the local coinage of Taxila on the coins of Demetrios.
- Thus, there is no evidence to support the theory of the extensive conquests of Demetrios in India.
- Demetrios I had to face danger of the nomads from the north, and the Imperial Parthians from the west, besides restive elements in Sogdiana, Aria, Drangiana, and India.
- He, therefore, very wisely desisted from disturbing the powers on the other side of the Hindukush, and, rather, utilized his energies in consolidating the territories he had already conquered.

The family of Antimachos I

- Another family of Indo-Greek rulers was founded by Antimachos I, a ‘mysterious king’.
- He has been variously described as a son or close relative of Diodotos II, a son of Euthydemos I, a Sogdian with a Greek name, etc.
- He is believed to have ruled after Euthydemos I.
- He might have risen to power around 190 BC by ‘eliminating’ Euthydemos II.
- From eastern Bactria, he moved on to the Kabul valley and the Upper Indus valley, and occupied parts of Paropamisadae, and, perhaps, even Takshaśilā.
- After the death of Demetrios I, he seems to have annexed the whole of Bactria, and even conquered Margiana.
- He was succeeded by a son named Demetrios [II].
- Demetrios II is believed by some scholars to be the first Indo-Greek king to issue bilingual coins, the Kharoshthī legend on the reverse being meant for his Indian subjects.
- This has led to the inference that Demetrios II was perhaps the first Indo-Greek king to lead expedition across the Hindukush, and occupy the Kabul valley.
- This expedition is identical with the one, mentioned in the Yugapurāṇa section of the *Gārgīsamhitā*.
- According to that text, the Yavanas crossed Sāketa, Pañchāla, and Mathurā, and reached Kusumadhvaja (Pāṭaliputra).

- This Indian expedition of Demetrios is, perhaps, also mentioned in the *Mahābhāshya* of Patañjail, which reports that the Yavanas had besieged Sāketa and Mādhyamikā (Nagari, near Chittor, in Rajasthan).
- The *Gārgīsamhitā* reports that the Yavanas had to return, due to internecine warfare, perhaps the revolt of Eukratides in Bactria.
- He might also have conquered Gandhāra and some of its western territories.
- But when he was busy in these southern ventures, Bactria was occupied by Eukratides I, who had been sent by Antiochos IV, to foment troubles for Demetrios.
- Demetrios II rushed to Bactria, and besieged Eukratides I with a large army.
- But Justin informs us that, in spite of having only 300 soldiers with him, Eukratides was able to defeat Demetrios II, who might even have been killed in this encounter.
- Two of his sons, Menander and Antimachos II, are known to have ruled after him.

The Family of Eukratides I

- A third family of Indo-Greek rulers was established by Eukratides I.
- He had been sent by Antiochos IV to Bactria, to foment troubles for Demetrios.
- Justin informs us that, in spite of having only 300 soldiers with him, Eukratides was able to defeat Demetrios II, who might even have been killed in this encounter.
- Eukratides was successful in this struggle for supremacy in Bactria.
- Henceforth, the rule of the successors of Demetrios II was limited to northwestern India.
- Eukratides also engaged in struggles with Pantaleon, Agathokles, Antimachos, and Apollodotos.
- Further, he fought with the Sogdiani, the Śakas of Bukhara.
- During his reign, Mithodates I annexed Aria (Herat) and Arachosia (Kandahar).
- Justin : Eukratides was killed by his son, while returning to his capital, in triumph.
- This son of Eukratides drove his chariot over the corpse of his father, and cast it away, without any funerary rites.
- Narain : This parricide might have been Plato, who is the only Indo-Greek king, shown on his coins as riding a quadriga.
- It was earlier believed that Heliokles, a son of Eukratides, was the last Greek ruler of Bactria, and that his successors were forced by the Śaka-Pahlavas to move out, towards northwestern India.
- But now, there is numismatic evidence to show that Greek rule over Bactria might have continued for some time, even after Heliokles.

The Greeks in India

- Among the successors of Demetrios I, Pantaleon was the son of Demetrios.
- He was succeeded by his brother, Agathokles.
- They seem to have ruled in northwestern India, as Bactria had been occupied by Antimachos I, and, subsequently, by Eukratides.
- But the greatest and the most famous Indo-Greek ruler was Menander, perhaps a son of Demetrios II.
- He has been identified with King Milinda of the Buddhist text, *Milindapañho*.
- If this identification be correct, Menander was born at Kālasī-*grāma*, on Alasaṃda-*dvīpa*.
- He rose to be the general of Demetrios I.

- Tarn : Menander married Agathokleia, the daughter of Demetrios I.
- He became king, some time after Demetrios.
- He is believed to have led the Indo-Greek invasion of India, mentioned in the *Mālavikāgnimitram* of Kālidāsa.
- Provenance of his coins suggests that he exercised authority over the central parts of Afghanistan, the erstwhile North Western Frontier Province, Punjab, Sindh, Rajasthan, Kathiawar, and also some western parts of Uttar Pradesh.
- Classical writers : Menander died in camp.
- His son, Strato I, appears to have been a minor at the time.
- During his minority, Agathokleia ruled as regent.
- Some time during the regency of Agathokleia, the kingdom of Strato I was invaded by Heliokles, who had been driven out of Bactria.
- This Heliokles restruck some joint coins of Agathokleia and Strato I.
- On coming of age, Strato I assumed independent charge of his kingdom.
- He had a long reign.
- Towards the end of his reign, he appointed his grandson, Strato II, as his co-ruler.
- But Strato II seems to have predeceased his grandfather.

- Strato I was succeeded by kings, like Dionysios, Zoilos, Apollophanes, and Hippostratos.
- They ruled over eastern Punjab, and its neighbouring regions.
- Hippostratos seems to have been the last ruler of his family.
- His coins have been restruck by the Śaka-Pahlava ruler, Azes I.

- Meanwhile, in the Eukratid family, Heliokles was followed by Antialkidas, who is mentioned in the Besnagar *garuḍa* pillar inscription of the time of Bhāgabhadra.
- He seems to have been threatened by some enemy, and sent his envoy, Heliodoros, to seek the help of the Later Śuṅga ruler, Bhāgabhadra.
- Bhāgabhadra acted as his saviour, and is called *trātā*, by Heliodoros, in the Besnagar *garuḍa* pillar inscription of the time of Bhāgabhadra.
- In the face of the Śaka-Pahlava menace, the rival Indo-Greek royal families seem to have entered into an alliance.
- There are some joint coins of the Eukratid, Antialkidas, the Euthydemid, Lysias, to indicate this *rapprochement*.
- Other kings of the Eukratid family were Diomedes, Epander, Philoxenos, Artemidoros, and Peukolaos.
- They ruled over the Takṣhaśilā and Pushkalāvātī regions of Gandhāra, from where they were ousted by the Śaka-Pahlava, Maues.
- The next two Eukratid rulers, Amystas and Hermaios, ruled only over the Kabul valley and Kafirstan.

- In order to cement the alliance between the Indo-Greek royal families, Hermaios married Kalliope, a Euthydemid princess, perhaps a daughter of Hippostratos.
- Kalliope seems to have ruled the kingdom, which she inherited from her father, jointly with Hermaios.

- However, this alliance failed to arrest the decline of the Indo-Greeks.
- Indo-Greek rule ended with Hermaios, c 50 BC.
- Most of their territories were occupied by the Śaka-Pahlava.