

Le portrait d'Alexandre le Grand [Osmund Bopeararchchi, Philippe Flandrin]

Autor(en): **Mani Hurter, Silvia**

Objekttyp: **BookReview**

Zeitschrift: **Schweizerische numismatische Rundschau = Revue suisse de numismatique = Rivista svizzera di numismatica**

Band (Jahr): **85 (2006)**

PDF erstellt am: **15.08.2024**

Nutzungsbedingungen

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Inhalten der Zeitschriften. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern.

Die auf der Plattform e-periodica veröffentlichten Dokumente stehen für nicht-kommerzielle Zwecke in Lehre und Forschung sowie für die private Nutzung frei zur Verfügung. Einzelne Dateien oder Ausdrucke aus diesem Angebot können zusammen mit diesen Nutzungsbedingungen und den korrekten Herkunftsbezeichnungen weitergegeben werden.

Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. Die systematische Speicherung von Teilen des elektronischen Angebots auf anderen Servern bedarf ebenfalls des schriftlichen Einverständnisses der Rechteinhaber.

Haftungsausschluss

Alle Angaben erfolgen ohne Gewähr für Vollständigkeit oder Richtigkeit. Es wird keine Haftung übernommen für Schäden durch die Verwendung von Informationen aus diesem Online-Angebot oder durch das Fehlen von Informationen. Dies gilt auch für Inhalte Dritter, die über dieses Angebot zugänglich sind.

Osmund Bopearachchi/Philippe Flandrin

Le Portrait d'Alexandre le Grand

Histoire d'une découverte pour l'humanité
Édition du Rocher (Paris 2005) € 18.90, ISBN 2-268-05476-4

From the day it came out this new book has caused a sensation in both numismatic and archaeological circles. Written like a film scenario with many flashbacks, it deals with the two main topics, the enormous hoard of coins and other objects from Mir Zakah and the new gold coin of Alexander the Great after which the book is named, but it does not treat them strictly separately. In a third part, with no connection with either the hoard or the new coin, the authors present two new and unique coins of the Bactrian ruler Sophytes.

*About the book**

The book is written by two authors, Philippe Flandrin (P.F.), a journalist who has spent much time in Afghanistan over the past years as a war correspondent, but one with a keen interest in lost, or dispersed treasures, and Osmund Bopearachchi (O.B.), who is a renowned specialist in Bactrian and Indo-Greek coinage. The first part, an introduction, is by P.F. while O.B. deals more specifically with the coins.

The book makes thrilling reading on account of P.F.'s knowledge of the country and its people. He seems particularly interested in the tribe, always unconquered, of the Pashtouns and their archaic-macho way of living. And it is deep in Pashtoun country that Mir Zakah, the find spot, is located.

But was it really necessary to retell in detail that old cloak-and-dagger story of the Oxus find of 1877, a find that, as it turns out, has problems of its own (see pp. 79-80)? After all, as recently as 2002 Frank Holt had once again dramatically recounted the tale.¹ Quoting the various publications on that treasure would have been sufficient.²

It is not easy to follow a sequence of events that is not clear at all, or to grasp what exactly became of the Mir Zakah material. P.F. never stays long with the same topic; in the introduction he speaks in the same breath of the *Eukratideion*, the Oxus find and present-day Afghanistan.

It was apparently in October 2004 that the two authors decided to travel to Afghanistan to pursue their investigations on the spot (p. 10). A few days later they

* For a map of the region see P.F. Mittag's article on p. 31 of this volume.

¹ F.L. HOLT, *Alexander the Great and the Mystery of the Elephant Medallions* (Berkeley 2003, with older literature).

² P. GARDNER, *New Coins from Bactria*, NC 1879; A. CUNNINGHAM, *Relics from Ancient Persia*, JASB 1881, S. 151; O.M. DALTON, *The Treasure of the Oxus*, BM 1905, and, most recently, J.E. CURTIS, *The Oxus Treasure in the British Museum*, *Ancient Civilisations from Scythia to Siberia* 10, 3/4, pp. 293-338.

met in London with their trusted contact person, *l'homme de Peshawar*, and in mid-February 2005 they left for Mir Zakah (p. 112). Within this short time, P.F. did his best to acquire some numismatic knowledge, but, alas, there was not much time. As the book was in print at the end of August of the same year, the authors must have written it more or less on the flight back to France. This great haste is surely the reason for the frequent numismatic inconsistencies like the confusion of gold stater and darics, or mistakes, such as the unfortunate Baaltras (pp. 43, 203 and index), or the British Museum's Martin Price becoming an American (p. 95) and a diobol a diabol (p. 200 top). One also wonders whether either author has read the other's part. As for the plates, many readers would surely have preferred to see more photos of coins or of objects rather than of people.

About the Mir Zakah Hoard

The first news on the Mir Zakah hoard dates back to the spring of 1992 (p. 35). In fact the hoard came in two parts; a first, smaller group was unearthed in 1947 (p. 105 ff.).³ The 1992 lot consisted of an enormous quantity of coins in gold, silver and bronze ranging in date from the 5th century bc to the 3rd century ad. It suffered the fate of most hoards, i.e., it was divided and dispersed before notes of any kind could be made. What information there is comes from this mysterious *homme de Peshawar* who is apparently an Afghan *marchand-amateur* living in Pakistan, a man with an astonishing knowledge who played mentor to O.B. and who met with the two authors in London in late 2004 (p. 34 sq.).

L'homme de Peshawar relates

He first heard of the hoard in the bazaar of Peshawar in late January 2003; at the time the coins were still in Mir Zakah. He immediately travelled to the finding place and was shown the following material (pp. 42-43):

- Silver coins: large amounts of Bactrian tetradrachms of attic weight from Demetrius I to Lysias
- Gold coins: a shower (*une pluie*) of Achaemenid darics and double darics (probably the ordinary type with the archer); triple darics of Mazaios with seated Baaltars and the lion attacking a bull. However, this information seems rather confused since we know that no double darics were struck by the Achaemenid Great Kings, and we read on p. 171 that the hoard contained no Achaemenid darics or sigloi; as for the triple darics of Mazaios, see Miho Catalogue⁴ nos. 44 a and b and below, p. 191).
- Darics of Lampsakos (Miho Cat. 44d; according to the IGCH no Lampsakos gold coins have ever been found in eastern Asia Minor or further east) and

³ R. CURIEL/D. SCHLUMBERGER, Trésors monétaires d'Afghanistan. Mémoires de la Délégation archéologique française en Afghanistan, tome XIV, p. 4-5.

⁴ Treasures of Ancient Bactria, Catalogue of the Miho Museum in Shigaraki near Kyoto, Japan (2002).

of Chio (read Kios in Bithynia, see Miho Cat. 44c); gold staters of Diodotos, Eukratides and of Indo-Greek and Indo-Scythian kings.

- Gold jewelry, precious stones, gemstones, silver vessels, rhyta with animals.
- and, for a moment, he sees the gold coin of Alexander.

Mentioned later (p. 219), a gold double stater (?) of Agathokles for Alexander, with Alexander wearing the lion-skin headdress and a seated Zeus facing⁵ (*un document numismatique d'une extrême importance*).

Mentioned even later, and it is not clear whether *l'homme de P.* actually saw it, is a gold stater of Menander (p. 226). And there is the photograph of a gold stater of Andragoras that Michel Setboun – who took most of the photos in the book – set in the Internet as coming from Mir Zakah, yet another type of gold coin whose authenticity has often been questioned.

When *l'homme de P.* returned to Mir Zakah two months after his first visit, i.e. in late March 1993, bringing large amounts of cash, the treasure had already vanished abroad (p. 45). A part of the coins were sold to a buyer in New York while three tons of silver coins remained in the Freeport of Basel (p. 36; and again, p. 138 “dans la bonne ville de Bâle”). The most important coins went from Basel to London, from where the cream of the hoard was apparently sold to a Japanese buyer.⁶

What was not sold, however, *l'homme de P.* tells us, is the gold coin of Alexander. The finder kept it aside for a rainy day, and now, ten years later, he has decided to sell it. *L'homme de P.* presents it to our authors at their meeting in London (pp. 48-50).

In order to be sure that the *Treasure of Ancient Bactria*⁷ really came from Mir Zakah, the authors travelled to Afghanistan in February 2005 to make inquiries on the spot and to interview villagers as well as civil and military officials. The main problem with Mir Zakah is, of course, that the hoard had not been properly recorded; circumstances did not allow it, and no one on the spot seems to have been knowledgeable enough to care. So, for the identification of hoard objects, the authors depended entirely on eyewitnesses among the local people who had been involved in the excavations. At no time do the authors question the good faith or the credibility of their informants. Some would remember a striking object such as the rhyta with the horse (Miho Cat. no. 116) or with the stag (Miho Cat. no. 117), no question about this. But how could a young Afghan remember well enough to positively identify some silver coins of which there were so many, after a lapse of ten years (p. 129)? Could not the villagers and the various officials have

⁵ For the obv. type see the tetradrachms M. MITCHINER, *Indo-Greek and Scythian Coinage* (London 1975/6), Type 146, for the rev. Type 137; this combination of types is not known for tetradrachms.

⁶ Above, n. 4.

⁷ *Ibid.*

tried to please the nice Mr. O.B., seeing how eager he was that they should recognize certain items? Unfortunately, these identifications, as those by *l'homme de Peshawar*, remain a matter of faith, a *Glaubensfrage*.

The new Alexander gold coin

The historical background is well known. In 327, after the conquest of Bactria, Alexander led his army towards India. In 326, on the Hydaspes river, he won his historical victory over the native king Poros and the Greek army continued its march down the Indus valley. Alexander had not struck any coins while in Bactria, but now, practically on the day after the battle, the authors tell us, he decided to celebrate his victory by a special commemorative issue of coins. Struck were the large silver 5-shekel pieces with the battle scene, i.e., the famous 'Poros' medallions, and 2-shekels with an archer and an elephant.⁸ Along with these silver coins a gold coin was produced, the new Alexander (*Pl. 16, 1*).

This gold coin is a complete *novum*. The engraver who cut the dies in a mint established *ad hoc* in the Indus valley (*atelier itinérant dans la vallée de l'Indus*, p. 191) was ahead of his time in creating two novelties:

- he produced the only known coin portrait of Alexander that was made during the conqueror's lifetime. In fact, it is apparently the earliest contemporary portrait of a Greek ruler. The Seleucid kings who succeeded Alexander all put their portraits on coins, but in Macedon the situation was different. In the early 3rd century we find portraits of Demetrios Poliorketes (306-284) but always with a divine attribute, a bull's horn, thus linking him with Poseidon whose son he proclaimed to be. The first portrait of a Macedonian king just wearing the diadem occurred on an exceptional issue of Philip V (221-179).⁹
- on this first portrait coin Alexander is wearing the elephant-scalp headdress (*exuviae*), which symbolizes the king's immortality; around his neck he wears the aegis of his father Zeus, thus emphasizing his divine descent (p. 49). The authors propose that this type was later copied on the early issues of Ptolemy I first struck in *c.* 319.¹⁰

It is at this point that the readers' readiness to accept the authors' theories and arguments starts to wear thin. They tell us that when Alexander marched from

⁸ The exact date and place of minting of these two coinages are still controversial; see HOLT, *supra*, n. 1. It must be added that Holt's new theory, in which both authors of this book seem firmly to believe, has not met with general acceptance; see e.g. the review by O. HOOVER, *ANS Magazine* vol. 3/2, 2004, pp. 58-61, or by C. ARNOLD BIUCCHI, *New Engl. Class. Journ.* 32/4, Nov. 2005, pp. 356-360.

⁹ See e.g. G.M.A. RICHTER, *The Portraits of the Greeks* vol. III (London 1963), 1744 (Demetrios) and 1746 (Philip V), or G.K. JENKINS, *Gulbenkian coll.* vol. II (Lisboa 1989), note to 879 (Demetrios) and note to 886 (Philip V).

¹⁰ See C.C. LORBER, *A Revised Chronology for the Coinage of Ptolemy I*, NC 165, 2005, pp. 61-62.

Bactria to the Indus valley he had a court artist travel with the army. Even more, they suggest it was Lysippos, one of the most accomplished and best-known artists of the later 4th century BC (later, p. 183, they also speak of the painter Apelles and the gem-cutter Pyrgoteles but without connecting them with the new gold coin). We know from ancient sources that Alexander refused to be portrayed by any artist other than Lysippos. That the most famous artist of his time should accompany Alexander on the strenuous march across the Hindukush is hard to believe. All the more as Lysippos was no longer a young man: he was born in the decade 400-390 BC and died toward the end of the 4th century; so in 326 he would have been at least 60 years old.¹¹

This coin portrait, the only lifetime likeness of the king, moreover, is said to be the model for the coinage of Ptolemy I with the portrait of Alexander. However, the Egyptian numismatic portraits of the recently deceased king¹² are of great sensitivity, with delicately modelled traits, with a vivid, open eye, a portrait that has at times be traced back to Lysippos' influence (*Pl. 16, 2*). They have little in common with the new gold coin which, compared to them, appears clumsily proportioned and rather devoid of artistic merit, though, of course, they do both bear a head with an elephant-skin headdress. The authors call the new coin the prototype (p. 188) for the Ptolemaic tetradrachms, but this just cannot be so.

One detail should be pointed out: the aegis. On the new gold coin it has a clearly scaly pattern; on the first issue of Ptolemy's Alexander-head tetradrachms, however, the aegis is plain. There the scaly pattern only appears on the later issues, not on those before *c.* 311 (*Pl. 16, 3*).¹³ If the gold coin really were the prototype of the Egyptian issues, should we not have expected a scaly aegis from the beginning on?

The elephant on the reverse of the gold coin is equally puzzling. Why is it seemingly standing on the tip of its toes, almost as if it were dancing? Elephants put their feet squarely on the ground when they walk or stand (*see Pl. 16, 6-9*).¹⁴ The clumsily rendered feet and manner of walking of the pachyderm is mentioned in connection with the 'Poros' 5-shekels (p. 192),¹⁵ yet with an ingenious explanation. The engraver, we read, was familiar with the elephants of the army, but he wished to reserve his mastery exclusively for the new gold coin that was intended for the King himself. The silver coins were just for gifts to officers of the army, and so the die-cutter bothered less. But, why then are the elephant's feet on the gold coin not rendered more realistically?

One question that has never been asked, at least by our authors: what about the authenticity of this new coin and of other novelties that appeared with it (see

¹¹ See P. MORENO, in: *Künstlerlexikon der Antike*, R. VOLLKOMMER, ed., vol. 2 (Munich/Leipzig 2004), *s.v.* Lysippos (I), pp. 27-39.

¹² G.K. JENKINS, *Ancient Greek Coins* (Fribourg 1972), p. 216 and fig. 502, or H.A. CAHN, *Frühhellenistische Münzkunst* (Basel 1949), p. 13-14 and fig. 10.

¹³ LORBER (*supra*, n. 10) pp. 62-63.

¹⁴ See *Grzimeks Tierleben*, vol. XII (1972), p. 464 and pp. 479-501 (*Pl. 16, 9*).

¹⁵ Already observed by B.V. HEAD, *NC* 1906, p. 8 sq. and by G.F. HILL, *BMQuart.* 1, 1926, p. 36.

below, pp. 192)? As already stated, it is all a matter of faith: as far as the provenance and the circumstances of finding go, we depend on *l'homme de Peshawar* – there is no way we can verify anything. And this man's recollections that O.B. accepted and repeats form the basis for the conclusions of this book. We can assume that O.B. held the coins in his hand, but how were they examined, where were they recorded, and, most important, where are they now? Possibly in some mysterious Japanese collection? All this does not make sense and we have to conclude that at least some of these wonderful novelties are forgeries.

After all, Northern India of the colonial age, present-day Pakistan and Afghanistan, has a tradition of producing forgeries that goes back to the late 19th century. The officers of the British army that were stationed there, mostly without family, found little to occupy them in their free time besides hunting or drinking too much. But quite a few became collectors and were fascinated by the ancient coins of which the local bazaars, real Aladdin's caves, abounded. The market flourished and before long the local dealers started mixing forgeries in with the real coins.¹⁶ These forgeries can still be found in old English collections whose owners were once stationed in India, e.g. Major-General Haughton's.¹⁷

Postscriptum to Alexander

A few months after the book had come out, O.B. let it be known that the Alexander coin had been on exhibit at the Montpellier museum for three months, but without any kind of announcement, however. Now Montpellier is a beautiful and pleasant town, worth a visit any day, but it is not exactly the hub of the numismatic world, and who would look for a new, sensational coin there without knowing about the exhibit? There was no need for such secrecy, and many questions could have been asked, and perhaps answered, on the spot if it had not been handled in such a furtive way.

Numismatic questions about Mir Zakah

For the few coins from the Mir Zakah find that are published we depend on the catalogue of the Miho Museum (see note 4) where (part of?) the coins sold to this institution are illustrated. It is a strange selection, and some items confirm the uneasy feelings one already got from reading about them in the book. This is the general situation:

¹⁶ Peshawar was apparently a center, see MITCHINER (*supra*, n. 5) vol. 4, p. 381.

¹⁷ See the catalogue Sotheby London, 30 Apr. 1958, lots 280, 290, 292, 333, 334, 395-397.

A) *surely not authentic*

- 44 a and b 'Mazaïos', AV Triple daric. 2 specimens from the same pair of dies. Unfortunately a fantasy, copying (the reverse badly so) silver staters of Mazaïos struck at Tarsos. On the silver staters there are Aramaic legends and letters on both sides and the lion/bull scene is turned to left, cf. esp. SNG von Aulock 5957, also SNG Paris Cilicie 330-353 and SNG Levante I, 100-107.
- 44 k and l Seleukos I, Gold stater. 2 specimens from the same pair of dies. Three genuine staters of this type are known so far: a) Berlin (= ESM 329); b) London, NC 1959, pl. VI, 22 ('purchased in Kabul'); c) coll. Houghton, CSE 1034 = NFA XVIII, 1987, 279.

B) *should be examined*

- 44 c Kios, Bithynia. Gold stater. Very suspicious, see the genuine specimen BMC 3 = R.Gén. II pl. XLIX, 3: same magistrate's name but differently arranged; no club above the prow. The coin from Mir Zakah is of the style and fabric of a silver drachm, not of a gold stater.
- 44 i and j Seleukos I, Gold stater. 2 specimens from the same pair of dies. For references see 44 k and l above. Die duplicates do of course occur in hoards, but why are there always two of the same here?
- 45 c Diodotos, Gold stater. This third specimen is possibly a copy of a silver drachm, cf. Mitchiner Type 65. On the stater both ends of the diadem fall on the neck, as on the silver, while on the gold staters one end is normally turned upward.
- 46 a Menander, Gold stater. Very suspicious, see Mitchiner vol. 4, p. 382. It is not sure whether this king struck gold coins at all.
- to be examined if and when they surface – Agathokles. Double gold stater, with head of Alexander wearing elephant-scalp headdress and with a seated Zeus facing on the rev. (see p. 219 and note 5).
– Andragoras, AV Stater

O.B.'s main argument in favor of the authenticity of the Menander gold stater (p. 226), a coin type that has long been questioned, is the claim that it came from the Mir Zakah hoard. What's more, he goes on to argue that this hoard provenance not only proves beyond any doubt the authenticity of the Miho specimen, but also disproves and silences definitely all the doubts that had been formerly voiced.¹⁸ This, however, is a typical circular reasoning, and we are back to our old problem: the provenance from the Mir Zakah hoard is not proven and cannot be proved. We might just as well turn the tables and argue that the fact that this extremely

¹⁸ But see MITCHINER (*supra*, n. 5), vol. 4, p. 381-383, Appendix three: Forgeries, esp. p. 382 with n. 515: the 3 specimens of the General Haughton coll.

questionable coin was from Mir Zakah is an indication that other rarities of this “hoard” could be equally dubious.

King Sophytes

When *l'homme de Peshawar* met with the two authors in Paris in February 2005, just before they left for Afghanistan, he had another surprise in store for them; apart from some fabulous jewelry coming from Aï Khanoum, he produced two coins (p. 112), both unknown and unique (both illustrated), a gold stater (*Pl. 17, 1*) and a new silver tetradrachm (*Pl. 17, 7*) of king Sophytes. Basically there is no connection between these two coins and the Mir Zakah hoard, and one wonders why their publication is included, a little furtively, perhaps, in this book.

O.B. had already treated this mysterious ruler in 1996.¹⁹ On rereading this article one finds it, unfortunately, somewhat disappointing. It mainly deals with the historical background, and the tetradrachm of this king, of the types of the smaller denominations, is not mentioned even once in the text though it was unique at the time and the first specimen of this large denomination known. Nor is there any comment on the letters MNA²⁰ – which occur again on the new gold stater – and the coin's illustration is both too dark and too out of focus to allow the reader to study it closely.

On this new gold stater we see a portrait of the king and, on the reverse, a kerykeion. Sophytes wears a helmet adorned with an olive wreath and with a large cheek-piece decorated with a bird's wing; on the neck are the letters MNA. The new tetradrachm bears a rather masculine looking head of Athena and, like Sophytes' smaller denominations, a cock on the reverse. Both coins are said to be from a hoard of 48 coins found at Aqtacha, near Bactra, in 2002, about which nothing is known except what *l'homme de Peshawar* told the authors.

In any event, until now Sophytes was generally thought to be a local ruler in Bactria toward the end of the 4th century, of whom little is known except that he struck coins with his name, coins that are normally found north of the Hindukush. Now his history is about to be retold.

The gold stater shows several peculiarities of which the helmet with its pronounced visor and cheek-piece is the most striking. It is reminiscent of the helmet Seleukos I wears on his tetradrachms from Susa, a victory coinage struck after 305, but with the difference that Seuleukos I's helmet is also adorned with the horn and ear of a bull (*Pl. 17, 3*).²¹ Until now the Seleucid helmet was always considered to have been the model for Sophytes, whose reign, consequently, came after that of Seleukos I. O.B. now offers a completely different interpretation of Sophytes' helmet that rather baffles the reader.

¹⁹ O. BOPEARACHCHI, Sophytes, The Enigmatic Ruler of Central Asia, *Nom. Khron* 15, 1996, pp. 19-32, with older literature.

²⁰ See H. NICOLET-PIERRE/M. AMANDRY, Un nouveau trésor de monnaies pseudo-athéniennes venu d'Afghanistan (1990), *RN* 1994, pp. 34 f., esp. 48-51.

²¹ *SC* 173-174.

On p. 200 we learn that the model for Sophytes' helmet is not to be found in the Seleucid coinage, but much farther to the West. O.B. compares it with the helmet Athena wears on the didrachms struck by Thurioi in Southern Italy of the years *c.* 440-420 (*Pl. 17, 2*).²² However, a mere quick glance at the cited specimens in ACGC shows that Athena's helmet at Thurioi is without a visor, that the olive wreath there is slightly curved as is the helmet's rim, that the leaves of the wreath do not stick out at an almost right angle from the twig, and that the pronounced helmet-crest – it is ultimately taken from Athenian tetradrachms – has, on the Bactrian coin, been transformed into a kind of handle with a volute pattern.

Moreover, the helmet on Seuleukos I's tetradrachms – the more likely models – is covered with a panther skin with its characteristic pattern of spots. On the cheek-piece of Sophytes' helmet this pattern is simply rendered as a bird's wing (which gives him a rather unshaved appearance).

There are also questions about the kerykeion on the reverse. If Sophytes was looking for a Western model for his helmet, one might almost expect a kerykeion in the manner of the reverse of the first Ainos tetradrachms (*Pl. 17, 5*). But there is a world of difference between the simple, unadorned staff at Ainos and the over-elaborate one of the gold stater. The best comparison for the latter is found on the large bronzes of Demetrios I of the early 2nd century (Bop. série 5E, *Pl. 17, 6*), but these are less over-elaborate despite the space the large planchet offers, and they look more like the staffs next to the cock on Sophytes' silver coins than the one on the new gold stater does.

The case of the new tetradrachm is somewhat different. It is less the coin itself, which may well be genuine, than the stylistic comparisons and their conclusions that astonish the reader. As said above, the head of Athena is rather coarse and masculine in appearance. But can we really recognize the king himself who usurped the traits of the goddess and thus committed an outrage (*un sacrilège*), as O.B. wishes us to believe? And, assuming that Sophytes did strike gold coins, would this have been tantamount to usurpation? Anyhow, whoever is on the coin seems to wear a round earring, and that points more to Athena.

Here again, O.B. was looking for a Western model, this time for the reverse, and once more the comparison does not work. The cock does not in the least resemble any of the cocks on the late archaic drachms and didrachms of Himera in Sicily of the years *c.* 520-480 that O.B. cites (*Pl. 17, 8 and 9*).²³ One might argue that a cock is a cock, but the proportions of the Bactrian bird with its larger crest are quite different from the Sicilian types, not to mention the chronological and geographical distances.

According to IGCH, silver coins of Thurioi have never been found outside Italy. The case of Himera is similar: early silver coins of this mint occurred outside Sicily only in the Asyut hoard (IGCH 1644) which contained 3 or 4 worn archaic drachms, and then the Nile valley is, of course, much more easily accessible for coins travelling

²² ACGC 728-729.

²³ ACGC 760-763.

east from Italy than the Oxus valley. So where did the Bactrian engravers get their models from?

Alas, this is all fantasy. The comparisons don't stand up to the most superficial examination. They are only put forward to rewrite Sophytes' history. If Seleukos I copied Sophytes' helmet, not the other way round, it follows that Sophytes' reign is earlier. This would situate him within the political vacuum in Bactria during the years 316-305, between Alexander's last satrap and the recapture of the province by Seleukos, and it would have been Sophytes against whom Seleukos waged war. It would also mean that the engravers at Susa were familiar with Sophytes' coins, which are, however, only known to have been found north of the Hindukush (see pp. 196-197).

In short, this proposed new dating of Sophytes' reign is an interesting speculation, but one that rests on unprovable assumptions which themselves are based on a gold coin whose claim to authenticity is unlikely in the extreme.

Silvia Mani Hurter
Brandschenkestrasse 82
CH-8002 Zürich
s.m.hurter@bluewin.ch

KEY TO PLATES 16–17

Alexander (Pl. 16)

Portrait of Alexander

- 1 Alexander III. Double daric (c.2.5:1)
- 2 Ptolemaios I, Tetradrachm, Alexandria Leu 36, 1985, 202
- 3 Ptolemaios I, Tetradrachm, Alexandria Leu 30, 1982, 217
- 4 Seleukos I, Double daric, Ekbatana. ESM 460; BMC Arabia etc., pl. XXIII, 1
- 5 Gold ring with silver intaglio by the engraver Kallippos, late 3rd cent. Ant.Kunst 45, 1/2, 2002, Pl. 18, 1

Elephant

- 6 Seleukos I, Tetradrachm, Pergamon c.281/280. CSE 1302; NFA XVIII, 1987, 287 ex “Kunstfreund” 249
- 7 Antiochos III, Tetradrachm, Nisibis. CSE 1183; NFA XVIII, 1987, 320
- 8 Seleukos I, Tetradrachm, Susa, c.295-285. CSE 1030; NFA XVIII, 1987, 278
- 9 Elephant advancing to left; see *Grzimeks Tierleben*, vol. XII (1972), p. 464

Sophytes (Pl. 17)

Helmet

- 1 Sophytes, Gold stater (c.3:1)
- 1A Sophytes, Gold stater (c.1.5:1; exact size not indicated)
- 2 Thurioi, Didrachm c.420. Leu 15, 1976, 25
- 3 Seleukos I, Tetradrachm, Susa, c.305. MM 76, 1991, 828
- 4 Sophytes, Didrachm, early 4th c. From Nom.Khron. 15, 1996, p. 31, 2

Kerykeion

- 5 Ainos, Tetradrachm c.470. Ars Classica XIII, 1926, 575
- 6 Bactria, Demetrios I, AE Triple Unit early 2nd c. Triton IX, 2006, 1115

Cock

- 7 Sophytes, *rev.* of new Tetradrachm (exact size not indicated)
- 8 Himera, Drachm c.520. Leu 28, 1981, 24
- 9 Himera, Didrachm, c.480. Ars Classica XVI, 1933, 529



1



2



3



5



4



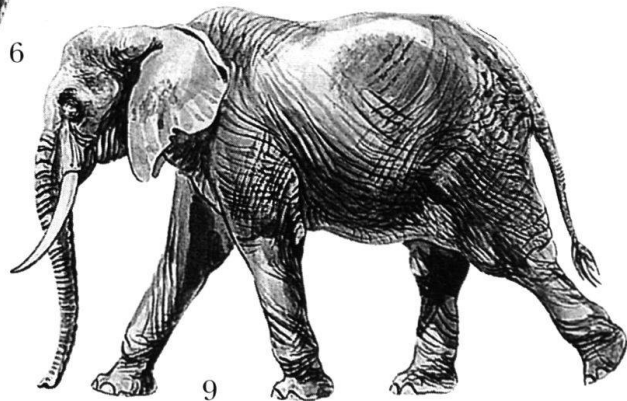
6



7



8



9



1
Sophytes



1 A



2



3



4



5



6



7



8



9

