

# HELLENISM IN THE EAST

The interaction of Greek and non-Greek  
civilizations from Syria to Central Asia  
after Alexander

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Amélie Kuhrt and Susan Sherwin-White

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## Greek and non-Greek Interaction in the Art and Architecture of the Hellenistic East\*

*Malcolm Colledge*

Interaction between Greek material culture and the non-Greek architectures and arts of the east Mediterranean and western Asia had been going on for a very long time before the arrival of Alexander the Great. To understand properly the forms this interaction took in the hellenistic phase a preliminary glance at previous cultures and patterns of interchange will be necessary, to give the general context in which later developments took place. The hellenistic phase will then be divided for purposes of analysis into four periods, to see if any trends in cultural interactions emerge from this study.

### Greek influence in the Near East before Alexander

By the time of Alexander (334 BC), Western Asia had generated sophisticated cultures for millennia. In the later fourth and third millennia BC, a vigorous and influential civilisation crystallised in southern Mesopotamia, the area later called Babylonia. Throughout its long history, the culture showed a strong tendency to maintain elements developed early in its evolution. Architecture was normally of local materials: mud brick, some baked brick for important items, and wood and stone (usually limestone) where available; lintels and roofing might be of wooden beams, although both 'pitched-brick' and radial vaulting became common from the late third millennium BC. Evidence for town planning is virtually non-existent, except occasionally around important buildings. Religious architecture was characterised by chapel-filled sanctuaries, rectangular temples with a vestibule and entry through one long side (the 'broad room' type) and enormous superimposed platforms that towered to the sky (the ziggurats). Palaces and houses consisted of rectangular rooms arranged around internal courts. Some representational work was of a schematic

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character in linear styles that displayed a love of decorative detail, although at various periods very lively, almost naturalistic forms were preferred (Uruk, Agade, Neo-Assyrian). Other important cultural developments also took place elsewhere in western Asia in the late third and earlier second millennia BC, such as the Harappan civilisation in north-west India, lasting for approximately 500 years. From a similar period important elements were established in Anatolian cultures, such as the 'megaron' room type and the combination of wood and stone with mud-brick in architecture. Around 1300 BC Iranian tribes including the Medes and Persians moved slowly into western Iran, where they seem to have continued to follow a pastoral existence. Before the Persians emerged as a politically dominant element c. 550 BC, the Medes had come into contact with and probably developed the architectural forms in use in that area in the early first millennium BC, e.g. the column-filled chieftains' halls. But the curious, so-called 'fire-temple' at Nush-i Jan may have been a specifically Median building (Frankfort 1970; Burney 1977).

Throughout the second millennium BC and the following three centuries of the Geometric period down into Archaic times, the Greeks were constantly adopting and transforming cultural ideas from the east (Lawrence 1973; Robertson 1975). But from the start of the sixth century BC, that is, from the later stages of the Greek Archaic period (which ended around 480 BC), the pattern of these contacts changed. From the early first millennium BC numerous Greek towns, such as Smyrna, Ephesus and Miletus were established along the coast of west Asia Minor and inland, in an area much of which was called Ionia. They enjoyed several centuries of comparative independence, during which they developed their own material culture, with painted pottery, houses, temples, towns and eventually sculpture and coinage. As happened on the Greek mainland, they experimented from the later seventh century BC with building, especially within sanctuaries, in carefully dressed ashlar blocks of local stone or marble (Coulton 1977, 31-7). The appearance, therefore, from 600 BC of similarly dressed masonry at Sardis, the capital of the neighbouring, inland kingdom of Lydia, must surely mark a Greek cultural influence in the reverse direction; and *if* the find of early electrum coins at Ephesus means the Greeks invented coinage, then the early spread of coinage to Lydia would be another example. A later Lydian king, Croesus (c. 560-547/6? BC), subsequently conquered western Asia Minor, including some Greek cities (Hdt. 1.28); this very possibly strengthened Greek cultural influence in the Lydian kingdom (Stronach 1978, 40-2; for coins: Jenkins 1972, 27-30).

Further Lydian expansion, however, was checked by the Persian king Cyrus II, who perhaps in 547/6 BC incorporated Lydia into his newly established empire. Lacking a developed imperial background

and base, Cyrus created a capital and palace complex at Pasargadae in west Iran (Fars), where he assembled craftsmen from various of his recently won territories to create an innovative Persian imperial architecture and art. Here the building forms were primarily Iranian, and the decorative art mainly Mesopotamian and particularly Assyrian in derivation. But nevertheless it is possible to recognise an input from Greek and Lydian west Anatolia. This is visible architecturally in the finely dressed stone blocks, column base forms, the taper in columns, the masonry techniques such as *anathyrosis* and the setting of iron clamps in lead. Further examples include the use of three-step bases for a viewing platform and Cyrus' tomb, the colonnades in palaces S and P, and the occurrence of west Anatolian masons' marks; the rosettes on the pediment of Cyrus' tomb and the robe of the four-winged Guardian on a palace door-jamb relief are of Ionian Greek type. But overall this contribution was a minor one. Important developments took place under Darius I (522/1–486 BC), who created an architectural and artistic style in his palaces at Susa, Persepolis and perhaps elsewhere which radically developed that of his predecessors, became classic in its own right and provided a canon for all his successors to follow. His inscriptions boast of the many nationalities employed on his projects, including Ionians, whose presence at Persepolis is confirmed by a Greek sculptor's doodle on the foot of a relief figure of Darius himself. They introduced into Iran the stone-carving tool that had been invented in Greece around 560 BC – the claw chisel with its serrated cutting edge, used for limestone and marble and for both architectural and sculptural purposes. The fluting of column drums seems to have been a Greek idea, and drapery folds were strongly influenced by those of around 525 BC in Archaic Greek relief. Lydian and Ionian Greek coins also provided the inspiration for the first official Achaemenid coinage, introduced by Darius I (as Herodotus confirms, 4.166) by c. 500 BC (as indicated by a hoard of coins from Smyrna), perhaps to pay mercenaries. This coinage comprised gold darics and silver *sigloi*, with an incuse reverse and four very similar designs of a stereotyped royal figure with a bow on the obverse, the design of which remained unchanged throughout the existence of the empire (Colledge 1977, pl. 38a). But again, the Greek contribution is minor: the overall result of the commissions of Darius I, and of his son Xerxes and their successors, was to create a specific and recognisable Achaemenid Persian imperial style.<sup>1</sup>

Quite the converse, however, was true of a number of commissions, by governors (satraps), local dynasts and local aristocrats, on the

1. Cyrus: Stronach 1978; Greeks working at Pasargadae: Nylander 1970. Darius: Schmidt 1953–70; Tilia 1968; Farkas 1974; Shahbazi 1976; Root 1979; Cook 1983. Greek sculptors: Richter 1946; Farkas 1974; Roaf 1980. Coins: Jenkins 1972, 41 figs. 116–17, 121–2; Root 1979, 116–18.

western frontiers of the empire, particularly in Anatolia and especially during the last century of its existence. Here works were executed by artists either of clearly Greek training or from workshops in which formal eastern styles were combined with the newly developed naturalistic, Greek 'classical' style (c. 480–c. 330 BC). Despite the fundamental divergence of these two art forms, Greek work became increasingly popular in western Anatolia as well as Phoenicia as illustrated by surviving funerary art and architecture, coins and perhaps gems. Early examples of the first include the reliefs of the 'Harpy' tomb (c. 500–470 BC) at Xanthos, the decoration on the 'Painted House' at Gordium, and the heads on the Egyptian-style royal sarcophagi at Sidon. Between c. 430 and 330 BC, the quantity of such Greek-influenced works increased enormously in these regions (see also Kuhrt, above pp. 50–1). Independent gravestones with low-relief banqueting and hunting scenes in a 'Graeco-Persian' style spread over north-west Anatolia. Rock tombs, often with reliefs portraying the deceased, were cut in many places in western Anatolia. Sarcophagi were found in royal tombs at Sidon with fine Greek-style reliefs, such as the carved 'Satrap' and 'Lycian' sarcophagi of around 400 BC, and the imported Attic sarcophagus of the Mourning Women of c. 350 BC. Striking tomb monuments were erected in the south-western subject kingdoms of Lycia and Caria, in which a number of Near Eastern, local and Greek architectural elements were combined with Greek-style sculptures. There seems to have been a massive increase in building activity in Lycia around 400 BC, exemplified by the Heroon enclosure at Trysa with the fore-parts of winged bulls guarding the exterior and scenes from Greek legend within, and by remarkable tombs at the capital, Xanthos, of the local type on a high platform. Examples include the sarcophagus-type 'Payava' monument on a high base with audience, chariot and combat scenes, and the Nereid monument on a lofty base with reliefs around the top and above this an Ionic temple with reliefs of the ruler fighting and giving audience, servants bringing tribute, and statues of the Breezes (Nereids). At the Carian capital, Halicarnassus, the most famous Anatolian funerary monument was constructed: the gigantic Mausoleum begun for himself by the local dynast Mausolus in 353 BC, executed by expert Greek artists, combining the typically local high podium with an Ionic Greek temple and Egyptian pyramid, and decorated with rich reliefs and free-standing sculptures, among which the so-called statue of 'Mausolus' exemplifies a predilection for highly individualised features.

This strong Greek influence was not limited to such monumental works; it is particularly marked in a series of locally minted coins showing again individualised profile heads of satraps, such as Tissaphernes, the style of which developed from late-fifth-century

formalism to greater naturalism in the fourth century. It eventually formed part of an amalgam of Greek, Persian and local designs, scripts and weights (Colledge 1977, pls. 38–9). Most interesting, perhaps, are a group of gems, carved intaglios in semi-precious stones, of the period which include a Greek-influenced 'Graeco-Persian' group which falls into three subdivisions: a 'Court' style imitating that of the Achaemenid court but including some Greek shapes and motifs, a 'Greek' style with Achaemenid shapes but either Persian or east Greek designs, and a 'Mixed' style embodying formal eastern styles and subjects from Greek art. This mixing of Greek and Persian has suggested Anatolia as their still unknown place of origin.<sup>2</sup>

From this evidence some idea of the patterns of interaction before Alexander may be gained. The eastern neighbours of the Greeks had developed their own specific styles from ancient times that gave each a strong cultural identity, which continued to flourish throughout this period. Until the end of the seventh century BC the Greeks borrowed from them, but from around 600 BC some rulers and aristocracies in the Near East and Anatolia came into contact with (east) Greek material cultures and borrowed from this source to help create a new style with which to impress contemporaries and subjects. Such borrowing was very limited in the imperial centres of Lydia and Persia, but in the case of the satraps, dynasts and élites of western Anatolia and the coastal regions of Syria and Phoenicia, Greek influence from the beginning of the fifth century onwards was at times enormous. The mixing of the different eastern and Greek styles took various forms (I shall henceforth refer to this as 'hybrid'). One was the creation of a work belonging to a category appropriate to one culture in the style of the other, as, for example, the Greek-style but iconographically Persian, audience relief on the Xanthos 'Harpy' tomb, or the Graeco-Persian gems of the 'Court' type. A second form was the juxtaposition of discrete elements from different cultures within a single monument, as in the Mausoleum where local, Egyptian and Greek ones were used in this way. Finally some items such as certain of the coins and the Graeco-Persian gems of the 'Mixed' style exhibit an actual blending of style and iconography. In these ways then, those Near Eastern élites who, as a result of their physical proximity, had become familiar with Greek culture commissioned work which embodied a proportion of Greekness, and thus helped to promote a variety of new styles for them.

2. Funerary art: Eichler 1950; Akurgal 1961; Lawrence 1972, 173–202; Shahbazi 1975; Childs 1978; Waywell 1978; Hornblower 1982. Gordium: Young 1956; 1962. Coins: Jenkins 1972, 126–42. Gems: Boardman 1970, 303–27.

### The hellenistic period

The analysis of interaction between Greek and the various non-Greek material cultures through this period is made difficult by the patchiness of surviving evidence; doubtless the frequent wars of the period, the often perishable materials used by craftsmen, and the accidents of discovery, have all contributed to this. Nevertheless it is worthwhile to try to establish to what extent the Greeks, who were now the new political masters of Western Asia, imposed their own developing and sophisticated material culture, how their subjects and neighbours reacted and how far these interactions varied from period to period. To do this architecture and art will be examined in four periods: the opening phase (the reigns of Alexander and Seleucus I), the third, second and first centuries BC.

#### *The opening phase of Alexander and Seleucus I (c. 330–281/280 BC)*

Through his conquest of the Persian empire (334–323 BC), Alexander had gained control of a huge territory with cultures already ancient and vastly different from the Greek. Some promotion of things Greek is discernible. In the realm of art, there are definite signs of Greek activity. Some importation is indicated by sherds of later fourth-century Athenian black-painted pottery. More significant are items made in various places in the east. Still overlooking the west Iranian city of Hamadan, stands a huge stone lion, weathered and damaged but nevertheless clearly of Greek workmanship. It is considered by many to be a memorial raised by Alexander to his Companion Hephaestion, who died at Ecbatana of alcoholic poisoning and whose main monument was to rise at Babylon (see below). Of more lasting significance, however, was Alexander's coinage. The study of this is as yet incomplete, but some aspects have become clearer. The important types, each issued in different denominations, were: a gold stater, with a helmeted head of Athena on the obverse and a standing winged personified Victory (Nike) on the reverse; a silver drachm and tetradrachm, with the head of the young Heracles in lion-skin headdress and a left-seated Zeus on a throne on the reverse; and a bronze unit, with an obverse similar to that of the silver, and on the reverse a bow in a case and a club. The coins were produced in mints dotted across the western half of the empire (only) (Hamilton 1973; Colledge 1977; Bellinger 1963; Thompson 1982). Yet Alexander also demonstrated his own awareness of the value of preserving those persons, practices and institutions of the former Achaemenid empire which could be of use, to the dismay of some of his own Macedonian followers. Arrian reports that he commanded the restoration at Babylon of two juxtaposed monuments of enormous significance, the shrine of the

great god Marduk, consisting of the gigantic, lofty religious platform (ziggurat) called Etemenanki, and the associated temple, Esagila (see Kuhrt, Sherwin-White 1987). Babylonian documents refer to work being done. Thus, Alexander actively maintained a number of traditional buildings of symbolic value,<sup>3</sup> while objects in daily use (such as figurines and pottery) remained unaffected by the conquest.

Alexander himself promoted the idea of 'blending' Greek and Achaemenid elements. This was expressed late in his campaign, in 324, by his public prayer for 'harmony and partnership in rule between Macedonians and Persians'. A physical expression of this may have been the gigantic memorial he is said to have raised at Babylon for his deceased Companion Hephaestion, comprising a towering five-storey platform, probably evoking the Mesopotamian ziggurats, with both Greek and Persian weapons placed at the top; it suggests a building of Babylonian type decorated with Greek and Persian weaponry. Some of his coins also provide further instances of Achaemenid motifs. Thus his remarkable continuation of darics and double-darics (and probably *sigloi* also), but with slightly hellenised designs, provides examples of items appropriate to one culture being produced in the style of the other. Others show this even more clearly, for example the Persic-weight coins of Tarsus, and the light-weight 'lion staters' minted at Babylon by the satrap Mazaeus (Hamilton 1973, 133-4, 144, 146; Bellinger 1963, 61-76, esp. pl. 3, nos.1,3,4,6). Thus Alexander fostered architectural and artistic production of three kinds: Greek, some carefully selected eastern types and some of Greek with non-Greek styles of the same kind that had existed already in the Achaemenid empire.

Seleucus I was responsible for the foundation of cities, often given dynastic names and using the Hippodamian grid-plan of streets, most notably with his two new capitals of Seleucia-Tigris (founded c. 305-301 BC) and north Syrian Antioch-Orontes, perhaps established towards 300 BC; under his rule another north Syrian grid-plan town was founded, Dura-Europus on the Euphrates (c. 300 BC?), which boasted ashlar outer wall foundations (fig. 4). It may also have been Seleucus who laid out the settlement at the junction of the Kokcha and Oxus rivers in northern Afghanistan, the ancient name of which is as yet unknown. The site is therefore called by its modern name, Ai Khanum. It had many Greek architectural features from this period: the street plan, walls, acropolis, propylaea and chamber-like Heroon of Kineas, who was probably responsible for the installation of the earliest stage of Macedonian settlement there. Perhaps also of this period are early phases of forts established on the Arabian coast

3. In general: Hamilton 1973. Persepolis: Hamilton 1973, 88-9. Esagila: Arrian *Anab.* 3.16,4; 17,1-4; Strabo *Geog.* 16.1,5; Smith 1924, 117ff; Grayson 1975a, 116 n.6; and cf. the curious BM 36613 pub. Sachs 1977, 144-7; Downey (forthcoming) ch.3.

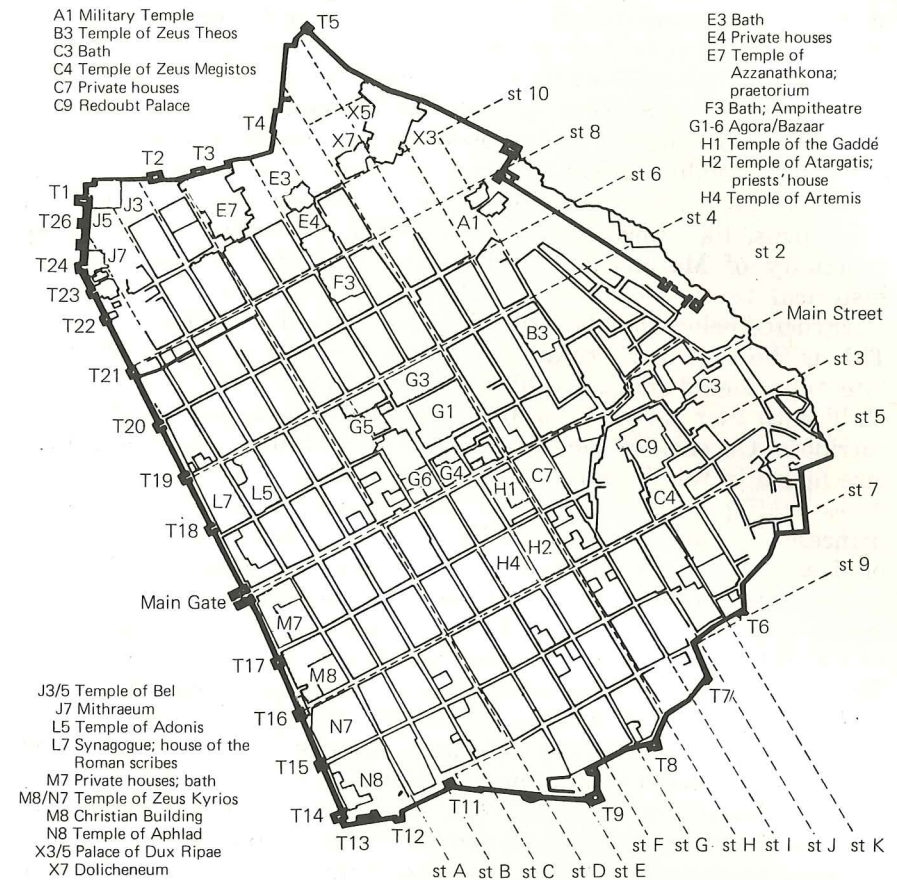


Fig. 4 Plan of Dura-Europus, founded c. 300 BC(?) [From Perkins 1973, fig. 2]

of the Gulf (see Salles, above pp. 85; 100ff) and the first phase of the Greek theatre built at Babylon (cf. Sherwin-White, above pp. 20-1; Van der Spek, above p. 65). Seleucus ordered a statue, which later became famous, from the sculptor Eutychides of Sicyon to personify the Good Fortune (Tyche) of one of his capitals, Antioch-Orontes, a piece now known only in Roman copies. Seleucus, like other hellenistic kings, commissioned portrait sculptures of himself; none has certainly survived although some scholars have identified a bronze head now in Naples as Seleucus on the basis of profile heads on his coins. A Greek palmette funerary stele, possibly Athenian, was imported into Sidon. Other work in Greek style, more important for our enquiry, was executed within the Seleucid realm. Greek pottery types and

shapes now influenced local pottery production in the Seleucid empire (see Hannestad 1983). The plain limestone sarcophagus of Kineas, at Ai Khanum, has a gabled lid which is typically Greek. Seleucus, like some of the other Successors, introduced a significant innovation in his coinage by placing on the obverses his own right-facing profile head, so individualised as surely to be a realistic portrait, with his name included in the legend on the reverses<sup>4</sup> (Colledge 1977, pl. 38c).

Seleucus, like Alexander, continued the restoration of the great sanctuary of Marduk at Babylon, as Babylonian documents and historical texts inform us. At Persepolis, a curious building was constructed below the platform of the now ruined Achaemenid palace. This is the so-called 'Fratadara' temple, the plan of which follows a late Achaemenid architectural development, i.e. a 'Centralised Square Hall' with four columns forming a central square and surrounding corridors. On each of the two surviving door-jambs is carved a full-size figure in relief, representing on one side a prince (?) in Iranian dress holding a ritual bundle of rods ('barsom'), and on the other a princess (?). The occurrence at the Greek settlement at Ai Khanum of Mesopotamian temple architecture is very remarkable and deserves to be fully stressed. Here, in a sanctuary on the main north-south street inside the city stood an almost square temple, the earliest phase of which (phase V) belongs to the late fourth or early third century BC. It had thick walls, and a simple plan, with a vestibule (antecella) and hall (cella) each occupying the full width of the structure and entered through the middle of one long side; it stood on a raised podium which itself was set on a platform. This is an example of the ancient Mesopotamian 'broad room' temple type, current already in the later fourth millennium BC and to remain popular in western Asia from the third century BC for about five hundred years; from its later ornamentation it is known as the indented temple (*à redans*): see Fig. 5. But why here? Various suggestions have been made such as that it was the result of the influence of Mesopotamian colonists among the settlers, or that it may be an Iranian development which was adopted. The local production of figurines and pottery continued,<sup>5</sup> indicating perhaps the mixed character of the population of the city.

Apart from the Greek and Mesopotamian styles, a 'mixed' style is represented most notably in a grand administrative complex, doubt-

4. In general: Colledge 1977; Downey (forthcoming). Gulf: Salles (this volume); Antioch, early traces: Lassus 1972, 140-1; Tyche: Dohrn 1960. 'Seleucus I' head: de Franciscis 1963, 65 pl.IV; Richter 1965, III 269-70 figs. 1865-8. 'Athenian' stele in Sidon: Parlasca 1982, 6 pl. I.1. Coins: Richter 1965 loc. cit; Colledge 1977, 104 with references.

5. In general: Colledge 1977. Babylon: Downey (forthcoming) ch.3. Ai Khanum, 'indented' Temple phase V: Bernard 1971, fig. 19. Ai Khanum, 'Mesopotamian colonists': Pidaev 1974, 33-8 fig. 2; Bernard 1976a, 307 n.16. 'Iranian': suggestion of A. T. L. Kuhrt.

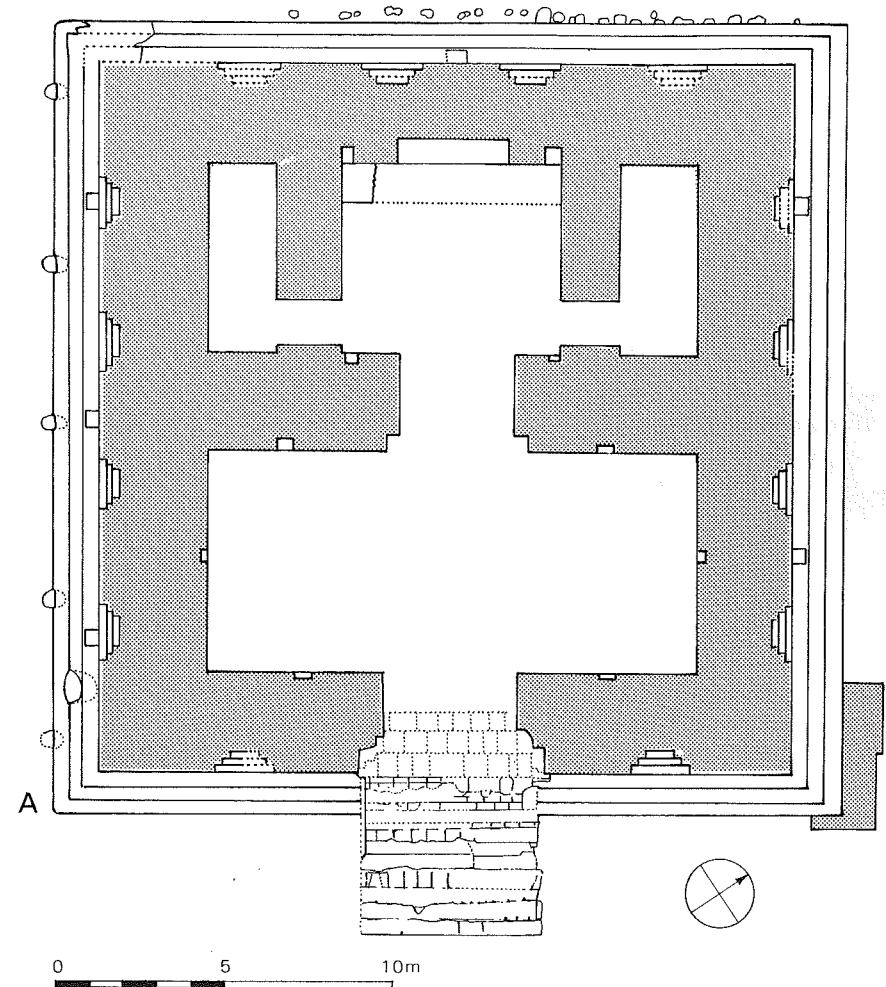


Fig. 5 Ai Khanum, plan of the indented temple, phase IV (c. 300 - 250 BC) [From Bernard 1971, fig. 17]

less the governor's palace. To the early period belong an imposing colonnaded court, corridors and rooms. The peristyle court, and much architectural decoration, are Greek in origin. But there are non-Greek features: the use of the court as a passageway, of flat roofing, of Persian-type limestone column bases, whose orthogonal planning and associated corridors recall Assyrian and Persian palace designs, and particularly the so-called Harem of Xerxes at Persepolis. This palace, at a provincial city, presumably echoes still grander examples in the cities, now lost. Its scale, and reminiscences of Persian predecessors,

as the excavator pointed out, illuminate hellenistic royal ideology: its blending of Greek and Achaemenid imperial styles symbolised both the change wrought by conquest and the political traditions to which it was heir. This was further expressed by those of Seleucus' coins which continue Alexander's series of darics and double darics, and of lion staters, although by Antiochus I's reign this series was no longer produced.<sup>6</sup>

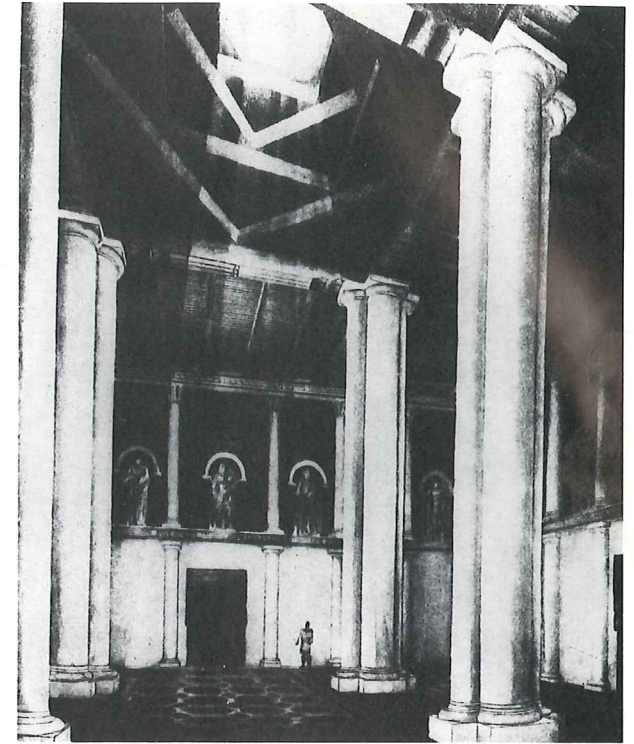
To sum up, the same kinds of artistic production continued under and were encouraged by Seleucus: selected Greek, Mesopotamian and Achaemenid elements and the development of the new style which combined Greek and a variety of local artistic traditions. The juxtaposition of Greek and Achaemenid elements is exemplified in the Ai Khanum palace, while an interchange of styles appears in the darics; and actual blending occurs in the Ai Khanum palace layout and the lion stater coins.

### *The third and early second centuries BC*

Antiochus I (281/0–261 BC) created a still partly extant and huge earthwork at Merv to defend the central Asian province of Margiane from the raids of nomads. Under him and his successors in the third century more Greek-style work was produced. At Dura-Europus in north-east Syria the 'Redoubt' and 'Citadel' palaces were of Greek type with colonnaded ('peristyle') court. The earliest sanctuary of Artemis, of the third or second century, consisted of a cut-stone court with a colonnade in the Doric order and an altar, possibly recalling a Greek parallel in the Delphinium at Miletus. At Seleucia-Tigris, a small building interpreted as a Heroon may have been first erected at this time. Work on the forts and staging-posts of the Persian Gulf continued, such as Qala'at al-Bahrain and the island of Failaka. Here by c. 250 BC the fortified enclosure had two partly ashlar temples of Greek type, one Doric, with a circular stone altar in front, and the other Ionic. The latter had two porch columns between projecting spur walls and thus *in antis* (but with bell-shaped Persian-style bases) and a rectangular stone altar before it. At Bactra (Balkh), perhaps the capital of the satrapy, a hellenistic level has been located at the Bala Hisar mound, which functioned as the acropolis. At Ai Khanum, an ashlar fountain was built by the Oxus river c. 250 BC and the lower city rampart was refurbished about then. Further evidence for extensive building activity includes limestone Corinthian column bases of c. 250–200 BC in the palace, a gymnasium perhaps dating to this period, and a Greek theatre, albeit with mud-brick seating, in use c. 225–150

6. Ai Khanum palace plan: Bernard 1973, 113–20; 1976a, 288–93; 1978, 444–61, fig. 18; 1980a, 435–57. Royal ideology: id. 1973, 117; 1978, 444–61. Coins: Bellinger 1963.

I. (Old) Nisa, Turkmenistan USSR: reconstruction of the interior of the 'Square Hall' as rebuilt in the mid-Parthian period (c. 150 BC – AD 100?) with 'quadrilobate' Doric columns



II. Khurha sanctuary, west Iran: view with Ionic columns with 'watchespring' capitals, perhaps second century BC



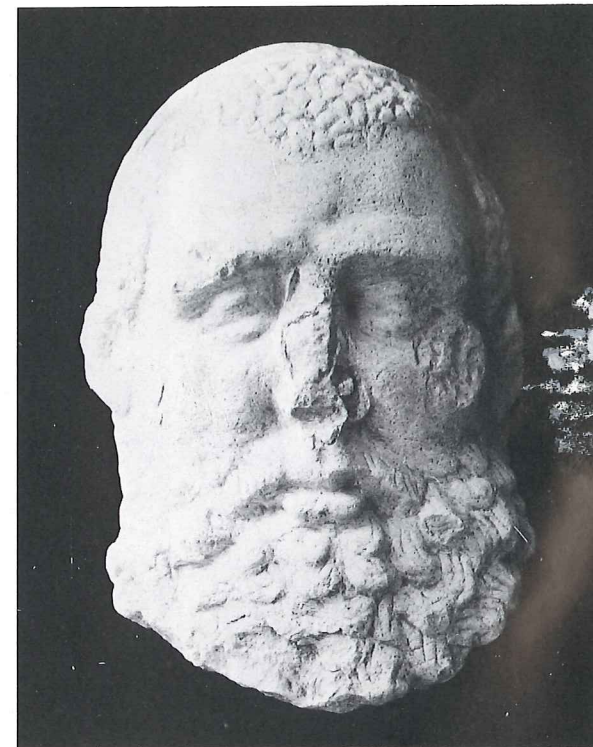
III. *above* West Iran(?):  
bronze figurine of horseman in  
cap, c. 300 — 150 BC(?) [British  
Museum WA 117760;  
ht. 17.5 cm.]



IV. *right* Laodicea (Nihavand),  
west Iran: bronze figurine of the  
goddess Fortuna/Isis [Teheran  
Museum 2437; ht. 10 cm.]

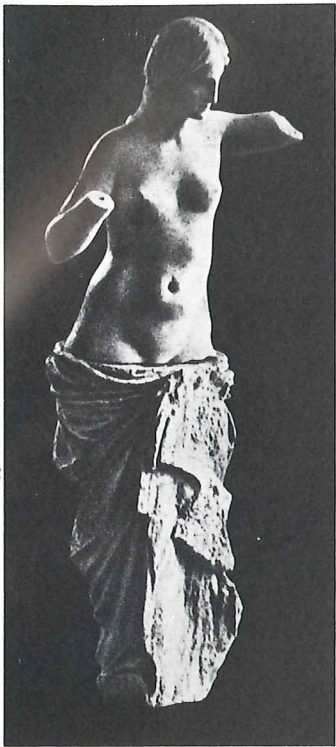


V. Rome: marble portrait  
head probably of an eastern  
Greek king (Euthydemus I?),  
perhaps a later copy of a  
hellenistic original [Rome,  
Museo Torlonia, Villa  
Albani; nearly life-size]



VI. Ai Khanum, gymnasium:  
limestone bearded head  
from a cloaked 'herm',  
second century BC [Kabul;  
ht. c. 20 cm.]





VII. *left above* (Old) Nisa 'Treasury', Turkmenistan, USSR: marble figurine representing a goddess (? — the head does not belong), probably second century BC [Leningrad, Hermitage; ht. c. 18 cm.]

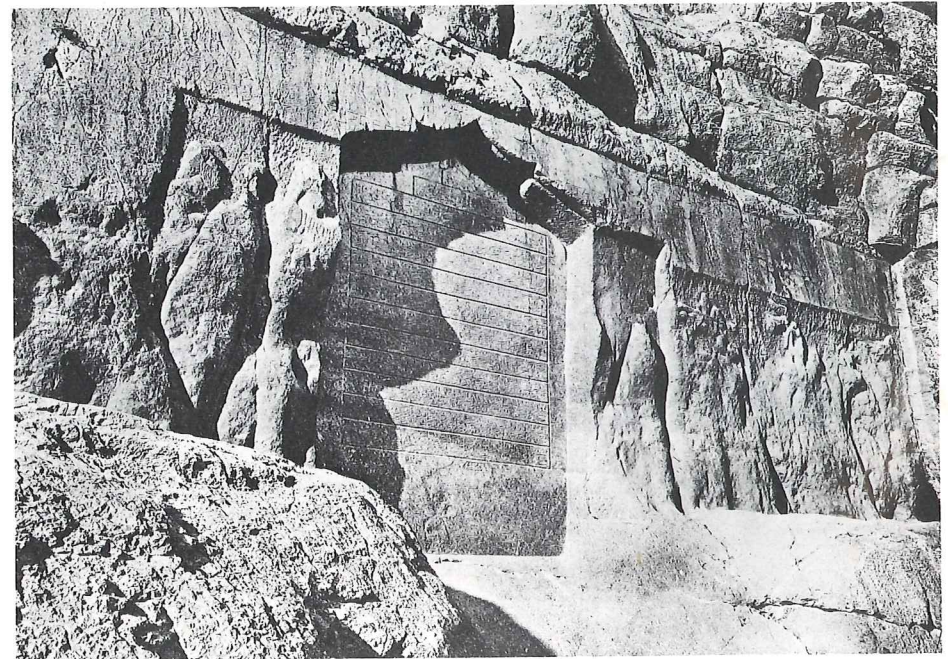
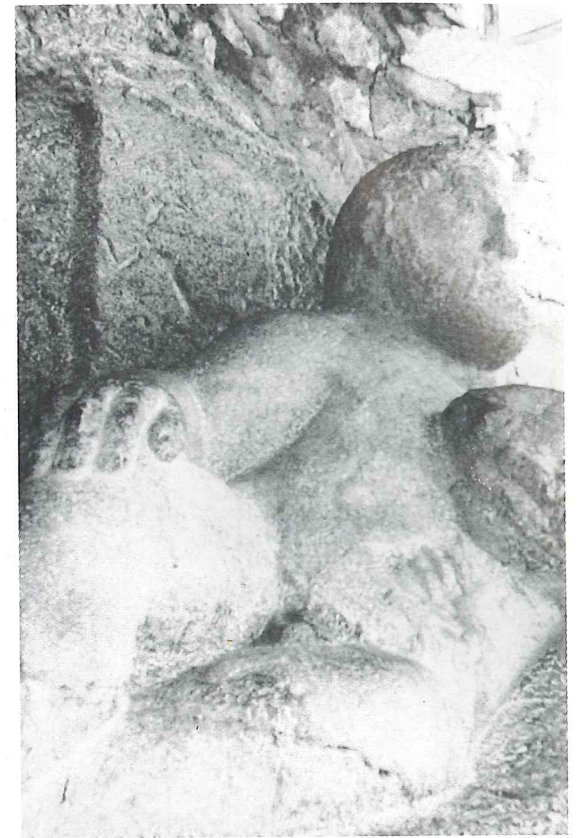
VIII. *left below* (Old) Nisa 'Square Hall', Turkmenistan, USSR: female (divine?) figure in clay and stucco on wooden frame from wall niche, c. 150 BC — AD 100 [Ashkhabad Museum; ht. 2.5 m.]

IX. *below* Ai Khanum 'indented' temple: limestone statue of a female figure beside a pillar, c. 200 — 150 BC(?) [ht. c. 1 m.]



X. *right* Bisitun: rock relief of Heracles reclining, inscribed and dated, June 148 BC [*in situ*; ht. 1.90 m., width 2.10 m.]

XI. *below* Bisitun; rock relief depicting a Parthian king (Mithridates II?) before four dignitaries (to the left), all in profile view, c. 123 — 110 BC? [*in situ*; ht. c. 4 m.]





XII. (Old) Nisa 'Treasury', Turkmenistan, USSR: three carved ivory drinking horns (rhytons) with figured decoration, perhaps second century BC [Leningrad, Hermitage; ht. c. 20 cm.]



XIII. Arsamea-Nymphaeus (Eski Kâhta), Commagene, south Turkey: limestone relief of king Antiochus I of Commagene shaking hands on equal terms with the god Heracles, c. 69 – c. 31 BC [*in situ*; ht. 2.26 m]



XIV. Shami shrine, west Iran: bronze statue of a chieftain, perhaps a Parthian vassal, c. 50 BC — AD 150 [Teheran Museum 2401; ht. 1.90 m.]

BC. Between about 250 and 150 BC the palace had a striking wall decoration, executed in brick and stone and doubtless imitated from examples in other centres, namely a blind arcade, anticipating those of the Parthian capital of Nisa and of republican and imperial Rome and thus establishing the clearly hellenistic origin of this feature.

A sensitive marble portrait head in Paris is considered by many, on the basis of coin profiles, to represent Antiochus III (but see Stewart 1979, 82–4); if correct, then he hired a Greek sculptor and material for this work. Some importation of Greek objects has been revealed by the finds at Ai Khanum, which included plaster casts of relief figures of Athena and other subjects for the making of Greek-style metal vases, the remains of a sandalled left foot and hands in marble from a 'acrolithic' statue (of Zeus?) in which the extremities would have been of marble and the main part of clay and stucco, and a silver religious relief (*oscillum*) from western Anatolia depicting Cybele.

Royal mints, now located across the region, minted coins on many of which the king's portrait in profile occupied the obverse; the reverse normally contained deities surrounded by a Greek legend giving the ruler's name. Graeco-Bactrians produced similar fine issues (Colledge 1977, pl. 39h). At Uruk and at Seleucia-Tigris, lumps of clay (*bullae*) used for sealing documents bore carved gem-impressions depicting divinities, royal heads and animals. Greek pottery types remained influential, mainly at Greek foundations such as Seleucia-Tigris and Ai Khanum, as did Greek figurines. In western Iran, bronze mirrors from Masjid-i Solaiman had elegant handles in the form of nude females. A limestone altar from Laodicea (Nihavand) was decorated with garlands in relief. It is also possible that the fragments of a limestone bowl or altar from Denavar, which had satyr and silenus heads, should be dated to this period. At Ai Khanum, the limestone river fountain of c. 250 boasted originally six heads as water-spout gargoyles of which a lion, dolphin and New Comedy mask survive. The gymnasium in its earliest phase (III) yielded traces of pebble mosaics. The indented temple vestibule was enlivened with three high-relief figures in clay and stucco, including a male head which was gilded.<sup>7</sup>

Work in accordance with the various local traditions continued throughout the third century. In Mesopotamia, houses and tombs of Babylonian types continued to be built. At Uruk, vigorous and creative use was made of old Babylonian religious architectural forms, as local documents and excavations testify. A towering platform (*ziggurat*)

7. For architectural and art items mentioned in the rest of this chapter see in general Colledge 1977 ch.3, with references and bibliography. Gulf: Salles (this volume). Ai Khanum rampart: Bernard 1970, 316–17; 1976a, 307; 1980a, 457–8. Theatre: id. 1976a, 314–22; 1978, 429–41. Gymnasium: id., 1976a, 301; 1978, 422–9. Fountain: id. 1976a, 307–13 (sculptures); 1978, 429 (date).

was built once again on a grander scale than before, as were the associated shrine of Anu and his consort Antum, called the Bit Reš, and Ishtar's apparently new temple complex, usually called Irigal (Colledge 1977, 74, fig. 35; for the problems of change see Doty 1977). Old forms, including 'broad room' temple types and glazed brick decoration, were adapted for these purposes, almost certainly under royal patronage. Textual evidence demonstrates that Seleucid rulers continued to exhibit their respect for the local temples at Borsippa, Ur and Babylon, especially Esagila, and there are traces of work on the enclosure wall of its ziggurat, Etemenanki (see Sherwin-White, above pp. 28–9; Kuhrt, above pp. 51–2).

The ancient Mesopotamian 'broad room' temple type was also used in the great temple 'of Athena' and the lesser 'of Heracles' on the religious platform at Masjid-i Solaiman, and in two mud-brick temples at Ai Khanum. One of these, as yet undated, was located outside the walls, and the other inside (a rebuilding in fact of the indented temple, now with a wall decoration of traditional Mesopotamian niched type (*à redans*) to match its plan). Iranian architectural forms continued to be used. At the Greek (or originally Achaemenid?) site of Shahr-i Qumis, possibly Hecatompylus, in north-east Iran the strange, square, possibly cult buildings (IV, VII and XIII) with their rectangular projections on each face, seem to evoke an antecedent in the 'Median fire-temple' at Nush-i Jan (c. 750–600 bc; Colledge 1977, 39, fig. 11), while a fortified residence on site VI with rooms and corridors opening on to a great court seems rather to have contemporary central Asian connections (Fig. 6B, cf. 6A). Their precise dating in the late third, or earlier second century bc remains uncertain. In west Iran, Achaemenid forms inspired some early Seleucid-period column bases at Istakhr (near Persepolis), probably an ashlar tower at Nurabad (seemingly a pale reflection of the 'Zendan' towers at Pasargadae and Persepolis), and the great open-air religious platform at Masjid-i Solaiman (with its 'broad-room' temples). A puzzling religious structure at Ai Khanum, as yet undated, may be related to this: an open-air sanctuary by the south-west corner of the acropolis with a stepped, flat-topped podium perhaps for ritual of Persian type.

Local art forms flourished as well. Figurine types included the traditional stiff, frontal nude goddess, found right across western Asia at such sites as Seleucia-Tigris, Failaka and Susa, as well as horseman figures in Mesopotamia and west Iran (Plate III). Old pottery forms continued, Mesopotamian and Persian. A now battered limestone male statue (if of this period) found at Susa was inspired by Achaemenid style, as were damaged rock reliefs perhaps of c. 200 bc at north Mesopotamian Qizqapan and west Iranian Dukkan-i Daūd and Deh-i Nau depicting profile male figures, and some rare fragments of linen textiles discovered in the indented temple of Ai Khanum, datable

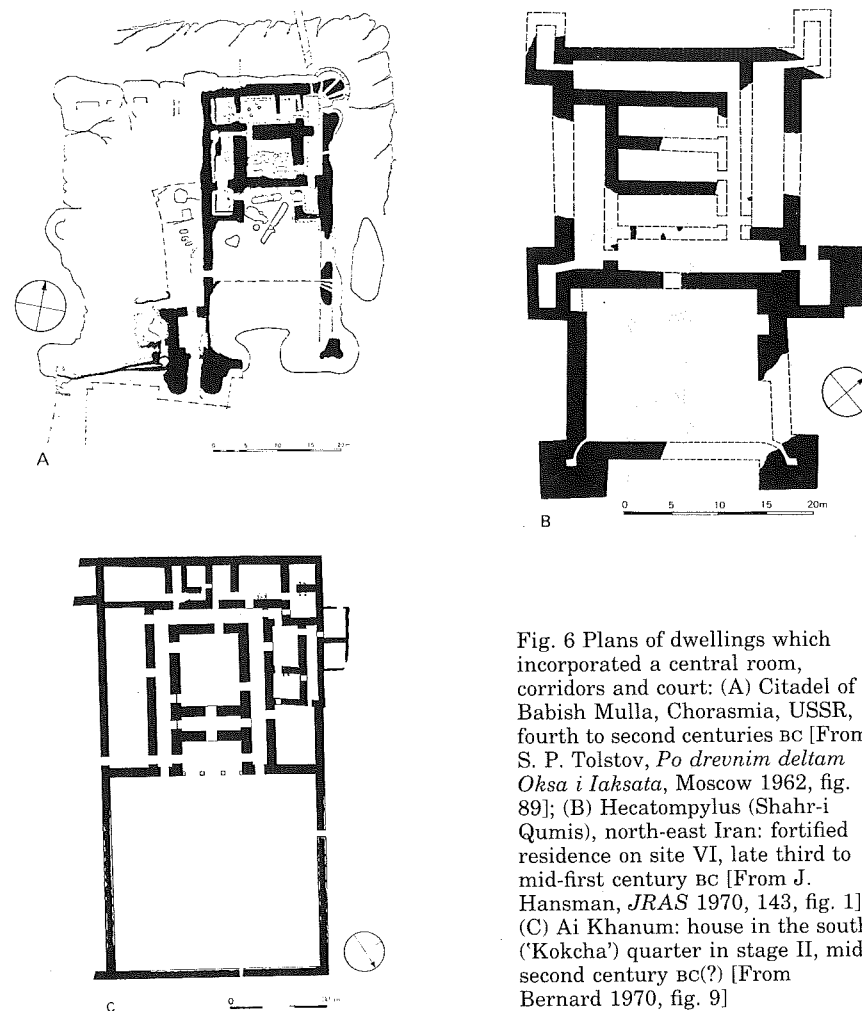


Fig. 6 Plans of dwellings which incorporated a central room, corridors and court: (A) Citadel of Babish Mulla, Chorasmia, USSR, fourth to second centuries bc [From S. P. Tolstov, *Po drevnim deltam Oksa i Iaksata*, Moscow 1962, fig. 89]; (B) Hecatompylus (Shahr-i Qumis), north-east Iran: fortified residence on site VI, late third to mid-first century bc [From J. Hansman, *JRAS* 1970, 143, fig. 1]; (C) Ai Khanum: house in the south ('Kokcha') quarter in stage II, mid-second century bc(?) [From Bernard 1970, fig. 9]

to the third or second centuries bc and showing friezes of walking animals.<sup>8</sup>

During the third century the production of works combining different artistic traditions was maintained. Certain architectural structures incorporate stylistically pure elements from more than one

8. Uruk, Seleucia-Tigris: see n. 4 above. Ai Khanum temple outside the walls: Bernard 1976a, 303–7. Pasargadae: Stronach 1978. Persepolis: Schmidt 1953–70. Ai Khanum platform: Bernard 1976a, 305–7.

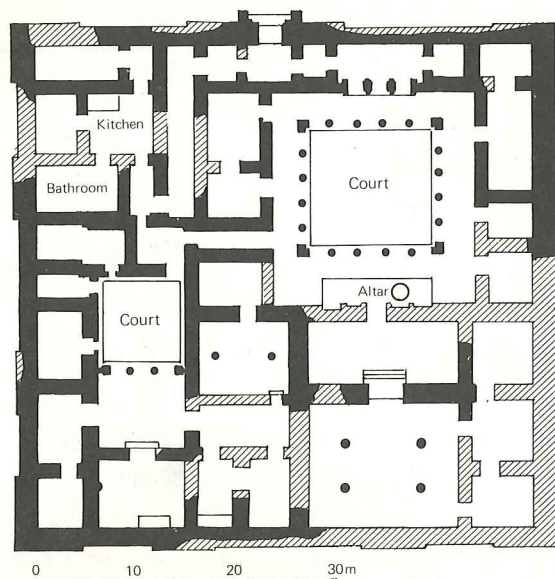


Fig. 7 Nippur, Babylonia: plan of the 'palace' c. 250 BC(?) [From A. U. Pope (ed.), *A Survey of Persian Art*, Oxford 1938, I, fig. 106]

culture, such as the great sanctuary at Masjid-i Solaiman which consisted of temples of Mesopotamian 'broad room' type set on a Persian platform. Other buildings juxtaposed traditional and Greek elements – the 'palace' at south Mesopotamian Nippur had a Mesopotamian plan but a Greek peristyle court featuring tapered Doric columns of baked brick (with the bricks arranged like the slices of a cake) (Fig. 7). On Failaka the two columns of the Ionic temple had Persian-type bell-shaped leaf ornamented bases. At Ai Khanum the rebuilt indented temple of 'broad room' type, in addition to its Babylonian decorative wall niches, was provided in the vestibule with high-relief figured decoration in Greek style, and set on a high three-step podium which might possibly recall the three-step stone platforms characteristic of Greek temples.

Other buildings showed a blending of styles. At the capital, Seleucia-Tigris, an administrative building incorporated two suites of seven rooms each with central columns and doors in the short sides reminiscent of Achaemenid 'centralised square' designs. On Failaka some architectural decoration of Greek derivation, including palmette temple roof ornaments (*acrôtèria*), was treated in a stylised fashion; the palace of Ai Khanum had an 'orientalised' Corinthian order (c. 250–200 BC) and palmette roof decoration used in a non-Greek way. The Parthians, too, made use of this 'blended' style, as

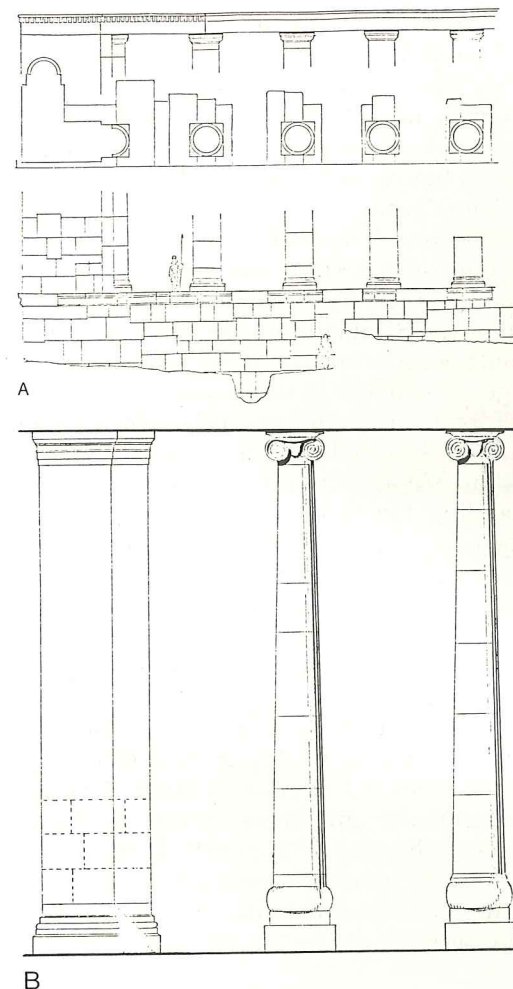


Fig. 8 Architectural orders of west Iranian sanctuaries, perhaps second century BC: (A) Kangavar, Doric; (B) Khurha, Ionic [From E. Herzfeld, *Iran in the Ancient East*, Oxford 1941, figs. 380, 383]

is exemplified by a temple-like mausoleum on the site of New Nisa which had a frontal colonnade with thin columns on stepped Persian-type bases and unusual Ionic capitals of the variety sometimes called 'watchspring' from the spiral character of the volutes (cf. Fig. 8).

Artists, too, continued to show interest in developing these hybrid designs. In many cases, this took the form of the use of Greek style for non-Greek subject-matter. In Babylonia, marble figurines were carved representing reclining and standing nude females – doubtless

divine – with attachments in plaster and, interestingly, eyes inlaid in the ancient Mesopotamian manner. A series of metal – mainly silver – plates and bowls with rich relief decoration, of unknown but possibly Bactrian origin, may have begun at this time. The plate ornaments include rosettes, heads or busts of deities, real or legendary animals, war-elephants with figures riding them and Dionysus. The bowls have rosettes again, floral ornament, animals, busts of deities, depictions of hunting, libation and banqueting, and even perhaps scenes from Greek drama. Coins offer further examples. Two groups were issued by Iranian kings, in Greek style and on the same reduced Attic Greek weight standard as the Seleucid coinage, but with local subject matter. In Persis, in south-west Iran, the local subject kings began issuing their own coinage, principally in silver, perhaps at some point between about 250 and 200 BC, although a second-century date is also possible. On the obverse was a bearded head in a floppy Persian hat or bashlik, facing right, as on Seleucid issues; on the reverse a popular design comprised a standing figure in Iranian dress worshipping at a fire altar, and any legends were in Aramaic (Colledge 1977, plate 38e, ee). The second group seems to have emanated from what became the Parthian territories of the south-eastern Caspian and north-eastern Iran. Some early Parthian coins, silver drachms, close in material and technique to those of Bactria, have on the obverse a beardless head again wearing the bashlik (right-facing like the Seleucid on what seems to be the earliest type, and left-facing thereafter) and on the reverse a bow-holding archer in riding dress facing left on the apparently earliest three types but afterwards right. A Greek legend names Arsaces and occasionally an Aramaic text perhaps mentions the Iranian rank of *krny* (Karen) or 'general'. These coins are possibly to be assigned to the last years of Arsaces I (c. 220–215 BC, types 1–4, struck perhaps at Nisa) and the first of Arsaces II (c. 215–209 BC, types 5–6, struck possibly at Hecatompylus).<sup>9</sup>

#### *The second century BC*

Despite political changes, work in Greek style continued across western Asia. Grid-plan cities were still being laid out, most notably by the Indo-Greeks (or Indo-Bactrians), with their foundation in north-west India of 'Lotus City' (Pushkalāvati) around 150 BC. Very possibly the great capital of Taxila (Fig. 9) also dates from this period, although the precise sequence of events and foundation date of the grid-plan city on the Sirkap Mound are as yet uncertain, and it remains a

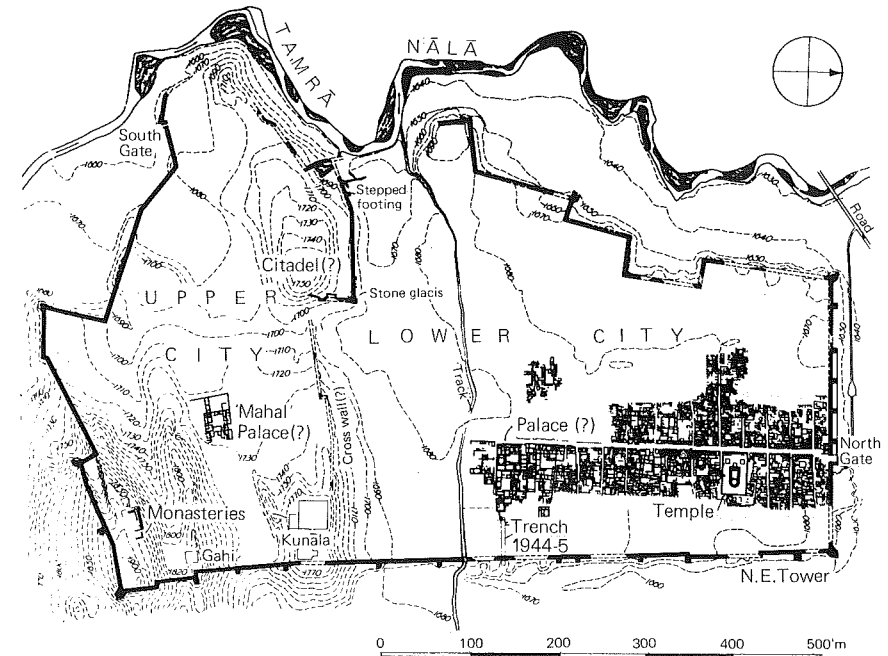


Fig. 9 Taxila, Pakistan: plan of the Sirkap mound with grid-plan streets, c. 50 BC–AD 150 [From R. E. M. Wheeler, *Flames over Persepolis*, London 1968, 113]

possibility that it was carried out by the nomadic Indo-Scythians under their king Azes I, who apparently supplanted the last Greek king in Taxila around 57 BC. Elsewhere, another usurper, Hyspaosines of the southern Babylonian kingdom of Characene, refounded an Antioch about 140–120 BC on the same lines as his capital Spasinu Charax. To the south of Characene, on Failaka, the north wall of the fort was pushed forward, before occupation ceased around 100 BC. At Seleucia-Tigris, there was work on cult buildings perhaps in the decades following the Parthian takeover in 141 BC. Two basically similar shrines were built: 'Temple A' and 'Temple B', each an open-air enclosure with a small theatre attached, and A had a covered ambularium inside the outer wall. The linking of religious building and theatre was a phenomenon particularly characteristic of hellenistic and Roman Syria (but contrast Millar, above pp. 117–8). The Greeks of Seleucia-Tigris still lived in houses of Greek type, with a two-column porch (*prodomos*) facing an interior court. At Dura-Europus, the open-air enclosure of the goddess Artemis with its cut-stone work and Doric colonnade may have originated at this time, if not earlier. The first phase of the temple of Zeus Megistos may also

9. Parthian coins: Abgarians and Sellwood 1971. Failaka terracottas: Mathiesen 1982.

belong to this century; the form of the temple itself is unclear, but the ashlar sanctuary wall and Doric columned gateway were Greek. At Antioch-Orontes the main street was surfaced with stones, and shops with strong walls and rectangular rooms were built. At Ai Khanum a new building phase of the palace incorporated some Greek features: more of the blind arcading in relief introduced as wall decoration in the previous century, standard Corinthian column capitals, and the earliest known example of the kind of colonnaded court called the 'Rhodian' peristyle, in which one row of columns is higher than the others, all datable before c. 150 BC.

Greek artefacts continued to be popular and influential. There was considerable importation of various items. Some sculpture has been found in west Iran: at Tal-i Zohak a small female head was discovered allegedly of Parian marble and apparently representing Aphrodite, and at Malamir a less than life-size white marble (divine?) female torso attired in a revealing chiton, the technique of which with its careful chiselling and abrading and fairly sparing use of the drill suggests a later hellenistic date. Fragments of large bronze heads from a mountain shrine at Shami, a female and a male portrait head, were found along with fragments of a gold diadem and therefore perhaps belonged to a king (CAH VII.1<sup>2</sup> 21, pl. 19). Greek statuettes, particularly of bronze, have been found at a number of dispersed sites, especially at Greek foundations. There is a group from Laodicea (Nihavand) in west Iran comprising the deities Zeus, Apollo, Athena, a gilded Eros, a rider figure and Isis in her Egyptian headdress (a solar disc between two ears of corn, surmounted by two plumes), perhaps associated with some sanctuary (Plate IV). A bronze Heracles was found at Ai Khanum and another at Pushkalâvati (Charsada).

Greek items were also imported by the Parthians. The building that seems to have functioned as the Treasury of the Parthian central Asian capital at Nisa yielded a whole group of Greek figurines of this period: silver gilt figures of Athena, Eros, a siren, centaur, sphinx and eagle, marble statuettes of draped and semi-nude females, presumably goddesses (Plate VII), and a marble arm holding a satyr's head. Monarchs of the period may well have patronised Greek artists for portraits, if identifications of sculptures in the round based on coin profiles are correct; these include a scowling marble head in Rome identified as Euthydemus I of Bactria (c. 200 BC: Plate V) and a bronze figurine and standing nude statue identified as the Seleucid king Demetrius I (162–151/0 BC).

Seleucid and other rulers continued to mint in quantity, with striking portrait heads in profile on the obverse and divine or other subjects on the reverse together with their name, on the Attic standard and in a remarkably pure Greek style throughout (Colledge 1977, pl. 38d). The silver issues remained the most important, with gold and

bronze less so (Colledge 1977, pl. 39gg). These high standards of craftsmanship were maintained by the Greek rulers of Bactria and India. The Bactrians used the Attic standard (Colledge 1977, pl. 39i). Around 150 BC king Eucratides I struck the largest gold coin of antiquity, a twenty-stater piece, shortly before his realm was overwhelmed by central Asian nomads. The Indo-Greeks (or Indo-Bactrians) of north India sometimes also issued coins on this standard, and c. 120 BC (?) Amyntas produced the largest silver coin of the ancient world, a twenty-drachm medallion, in this series. Doubtless these Attic-standard pieces were normally for trading north of the Hindu Kush, for most Indo-Greek issues were of a lighter, Indian weight, including many of circular Greek silver drachm, tetradrachm or occasionally hemi-drachm denominations, and some bronze pieces, in varied designs (Colledge 1977, pl. 39k,m). Parthian issues, too, were essentially Greek in style (especially those issued from Seleucia-Tigris after its capture in 141 BC), at least until the time of Mithridates I (c. 171–138 BC), but used Iranian iconography and so, strictly, fall into my category of 'hybrid' production.

Scattered small finds indicate further activity of Greek character. At Uruk and Seleucia-Tigris seal-impressions on clay *bullae* were from gems carved with divinities, heads and animals. At the Parthian capital of Nisa, a semicircular altar had painted garlands as decoration, and in the Treasury there were ivory couch legs of Greek design. The palace at Ai Khanum was brought reasonably up to date in its interior bathroom design by the application of a red wash on the walls and by the laying of competently executed pebble floor mosaics with various designs, figured and otherwise, including a sea-monster, all characteristic of Greece. The pebble technique was one still in use in the Greek cities during the hellenistic period, but being ousted by the cut-stone cube or *tessera* (Dunbabin 1979).

But what is of special interest at Ai Khanum are the great wall reliefs, executed in a very particular technique. On a framework of wood and cloth figured compositions were built up in a combination of clay and stucco, in a new development of techniques used in the Greek cities and then painted. Room 9 of the palace boasted wall reliefs which included at least fifteen persons on four different scales from half to fully life-size, and room 6 a huge equestrian group, two to three times life-size. Equally notable is the recurrence of wall reliefs of this type at the Parthian capital of Nisa, where in the building complex known as Old Nisa the walls of the Square and Round Halls were decorated with niches, in each of which stood an over life-size figure done in this technique; a standing female in excellent Greek style survives (Plate VIII). Perhaps these were executed for the Parthian court by artisans from Bactria. Sculpture was also represented by some noteworthy pieces in local limestone from Ai

Khanum such as a bearded head on a rectangular pillar ('herm': Plate VI) from the gymnasium, with realistic features (perhaps the Denavar fragments should be dated here as well: see above p. 145), and from a mausoleum the gravestone of a nude youth with upturned gaze. Thus in the second century BC Greek craftsmanship in western Asia remained active and innovative, at least in those genres familiar to Greeks, such as their own building forms, and sculpture, mosaic and coins.

Work drawing on the various local traditions continued to be produced. This was reflected architecturally in various ways. Some city-foundations may be cited. Around 150 BC, shortly before being overrun by central Asian nomads, the Bactrians founded a town whose ancient name is unknown at the site of Dilberdjin, some 40 kilometres north-west of Bactra. But this was no grid-plan layout. A huge, square enclosure was protected by a great mud-brick wall with towers and gates, the largest of which faced southwards towards the capital; the structures which arose both inside and outside were in only the roughest alignment. At the centre of the complex was a great circular building with stamped earth walls and numerous internal rooms, reminiscent of earlier and contemporary fortresses of central Asia such as Koi-Krylgan-Kala, although less organised than the latter. Circular again was the layout c. 140 BC of the Parthian refoundation of the Babylonian village, Ctesiphon, sited close to the recently conquered Seleucia-Tigris with a plan that was not of Hippodamian design. At Hecatompylus (Shahr-i Qumis), in north-east Iran, by then under Parthian control, a large fortified residence on site VI with rooms surrounded by corridors opening on to a great court, probably of central Asian inspiration, was constructed around this time.

Religious structures also perpetuated and developed earlier traditions. In Uruk, the ziggurat, the Bit Reš sanctuary of Anu and Antum and the Irrigal sanctuary of Ishtar and Nana were functioning well after the Parthian conquest of c. 140 BC, as is now revealed by the discovery of new texts (Kessler 1984b). It is possible that part of the mound at Seleucia-Tigris (see n. 4) called Tell 'Umar once was the site of a structure of ziggurat type, and that it was first constructed in this period. At the same date the Mesopotamian 'broad-room' type indented temple and temple outside the walls at Ai Khanum were still being utilised. Another 'broad-room' temple 'of the Dioscuri' was built c. 150 BC at the new Bactrian foundation of Dilberdjin (Kruglikova 1977), with Iranian corridors (and so overall an example of my 'hybrid' category). The open-air terrace with enclosure wall was represented by examples in west Iran: the one at Shami had an internal portico and statuary (see below for Khurha and Kangavar). At the Parthian capital, (Old) Nisa, more cult buildings were erected. Within a large fortified complex, whether a palace-fortress or a

religious enclosure, some buildings look like temples. A solid 'Square Temple', surrounded by slim corridors of Iranian variety, might well have been a fire tower of some sort. Close by was a 'Square Hall', a 'centralised square' design with the usual four central columns derived from Achaemenid architecture, embellished with Greek decorative forms and Graeco-Bactrian-style wall reliefs comprising over life-size figures standing in niches, which may have functioned either as a reception hall, or as a dynastic shrine (Colledge 1977, 38 fig. 10; Plate I). An ancient tomb type, the *hypogeum*, entered down steps and with burial slots either side of a central corridor (found in the Neo-Assyrian period) occurred in examples datable to around 150 BC at towns as far apart as Palmyra (Colledge 1976, 58–9, with no. 169), Susa and Ai Khanum. Local Babylonian house types remained in use throughout Mesopotamia.

Traditional pottery types and figurines were still being produced: in particular, examples of the Mesopotamian stiff nude goddess figurine turned up not only in Mesopotamia, but also in west Iran and at Ai Khanum. Achaemenid art styles also inspired some activity. In the Treasury at (Old) Nisa, along with Greek items, were ivory couch legs of Achaemenid design. A Parthian king, almost certainly Mithridates II (c. 124/3–87 BC), commissioned a great rock relief at Bisitun in west Iran, overlooking a main highway (Plate XI). It is now damaged, but a seventeenth-century drawing of it when in a better state is helpful. To the right, in left-facing profile, stands the king; before him, also in profile, pose four nobles, named above in Greek like the king and with a small figure of victory personified (Nike) hovering over them. Perhaps Mithridates II is handing out fiefs to selected nobles. What is particularly noteworthy is the evocation of Achaemenid imperial style, for the relief is placed, surely deliberately, below the famous triumphal relief of Darius the Great, and this all accords with Mithridates' publication of a claim to be descended from a member of the Achaemenid house. So the choice of this Achaemenid-style representation (itself derived from a much earlier relief nearby) may have been deliberate and politically calculated. In the second century, therefore, Mesopotamian and Iranian architecture and art remained enormously influential.

There is ever more evidence of work intermingling Mesopotamian, Iranian and Greek traditions. The Mesopotamian 'broad room' temple type seems to have been adapted at Seleucia-Tigris for a rebuilding in baked brick of the supposed Heroon around 140–100 BC. At Dilberdjin it formed the basic element in a mud-brick temple built c. 150 BC and dedicated, to judge from wall-paintings, to the Greek Dioscuri, but with Iranian corridors around the inner chamber (cella), and thus anticipating in its form the cella of the great dynastic shrine of the Kushan king Kanishka of some three centuries later at Surkh



Kotal. Other structures mixed traditional elements with Greek. At Babylon, houses of Mesopotamian plan *very* occasionally incorporate a Greek columned (peristyle) court. The open Greek market place (agora) at Dura Europus, after the Parthian takeover (by c. 113 BC), was gradually filled with little, densely packed shops, and so became more like a covered market. In west Iran, the basically open-air religious terraces of Khurha and Kangavar, perhaps of this period, acquired some notable features (Fig. 8). The Khurha enclosure had a limestone colonnade, ostensibly Ionic with a taper (*entasis*) in the columns, but with Persian bases comprising two steps surmounted by a circular torus moulding, a shaft thin by Greek standards, and 'watchspring' capitals (Fig. 8B; Plate II). That at Kangavar, again in local limestone, boasted a grand double-entry staircase in imposing masonry of Persepolitan grandeur; around the platform ran a colonnade in the Doric Greek order, but with Persian square bases – a double solecism from the standard Greek viewpoint, as Doric columns should have no bases at all – and mouldings misplaced according to the Greek canon (Fig. 8A).

At Ai Khanum, were further examples of both the juxtaposition of Near Eastern and Greek cultural elements, and their blending. The indented temple, combining 'broad-room' plan with Greek wall reliefs, remained in use. In the palace, the Persian type column-base with two steps and *torus* was used for limestone columns otherwise in the Greek Ionic and Corinthian orders. The treasury, built c. 150 BC, had long, narrow rooms that recall both an Achaemenid antecedent at Persepolis and contemporary parallels at the Parthian capital Nisa. The Ai Khanum gymnasium was reminiscent of Greek types, but with prominent corridors recalling those of the Persian tradition and a puzzling central rotunda with two side rooms and a corridor of unknown purpose in the south court (see n. 7). The rich lived in grand houses which blended Greek courtyard types with Iranian rectangular arrangements and corridors, like the mansion in the south quarter (Fig. 6C). A strikingly similar house was erected in about 150 BC at the new foundation of Dilberdjin.

Other mixed structures characterised the city of Nisa. A Round Hall, perhaps originally with a wooden, pyramidal roof, has reminded some observers of circular Greek structures such as circular temples (*tholoi*) and the Arsinoeion on Samothrace (c. 280 BC). Indeed its decoration included (terracotta) metopes and Corinthian capitals of Greek type, as well as arched niches as found at Ai Khanum. But the overall square plan and surrounding straight, narrow corridors seem more reminiscent of the Iranian 'centralised square' design (Colledge 1977, 38, fig. 10A). The Square House, later definitely used as a Treasury, with a square, open colonnaded court surrounded by long, narrow rooms, recalls Greek exercise buildings (*palaestrae*) and closed

porticos (stoas), as well as arrangements in Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian palaces and the Treasury at Persepolis.

Some artistic production falls into the category of subjects or items appropriate to one culture expressed in the style of another (usually Greek). Thus Parthian monarchs issued coins with Parthian subject matter but in various Greek styles – the profile, now usually left-facing male head on the obverse, and commonly a seated archer figure on the reverse (Colledge 1977, pl. 38h, hh). The Greek style is purest on the coins issued by Mithridates after his capture of Seleucia in 141 BC (doubtless a result of his use of die-cutters there: Colledge 1977, pl. 38j, jj) and most linear on those of Mithridates II (c. 124/3–87 BC: Colledge 1977, pl. 38k, kk). Similarly, the Indo-Greek kings minted issues, most of which were 'Indianised' on a light Indian standard. The coins had Prakrit legends on the reverse (and Greek on the obverse) and frequently idiosyncratic or Indian subject matter. The shapes were circular mainly for silver issues, but square commonly for copper and bronze, in imitation of Indian currency. Despite this they were always in Greek style (Colledge 1977, pl. 39k–p). The series of nude goddess figurines in Babylonia, Mesopotamian in conception but Greek in execution, continued. So, very probably, did the series of 'Bactrian' silver and bronze vessels with their rich ornamentation.

A further dramatic illustration of this process came to light in the Treasury of Nisa: the fragments of sixty or more ivory drinking horns (rhytons) with rich figured decoration comprising reliefs of Bacchic scenes, sacrifice, heads and animals, and ending in the foreparts (*protomai*) of a horse, griffin, centaur or female. They are Iranian in form and subject matter, cf. the row of heads, but Greek in execution, as is shown both by the style and by the labelling of a goddess, Hestia, in Greek (Plate XII). Were these perhaps a commission by the Parthian kings from the neighbouring Bactrians, a further link between the two realms, or the Parthian kings patronising local craftsmen? An example of the reverse, an item essentially Greek but in non-Greek guise, is provided by pottery, in which from around 150 BC a revival of an ancient technique of coloured glazes may be seen, used on both local and Greek shapes.

At the new Bactrian town of Dilberdjin the temple was decorated with wall-paintings (in a somewhat linear Greek style) of the two Dioscuri with white horses beneath what might be a *palaestra* scene. Other examples in which Greek and non-Greek elements are blended occur in sculpture. Figurines from Babylonia and Failaka are of this kind (see n.9), as is a little serpentine head perhaps of a Parthian ruler, possibly of the second or first century BC, from north Mesopotamia. At Ai Khanum, the limestone statuette of a standing woman is basically Greek in execution but there is some non-Greek linearity in the style (Plate IX). Particularly noteworthy is another rock relief

overlooking the highway at Bisitun. Heracles reclines, holding a bowl in a standard Greek pose, before a niche (Plate X). Helpfully, a Greek inscription informs us that it was put up by a high Seleucid official in June 148 BC; a second inscription, in Aramaic is unfinished (see Sherwin-White, above p. 23). Significantly for an official Seleucid work, the style is poised midway between Greek and Iranian; rounded forms are rendered in a slightly stiff way, and the sculptor's technique makes much use of flat and claw chisels in the Greek way but without the drill or abrasives, leaving a crisp finish (Colledge 1979, 228–9, 237–40, figs. 8–10). Thus the various categories of new styles, combining Greek and non-Greek elements ('hybrid') flourished at this time.

#### *The first century BC*

The output of purely Greek work had now diminished enormously. Little Greek art was imported into western Asia – primarily coins, and a late hellenistic statuette possibly of Aphrodite at what was now Parthian Dura Europus. The Seleucid, and occasionally the Indo-Greek monarchs, still minted Greek coins.

What may be regarded as work based on traditional local non-Greek styles had also decreased. At Dura-Europus the old Greek market place had now been filled with shops; c. 75–50 BC the temple of Zeus Megistos, and in 40–32 BC the temple of Artemis, were rebuilt as shrines incorporating a 'broad-room' cella (Downey, see n.5). But such architectural ornament as survives from these later 'broad-room' temples often includes Greek elements, and so they should rather be considered as of my 'hybrid' category. The small quantity of art bearing no traces of Greek influence includes impressions from seals on clay items made for official purposes found at Nisa and Hecatompylus (Shahr-i Qumis), gems carved in the central Asian 'Animal Style', and colourful 'nomad' jewellery from Taxila.

Instead, what had now blossomed right across western Asia was 'hybrid' work, in which Greek and various locally derived styles mingled. Architectural examples proliferated, particularly from the mid-century. At Palmyra, from c. 50 BC, local limestone began to be employed for building and art: Aramaic inscriptions were given Greek mouldings, architectural decoration of Graeco-Iranian types emerged, and the first of its long succession of splendid, soaring cut-stone funerary towers were raised, radiating outwards from the increasingly monumental inhabited quarters. At Seia (Si'), the temple of the god Ba'alshamin (33–32 BC) used both the Persian 'centralised square' and Greek forms. In the kingdom of Commagene, Antiochus I (c. 69–31 BC) raised a whole series of monuments of grandiose proportions. There were sanctuaries devoted to the king's cult, and in addition what was

called the *hierothesion*, royal tomb and sanctuary combined, for the worship of the king, his ancestors and divinities. The royal cult took many forms – rock-cut tombs, reliefs on bases above processional ways, a mound surrounded by groups of columns bearing statuary and reliefs (Colledge 1977, 46 fig. 17), and most impressively of all the colossal hilltop tumulus of Nemrud Dağ, 150 metres high, dominating on either side a great terrace with reliefs and colossal seated statues. As part of his programme of dynastic art, Antiochus covered his realm with statuary and reliefs depicting himself, his family, ancestors and patron deities (Plate XIII). The style is a blend of Persian and Greek. Art forms and the iconographical repertoire mix such ancient Anatolian items as the rock relief and dado relief with Persian elements like the figures of Achaemenid kings from whom Antiochus claimed descent. Contemporary Anatolian and Iranian costume is employed, and Greek forms such as the statue on a column or scenes like the handclasp (or *dexiôsis*, here between Antiochus and selected deities). A lion relief illustrates his horoscope.

At Nisa the 'centralised' Square Hall was apparently rebuilt at this time, with Doric 'quadrilobate' columns on square bases. At Khaltchayan, in central Asia, a building datable to c. 50 BC–AD 50 – perhaps a reception hall – was built. It contained a six-column portico, a central hall entered (like a 'broad-room' shrine) through its long side, and a ('centralised?') square inner chamber with two central columns, enclosed by corridors, but with roof edge ornaments (antefixes) and terracotta roof tiles of Greek type (Fig. 10). At Taxila temples were constructed, perhaps under the Indo-Scythians. One at Mohrâ Maliârân had an Ionic columned porch. Another, better known, on the Jandial site mixed Greek proportions and Ionic portico order with Iranian square cella, tower and corridors, and a covering outside of a special Indian stucco using crushed shells (Fig. 11).

Some art is of the kind where the style of one culture (in every case, Greek) is used for items characteristic of another culture. The 'Indianised' coin issues of the Indo-Greeks were of this sort, in both their circular and their square forms, as were Elymaean coins (Colledge 1977, pl. 38f and 39a,c), and Parthian issues until c. 50 BC (Colledge 1977, pl. 38l,mm; see *ibid.* pl. 39j,k–s, for coins of Indian rulers), after which the different styles were blended. The same appears to be true of the 'Bactrian' silver and bronze bowls and plates which might be datable to this period. Especially striking are two apparently late hellenistic heads from west Iran, in a marble that is white but with blue-grey streaks and thus most likely from south-west Anatolia: so it may have been imported. The technique is Greek. One, from the open-air shrine at Shami, shows a bearded Parthian prince. The other, from Susa, is female and Greek in all its details

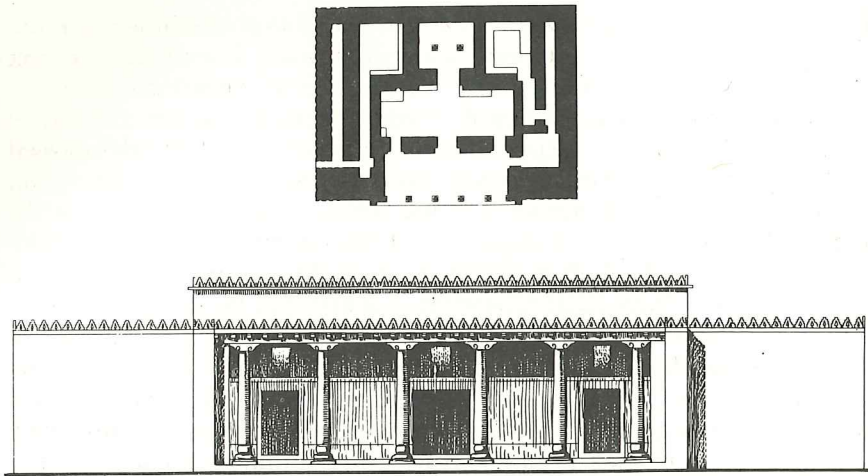


Fig. 10 Khaltchayan, north Bactria, USSR: 'reception hall', plan and front facade, probably c. 50 BC – AD 50 [From G. A. Pugachenkova, *Skulptura Khaltchayana*, Moscow 1971, 16–17]

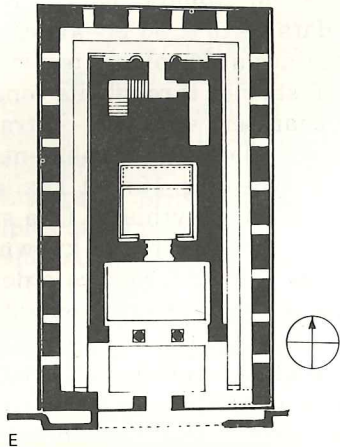


Fig. 11 Taxila, Pakistan: plan of the 'Jandial' temple, Indo-Scythian period, probably first century BC [From A. U. Pope (ed.), *A Survey of Persian Art*, Oxford 1938, I]

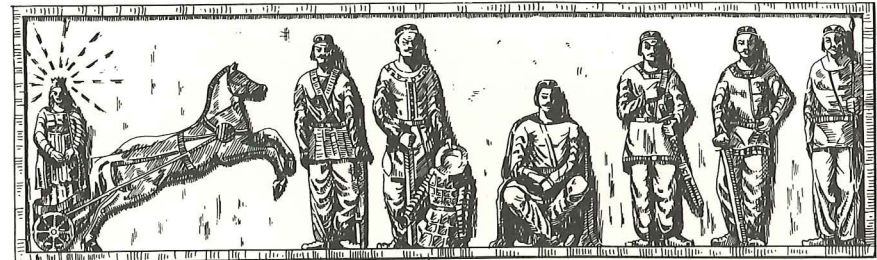
apart from a city-wall crown with merlon ornament. This suggests that the subject is the Good Fortune (Tyche) of a city (Susa?).

But most hybrid art is of the fully blended variety. This was true of Parthian coinage after about 50 BC (Colledge 1977, pl. 38n,o), and of associated coinages such as those of Armenia and Commagene (ibid. pl. 39e,r–u). It was true of other small items, such as pottery (for instance at Ai Khanum), or seal impressions of horsemen with lions and of suppliants from Nisa and Hecatompylus (Shahr-i Qumis), as well as, in all probability, circular schist and steatite 'toilet trays' from Taxila. The latter had reliefs of satyr and nymph, couples,

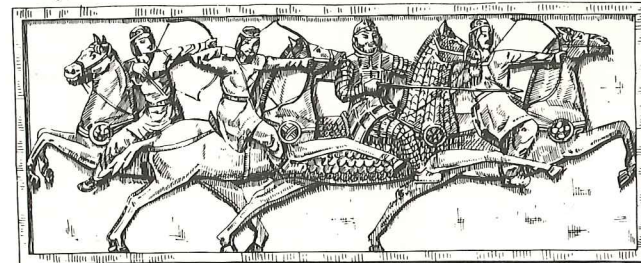
reclining figures or animals. From the Mesopotamian town of Assur come two limestone gravestones with profile male figures in Parthian dress, one bearing an Aramaic text and date that may be read as 89/88 BC or AD 12/13; the Greek heritage is visible in a certain rounding of forms. Traces of wall-painting including a head in the vestibule of the Khaltchayan 'reception hall' (c. 50 BC–AD 50) show a continuation of the style seen at Dilberdjin. The main reception chamber in the Khaltchayan hall was decorated with splendid wall reliefs in clay and stucco on a wooden frame – in other words in the 'Bactrian' method seen earlier at Ai Khanum and Parthian Nisa – picked out in vivid colours (Fig. 12). In the centre of the main wall sat a royal couple



A



B



C

Fig. 12 Khaltchayan, north Bactria, USSR: 'reception hall', reconstruction of three wall-compositions in painted clay and stucco. (A) Central group: a royal couple with high-ranking persons; (B) North part of main wall: a seated noble, high-ranking clansmen and a goddess on a chariot; (C) South wall: mounted central Asian archers [From G. A. Pugachenkova, *Skulptura Khaltchayana*, Moscow 1971, 51, 61, 71]

flanked by attendants; on the north side were further nobles, and a goddess on a chariot, while on the south were central Asian archers. Above the whole ensemble ran a garland frieze, held up by Erotes. Most characteristic of this blended style is the great bronze statue of a Parthian grandee from the Shami sanctuary, variously dated c. 50 BC–AD 150; although Iranian in subject, the figure exhibits a Greek naturalism (Plate XIV). Thus in this period the hybrid has become completely predominant; and within the possibilities offered by this development, one has emerged pre-eminent: that in which different styles are completely blended.<sup>10</sup>

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10. Shami head: Colledge 1977, 82, pl. 8b; id. 1979, 226–7, fig. 5. Susa head: id., 1977, 84, pl. 9c; 1979, 225–6, fig. 4. Taxila trays: Francfort 1979. Commagene: Colledge 1977, 229, fig. 11.

## Abbreviations

- AA = *Archäologischer Anzeiger*  
 AA(A)S = *Annales Archéologiques (Arabes) de Syrie*  
 AASOR = Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research  
 AB = Siglum for cuneiform texts in Bodleian Library, Oxford (now in Ashmolean Museum)  
 AC = *L'Antiquité Classique*  
 Acta Antiqua = *Acta Antiqua Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*  
 Acta Ir. = *Acta Iranica*  
 ADAJ = *Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan*  
 ADFU = Ausgrabungen der Deutschen Forschungsgemeinschaft in Uruk-Warka  
 AfO = *Archiv für Orientforschung*  
 AHw = W. von Soden 1965–1981 *Akkadisches Handwörterbuch*, Wiesbaden  
 AJA = *American Journal of Archaeology*  
 AJAH = *American Journal of Ancient History*  
 AJBA = *Australian Journal of Biblical Archaeology*  
 AJP = *American Journal of Philology*  
 AJSL = *American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literature*  
 AMI = *Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Iran*  
 Annales ESC = *Annales. Economies, sociétés, civilisations*  
 ANRW = H. Temporini, W. Haase (eds.) *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt: Geschichte und Kultur Roms im Spiegel der neueren Forschung* Berlin  
 ANS = American Numismatic Society  
 Anth. Pal. = *Anthologia Palatina*  
 AOAT = Alter Orient und Altes Testament  
 AOF = *Altorientalische Forschungen*  
 Ar. Or. = *Archiv Orientalní*  
 BaM = *Baghdader Mitteilungen*  
 BAR = British Archaeological Record  
 BASOR = *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*  
 BCH = *Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique*  
 BE = J. Robert, L. Robert, *Bulletin Epigraphique*  
 BE VIII = A. T. Clay: *Legal and Commercial Transactions dated in the Assyrian, Neo-Babylonian and Persian Periods* Philadelphia 1908.  
 BiOr = *Bibliotheca Orientalis*  
 BJ = *Bonner Jahrbücher des Rheinischen Landesmuseum*  
 BOR = *The Babylonian and Oriental Record*  
 BRM I = *Babylonian Records in the Library of J. Pierpont Morgan I*: A. T. Clay *Babylonian Business Transactions of the First Millennium BC* New York 1912  
 BRM II = *Babylonian Records in the Library of J. Pierpont Morgan II*: