

# A Kingship Ritual in Bactria. Antiochos III and the Reorganization of Seleukid Central Asia

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## ABSTRACT

The article analyzes Polybios' account of the ritual reception of Demetrios, the son of Euthydemos of Bactria, at the court of the Seleukid emperor, Antiochos III, outside of Baktra. In 206 BCE, after a long and inconclusive war, Antiochos III gave the title of king to the rebellious ruler Euthydemos. Euthydemos thereby gained legitimacy through imperial recognition of his royal status in return for his acceptance of Seleukid suzerainty and incidental military support. Creating a friendly satellite kingdom in Central Asia was more useful for the empire than reestablishing direct control. The alliance was sealed with a dynastic marriage. Bactria and Sogdia were thus reintegrated into the Seleukid imperial networks of connectivity and exchange, especially after Antiochos III reopened the ancient sea routes between the Indus Valley and Mesopotamia.

## KEYWORDS

Imperialism; Connectivity; Kingship; Seleucid Empire; Greco-Bactrian Kingdom; Antiochos III; Polybios.

Hellenistic Central Asia has become an important focus area for the study of ancient religions. In the past decades, new archaeological and epigraphic evidence has greatly improved our knowledge of the rich diversity of deities and religious cults in Central Asia, and the ritual practices associated with these deities and cults.<sup>1</sup> Next to nothing however is known about royal ritual. Yet monarchy obviously was of fundamental importance for the social organization of the Baktrian, Indo-Greek, and Kushan kingdoms.<sup>2</sup> Monarchy and religion are never distinct categories, and notably in Hellenistic India royal coinage was an important venue for religious innovation.

All we have is the indirect evidence of ritual objects depicted on coins – above all the diadem – and a single reference in Polybios' *Histories*:

Euthydemos finally sent his son, Demetrios, to confirm the agreement. The young man was admitted into the presence of the king [Antiochos III], and impressed by his appearance, conversation and dignity, [the king] declared firstly that he would give him one of his own daughters [in marriage], and secondly that he would grant to his father the title of king.<sup>3</sup>

This to my knowledge is the only extant written account of a ritual taking place in Hellenistic Central Asia. It is not much. But as we will see, this rare description of a ritualized (and probably well-prepared) public performance may shed an important new light on the political

1 MAIRS 2015; see further e.g., BERNARD – GRENET eds. 1991; STANČO 2012; FOGELIN 2015.

2 For the importance of ritual for monarchy, see CANNADINE – PRICE eds. 1987.

3 Polyb. XI, 34.8–9: τέλος Εὐθύδημος ἐξέπεμψε Δημήτριον τὸν υἱὸν βεβαιώσοντα τὰς ὁμολογίας: ὃν ὁ βασιλεὺς ἀποδεξάμενος, καὶ νομίσας ἄξιον εἶναι τὸν νεανίσκον βασιλείας καὶ κατὰ τὴν ἐπιφάνειαν καὶ κατὰ τὴν ἔντευξιν καὶ προστασίαν, πρῶτον μὲν ἐπηγγείλατο δώσειν αὐτῷ μίαν τῶν ἑαυτοῦ θυγατέρων: δεύτερον δὲ συνεχώρησε τῷ πατρὶ τὸ τῆς βασιλείας ὄνομα.

development of Central Asia during the Hellenistic period. The aim of this paper, then, is to understand the meaning of this passage.

The scene takes place in 206 BCE and is part of a longer episode about concluding peace between Euthydemos of Bactria and the Seleukid emperor, Antiochos III. The topos of the bright young man who makes such an excellent impression on a king that he is elevated to high office belongs to the genre of the ‘court story’, akin to the court stories preserved in the book of Daniel (chapters 1–6), which in its final form is contemporaneous with Polybios.<sup>4</sup> The term Polybios uses to denote Demetrios’ age, *neaniskos*, indicates that he was between 20 and 30 years old.<sup>5</sup> The episode is well-known because historians have long considered it to be a pivotal moment in the emergence of an independent Bactrian kingdom. As we will see, the agreement between Antiochos and Euthydemos paradoxically also signified the successful reintegration of Central Asia into the Seleukid Empire.

With mainly coins to work from, the chronology of the Bactrian kingdom probably will remain a matter of controversy forever. But some agreement on the sequence of events in the second century BCE has emerged in recent scholarship. The crucial point is, that the production of local coinage is no longer seen as indicative of a formal ‘breakaway’ of a region from Seleukid hegemony; it can also indicate the establishment of local rule under imperial suzerainty in the context of a broader process of ‘vassalization’ of the Seleukid Empire.<sup>6</sup> The increase in the number of client kings was a trend in the Seleukid Empire but also appears to be typical of premodern dynastic empires in world history in a more general sense. Allying with the distant ruler was a common strategy of local rulers to outdo their local rivals, while imperial leaders often tended to appease local rulers because they knew that their own abilities to exert direct control over great distances were limited.<sup>7</sup> From this perspective, the first Bactrian ruler to strike coins bearing his own portrait, Diodotos I, would rather have been a client king who ruled in the name of the Seleukid emperor, Antiochos II, who had formally confirmed Diodotos’ royal status (as indeed Diodotos’ famous ‘Thundering Zeus’ coinage was still inscribed with the name of his overlord, Βασιλεὺς Αντίοχος), and perhaps had given him his daughter in marriage.<sup>8</sup> From this position of officially sanctioned autonomy, which boosted his legitimacy as king vis-à-vis his local rivals, Diodotos had every reason to acknowledge Seleukid suzerainty. His successor, Diodotos II, may have aimed at complete independence, in alliance with the rebellious Parni king, Arsakes (Aršak) I.<sup>9</sup>

The Diodotid dynasty of Bactria came to an abrupt end in 223 or 222 when Diodotos II was overthrown by Euthydemos, the governor of Sogdia or Margiana.<sup>10</sup> The rebellion of Euthydem-

4 On the genre, and its manifestation in Daniel 1–6, see HOLM 2013. The topos of the bright young man impressing a king occurs also e.g., in Jos. AJ 12.170–173.

5 On Greek age classes, see KLEIJWEGT 1991; CHANKOWSKI 2010.

6 On the increasing number of kings in the Seleukid Empires, see CAPDETREY 2007, 130–133; STROOTMAN 2010, 153–155, and STROOTMAN 2011, 83–85; ENGELS 2011 (who uses the term ‘feudalization’); DUMKE 2012; CHRUBASIK 2016, 22–45.

7 See DUINDAM 2018, 4, with the references in n. 8.

8 WENGHOFFER – HOULE 2015; see now also WENGHOFFER 2018. On the meaning of Diodotos I’s coinage, see DUMKE 2012, and specifically on the Antiochos coinage BOPEARACHCHI 1994 (see however JAKOBSSON 2010, arguing that this Antiochos was not a Seleukid but a third Diodotid king, who perhaps reigned c. 230–220 BCE).

9 Diodotos II continued to mint allegiance coins for some time, until he replaced the name Antiochos with his own and took the title of *basileus* (WENGHOFFER – HOULE 2015, 203–204).

10 Strabo XI, 9.2. For the date see LERNER 1999, 54–58, cf. JAKOBSSON 2007. WALBANK 1967, 264, dates Euthydemos’ defeat of Diodotos II to ‘shortly after 230’.

os occurred in the context of the accession of Antiochos III – whose legitimacy was disputed – and coincided with a major uprising of Macedonian satraps in western Iran and Mesopotamia (the so-called Revolt of Molon).<sup>11</sup> It was in other words not an isolated event in a remote province but closely linked to developments in the wider Seleukid world. Antiochos III however succeeded in suppressing the Revolt of Molon, and proceeded to cleanse and reorganize the top layers of imperial rule in Iran. In 209 he arrived in Baktria with his army and court, as part of his so-called *anabasis*, a military campaign and ritual tour meant to reincorporate the eastern provinces of his empire and ritually demarcate the edges of the empire (211–205/4).<sup>12</sup> In a battle at a crossing of the river Arius, the present-day Harī Rūd, Euthydemos' army was defeated.<sup>13</sup> Euthydemos retreated into the heavily fortified city of Zariaspa (Baktra), where from c. 208 he was besieged.

Polybios says that Baktra was under siege for several years.<sup>14</sup> What we should envisage, is a protracted blockade rather than an ongoing battle. During these years, Antiochos had ample opportunity to reorganize Baktria, negotiate deals with local communities and military leaders, and in general consolidate his power and isolate Euthydemos. New numismatic discoveries suggest that Antiochos indeed was quite active throughout Baktria and Sogdia.<sup>15</sup> Also to this period can be dated several new fortifications guarding the mountain passes, including the Iron Gate between Baktria and Sogdia.<sup>16</sup> While Martinez-Sève ascribes these building activities to Euthydemos and sees them as defenses against nomad incursions,<sup>17</sup> others have suggested that Antiochos was responsible for them and that they were intended to consolidate Seleukid power in the region; Lerner in particular has argued that the massive fortifications at Ai Khanum may be associated with Antiochos III's stay in Central Asia.<sup>18</sup>

Antiochos however failed to take the city of Baktra. In 206 an agreement was reached between Antiochos and Euthydemos, brokered by a courtier named Teleas, who like Euthydemos was 'a Magnesian'.<sup>19</sup> The reconciliation was legitimated by casting Euthydemos in the role of a loyal Seleukid governor, who had put down the rebellion of Diodotos II in the name of Antiochos. Euthydemos was moreover restored to power on the pretext that he was the best man to defend the northeastern frontier against an alleged barbarian threat. The 'multitude of nomads' at the gates, threatening to utterly 'barbarize the land',<sup>20</sup> of course is a trope – though

11 LERNER 1999, 43; COLORU 2009, 176.

12 On the *anabasis* of Antiochos III see also BRÜGGEMANN 2017, rightly arguing that the king was not emulating Alexander the Great. Specifically on the campaigns in Baktria consult MARTINEZ-SÈVE 2017; earlier attempts at reconstructing the events include HOLT 1999, 126–133; LERNER 1999, 47–62; COLORU 2009, 179–186; and PLISCHKE 2014, 270–274.

13 Polyb. X, 49.1–14. Polybios adds that Antiochos gained much prestige (lit. a reputation for *andreaia*, or manly courage) because he personally participated in the fight, and because his horse was killed and the king himself wounded in the face.

14 Polyb. X, 49.15. The siege of Baktra became famous throughout the Mediterranean (Polyb. XXIX, 12.8) – another case of successful Seleukid propaganda.

15 KRITT 2000; cf. COLORU 2017, 310, with the references in n. 30.

16 MARTINEZ-SÈVE 2017, 288–291.

17 MARTINEZ-SÈVE 2017, 288–291.

18 LERNER 2003–2004.

19 Polyb. XI.34.1. Euthydemos' place of origin was either Magnesia-on-the-Meander or Magnesia-under-Sipylos, cf. WALBANK 1967, *ad loc.* On Euthydemos and Magnesia, see further LERNER 1999, 52–54.

20 Polyb. XI, 34.5: πλήθη γὰρ οὐκ ὀλίγα παρεῖναι τῶν Νομάδων, δι' ὧν κινδυνεύειν μὲν ἀμφοτέρους, ἐκβαρβαρωθῆσθαι δὲ τὴν χώραν ὁμολογουμένως.

one that likely was propagated vis-à-vis western audiences by the Seleukid court before being recorded by Polybios.<sup>21</sup>

What Polybios XI, 34.8–9 describes in the passage quoted above, is a ritual: a theatrical performance in which Antiochos and Demetrios are the principal actors. The Seleukid court, and perhaps also the Seleukid army, constituted the audience, as was usually the case in Hellenistic royal rituals.<sup>22</sup> It is likely that representatives of Euthydemos' entourage were also present, though Euthydemos himself was not. It was an investiture ritual of sorts, one that sanctioned Euthydemos' status of king.

It would be rash to assume this was merely a charade. The passage highlights the success of the Seleukid king in reasserting authority in Central Asia,<sup>23</sup> and Polybios makes it particularly clear that it was Antiochos who conferred the title of king upon Euthydemos.<sup>24</sup> The involvement of Demetrios, and his marriage to Antiochos' daughter, means that a dynasty was created that would be closely linked to the imperial house through kinship.<sup>25</sup> Polybios does not mention that a wedding ceremony actually came to pass, and Tarn has postulated that the marriage never took place.<sup>26</sup> But there is no compelling reason to assume this, and the fact that Polybios mentions the marriage arrangement can only mean that it did in fact take place, perhaps at a later date.<sup>27</sup> The arrangement implied that Demetrios' eventual successor would be a grandson of Antiochos III – a fact that is often overlooked in discussions of this event.<sup>28</sup>

Euthydemos was thus ostensibly transformed from a 'rebel' into a loyal friend and vassal with (vice)royal status, while his enemy, Diodotos II, through this arrangement was retrospectively constructed as a rebel and a traitor. Diodotos may have been dead by then, but his family and supporters perhaps were not. The imperial backing given to Euthydemos' now legitimate kingship gave him an edge over these rivals. Indeed, Polybios' statement that Euthydemos' realm was threatened by 'nomads' suggests that his rule was far from secure. Also, a Greek dedicatory inscription from Kuliab in Tajikistan dating to c. 205–195 BCE suggests as much. Published in 2004, the text was inscribed on an altar dedicated to Hestia by a general (?) named Heliodotos for the safety of 'Euthydemos, greatest of all kings, and his outstanding son Demetrios, renowned for [his] fine victories'.<sup>29</sup> Because Demetrios is praised as *kallinikos*, it is tempting to associate the Kuliab inscription with his conquests in India. These conquests however took place after the death of his father (in 200 or 195),<sup>30</sup> who is mentioned as reigning king while Demetrios is not given the title of king in the inscription. It is therefore more likely that the context is Euthydemos' and Demetrios' pacification of their new Baktrian dominion

21 KOSMIN 2014, 66–67. COLORU 2009, 181–182, accepts the nomad threat as truth; WALBANK 1967, 313 ad 5, however suggests that it was a Polybian insertion by pointing out the similarities to Polybios' account of Agesilaos' appeal to Greek unity in the face of a barbarian threat in 217 BCE (Polyb. V, 104).

22 STROOTMAN 2014, 210–232.

23 CHRUBASIK 2016, 50–51.

24 SHERWIN-WHITE – KUHRIT 1993, 199.

25 For the likelihood that the marriage indeed took place, see WENGHOFFER – HOULE 2016, 214–215.

26 TARN 1951, 82.

27 COLORU 2009, 184.

28 On Seleukid kinship ties with Baktrian dynasties, see WENGHOFFER – HOULE 2015.

29 BERNARD *et al.* 2004 = SEG 54.1569, ll. 4–5: τὸμ πάντων μέγιστον Εὐθύδημον βασιλέων τοῦ τε παῖδα καλλίνικον ἐκπρεπῆ Δημήτριον. For a good discussion (and slightly different interpretation) of the inscription, see WALLACE 2016, 211–213; also see MAIRS 2021.

30 Strabo XI, 11.1. On the reign and conquests of Demetrios I see COLORU 2009, 187–193.

shortly after the departure of Antiochos III; the designation ‘greatest of all kings’ would then imply a claim to the entirety of Seleukid Central Asia – Sogdia, Baktria, Margiana, and Aria – and supremacy over its various local rulers.<sup>31</sup>

In 206, neither Euthydemos I (whose army had been defeated in battle) nor Antiochos III (who had gained control of parts of Baktria but had failed to conquer Baktra and capture Euthydemos) was able to gain the upper hand. The arrangement they agreed upon was meant to lift the deadlock in a way that was beneficially for both of them. Euthydemos could legitimately claim the title of king, and this must have given him a decisive advantage over his rivals. Antiochos regained imperial suzerainty, while creating strong bonds of loyalty with Euthydemos’ dynasty by creating kinship ties and the granting of kingship. Euthydemos openly acknowledged Antiochos’ overlordship by offering him tribute in the form of provisions for his army and war elephants.<sup>32</sup> Antiochos thus could not only claim victory but also demonstrate his clemency, a royal virtue. That all this was more than a mere pretense of power is clear from the fact that Antiochos did not return to the west but on the contrary continued his march to the east, and into India, where he reasserted Seleukid suzerainty over some of the territories that Seleukos I had given to Chandragupta in c. 305, collecting provisions, tribute, and additional war elephants.<sup>33</sup> He then went on to recover Arachosia and Drangiana.<sup>34</sup> When he returned from his *anabasis*, Antiochos had accumulated enough prestige to adopt the title of Megas, and shortly thereafter also the title of Great King (*basileus megas*),<sup>35</sup> perhaps in the context of his subsequent victories over the Ptolemies.<sup>36</sup>

The events in Central Asia in 206 fit into a pattern that characterized the imperial policy of Antiochos III since the suppression of the Revolt of Molon. The principal problem that Antiochos had to deal with during his reign, was the growing independence, even insubordination, of the uppermost layer of Macedonian noble families, and the increasing autonomy of local rulers in the peripheries of the empire.<sup>37</sup> In response to these centrifugal forces, Antiochos drastically reorganized his empire by favoring local, often non-Macedonian dynasties over appointed governors. Conferring royal status and dynastic marriage often accompanied the (re)integration of local rulers.<sup>38</sup> The claim to be related to the Seleukid dynasty by blood increasingly became a legitimization of kingship, particularly in Asia Minor and Anatolia.<sup>39</sup>

Polybios epitomizes the procedure with regard to the Armenian ruler Xerxes, whose father had stopped paying regular tribute to the Seleukid court; Antiochos III arrived with his army, laid siege to Xerxes’ royal city Arsamosata, and forced him to submit. But then...

31 As previously in the Achaemenid Empire, in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century the Seleukid satrap of Baktria seems to have doubled as ‘viceroy’ of Central Asia in its entirety; on the Achaemenid province of ‘Greater Baktria’ (Bāxtriš) see JACOBS 1994; KLINKOTT 2005.

32 Polyb. XI, 34.10.

33 Polyb. XI, 34.11–12; well understood by LEHMANN 1998, 81: ‘Antiochos III. „der Große“, während seiner deutlich am Hochziel eines Ökumene-Königtums orientierten „Anabasis“, [konnte sich] ohne Prestigeverlust mit der Anerkennung seiner „großköniglichen“ Oberhoheit über starke Regionalreiche begnügen.’

34 Polyb. XI, 34.13.

35 Megas: App., Syr. XI, 3.15; cf. Polyb. IV, 2.7. For the epigraphical evidence for *basileus megas*, see MA 2000, 271–276; on the meaning of this title in the Seleukid context, see STROOTMAN 2019.

36 MA 2000, 276.

37 STROOTMAN 2011.

38 STROOTMAN 2014, 94; WENGHOFFER 2019.

39 GABELKO 2009; STROOTMAN 2010 and 2016.

... remitting the greater part of the sum which his father still owed him as tribute [and] receiving from him a gift of three hundred talents, a thousand horses, and a thousand mules with their trappings, [Antiochos] restored all his dominions to him and by giving his daughter Antiochis in marriage conciliated and attached to himself all the inhabitants of the district, who considered that he had acted in a truly royal and magnanimous manner.<sup>40</sup>

This policy stands in a larger process of vassalization (and Iranization) of the Seleukid Empire since the reign of Antiochos I, in which direct rule through appointed governors made way for indirect rule by local dynasties.<sup>41</sup> But for the reasons discussed above, Antiochos III was the most prolific 'kingmaker' in Seleukid history. His title *basileus megas* is directly connected to this process of vassalization: because Antiochos III appointed more kings than any other ruler before him, he also had more need to articulate his own superior status.<sup>42</sup>

Empires rarely follow clear-cut historical trajectories that lead them from a 'Classical' age through a period of decline to their unavoidable collapse. Empires rather are able to 'breathe'. When conquest comes to a halt, they often contract due to dynastic strife and an unruly, dissatisfied conquest clan.<sup>43</sup> But when they do not collapse after one or two generations, the reason behind their survival usually is some form of revival caused by new, successful warfare, and the co-opting of new, internal associates.<sup>44</sup> We can see such a pattern in the Seleukid Empire, which reached the height of its power, not under Seleukos I, but under Antiochos III, after half a century of military setbacks and territorial contraction.

The crises at the beginning of Antiochos III's reign – the revolts of Molon and Achaios and a violent conflict between the noblemen at his court – had shown how arduous it could be to remove powerful men from office, especially governors who were in control of a province's resources and armed forces. Affirmation of the autonomy of local monarchies, and the patronage of emerging new local dynasties was a means to bring rebellious territories back under the imperial umbrella. These local rulers gained legitimacy through imperial recognition of their royal status in return for their acceptance of Seleukid suzerainty and incidental military support.

It seems to have worked out quite well for the Seleukids, at least for some decades. Polybios has no doubts that Antiochos III's *anabasis* was a success. The newly acquired prestige, capital, and probably manpower enabled him to destroy the Ptolemaic Empire in the Mediterranean in a string of military and diplomatic successes between 202 and 198, effectively reducing the Ptolemies to the status of local kings of Egypt, and even invading Greece (which led to an unsuccessful war against Rome). A remarkable passage in 1 Maccabees suggests that in

40 Polyb. VIII, 23.5. Further instances include rulers in Parthia (Polyb. X, 27–31), Kappadokia (App., Syr. 5; Liv. XXXVII, 31.4), and Persis (WIESEHÖFER 1994, 106–136; STROOTMAN 2017a; ENGELS 2018). For a detailed account of the king-making activities of Antiochos III, consult ENGELS 2014; for an overview of all the kingdoms and principalities within the Seleukid sphere of influence, see CAPDETREY 2007, 112–133.

41 As noticed by BROSIUS 2006, 114–117, and elaborated by STROOTMAN 2010 and ENGELS 2011; cf. ENGELS 2014 and STROOTMAN 2018. Specifically for Central Asia, see DUMKE 2012 and WENGHOFFER 2018. On the Iranization of the Seleukid Empire see STROOTMAN 2011–2012 and 2017a; CANEPA 2018, 188–204. Foundational for the current new approach is WIESEHÖFER 1994.

42 STROOTMAN 2011.

43 STROOTMAN 2017b, with further bibliography.

44 On the importance of (successful) warfare for Hellenistic kingship, see the classic treatments by GEHRKE 1982 and AUSTIN 1986 on respectively the ideological and economic aspects of victory; also see CHANIOTIS 2005 and STROOTMAN 2014, 49–53.

the treaty of Apameia (188), ‘India’ at that time was still seen as part of Antiochos’ empire.<sup>45</sup> Connections with Central Asia remained intact under his successors. Antiochos IV (145–164) continued his father’s policy of strengthening the Seleukid hold on the Persian Gulf and diverting the Indian Ocean trade to Mesopotamia.<sup>46</sup> A Seleukid elephant corps is attested in Syria some fifty years after Antiochos’ departure from Central Asia, which therefore likely had been replenished via Baktria.<sup>47</sup> And as late as 140/139, Demetrios II could still call upon a local ruler or governor in ‘Baktria’ for military support against the Parthians.<sup>48</sup>

Perhaps the most significant conclusion is that due to the policy of Antiochos III Central Asia became more tightly integrated in imperial networks of connectivity and exchange. The establishment of a friendly satellite kingdom probably was more important for the empire than reestablishing direct control. This is what Antiochos did, for not only did he strengthen Central Asia’s connections with the west via land, he also reopened the ancient sea routes between the Indus Valley and Mesopotamia.<sup>49</sup>

## ABBREVIATIONS

AD = Astronomical Diary

BCHP = *Babylonian Chronographic Texts from the Hellenistic Period*. Edited with a translation by R.J. van der Spek, I.L. Finkel, R. Pirngruber, and K. Stevens. Atlanta 2023.

SEG = *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum*. Leiden 1923–.

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App. *Syr.* = Appian of Alexandria: *Roman History 11. The Syrian Book*. Ed. and transl. by B. McGing. Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge, MA 2019.

Jos. *AJ* = Flavius Josephus: *Jewish Antiquities*. Transl. R. Marcus. Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge, MA 1930.

Liv. = Titus Livius (Livy): *Ab Urbe Condita*. Ed. and transl. by J.C. Yardley. Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge, MA 2017.

Plin. *NH* = Caius Plinius Secundus (Pliny the Elder): *Natural History*. Transl. H. Rackham. Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge, MA 1938.

Polyb. = Polybios of Megalopolis: *Histories*. Transl. W.R. Paton, rev. by F.W. Walbank and C. Habicht. Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge, MA 2010.

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45 1 Macc. 8.8; cf. JAKOBSSON – GLENN 2018 and JAKOBSSON, forthcoming.

46 Plin. *NH* VI, 31.138–139; MITTAG 2006, 298–307.

47 Polyb. XXXI, 2.9–11; App., *Syr.* 46 (240). The earlier central role of the Baktrian satrap in the acquiring and forwarding of Indian war elephants is attested on two cuneiform documents from Seleukid Babylon: BCHP 7, Obv. 13’–15’ (281 BCE?) and AD I, p. 345, No. -273b, Rev. 30’–32’ (273 BCE); cf. BERNARD 1990; VAN DER SPEK 1993.

48 Just. XXXVI, 1.4; cf. Jos. *AJ* 13.185.

49 As was argued by LERNER 2004; on Central Asia’s connectedness also see MAIRS 2012 and HOO 2017.

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