

**After the Achaemenids: exchange, transmission and transformation
in the visual culture of Babylonia, Iran and Bactria c.330 – c.100 BC.**

Rachel Wood

Lincoln College, Oxford.

Volume 1: Text.

A thesis presented to the University of Oxford in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Trinity Term 2012.

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Abstract.

This thesis examines the art of Babylonia, Iran and Bactria after the Macedonian conquest, from c.330 to c.100 BC, in light of current developments in archaeological theory of cultural interaction.

In order to illustrate the character and scale of these interactions, the thesis presents a discussion of iconographic material ranging from architectural ornament and sculpture to minor arts. Chapters II-IV discuss the material from each site, highlighting regional characteristics and differences between media.

Chapters V-VII use three cross-sections to examine cultural interaction visible in material used for different social functions ('spheres'). The 'sphere of gods' discusses religious architectural ornament and iconography, and the implications for our interpretation of cult in Babylonia, Iran and Bactria in this period. The 'sphere of kings' considers ruler representation and the physical appearance of 'royal space' while the 'sphere of citizens and subjects' discusses material made and used by the wider populace.

Macedonian rule and the influx of settlers to Babylonia, Iran and Bactria developed networks of exchange, transmission and transformation creating 'visually multi-lingual' societies. The adoption of new artistic influences did not replace all existing traditions or necessarily infringe ethnic identities. There was selective adoption and adaptation of iconography, styles and forms to suit the new patrons and contexts. This cultural co-existence included some combinations of features from different artistic traditions into individual compositions, emphasising how visual languages were not closed-off, rigidly defined or static. Patrons were not confined to using the visual language associated with their ethnicity or current location. There was flexibility of use and meaning, which could be a useful model in the study of other areas of cultural interaction in the Hellenistic period.

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List of Abbreviations.

<i>AMIT</i>	<i>Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Iran und Turan</i>
<i>AUWE</i>	<i>Ausgrabungen in Uruk-Warka, Endberichte</i>
<i>BAI</i>	<i>Bulletin of the Asia Institute</i>
<i>BaM</i>	<i>Baghdader Mitteilungen</i>
<i>BCH</i>	<i>Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique</i>
<i>CRAI</i>	<i>Les Comptes rendus de l'Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres</i>
<i>I. Estremo Oriente</i>	Canali de Rossi, F. 2004 <i>Iscrizioni dello estremo oriente greco: un repertorio</i> (Bonn).
<i>JAOS</i>	<i>Journal of the American Oriental Society</i>
<i>JHS</i>	<i>Journal of Hellenic Studies</i>
<i>JNES</i>	<i>Journal of the Near Eastern Society</i>
<i>JRAS</i>	<i>Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society</i>
<i>OCD³</i>	<i>Oxford Classical Dictionary</i> (3 rd ed.)
<i>PFS/PFT</i>	Persepolis Fortification Seals/Persepolis Fortification Tablets
<i>RN</i>	<i>Revue Numismatique</i>
<i>SE</i>	Seleukid era
<i>SEG</i>	<i>Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum</i>
<i>StIr</i>	<i>Studia Iranica</i>
<i>UVB</i>	<i>Uruk vorläufiger Berichte</i>
<i>VDI</i>	<i>Vestnik drevnej istorii</i>
<i>WVDOG</i>	<i>Uruk-Warka nach den Ausgrabungen durch die Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft</i>
<i>ZPE</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik</i>

Abbreviations of ancient authors follow the *OCD³* guidelines.

References to catalogue entries are included in bold in the text, such as **[86]**.

Note on spelling.

This thesis aims for internal consistency and accessibility rather than one rule for rendering transliterated words. Latinized forms, therefore, are used for well-known places and regions (such as Ecbatana rather than Ekbatana, and Bactria instead of Baktria). The majority of Greek personal names are kept similar to their Greek form (therefore Seleukos not Seleucus), though with some exceptions for commonly Anglicized names (such as Alexander instead of Alexandros). Iranian names and words follow the most commonly employed versions in publications (for example, Mithridates rather than Mihrdād, but Baydād not Bagadates). The term ‘Hellenistic’ designates stylistic affinities to art of that period whereas the term ‘Greek’ implies a connection with that geographical origin.

Chapter I: Introduction.

The purpose of this thesis is to provide an archaeological perspective on the impact of the political and social changes in Babylonia, Iran and Bactria after the Macedonian conquest. This centres on the cultural interaction and exchange between Macedonian and local populations as evident in the material record: the relationship between local continuation and development, Hellenistic arrivals and the accompanying zones of interaction and exchange. This thesis explores the character of this interaction and variations visible in and between the archaeological record of different social and functional spheres.

In order to examine the relationship between the adoption and adaptations of new iconography, styles and techniques with the continuation and creation of local forms this thesis will use three aspects of the social functions and audiences of visual culture: pertaining to religion, rulers and the wider populace. The character of the dissemination of new iconography was envisaged previously as a ‘top-down’ trickle focused around emulation of the new political elite, sparked by official sources and only a concern of the wealthy, or as the result of dispersal from urban centres to peripheral rural settlements.¹

This study seeks to illustrate the widespread transmission of the iconography, styles and techniques of Hellenistic art and architectural ornament through different

¹ See, among others, Habicht 1958; Palagia 2012.

media and objects with a wide range of functions. This transmission was not a passive and indiscriminate wash over the indigenous visual cultures, but rather the features were employed selectively by Greeks and non-Greeks alongside, mixed with, and chosen instead of, local traditions. The thesis centres on the re-interpretation and development of available decorative practices and the wider political and social implications of the choices that shaped the physical surroundings.

Geographical and historical introduction.

The vast swathes of land between the Euphrates and Hindu Kush (**Map 1**) formed the eastern half of the Achaemenid empire and for a while much of the Seleukid empire. Babylonia (**Map 2**), the subject of Chapter II, was central to Seleukid power, as demonstrated by the dating of the Seleukid era from Seleukos I's re-entry into Babylon in 312 BC rather than his assumption of the title of βασιλεύς in 305/4 BC. As the base of the Fertile Crescent, this region provided rich economic benefits of agricultural production as well as crucial trade and transport routes along the Euphrates and Tigris to the Persian Gulf and the road networks linking Babylon to the main cities of the east and west. The region included several very ancient cities once the centres of large and long-standing empires, such as Uruk, Telloh (Lagash) and Babylon, in addition to the Seleukid royal foundation of Seleucia-on-the-Tigris. Southern Babylonia became the independent kingdom of Characene/Mesene by 127 BC.² The island of Failaka, c.13km from the mouths of the Tigris and Euphrates in the Persian Gulf, is included in the discussion of Babylonia.

² Schuol 2000, 218.

Chapter III, 'Iran', concerns a conglomeration of regions on and around the Iranian Plateau: Elymais, Persis, Media and Parthia (**Map 3**). In the foothills of the southern Zagros Mountains (modern Khuzestan) is the ancient city of Susa, its hinterland Susiana, and the rural sanctuaries among the plains and valleys of Elymais. Southeast of Elymais lies the Persian heartland of Persis (Fars) and the Achaemenid capitals of Persepolis and Pasargadae. Elymais and Persis were ruled by semi-independent dynasts under the Seleukids and Parthians. Around the central Zagros Mountains and Elburz Mountains lies Media (Kermanshah), with Hyrcania to the west around the south-eastern coast of the Caspian Sea. This chapter concludes with a discussion of Parthia (Khorasan) on the north-eastern edge of the Iranian Plateau around the Kopet Dağ, bordering the Scythian Steppes. There have been a few excavations in the eastern Iranian plateau, in Carmania and Drangiana (Sistan), but there is little evidence of permanent settlements.³

Chapter IV's title of 'Bactria' refers to the Greco-Bactrian kingdom, which included Sogdiana and later expanded into Arachosia and north-west India. This later incarnation is now known as the Indo-Greek kingdom since the Bactrian territory was lost to the nomadic Steppe tribes of the Saka and Yuezhi c.125 BC.⁴ Bactria comprises the eastern river basin of the Amu Darya/Oxus, west of the Hindu Kush (**Map 4**). The precise topographical definition of Bactria is unknown, but perhaps included territory north of the Oxus (rather than the river forming a border between

³ The so-called 'fire temple' at Kuh-e Kwaja may have an Achaemenid-style plan to the central court, but is not excavated fully and the stucco sculpture is Sasanian (Kawami 1987, 21, app.II).

⁴ Widemann 2009, 452.

Bactria and Sogdiana).⁵ There is evidence of many other sites in the region that show occupation in our period, but decorated material of the third and second centuries BC is rare.⁶ This chapter focuses on the river-side sites of Takht-i Sangin and Aï Khanoum, though some sites with a little or later iconographic material, such as Kampyr Tepe and Begram, will be discussed briefly at the end of the chapter to develop a broader understanding of the region.

The historical starting point for this thesis is the Macedonian conquest of the Persian Empire in 330 BC, when Alexander the Great entered Persepolis and the Achaemenid pretender Bessus killed Darius III. Study of the following two centuries encapsulates the intricate political modulations in the many kingdoms of these regions and examines how (and if) they correspond to the material record. Greco-Macedonian rule ended in Babylonia, Iran and Bactria by c.125 BC but the Hellenistic legacy in the visual culture persisted long after this. The inherent pitfalls of the term ‘Hellenistic’ to designate the third and second centuries BC are widely recognised (see below for further discussion).⁷ This is particularly problematic when discussing cultural exchange – something may be ‘Hellenistic’ (common to the period) as distinguished from ‘Hellenistic-style’ (affecting Greek characteristics).

By Alexander’s death in 323 BC in Babylon, his empire extended to the Hyphasis. His generals failed to keep peace between them and hold Alexander’s empire together for his son Alexander IV. Seleukos, made satrap of Babylon in 321

⁵ Leriche 1985, 67.

⁶ Ball & Gardin 1982.

⁷ Droysen 1836, 442; Shipley 2000, 1.

BC at Triparadeisos, managed not only to fend off the Antigonids but also to regain Alexander's eastern territories. Following the Antigonids, like the other Successors, he assumed the diadem and took the title of βασιλεύς in 305/4 BC. The *fratarakā* dynasts asserted independence in Persis perhaps around this time.⁸

Diodotus, Seleukid satrap of Bactria, formed his independent kingdom c.250 BC. Around this time, Arsaces, the leader of the Parni, defeated the independent Andragoras, former Seleukid satrap of Parthia. Diodotus fended off Parthian incursions into Bactria c.240 BC and Antiochus III attempted unsuccessfully to regain Bactria from Euthydemus I in 208 BC. Euthydemus' successor, Demetrius I, extended Greco-Bactrian territories across the Hindu Kush.

The Parthians, under Mithridates I, conquered Media and Babylonia c.141 BC. It is possible Persid rulers once again gained independence at this point. The immediate successors of Eukratides I lost Bactria to nomadic tribes c.125 BC, though the Indo-Greek kingdom lasted to the end of the first century BC. The Seleukid kings Antiochus VII and Demetrius II regained control of Babylonia fleetingly during the following year. Characenean and Elymaean dynasts took advantage of the Seleukid-Parthian conflicts in the second half of the second century BC to gain independence and make several incursions into Babylonia. They were subdued into positions as client kings of the Arsacids, who ruled their vast empire until 224 AD.

⁸ Hoover 2008.

Definition of the material.

The term ‘visual culture’ for the purposes of this study denotes the interaction with any object bearing iconographic decoration, whether figural, vegetal or geometric designs. This is intended to bring media such as architectural ornament on public buildings, bronze sculpture and miniature terracotta figurines into a directly comparable format. Ceramics are sidelined in this study since they do not provide much iconographic information in this period, but are used as comparanda of production patterns where possible. Coinage, however, provides an extensive visual testimony for iconographic study with accompanying legends. Numismatics provide our only sources for many of the Greco-Bactrian and Indo-Greek kings, and for the semi-independent rulers of Elymais, Characene and Persis.⁹ This thesis sets the iconography of coins in context with the archaeological material. The vast number of seal impressions from Uruk and Seleucia-on-the-Tigris not only provide a basis for iconographic study, but are often attached to documents that, in addition to the findspot and language of the text, provide the date of use of the seal and names of those involved in the business transactions.¹⁰ This study assesses the iconographic choices made in these regions: what was felt appropriate decoration for particular objects across scale, medium and expense, thereby comparing the choices made by different patrons for various functions and audiences.

⁹ For Seleukid issues, see Houghton, Lorber & Hoover 2002. See Bopearachchi 1991 for a catalogue of Greco-Bactrian coinage, and Holt 1999, Kritt 2001, Coloru 2009 and Widemann 2009 for accompanying historical interpretations. There are few comprehensive studies of Parthian coinage since Sellwood 1971 and Gardner 1981, but see Le Rider on Seleucia-on-the-Tigris (1998) and Susa (1965), the latter also for Elymaean and Characenean issues. For Persid coins, see Klose & Müsseler 2008, Hoover 2008 and Curtis 2010. For Characene, Schuol 2000.

¹⁰ Rostovtzeff 1932; Wallenfels 1994; Lindström 2003; Invernizzi 2004.

Since the original function and context of the artefacts is so important to this study, the emphasis is on material with known archaeological provenance. Some objects are included even though little is known of their precise archaeological context. Such evidence should not be ignored but should be handled carefully and with suitable hesitation, providing peripheral interpretations around the core of provenanced material from systematic excavations. For this thesis, items whose provenance is less secure or conjectured include collections such as the ‘Oxus Treasure’ in the British Museum and the ‘Bactrian Treasures’ of the Miho Museum. The material used is published in monographs, journals and catalogues. Since architectural ornament is included within the scope of this study, the relevant architectural context of the decoration is taken into account though not extrapolated in depth.

Other forms of evidence.

In addition to the art and architectural ornament found in these regions, on which this study focuses, there is also a considerable body of epigraphic evidence and literary sources concerning this period which assist the interpretation of the visual culture. There are numerous Greek inscriptions from Babylonia, Iran and Bactria after the Macedonian conquest, varying in quality, length and elaboration from names as *dipinti* on potsherds at Aï Khanoum to the hyperbolic stele of Sophytos.¹¹ The deep impact of the Greek language in Bactria is demonstrated by the Kushan-period

¹¹ *I. Estremo Oriente* 323ff; *SEG* LIV.1568.

adoption of Greek script to write the Bactrian language.¹² The study of Aramaic inscriptions from the late fourth century in Bactria is providing a wealth of information, particularly on administrative practices.¹³ There is an extensive corpus of clay cuneiform documents from Babylonia, along with the iconography of their sealings. As well as the historical calendars preserved in the '*Astronomical Diaries*', clay tablets record business transactions of temples, merchants and families.¹⁴ These have proved invaluable sources for studies of economy and the workings of Babylonian religion.¹⁵ These studies are vital in the discussion of continuity and change in the local administration and business activities. The large corpus of Achaemenid texts from the Persepolis Fortification Archive also provide useful comparanda for the seals used after the Macedonian conquest.¹⁶

Of the ancient literary sources concerning this region and period, the majority are by Greek and Roman authors, most writing long after the events. The Babylonian temple official Berossus, however, wrote his *Babyloniaka* in Greek at the beginning of the third century BC and it survives in references by later Classical authors.¹⁷ Polybius (c.200-118 BC) touches on the activities of Seleukids and Greco-Bactrians but is far more concerned with political shifts in the Mediterranean. Strabo's *Geographika* (early first century AD) is very useful in his detailed descriptions of the topography of the east and various historical insights. Diodorus Siculus, Curtius

¹² Sims-Williams 2012.

¹³ Shaked & Naveh *forthcoming*.

¹⁴ Sachs & Hunger 1988.

¹⁵ McEwan 1981.

¹⁶ Garrison & Root 1996; Garrison & Root 2001.

¹⁷ Verbrugge & Wickersham 1996.

Rufus, Arrian and Plutarch refer to Babylonia, Iran and Bactria in their narratives of Alexander's *anabasis* and the formation of the Seleukid empire. Useful fragments also appear in other authors such as the Polyaeus' *Strategemata* (second century AD) and Isidore of Charax's *Parthian Stations* (first century AD). I and II *Maccabees* provide an insight into the Judaeian viewpoint and are particularly concerned with Hellenism in Jerusalem. This is the only ancient text concerned with non-Greeks abandoning their traditional culture for Greek ways, though Plutarch implies this in his description of Alexander's 'civilizing' effect on the Upper Satrapies.¹⁸

Of the Iranian written sources, Zoroastrian texts that refer to Alexander and the period of Macedonian rule provide useful insights but should be negotiated with caution since they were written much later.¹⁹ The *Avesta* was not written down before the reign of Khosrow I (531-579 AD) and the earliest copies may date to the fourteenth century AD.²⁰ Ferdowsi's *Šāhnamē* (written around the beginning of the eleventh century AD) also refers to Alexander.²¹ The association of Alexander with *Dhul-Qarnayn* (the 'Two-Horned One') of the *Qu'ran* and the tales of the Iranian *Alexander Romance* illustrate the longevity of the impact of the Macedonian conquest in Iranian culture.

¹⁸ Plut.*Mor.*328c; Shipley 2000, 1.

¹⁹ See, among others: Boyce & Grenet 1991; De Jong 1997; Soudavar 2010; Wiesehöfer 2011.

²⁰ Soudavar 2010, 111.

²¹ Wiesehöfer 2011.

Existing scholarship.

The extensive activities of European excavators in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries produced reports and monographs on many large-scale projects in Babylonia and Iran such as at Susa, Babylon, Uruk and Telloh.²² Few, however, were interested in the post-Achaemenid levels. Herzfeld's works are among the few synthetic studies and while they provided valuable groundwork they are now somewhat outdated in material and interpretation.²³ Further significant work in the 1960s and '70s on Pasargadae, Persepolis and Failaka, and the discovery of the city at Aï Khanoum in 1961, proved invaluable.²⁴ The considerable publication record of the *Délégation Archéologique Française en Afghanistan* directed by Paul Bernard and of the *Centro Ricerche Archeologiche e Scavi di Torino per il Medio Oriente e l'Asia* led by Antonio Invernizzi forms a large proportion of any archaeological study of the Euphrates to the Hindu Kush. Many excavations currently underway will contribute to knowledge of the period and regions, such as those in Fars, on Failaka, at Seleucia-on-the-Tigris, Old Nisa, Takht-i Sangin and Bactra.²⁵ There are also valuable new collections of synthetic and thematic studies of archaeological material from conferences and in association with a recent spate of exhibitions.²⁶

There is traditionally a gap created by the prerogatives of modern scholarship in Iranian and Classical studies. The former tend to divide analyses into those

²² Dieulafoy 1892; Koldewey 1914; *UVB* 1930-; Genouillac 1936.

²³ Herzfeld 1935.

²⁴ Schmidt 1953-1970; Stronach 1978; Jeppesen, Mathiesen & Hannevad 1982-1989; Salles et al 1984-2008; Bernard et al 1973-1992 (preliminary reports in *CRAI* 1966-).

²⁵ Messina 2006; Invernizzi & Lippolis 2008; Drujinina 2001; Callieri 2007; Besenval & Marquis 2008.

²⁶ See, among others: Bernard & Grenet 1991; Invernizzi & Salles 1993; Invernizzi 1995; Cribb & Hermann 2007; Cambon 2007; Messina 2007; Wiczorek, Hansen & Tellenbach 2009.

focusing on periods before the death of the Achaemenid Darius III and those focusing on after the accession of the Sasanian Ardaxšir I. Classical scholars working on the Hellenistic period tend to mention only briefly the eastern half of the Seleucid empire. Ai Khanoum and Babylon often make it into mainstream studies of the Hellenistic period, but little else. There has been, however, a surge in scholarship on the topic in the past decade. The core issues in studies of the period immediately after the Macedonian conquest have focused on the problematic concept of ‘Hellenization’ and its many would-be replacements (such as acculturation and hybridisation), themes of continuity and change from the Achaemenid period, and an ‘Iranian revival’ in the later Parthian period.

Historical studies of Bactria before the discovery of Ai Khanoum based their accounts on numismatic and literary sources.²⁷ The most significant (and polarised) studies are W. W. Tarn’s *The Greeks in Bactria and India* (1938) and A. K. Narain’s *The Indo-Greeks* (1957). These were influenced strongly by colonial and post-colonial reactions to British involvement in India. The former considers the Greco-Bactrian kingdom a Hellenistic state of as much importance to Greek history as the Mediterranean kingdoms: ‘in the history of India the episode of Greek rule has no meaning, it is really part of the history of Hellenism, and that is where its meaning resides.’²⁸ Narain’s study, in reaction, saw the Greco-Bactrians as part of Indian history not of the Hellenistic world, and emphasised the Indian influence on the

²⁷ For more recent historical studies of the Greco-Bactrian kingdom, see Holt 1999; Holt 2005; Coloru 2009; Widemann 2009. See Mairs 2011b for a summary of scholarship on Bactria and Central Asia.

²⁸ Tarn 1938, xx.

rulers: ‘they came, they saw, but India conquered’.²⁹ Since these two major studies, cultural identity has formed the core of research on the ‘Hellenistic East’ (in Babylonia and Iran as well as Bactria). Trends of theoretical interpretation such as colonialism, post-colonialism, acculturation, assimilation, fusion and hybridity mould many of these approaches (discussed further below).

A similar reaction against a hellenocentric view occurred in the study of Seleukid history with the work of Kuhrt and Sherwin-White, emphasising Achaemenid continuity and the importance of Babylonia to Seleukid power.³⁰ While this approach brings many benefits, most scholars call for a less extreme interpretation.³¹ Their study built upon the emphasis on continuity and local vitality that was a central part of the surge in Achaemenid scholarship in the 1980s, led by Briant and Sancisi-Weerdenburg.³² Briant’s phrase of ‘*le dernier des Achéménides*’ to describe Alexander in terms of the imperial geopolitics of the Near East assists the study of administrative practices but should not be stretched beyond its capacity, such as to the nature of kingship itself.³³ The Achaemenid legacy was important to other rulers such as the independent Armenian rulers, Antiochus I of Commagene, and Sasanian Persians.³⁴

²⁹ Narain 1957, 11.

³⁰ Kuhrt & Sherwin-White 1993.

³¹ Austin 2003.

³² Sancisi-Weerdenburg & Kuhrt 1990; Briant 1994 (trans 2010); Sancisi-Weerdenburg, Kuhrt & Root 1994; Briant 1996 (trans 2002); Briant 2001; Briant 2005.

³³ Briant 2002, 876; Aperghis 2004; Lane Fox 2007; Tuplin 2008.

³⁴ Goell & Sanders 1996; Canepa 2010; Soudavar 2010; Shayegan 2011.

The proceedings of the Achaemenid History Workshops developed many strands of study, including a volume on ‘centre and periphery’ and another on ‘continuity and change’.³⁵ The former’s methodology concerns the view of the Persian empire from the local perspective of the various regions and how it affected existing traditions and the social and economic structures. This enables comparison with the impression drawn from Greek historiography. Volume VIII on ‘continuity and change’ addresses ‘how (and which) images have been received, re-invested and re-incorporated from one period or culture to another’ and ‘how significant an ingredient this transmission might be in the creation of a new iconographic repertoire.’³⁶ This thesis applies these concerns to material from the following period, similarly widening the focus to outside the royal arena.

Theoretical studies.

Ever since Droysen termed the period ‘*Hellenismus*’, scholarship of the Near East and Central Asia in third and second centuries BC has been preoccupied with ‘hellenization’.³⁷ This is understandable due to the abrupt political change of military conquest by an outsider, the migration of Greek settlers and the longevity of Hellenistic traits in many aspects of the society of the Near East and Central Asia. The problems of such a term are discussed at length in many studies, revolving around the ‘top-down’ one-way inferences of the term.³⁸ The concept of the

³⁵ Sancisi-Weerdenburg & Kuhrt 1990; Sancisi-Weerdenburg 1994.

³⁶ Sancisi-Weerdenburg, Kuhrt & Root 1994, 5.

³⁷ Droysen 1836, 442.

³⁸ Wallace-Hadrill 2008, 21.

conscious practice of 'hellenism' is a less contentious term than the implied passive and complete process of 'hellenization'.³⁹

For post-colonial studies particularly influenced by anthropology, a driving concern was the identification of demonstrations of cultural identity and ethnicity. Saïd's concept of 'the Other' provided the basis for White's 'middle ground' and Bhabha's theories of hybridisation and the 'third space'.⁴⁰ 'Hybridization' allows an active role to local forces in creating a new assemblage (in contrast to 'hellenization' and other terms) but still assumes the old (native) is displaced by the new (hybrid), with the 'tacit assumption that culture is unitary – one, other or blend'.⁴¹

There are also the problematic connotations in the term 'hybridity' of one (almost instant) transformation where every aspect of the culture is affected.⁴² This concern is voiced by many scholars, since the designation of 'hybrids' implies 'the production of a rapid and homogenous fusion after conquest is certainly not to be taken for granted, if indeed it ever happens' and conflicts with the inherent heterogeneity and continuous evolution of cultures.⁴³ There is also a troublesome implied inevitability and naturalness in the term, disguising how the identification of hybrids recognises and creates distinctions and polarity.⁴⁴ The emphasis in the creation of material culture is on the agency of conscious selectivity and choice.

³⁹ Among others, Moyer 2011.

⁴⁰ Saïd 1978; White 1991; Bhabha 1994.

⁴¹ Wallace-Hadrill 2008, 17, 27.

⁴² Mairs 2011, 17.

⁴³ Dean & Leibsohn 2003, 5; Wallace-Hadrill 2008, 7.

⁴⁴ Dean & Leibsohn 2003, 6.

Wallace-Hadrill identifies a ‘distinction of cultural artefacts which aim explicitly to mark identity from those which may be taken to reflect it’ and emphasises the self-definition involved – a subjective conscious choice rather than objective.⁴⁵ While there is much in the rhetoric of ancient Greek literary sources of the development of an ‘us’ and ‘them’, it is doubtful these categories were mutually exclusive, or that the use of new artistic forms displaced the user’s identity.⁴⁶ This is not to say that cultural heterogeneity is so overriding that no distinctions and comment can be made on the character of the material record.

In the study of areas and periods of heightened contact between cultures, much has been made of ethnicity and cultural identity.⁴⁷ Hall defines cultural identity as ‘the conscious reification of ideas, beliefs, values, attitudes and practices, selecting extracts from the totality of social existence and endowed with a particular symbolic signification for the purposes of creating exclusivity or distinctiveness’.⁴⁸ Ethnicity is distinct from cultural identity as a specific type of cultural identity, revolving around fictive kinship and descent.⁴⁹ While not indicative of an ethnic group, variations in material culture affect cultural and ethnic relationships and, consequently, socio-economic and political relationships.⁵⁰ The lack of mutual exclusivity in cultures discussed above applies to the study of identity since individuals possess many

⁴⁵ Wallace-Hadrill 2008, 9, 15.

⁴⁶ Hall 2002, 17; Wiesehöfer 1991, 58, 62.

⁴⁷ See Mairs 2006a, 2007 & 2011 on ethnicity and cultural identity in Hellenistic Central Asia.

⁴⁸ Hall 2002, 17.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ Jones 1997, 106-107; Hall 2002, 5.

identities, which are not static.⁵¹ These studies form an interpretive framework in which lies the focus of this thesis on craftsmen, patrons and audiences.

A key development in the archaeological theory of cultural interaction is that of viewing cultural exchange in terms of networks and nodes of contact.⁵² Langin-Hooper applies these principles to the Babylonian coroplastics of our period, emphasising the connections and networks between different social strands.⁵³ In a similar approach wishing to avoid the implied segregation between cultures portrayed by many theoretical terms, Revell identifies fluidity and elasticity in the relationship between Roman and local identities. The focus lies on the relationship between the agency of the individual and the structure of society: each mutually dependent as the precondition and product of the other.⁵⁴ These theories emphasise the variety of levels of social identity (which are multiple and overlapping) and the variety of expressions of these identities. They highlight the problems inherent in seeking to define concepts where labels mask the continual redefinition of cultural identity. The central features are heterogeneity and a multiplicity of options for artist and patron and of interpretations by the audience.

Wallace-Hadrill's *Rome's Cultural Revolution* sees identity as a process defined by repetitive action, conditioned by education and demonstrated in thinking,

⁵¹ Hall 2002, 17.

⁵² Bentley & Maschner 2003.

⁵³ Langin-Hooper 2007.

⁵⁴ Revell 2009, 7.

living and dressing.⁵⁵ Revell advocates a similar line, seeing personal identity negotiated on a daily basis through interaction with others of similar or different identities.⁵⁶ This is the driving concern in this thesis behind Chapter VII's exploration of the visual culture created by the built environment and the promotion of social memory and identity through public monuments.⁵⁷ As those discussed above, these studies emphasise the lack of mutual exclusivity between identities and the problems of implied homogeneity, static, and a monolithic nature. It is possible for an individual to take on one strand of identity and not necessarily lose any former identities, thereby maintaining a multiplicity of over-lapping identities. Wallace-Hadrill terms this a 'cultural bi-lingualism' in localities conquered by the Romans.⁵⁸ The linguistic metaphor is very useful for discussing the communication involved in the creation and use of an image, though should not be taken too literally since it is not compulsory for a craftsman, patron or viewer to understand the original meaning of the motif in order to gain any meaning from it. The co-existence of many artistic traditions in the assemblages from so many of the sites covered in this thesis therefore gives an impression of 'visual multi-lingualism'. The cosmopolitanism of the third and second centuries BC fostered societies of 'visual polyglots' capable of using and interpreting different styles and forms of images.

While exploring the possibilities of changes in meaning dependent on the audience and use of the object, the inherent power and importance of images should

⁵⁵ Wallace-Hadrill 2008, 6.

⁵⁶ Revell 2009, xii.

⁵⁷ Dignas & Smith 2012.

⁵⁸ Wallace-Hadrill 2008, 13ff.

not be underemphasised. The late fourth and third centuries BC are often identified as a 'great age of transition' where 'new forms of artistic and visual expression had arisen in the wake of fundamental political change'.⁵⁹ Visual language and imagery was (and is) an important tool in displaying, reinforcing and affecting legitimacy and power. The significance of choice of visual language does not only apply to rulers and the political and social elite. As Langdon summarises in her study of Archaic Greek art, artefacts were 'created by individuals to be seen by other individuals, figural art implies a message and a social intent, representing not objective facts but the subjective projections of artist and patron'.⁶⁰ The importance of objects is emphasised by their frequent role at the centre of rites of passage and other notable points of social intercourse.⁶¹

Gosden and Marshall highlight this role of objects in social intercourse as the origin of meaning for the object in question.⁶² Their study and that of Kopytoff (1986) on the cultural biography of objects illustrate the transformation of meaning caused by the movement and use of objects. The impact of the images (and any transformation of meaning) is dependent on function, place and audience (and time).⁶³ The meaning of an object in a particular setting, however, may not be equivalent to its meaning in its cultural origins. The range of differences in interpretation of these objects is of particular interest to this thesis. Mairs emphasises the potential for independent transformation, where 'familiar forms and motifs can be

⁵⁹ Zanker 1993, 335.

⁶⁰ Langdon 2008, 10.

⁶¹ Langdon 2008, 35.

⁶² Gosden & Marshall 1999, 169.

⁶³ Gosden & Marshall 1999; Kopytoff 1986, 86-88.

deconstructed and reimagined in different ways in different contexts'.⁶⁴ The agency of the individual as artist, patron, user or viewer is a current core focus in many humanities topics, and is particularly important in the study of the development of visual culture and demonstrations of cultural interaction.⁶⁵

Thesis structure.

The first half of the thesis (Ch.II-IV) is divided into three regional chapters: Babylonia, Iran and Bactria. Each of these chapters is structured by site in order to present and emphasise the original context of the material and to highlight regional variations. The discussion of the sites runs roughly from west to east, beginning in Babylonia, east into Susiana, Elymais and Persis, then north to Media and from there east into Parthia and Bactria. Within the discussion of each site, the material is separated by medium, leading from architectural ornament to large-scale sculpture in marble and bronze to smaller objects such as terracotta figurines, seal impressions and coins. At the end of each of these three chapters is a short discussion of the main characteristics of the region's visual culture, summarising the central points to be developed in the following synthetic chapters (Ch.V-VII). The accompanying catalogue follows the same structure as chapters II-IV and includes brief introductions to the topography, history and excavation of each site before the relevant catalogue entries.

⁶⁴ Mairs 2011, 16.

⁶⁵ Among others, Langdon 2008, 37.

Chapter IV has a slightly different structure due to the nature of the evidence from Bactria. The two sites with much iconographic material from our period, Takht-i Sangin and Aï Khanoum, are treated as outlined above; then follows a short section on Greco-Bactrian coinage (separate because much of which is without secure provenance); finally a brief summary of some of the sites that show occupation c.330-c.100 BC but have little iconographic material, require further excavation or are dated to after our period but are relevant to the discussion.

The second half of the thesis comprises three thematic and synthetic chapters. These focus on three cross-sections of society – religious, royal and the wider populace. While not claiming to be a comprehensive analysis of every aspect of the social settings of the material culture, this trio is intended to illuminate divergences and similarities resulting from different functions, patrons and audiences of the objects. The ‘Sphere of Gods’ (Chapter V) concerns the interpretation of the iconography of deities, votive material, and the decoration of religious spaces. The ‘Sphere of Kings’ (Chapter VI) discusses ruler representation and the visual language of ‘royal space’. Chapter VII, the ‘Sphere of Citizens and Subjects’, considers the adoption of Hellenistic art in forms more readily available to the wider population of these regions, in terms of personal belongings or, for example, an individual’s votive dedications, and also in terms of the built environment in which the populace lived and with which they interacted.

Questions and approach.

The central point of interest for this thesis is the impact of cultural interaction facilitated by the Macedonian conquest on the visual culture of the regions between the Euphrates and Hindu Kush. The increased concentration and points of contact through (among other factors) changing political territories, the development of trade links and the movement of settlers and craftsmen facilitated a greater rate of exchange and modulation in the material record of the region. This study questions how artistic features of iconography, style, technique and form connected to the heritage of the Macedonian rulers were used in various social arenas in Babylonia, Iran and Bactria. A main concern is how these styles, iconography and forms were selected, altered and renegotiated for their new cultural context, particularly when seen in light of existing artistic forms: how new influences interacted with local traditions. Where possible, this thesis considers whether the Babylonian, Iranian and Bactrian audiences interpreted similar meanings from these artefacts to those of a Mediterranean audience.

Concerning the ‘sphere of gods’ (Chapter V), the core theme is syncretism and what it entails: whether the transmission and use of images attests to the transferral of cult and whether all images of Greek gods were given local translations or equivalences (and the reverse – *interpretatio graeca*). Another significant question is whether this equivalence was politically motivated (to promote cultural unity and stability, and placing the Macedonian ruler in the local framework to support his

legitimacy of power), such as identifiable in the Ptolemaic kingdom.⁶⁶ The interaction between images of Greek gods and Greek religious practices with those of local religions (Iranian, Babylonian, Elymaean and Hindu pantheons, and the beginnings of Buddhism) forms a central topic. Representations of some gods were adopted more frequently than others. Was this because they are more easily transferable and translatable into the existing cultural structures and visual languages? A central concern of the thesis, particularly applicable to the discussion of syncretism, is whether alterations to iconography should be considered the product of ‘misunderstandings’ or rather the partial reformulation or exploitation of potential ambiguity for the purposes of the new craftsman, patron and audience, thus creating dialogue between different cultures.⁶⁷ The discussion includes the shape of sacred space in this period: the developments and relationship between open-air worship and the erection of enclosed temples. This chapter also considers how religious iconography pervaded visual culture outside the immediate sacred space. There are many textual sources mentioning religious practices, so it is particularly interesting to compare and contrast these with the archaeological evidence.

In the visual culture of kingship and power in these regions (Chapter VI), a much studied topic is the reception to differing degrees of the Hellenistic king model set by the image of Alexander and his Successors in the representation of rulers of different territories, varying levels of power and autonomy.⁶⁸ In particular, this concerns the philhellenism of the Parthian kings and the imitation (and not) of

⁶⁶ Ashton 2001.

⁶⁷ White 1991.

⁶⁸ Smith 1988; Stewart 1993.

Alexander's image by non-Macedonian dynasts. The points of interest lie in how this was reconciled with traditional symbols of royalty particular to those regions (especially by rulers not indigenous to the lands they ruled, whether Macedonian or not). The effect of public expectation on the appearance of their image is considered as influential as personal choice.⁶⁹ The role of iconographic ambivalence in order to speak to multiple audiences is crucial here. This chapter also considers how these issues relate to the appearance of physical spaces of power.

In the artistic repertoire created and used by the wider populace, not rulers and the elite, were the Hellenistic features adopted and adapted in similar methods? Chapter VII examines whether the effects of political change are visible in the material record of areas of life not directly involved in administration and government. Was the iconography of the vernacular more resistant to change than political and elite forms? The relevant material includes small items bought and used by individuals, such as terracotta figurines, as well as contemporary and earlier monuments that shaped the space used by citizens and subjects during this period (for instance, the civic space of Aï Khanoum or Iranian rock reliefs). This chapter in particular addresses the agency behind the adoption and maintenance of various visual features and the relationship between the visual culture of urban centres and rural peripheries: the people who made, used and saw the artefacts, as well as how they used and interpreted them. This illustrates whether emulation of Alexander and the ruling Greco-Macedonians was central to the motivating factors behind the creation and adaptation of Hellenistic artistic influences.

⁶⁹ Briant 1990, 60.

Running throughout these synthetic chapters are considerations of selectivity and re-interpretation of new forms into the visual repertoire, emphasising the conscious choice and agency of artist and patron. What was deemed appropriate decoration for objects with particular functions and audiences? The co-existence and interaction of new iconography and styles with traditional or pre-existing forms particular to the visual culture of individual localities, and independent (and in some cases perhaps reactionary) local developments are also of prime importance. The thesis aims to illustrate how these categories can overlap and exist independently, with features adopted in different permutations depending on time, place and function.

In using this broad selection of media and investigating various zones of social interaction, this thesis aims to show how the Macedonian conquest affected the visual forms created and used by others than the politically elite. The local populations selected features of Hellenistic visual culture, brought into their immediate vicinity by the conquest, and adapted them to their own preferences and requirements. This resulted in the co-existence and inter-mingling of Hellenistic and local forms. There were not defined boundaries between different artistic styles and users were not confined to one strictly reified visual repertoire.

Chapter II: Babylonia.

Introduction.

The visual culture of Babylonia after the Macedonian conquest displays the continuation of motifs and styles in material from public and domestic contexts. Artistic forms connected to Babylonian religion in particular remained rooted firmly in their visual heritage. New iconography, styles and forms, however, were incorporated simultaneously into the repertoire. This new iconography was concentrated on a few subjects in particular, some similar to existing Babylonian motifs alongside the reception of completely novel artistic features.

Babylonia was of central importance to Seleukid power.¹ The satrapy was Seleukos' first territorial acquisition after the agreement of Triparadeisos, and the support of the Babylonian people was crucial to his establishment in 312 BC.² The position in southern Mesopotamia at the head of the Persian Gulf and around the Euphrates and Tigris river basins provided not only access to numerous arterial trade routes but also stability and wealth from the agricultural resources of this part of the Fertile Crescent. The Seleukids lost control of Babylonia to the Parthians c.141 BC and, despite a number of attempts in the following decades, never managed to recover it for any length of time. Around this time the Seleukid satrap of Characene, Hyspaosines, began minting his own coins, invaded Babylonia (he is recognised in

¹ Kuhrt & Sherwin-White 1993.

² Diod.XIX, 91; App.Syr.56.

the temple archives as king of Babylon in 127 BC) and retained some degree of independence under the Parthians.³ The Elymaean dynast Kamniskires made several incursions into Babylonia while the Seleukids were preoccupied with conflict with the Arsacids.⁴

In Babylonia there are a number of long-established urban centres that were the hubs of empires over the millennia before Alexander the Great, such as Uruk, Ur, Larsa, Lagash, Nippur and Babylon. Assyrian rule of Babylonia (911-620 BC) was followed by independent Neo-Babylonian Empire from 620 to 539 BC, until the Achaemenid Persian conquest by the Cyrus II. In addition to the ancient sites of Uruk, Telloh (Ngirsu, the religious centre for Lagash) and Babylon, this chapter studies the Hellenistic royal foundation of Seleucia-on-the-Tigris and the remote garrison settlement on the island of Failaka (Ikaros) in the Persian Gulf.

The extent of Hellenism or Hellenization is a predominant issue in discussions of Babylonian culture after the Macedonian conquest.⁵ Oelsner characterizes the situation as an 'inseparable mixture of elements of different origins which is more than a symbiosis' (symbiosis being the close and long-term interaction of unlike organisms).⁶ He notes the anomalous policy of forced Hellenization by Antiochus IV in Judaea, and distinguishes between Hellenization *in* Babylonia and the hellenization of Babylonian culture. The visual record supports this idea that while new Hellenistic

³ Schuol 2002, 31-34, 294; Shayegan 2011, 111.

⁴ Shayegan 2011, 62ff.

⁵ Among others, Kuhrt & Sherwin-White 1987.

⁶ Oelsner 2002, 183.

motifs and forms were incorporated into the Babylonian repertoire, Babylonian visual heritage retained its vitality and in many cases was consciously revived and promoted. Another aspect to consider is whether there is a discernable variation in the character of material from long-established sites such as Uruk, Telloh and Babylon to new settlements such as Seleucia-on-the-Tigris and on Failaka. A similar comparison should be made between urban centres and more peripheral sites.

Seleucia-on-the-Tigris.

As a royal Macedonian foundation on (as far as we know) virgin soil, Seleucia-on-the-Tigris provides an intriguing case study for visual culture resulting from interaction between the local population and the new arena created by Macedonian rule. Did the visual culture of the Seleukid capital differ greatly from other Babylonian settlements, particularly ancient cities such as Babylon and Uruk? Pliny notes that in the first century AD the city ‘retained Macedonian manners’, but the city can also be seen in its Babylonian context, rather than sitting awkwardly in its orthogonal grid plan as a Greek city in Babylonia.⁷ Did it occupy ‘a fundamental position for the presence and diffusion of Hellenism in Asia’?⁸ The situation was more complex and fluid. Seleucia-on-the-Tigris was not isolated from its surrounds and had a considerable Babylonian population as well as Greco-Macedonian settlers, and this is visible in the material record.⁹

⁷ Pliny *HN*.VI.XXX.121; Messina 2011.

⁸ Invernizzi 1995a, 11.

⁹ Strabo XVI.7.44; Paus.1.16.13; Boiy 2004, 141-142 on the deportation of Babylonians; Messina 2011.

Due to the paucity of stone in Babylonia, baked and unbaked brick were the established media for architectural construction. In the courtyard of ‘Temple A’ at Seleucia-on-the-Tigris were fragments of columns, torus and scotia bases and pseudo-Ionic capitals all made of brick.¹⁰ Elements of Greek architectural orders were adapted to available building materials and existing construction techniques. Alongside these elements were glazed bricks decorated with griffins, leaf and tendril or leaf and grape motifs. Similar fragments were found in ‘Temple B’. From the excavations of the ‘stoa’ on the east side of the Archive Square came fragments of clay lion-head spouts and palmette antefixes [2].¹¹ The palmette is a free and flowing adaptation of the Greek canon, lacking the rigid symmetry of Greek antefixes and emphasising the organic thin tendrils. It is likely these antefixes trimmed the edges of cover-joints on eastern-style flat-roofed buildings (see 16).¹² The Italian excavations found many fragments of painted and glazed terracotta with relief decoration of acanthus leaves and volutes [1], similar in medium and technique to fragments from Old Nisa [93].¹³ Fragments of terracotta Corinthian capitals and bases were found in the ‘Terracotta Workshop’ on the Southern side of the Archive Square, whose main production was terracotta figurines.¹⁴ Decorative architectural elements were incorporated into the repertoire of existing manufacture methods. The terracotta reliefs formed pilasters, most likely a façade on brick structures, and therefore were

¹⁰ Downey 1988, 54; Hopkins 1972, 122.

¹¹ Hopkins 1972, 132; Messina 2007, 136.

¹² Waterman 1933, 29-30.

¹³ Invernizzi 1995a, 6-7; 92.

¹⁴ Invernizzi 1995a, 6.

purely ornamental rather than structurally significant.¹⁵ The application of blue-green glaze to these capitals provided a visual link to Babylonian architecture. We see an interest in the Hellenistic aesthetic adapted to the constraints of building construction techniques. This reinterpretation and adaptation of Hellenistic forms was not anomalous but is seen also at other sites in Babylonia, Iran and Bactria.

Architectural ornament from Seleucia-on-the-Tigris not only derived from Hellenistic orders. Arrow-cut stepped merlons, traditional to Babylonian and Persian architecture, were cast in stucco from open moulds.¹⁶ Other stucco arrow-cut stepped merlons are adapted to form a cornice and embellished with the addition of scrolls.¹⁷ A campaniform base [3] re-used in the 'Parthian Villa' (most likely a Seleukid heroon when first built) could indicate the continuation of commissions following Achaemenid architectural patterns, but perhaps is a result of re-use of existing elements motivated by a desire to conserve the precious stone so rare in this region, perhaps from a nearby earlier settlement such as Opis.¹⁸ The architectural repertoire of Seleucia-on-the-Tigris was broad and not confined to replicating Greek orders. The craftsmen were experimental with forms, combining elements from different traditions. The interest in the new Hellenistic forms was adapted to suit existing manufacturing practices.

¹⁵ Invernizzi 1995a, 6.

¹⁶ Hopkins 1972, 134.

¹⁷ Hopkins 1972, 136-137.

¹⁸ Held 2002, 228-229; see also 48 and a campaniform base re-used in the foundations of the palace at Ai Khanoum (Bernard 1973, fig.5, pl.34).

The bronze Herakles-Verethragna statue [4] was brought to Seleucia-on-the-Tigris from Spasinou Charax in the second century AD and thereby attests to the continuation of Hellenistic artistic styles in Babylonian visual culture long after Seleukid rule. The quality is very high and the style has a Lysippan quality (late fourth century BC). The anatomy is less heavily muscular and stooped than the Farnese copy of Lysippos' Herakles by Glykon (third century AD) and instead bears comparison to gilded bronzes from the Forum Boarium and Theatre of Pompey in Rome (both dated to the second century BC, clean-shaven and carrying the apples of the Hesperides) and the Villa Albani Hercules.¹⁹ The pose and style of the sculpture are also comparable to terracottas from Seleucia-on-the-Tigris.²⁰ Analysis of the alloy revealed some silver, very rare in Greek bronzes.²¹ These factors suggest it is possible this Hellenistic-style sculpture was made in Babylonia, perhaps Characene, in the second century BC.²² There were also several large-scale sculptural fragments found in the courtyard of Temple A (no images are published). These include an over-life-size foot in marble, two pieces of a marble arm and an arm in bronze.²³

The Herakles-Verethragna statue is especially important for this study due to the juxtaposition of the style and subject matter with its accompanying inscriptions. On the right thigh there is a Greek inscription, repeated in Parthian on the left thigh.²⁴ These inscriptions of the Arsacid Vologases IV translates Herakles and Apollo as the

¹⁹ Al-Salihi 1984; Invernizzi 1989; Musei Vaticani 252; Musei Capitolini MC1265.

²⁰ Al-Salihi 1984, 221; Invernizzi 1989, 91.

²¹ Al-Salihi 1984, 220.

²² Invernizzi 1989, 101-103.

²³ Hopkins 1972, 121.

²⁴ *I. Estremo Oriente* 86; Al-Salihi 1984, 224-225.

Zoroastrian *yazata* Verethragna and the Babylonian god Nebo respectively. This prompts questions regarding the popular conception of the equation of these gods: whether this was an official, recognised and homogenous conflation with resonances in cultic practice or a translation to make sense of the particular deity to the other audience.²⁵ The implication is of an influential proportion of the population in Seleucia-on-the-Tigris in the second century AD who could read Greek.

Terracotta figurines are prominent among the archaeological remains of Babylonian sites for centuries before the Macedonian conquest. Seleucia-on-the-Tigris is the only Mesopotamian site where kilns for terracotta figurine production have been found, confirming local production.²⁶ Since the material and small scale makes them particularly durable and they are a traditional form of object, they are a useful indicator of continuity and change in subject, style and technique. Although the assemblage from Seleucia-on-the-Tigris is extensive (c.12,000 terracottas, let alone the fragments of bone, alabaster, marble and plaster figurines), they are often difficult to date since they were most frequently found in filling layers and as fragments in baked bricks. They are highly mobile within the soft layers of mud caused by the high water table at Seleucia-on-the-Tigris, which confuses the chronology. Also problematic is that in consequence they are often dated by style and fitted into a linear chronological development, which provides a circular problem when aiming to discuss the development or continuation of particular subjects, styles

²⁵ See the reliefs at the hierothesion of Antiochus I of Commagene at Nemrud Dağ from the 1st century BC (Sanders 1996) for a comparison of syncretism of deities, and further discussion in Ch.V.

²⁶ Invernizzi 1977, 9-10; Invernizzi 1985, 93, 97; Karvonen-Kannas 1993, 26.

and techniques. The subjects of the Seleucian figurines, however, conform to the categories of the Babylonian visual *koine* of terracotta figurines in this period.

One figurine type commonplace in Babylonian visual culture long before the Macedonian conquest is a naked female standing either with arms by her sides or supporting her breasts.²⁷ These traditional local types continue to be popular during our period, and several variations develop alongside. There are examples of figurines of women in these poses but with more detail or realism of anatomy or hairstyle (such as **5**, on which the coroplast articulated a tripartite Parthian bouffant).²⁸ The only other pose for nude female figurines is reclining (see **6**, also with a Parthian tripartite hairstyle, naturalistic and softly rendered anatomy, and added details inlaid and with paint).²⁹ Figurines of reclining women show them nude or clothed, often wearing elaborate headdresses or pointed Phrygian hats. The reclining female figurine is rare in Greek art and perhaps held a special significance in Babylonia since it is so popular in the terracottas from Seleucia-on-the-Tigris, Babylon and Uruk.³⁰ Depictions of Greek fashions of women's clothing were also very popular in Babylonia.³¹ The standing female figure wrapped in thick drapery [**7**] is almost indistinguishable from Tanagra figurines of the contemporary Mediterranean. For figurines of men, however, Parthian costume is far more frequent than Macedonian.³²

²⁷ Van Ingen 1939, 57-65, no.1-41, pl.I-II.

²⁸ Klengel-Brandt 1993, 186 argues there is little Hellenistic influence.

²⁹ Van Ingen 1939, 181-196, no.613-690, pl.XLIII-XLV.

³⁰ Klengel-Brandt 1993, 188.

³¹ Klengel-Brandt 1993, 186.

³² Van Ingen 1939, 116-128; no.296-355, pl.XXI.138-XXIV.170; Klengel-Brandt 1993, 193.

Figurines of couples are another subject with an established place among the coroplastic assemblages of Babylonian sites before the Macedonian conquest.³³ As with female figures, this subject continued to be popular and the repertoire broadened as variations developed. The representation of the anatomical detail heightened and became more realistic with convincing twists to the torsos, while the inclusion of drapery swirling around the hips and the softer, chubbier anatomy makes many of the couples identifiable as Eros and Psyche [8].

Other subjects among the coroplastic assemblage, echoed in the visual culture of other sites across Babylonia, Iran and Bactria, are masks and a few athletic figures [9].³⁴ Many terracotta theatrical masks in various sizes, ranging from small models to functional scales, were found on the southern side of the 'Archive Square', opposite Tell 'Umar which was perhaps the site of a theatre.³⁵ The portrayal of images specifically associated with Greek theatre and the *paideia* and alien to Babylonian visual culture before the Macedonian conquest indicates an interest or participation in these Greek social institutions. Musicians, the most common subject in Babylonian terracottas of this period, also are represented at Seleucia-on-the-Tigris.³⁶ The popular Hellenistic subject of dwarves and grotesques are attested among the Seleucian assemblage but are unknown at Babylon, and generally rare in Babylonian coroplastics.³⁷

³³ Van Ingen 1939, 223-226, no.842-856, pl.LIV-LV.

³⁴ Van Ingen 1939, 303-308, no.1359-1395, pl.LXXIII.

³⁵ Invernizzi 1990, 19-23.

³⁶ Van Ingen 1939, 158-179, no.501-603, pl.XXXVI-XLI.

³⁷ Van Ingen 1939, 128-136, no.356-396; pl.XXV-XXVII; Klengel-Brandt 1993, 193; Karvonen-Kannas 1995, 88-89, no.337-341, pl.57.

Developments in the production of terracotta figurines were not limited to iconography. There were also technological changes. Among the assemblage from this site are a number of large hollow figurines, particularly of children.³⁸ The use of the bivalve mould, associated with terracotta production in the Mediterranean and not Babylonia before this period, is visible. This technique was used to create Babylonian rigid naked female figures as well as new representations such as Greek deities. The coroplastic repertoire of Seleucia-on-the-Tigris was very similar to Babylon (see below).

American excavations of a residential insula found many seal impressions in two 'private archives'.³⁹ An even larger body of impressions, however, was found west of the open space south of Tell 'Umar, in a building thought to be a public archive.⁴⁰ These small impressions are the motifs that officials, administrative bodies and wealthy businessmen chose to represent themselves. Seals from Seleucia-on-the-Tigris are mostly on bullae, and some on clay tags. They include impressions made by official seals and those of private individuals. The official seals are identified by their larger size, the inclusion of a monogram or legend, the high quality of execution, the particular form of a motif, or a portrait with royal signifier (such as the diadem).⁴¹ The motifs were charged with the specific task of representing the person,

³⁸ Van Ingen 1939, no.750-780; See also Karvonen-Kannas 1995, no.242-252.

³⁹ McDowell 1935.

⁴⁰ Invernizzi 2004; Messina 2006. From 1967-1972, 25,255 seal impressions were found. Over 15,000 have date stamps (Messina 2006, 68). These, and the portrait of Demetrius II from his second reign (129-125 BC) prove a Seleukid occupation phase and *terminus ante quem* of 129 BC for the conflagration of the Archive Building.

⁴¹ McDowell 1935, 31.

position or institution and therefore presumably carried carefully considered connotations. Local business connections are shown by the use of some of the same seals at Uruk.⁴² It is likely the seals found at Seleucia-on-the-Tigris are a mixture of products from local workshops and those from far further afield, due to their portable and personal nature and the importance of this metropolis.

From the excavations of two private archives, McDowell formed the impression of an over-riding dominance of Hellenistic motifs.⁴³ The excavations of the official Archive Building, however, provided a far more subtle mix.⁴⁴ McDowell's assemblage is perhaps the result of a private individual's business dealings rather than a comprehensive slice of the seals used in Seleucia-on-the-Tigris, such as stored in the public archives. Babylonian motifs from the Archive Building include priests and mythological animals. The meaning of Babylonian astrological animal symbols, however, would have been recognisable also to Greco-Macedonian audiences [13].

Of the Greek deities on the seals of the Archive Building, the most popular are Apollo, Artemis [11], Aphrodite, Athena, Dionysus and Herakles. Eros, Nike and Tyche are also very common. This is similar to the seal impressions from the American excavations, where the most popular motifs are of Athena, Tyche and

⁴² Wallenfels 1994, 150.

⁴³ McDowell 1935, 224.

⁴⁴ Invernizzi 1996; Messina 2006. This Archive Building is presumed the city's public archive not only because of the predominance of impressions from official seals and those relating to the salt tax, but also because the very large building is in the centre of the city on the side of an open space.

Eros.⁴⁵ Among the iconography of royal seals are motifs particular to the Seleukids: portraits of the king [12], anchors, half-anchors, horses heads and elephants. There is a close relationship with the iconography of coins, not only on royal seals but also through imitation on private seals, particularly in images of Zeus, Athena, Apollo, Tyche and Nike.⁴⁶ Messina remarks on the ‘ease of passage’ between one medium to another and from an official to unofficial purpose.⁴⁷ A number of subjects common among the seal impressions are also popular as terracotta figurines, such as theatrical masks and satyr heads.⁴⁸

There are a few images of ‘hybrid’ deities among the seal impressions, such as Apollo-Nabû and Athena-Artemis-Nanaia [10].⁴⁹ These motifs of Greek deities carrying attributes of Babylonian gods (and of other Greek gods) demonstrate the flexibility of these two polytheisms. As for Herakles-Verethragna discussed above, questions of whether these were aimed to address a wider audience, demonstrate the mixed cultural heritage of the seal-holder, or represent the syncretism of religious practices, will be central to Chapter V. The syncretism of religious iconography supports McDowell’s identification of a trend towards the disappearance of mutually exclusive concepts of ‘Greek’ and ‘barbarian’ and the stimulation of new tastes in the choice of personal devices.⁵⁰

⁴⁵ McDowell 1935, 225.

⁴⁶ Messina 2006, 17.

⁴⁷ Messina 2006, 17, 21.

⁴⁸ Invernizzi 2004, III.49-67, M1-211, pl.15-25.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, II.59-60.

⁵⁰ McDowell 1935, 221.

The Seleukid and Parthian coins minted at Seleucia-on-the-Tigris share a number of similar motifs, themes and styles. The patron deity of the Seleukid dynasty, Apollo, is very common to Seleukid reverses, seated on the *omphalos* or leaning on a tripod.⁵¹ The Arsacids develop this Seleukid motif by showing the tripod as a stand-alone motif also.⁵² Similarly, another reverse motif on the bronzes of Alexander I Balas is the seated Zeus Nikephorus, or his attribute, the thunderbolt, as a stand-alone motif.⁵³ Other solitary attributes of Greek deities on reverses minted at Seleucia-on-the-Tigris include the club of Herakles (with his head on the obverse) and cornucopia.⁵⁴ The portrait of Artabanus I [15] presents the ruler in Parthian costume of studded jacket, torque and earrings, and with a full pointed beard. The diadem, right-facing bust, the Greek legend, title of *basileus* and the style of carving are very much those of a Hellenistic ruler. Issues from Seleucia-on-the-Tigris of Demetrius I, Alexander I Balas and Demetrius II show a variety of portrait types: the canonical right-facing clean-shaven portrait wearing a diadem; three-quarter views; jugate; radiate; in an elephant scalp or wearing a Boeotian helmet.⁵⁵

As well as a seated Athena, another female figure, presumably Demeter/Tyche, is frequently shown seated and holding Nike and a cornucopia on Seleukid issues minted at Seleucia-on-the-Tigris.⁵⁶ This goddess is seen also on 15, a tetradrachm of Artabanus I. A tetradrachm of Phraates II (c.138-127 BC) minted at

⁵¹ Houghton, Lorber & Hoover 2002, I.II pl.18-28.

⁵² Le Rider 1998, 14, pl.2.2; 50, no.91-109, pl.8.93 & 99.

⁵³ Ibid, 13, pl.1.29, 30-31.

⁵⁴ Ibid, 11, pl.1.23-24; pl.1.21-22.

⁵⁵ Ibid, pl.1.

⁵⁶ Ibid, Athena: pl.1.18-19; seated goddess (maybe bearded) pl.1.16-17; standing (also maybe bearded) pl.1.9, 10, 37.

Seleucia-on-the-Tigris shows a very similar motif, except the figure wears a beard despite still obviously female, in addition to the *chiton* and *polos*.⁵⁷ The image is highly detailed and very well executed, although the figure is perched somewhat awkwardly on a high pedestal rather than enthroned or on a low stool. Curtis interprets this as a mistake of the die-engraver, representing the unfamiliarity of the Parthian court or the engraver with the original motif.⁵⁸ A more favourable interpretation is suggested by Curtis' proposition that the iconography of Greek deities should be seen in a local religious context.⁵⁹ The bearded man wearing a long garment and *polos* and holding a cornucopia has a Seleukid model on the reverse of a bronze of Demetrius I and a similar figure (a bearded god in a long garment and *polos*, perhaps Serapis) appears on the reverse of a bronze of Mithridates II alongside a goddess in a *polos* carrying a cornucopia [14].⁶⁰ This suggests two similar yet separate male and female deities, both of whom were recognised in Seleucia-on-the-Tigris in the Seleukid and Parthian periods.⁶¹

The early Parthians were well-known for their ostentatious philhellenism. The iconography of their coins shows how this was not confined to copying Seleukid issues and replacing the legends with their own names. The Arsacids reference to the Seleukid motif of Apollo-on-the-*omphalos*, for example, represents the Parthian royal archer.⁶² A question to be explored in Chapter VI is the extent to which this

⁵⁷ Sellwood Type 17.

⁵⁸ Curtis 2007b, 420-421, fig.11. Coins of Phraates' successor Artabanus II and also Phraates IV c.38-2 BC show this female figure, however, clearly resembling the Seleukid model (Curtis 2007b, 421).

⁵⁹ Curtis 2007b, 422.

⁶⁰ Le Rider 1998, 10, pl.7-8.

⁶¹ Grenet 1991, 148, fig.3 suggests 'Zeus Belos'.

⁶² See Ch.V & VI; Erickson 2010.

philhellenism, as visible in the visual record, was confined to or emphasised more heavily in areas with a concentrated Greco-Macedonian audience, such as in Seleucia-on-the-Tigris.

The material record of Seleucia-on-the-Tigris indicates the city did indeed retain some ‘Macedonian manners’ but was not an island of Hellenism in Babylonia. Hellenistic and Babylonian characteristics are visible in domestic, business, religious and administrative areas. Seleucian coroplasts were involved fully in the repertoire of the Babylonian *koine*. The forms of architectural ornament illustrate the adaptation and flexibility of Hellenistic forms by patrons and architects to the available materials. Parthian coins show a concern to promote themselves as philhellenes, yet this does not override all indicators of their Iranian heritage. The iconography of seal impressions and coins shows how many Hellenistic motifs became ubiquitous particularly in official and business arenas.

Babylon.

The material record from Babylon after the Macedonian conquest is notable for its continuity from previous periods, particularly in the religious sphere. Strabo places responsibility for the decline of Babylon on the foundation of Seleucia-on-the-Tigris by Seleukos I and the transition of the royal capital to this new city, which reduced Babylon to a desert by Strabo’s day through Seleukid neglect.⁶³ In contrast, he says that with the foundation of Ctesiphon in the second century BC the Parthians

⁶³ Strabo XVI.1.5.

intended 'to spare the Seleucians' from the wintering army, rather than to create a new capital to compete with and diminish the city.⁶⁴ The archaeological record and the testament of many cuneiform tablets suggests the decline should be attributed to the Parthian period rather than when the city was under Macedonian rule or, at the least, there was a slower decline in the Seleukid period than implied by Strabo. In the Parthian period, for example, there were houses and burials built in the ruins of the monuments in the Kasr district.⁶⁵ Current scholarship is more sceptical of Strabo's account, and an image of the city's vitality can be drawn from the remains of the visual culture of the period.

The excavators found signs of embellishment and redecoration in the Summer Palace of Nebuchadnezzar, including a terracotta palmette antefix [16] attached to a ridge tile for an eastern-style flat roof and fragments of painted wall plaster.⁶⁶ The problems of stylistic dating mean we cannot say if there was also redecoration along traditional methods, but we can say that some Hellenistic-style architectural ornament was incorporated into the appearance of the Neo-Babylonian seat of power. These were minimal changes to the appearance of the palace in the Hellenistic period and it was usable, but whether Seleukid kings or governors occupied it is uncertain.

Remains of visual culture from our period confirm the emphasis drawn from epigraphic sources on religious continuity in Babylon. Continuity in style and subject of statuary is seen in the bitumen impression of a throne (probably made of wood)

⁶⁴ Strabo XVI.1.16.

⁶⁵ Koldewey 1913, 179.

⁶⁶ Mallwitz, Schmidt & Wetzel 1957, 24, pl.23, c-d; 46-47, pl.29.

from the cella of Esagila [17].⁶⁷ The indication of low relief carving in the sketch of the imprint and the emphasis on pattern in the wavy tongues and angular leaves of the central figure's long garments are very similar to those of the wooden statue from the Irigal at Uruk [35]. The small snail curls of the figure's hair are also very much in keeping with Mesopotamian and Iranian representational traditions. The bottle-holder in the bottom left corner is a typical Babylonian motif, similar to the vase-pourers in a frieze on the façade of the Eanna at Uruk.⁶⁸ The feline snake-dragon (*mušušu*) of Marduk to the left of the bottle-holder is comparable directly to the repeated motifs on the Ištar Gate.⁶⁹ Although we cannot identify when the throne was carved, it was in use during the Seleukid period. There was continuity in the form of religious apparatus in the centre of cult practice as much as in the exterior appearance of the temples. The archaeological evidence is supported by the testament of cuneiform records, which both present a different image to the neglect described by the Classical authors. In Strabo's account, the 'tomb of Belus' (the ziggurat Etemananki of the temple of Bel/Marduk, Esagila) was destroyed by Xerxes.⁷⁰ He records that Alexander intended to rebuild the ziggurat but died before he could finish, and none of his Successors cared to complete the work. The archaeological remains and a number of cuneiform tablets dispel Strabo's picture of both Persian abuse and Hellenistic neglect.⁷¹ Studies of cuneiform clay tablets confirm the continuation of the administrative functions of the temples, and the continuity in recording

⁶⁷ Koldewey 1911, 42-43; Mallwitz, Schmidt & Wetzel 1957, 34, pl.35-39.

⁶⁸ Mallwitz, Schmidt & Wetzel 1957, 34.

⁶⁹ Koldewey 1918.

⁷⁰ Strabo XVI.1.5.

⁷¹ Kuhrt 2010, 491-494.

practices.⁷² A tablet from the Seleukid era describes the temple of Bel in great detail, suggesting the temple was still fully operational as a religious site.⁷³ Excavations around Etemananki identified rebuilding work on the enclosure wall in the Seleukid period.⁷⁴ This activity supports the account given by the Borsippa Cylinder of the patronage of Antiochus I.⁷⁵

The only other indication of free-standing sculpture from the excavations at Babylon are the brick pedestals that marked the border between the orchestra and *cavea* of the theatre.⁷⁶ Fine white plaster covered the pedestals, imitating marble statue bases. The area of the theatre and its adjoining structure (perhaps a *palaestra*), in use until at least the second century AD, is often termed the ‘Greek quarter’.⁷⁷ This did not equate to a separation of the Greek and Babylonian communities in the city. This idea of cultural segregation is a consequence of the curtailed excavations and is dispelled by the material record, particularly the terracotta figurines.

There are extensive catalogues and studies of the figurines from Babylon.⁷⁸ The figurines were found in religious, funerary and domestic contexts. The repertoire is very similar to that of other Babylonian sites.⁷⁹ The most prevalent type is the nude

⁷² McEwan 1981; Oelsner 1986; Sachs & Hunger 1988-; Downey 1988, 11; Boiy 2004.

⁷³ Koldewey 1914, 301; McEwan 1981, 189 discusses the vitality of religious activity in Babylon, particularly since cult statues from Babylonian sites that declined in prosperity were moved to temples in Babylon.

⁷⁴ Mallwitz, Schmidt & Wetzel, 29-33.

⁷⁵ Kuhrt & Sherwin-White 1991.

⁷⁶ Koldewey 1913, 296, fig.251.

⁷⁷ *I.Estremo Oriente* 112; Boiy 2004, 11, 40, 93-94.

⁷⁸ Klengel-Brandt 1993; Karvonen-Kannas 1995; Klengel-Brandt & Cholidis 2006.

⁷⁹ Zeigler 1962; Van Ingen 1939.

female figure, simply delineated, standing with arms by her sides.⁸⁰ A similar type stands with arms finished at the shoulders or with articulated arms.⁸¹ Another variation on this figure is the very popular standing nude female figure, one or both arms folded up to hold her breast(s) with her hand(s) [18].⁸² Another common type of figurine of a female form uses a reclining pose [19], nude or clothed.⁸³ The variety of formulations of subject, style and form of the terracotta figurines show ‘cross-cultural combinations’ that illustrate multi-directional networks of interaction and exchange among the wider populace in Babylon.⁸⁴

While nude female figures are quite common in the terracottas of the Mediterranean, their poses are usually in motion, which is unseen in the coroplastics of Babylonia.⁸⁵ There are none of the dancing or crouching women of the Tanagra figurines.⁸⁶ The figurines of clothed women show them wrapped tightly in their garments. The diagonal folds of the *himation*, pulled up to the left hip where the left hand rests, overlap the vertical folds of the skirt. The right arm folds up across the breast, usually clutching at the bottom of her veil. There is a strong resemblance to the demure depictions of wrapped Hellenistic women, such as in relief on grave stelai and over life-size honorific statues in the Mediterranean, as well as to Tanagra figurines. The clothing of reclining female figurines differs from the standing women

⁸⁰ Karvonen-Kannas 1995, 46-48, pl.6-12; Klengel-Brandt & Cholidis 2006, 148-183, no.700-1033, pl.33-39.

⁸¹ Klengel-Brandt & Cholidis 2006, 342-347, no.2138-2178, pl.100-101.

⁸² Karvonen-Kannas 1995, 44-46, pl.2-5; Klengel-Brandt & Cholidis 2006, 183-191, no.1034-1094, pl.40-43.

⁸³ Karvonen-Kannas 1995, 59-64, no.142-186, pl.23-32; Klengel-Brandt & Cholidis 2006, 246-258, no.1551-1593, pl.62-66.

⁸⁴ Langin-Hooper 2007, 161. See Ch.VII.

⁸⁵ Klengel-Brandt 1993, 186.

⁸⁶ Jeammet 2010.

in that they are most frequently depicted wearing a *chiton* and pointed hat, wreath or *polos*.⁸⁷ A small number of the clothed women hold a baby, a type common to the Neo- and Late-Babylonian periods.⁸⁸

Although representations of female figures are more prevalent, another popular type of figurine shows a standing man in Parthian costume clasping his hands over his chest or holding a lotus in one hand while the other is by his side (sometimes wearing a *bašlyk* with chin and cheek coverings).⁸⁹ Other types of male figure include a bearded man with headband [22]. In addition to men in Iranian costume, there are also male figures in Macedonian dress, also seen at Uruk.⁹⁰ The figurines of men in eastern and western clothing were made in single moulds.⁹¹ Although the bivalve mould is attributed traditionally to Greek terracotta production and the single mould to Mesopotamian coroplastics, traditional Babylonian forms such as examples of the various types of nude women were also made with the double mould.⁹² It was possible to add a reverse to a single mould, however, and to use what was originally a double mould singly.⁹³ This implies some flexibility and creativity on the part of the coroplasts, who did not confine themselves to one technique for a particular subject.

⁸⁷ Karvonen-Kannas 1995, 61.

⁸⁸ Klengel-Brandt 1993, 186.

⁸⁹ Karvonen-Kannas 1995, 89-91, no.342-391, pl.58-60; Klengel-Brandt & Cholidis 2006, 259-268, no.1594-1664, pl.67-69. See Ch.III for discussion of the *bašlyk*.

⁹⁰ Karvonen-Kannas 1995, 91, no.381-384, pl.61; Klengel-Brandt & Cholidis 2006, 275-287, no.1712-1803, pl.73-77.

⁹¹ Karvonen-Kannas 1995, 90-91.

⁹² Karvonen-Kannas 1993, 33.

⁹³ Karvonen-Kannas 1993, 25; Karvonen-Kannas 1993, 21-28 for a summary of production techniques.

The impression of a Babylonian *koine* in the coroplastic repertoire of the two centuries after the Macedonian conquest is reaffirmed by the popularity of musicians among the terracottas of Babylon. The instruments include the tall triangular harp [20], flute, *aulos*, lute, tambour and castanets.⁹⁴ Also frequent are masks, some in the style of Greek theatrical masks [23], mostly found in Parthian funerary contexts.⁹⁵ Another popular theme in Babylonian coroplastics that appears among the assemblage from Babylon is the embracing Eros and Psyche.⁹⁶ This couple were also very common in the art of the Mediterranean and on Seleukid-period seals.⁹⁷ Lone standing Eros is also in the repertoire (see 21, perhaps part of a necklace).⁹⁸ Other Greek deities in the coroplastic repertoire include Herakles (who recurs frequently throughout the art of Babylonia, Iran and Bactria), Athena and Aphrodite.⁹⁹ The motif of a hero fighting a lion (or other monstrous beasts) is popular in the visual culture, including seal impressions, of Achaemenid, Neo-Babylonian and Assyrian Babylonia.¹⁰⁰ The male nudity of 24, however, is novel to Babylonian visual culture. Similarly, the horse-rider figure is popular form of figurine long before the Macedonian conquest, but a new variant in a flat hat (the *kausia*) appears after the Macedonian conquest in addition to the existing types. There are many figurines of

⁹⁴ Karvonen-Kannas 1995, 79-86, No.277-332, pl.48-56; Klengel-Brandt & Cholidis 2006, 307-342, no.1935-2137, pl.87-99.

⁹⁵ Karvonen-Kannas 1995, 97-99, no.503-531, pl.68-73; Klengel-Brandt & Cholidis 2006, 582-590, no.4137-4176, pl.161-166.

⁹⁶ Karvonen-Kannas 1995, 74-75, no.253-259, pl.45; Klengel-Brandt & Cholidis 2006, 397-400, 2550-2565, pl.124.

⁹⁷ McDowell 1935, 92-96.

⁹⁸ Karvonen-Kannas 1995, 67-68, no.196-205, pl.35; Klengel-Brandt & Cholidis 2006, 305-307, no.1921-1934, pl.86.

⁹⁹ Herakles: Karvonen-Kannas 1995, 75-77, no.260-267, pl.46, 88. Athena: Karvonen-Kannas 1995, 77-88, no.268-273, pl.47, 88. Aphrodite: Karvonen-Kannas 1995, 64-67, no.187-195, pl.33-35.

¹⁰⁰ Mallwitz, Schmidt & Wetzel 1957, 44; see Garrison & Root 2001; Mallwitz, Schmidt and Wetzel 1957, 43-45, pl.40c-h, 41c-n.

horse-riders from Babylon, far more in pointed hats than flat.¹⁰¹ While there are slight variations between sites, there are clear preferences to particular common subjects (and their styles of representation) in the repertoire of Babylonian coroplastics (and also in nearby Susa).

There is a distortion in the interpretation of continuity of coroplastic production at Babylon since most terracottas from Babylon are from the Seleukid-Parthian period since the high water table prevented much excavation beyond the upper layers.¹⁰² Whether there was a dramatic increase in the existing terracotta production after the Macedonian conquest therefore cannot be certain.

Coins minted at Babylon also demonstrate an effort to maintain visual continuity with the past. Mazaios produced 'lion staters' in his role as Darius' satrap at Tarsus and as satrap of Babylon under Alexander [25]. The obverse of these issues show Baaltars sitting on a low backless stool, nude except for a cloak. In his right hand is a sceptre. On the reverse is a lion, walking to the left. This type of lion appears on the Cilician issues, though less commonly than the motif of a lion grappling with a bull. Although Mazaios used this motif before arriving in Babylon, the striding lion is a common motif in the visual culture of Babylon (the most famous examples are those in the glazed brick friezes of the Istar Gate). A tetradrachm of Alexander [27] places the seated semi-nude male figure on the reverse. The similarity of this figure to Baaltars is palpable, yet the bird in his outstretched right hand (the

¹⁰¹ Karvonen-Kannas 1995, 93-97, no.406-502, pl.63-67; Klengel-Brandt & Cholidis 2006, 400-535, no.2566-3645, pl.125-146.

¹⁰² Klengel-Brandt 1993, 184.

sceptre moved to the left hand) and removal of the *bašlyk* change the identification of this figure to Zeus Aetophorus. The Aramaic inscription of Mazaios is replaced by a Greek inscription with Alexander's name. A tetradrachm of Seleukos [23], issued c.311-305 BC before he proclaimed himself king, repeats the Baaltars motif on the obverse but without the *bašlyk*. The reverse design also imitates Mazaios' lion-staters, but adds Seleukos' personal symbol, the anchor. The mint at Babylon, set up by Darius I two hundred years earlier, ceased to function probably around the time of Seleukos I's death in 281 BC and production moved to Seleucia-on-the-Tigris.¹⁰³

The material record from Babylon shows a receptivity to some new styles and repertoire in the visual culture but it does not infringe upon existing iconography and forms. The terracotta figurines, in particular, exemplify this. There are several new subjects, but many of them develop existing popular themes. The coroplastic compositions are not as adventurous as those of the Mediterranean, where twisting, dancing and flying figures are popular. The Hellenistic genre subjects are also not adopted into the Babylonian corpus.¹⁰⁴ The emphasis is very much on maintenance, revival and continuity of traditional Mesopotamian visual forms, with inclusion of some Hellenistic elements, until at least the first half of the first century BC.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³ Boiy 2004, 45.

¹⁰⁴ See the few 'grotesques' of Karvonen-Kannas 1995, 88-89, nos.337-341, pl.57.

¹⁰⁵ Boiy 2004, 97.

Telloh.

The decoration of the palace of Adad-nadin-akhe at Telloh underlines the importance placed on local heritage by the Babylonians. The north-east and north-west façades of the structure were decorated with niches and projections common to Babylonian religious architecture (such as the sanctuaries of Uruk). From the higher levels are bricks of the same shape and scale as bricks of Gudea from the lower levels, but inscribed with the name of Adad-nadin-akhe in Aramaic and Greek.¹⁰⁶ Telloh (Ngirsu) was the sacred site of the capital, Lagash, which Gudea ruled in the 22nd century BC during its brief period of independence between the Akkadian and Ur III empires. The first excavators believed Adad-nadin-akhe, likely a local dynast, rebuilt Gudea's *énninû* (temple of the war god Ngirsu) in the second century BC as his palace.¹⁰⁷ An alternative explanation, proposed and preferred by Genouillac, is that he took bricks from the *énninû* and brought them to Tell A, rather than built over the temple.¹⁰⁸ Either interpretation emits an unambiguous message through the appropriation of the monument built by the legendary ruler who claimed to have conquered Elam and Anšan, at the religious centre of the once-independent kingdom. Adad-nadin-akhe used the visual culture of the region to link himself to the heritage and prosperity of the area he governed. He was not unaware of or averse to employing Greek to display his work. The brick inscriptions cater for a mixed

¹⁰⁶ Huezey 1912, 50-54, 242, 401, fig.1 & 2, pl.8, pl.51; Parrot 1948, 310; *I.Estremo Oriente* 129.

¹⁰⁷ Heuzey 1912, 395-406.

¹⁰⁸ Genouillac 1936, 10 cannot see any resemblance between the plan on **29** and the remains of the building. Parrot 1948, 150 agrees with Genouillac 1936, 9 that the *énninû* before Gudea was known as the *éšgirsu* and was located on Tell K, abandoned by Gudea's predecessor, Ur-Bau. Parrot 1948, 155, however, follows Huezey's interpretation that on Tell A was the 'new *énninû*' of Ur-Bau, of Gudea, and finally the palace of Adad-nadin-akhe, who made substantial changes to the layout of the building. Parrot 1948, 310 designates the north and north-west areas as private residential rooms and the main open space, Court A, for receptions and official duties.

audience of Aramaic and Greek readers, though whether the Greek audience was an established part of the local population or whether the inscriptions catered to visiting Macedonian elite is ambivalent.

At least eight diorite statues of Gudea, four seated and four standing, were found in Court A [29].¹⁰⁹ All but one bear inscriptions including the name of Gudea and all are stylistically from Gudea's period but come from excavations of the higher levels. Adad-nadin-akhe collected these statues and displayed them prominently in the main court of his palace.¹¹⁰ They would have accompanied any reception of guests, supplicants, ambassadors or messengers from his Seleukid or Parthian overlords, reminding them of the distinguished heritage of Lagash and Girsu.

The terracotta figurines from the upper levels of excavation at Telloh fit perfectly into the popular types of the Babylonian coroplastic repertoire also seen at Seleucia-on-the-Tigris, Babylon, Uruk and Failaka. These are musicians playing the tambour and *aulos* [32; 33], the 'Macedonian rider' [30] and the nude female figure holding her breasts [31]. The horizontally curving lines on the veil of 32 could mark wide stripes or be cursory attempts at indicating folds. The woman playing the *aulos*, however, wears a *chiton* and *himation* that have uneven and convincing folds to the material, indicating a swaying motion to the figure.

¹⁰⁹ Huezey 1912, 43-46; c.24 more, most with 'unknown provenance' but probably from Telloh, are in museums around the world (Parrot 1948, 160-172).

¹¹⁰ Parrot 1948, 155, 310; The original context of the statues is unknown, but perhaps many were set up in the *éminû* since several of their inscriptions refer to Gudea's restoration of the temple.

Adad-nadin-akhe displayed the heritage of the locality, his commitment to it, and allied himself with the legendary power and fame of Gudea. The bilingual inscriptions suggest a heterogeneous audience and that the region was not an isolated stronghold of fierce localism. This is supported by the terracotta figurines that demonstrate participation in the *koine* of Babylonian coroplastic repertoire. This emphasises Adad-nadin-akhe's conscious choice to revive the visual culture of his locality, rather than adopt Hellenistic or Parthian forms.

Uruk.

Uruk was a long-established urban centre, thought to be the first of human history and the largest in the fourth millennium BC. The pottery of Uruk indicates established distribution and influences on other lands' ceramic production, including Egypt (c.3500 BC), facilitated by naval trade, wandering craftsmen or trade routes via Palestine established already millennia before the Macedonian conquest.¹¹¹ While the Macedonian rulers did not use this city as a royal capital, among the seal impressions from the Bit Rēš (Great House) are Greek inscriptions from the end of the third to mid-second century BC referring to the χρεοφύλακτον of Uruk, indicating a city archive and Seleukid administrative presence.¹¹² Similar to the situation at Babylon, the city declined after c.100 years of Parthian rule, as evidenced by the small residential structures and burials built in the public sanctuaries.¹¹³ The Seleukid and

¹¹¹ Al-Soof 1968-9, 178.

¹¹² *I.Estremo Oriente* 130a-b; Greeks knew Uruk as 'Orkhoi'.

¹¹³ Downey 1988, 17.

early Parthian periods were prosperous for Uruk.¹¹⁴ As at Telloh, another ancient centre, the maintenance of the local visual culture was of vital importance in the third and second centuries BC. This was not the result of isolation from Greek culture, but a conscious choice to promote traditional forms of public buildings. The small-scale portable visual culture, represented by the terracotta figurines, seal impressions and the burial goods at Frēhāt en-Nufēgi, however, show a more complex situation.

The erection and restoration of religious structures in Uruk in the third century BC displayed the maintenance and revival of Babylonian visual culture. The large-scale regeneration of Uruk's sanctuaries transformed the centre of the city, shaping civic space as well as providing arenas for worship of the Babylonian gods. The ziggurat of Anu was enlarged and its enclosure rebuilt. The ziggurat of the Eanna (temple of Inanna) and the Bit Akitu ('Festival House' for the new year celebrations) were also rebuilt. Care was taken to preserve and revive these ancient religious structures. The work on the two new sanctuaries of the Bit Rēš (the enlargement of the Anu-Antum complex) and Irigal (of Ištar) shows this same care applied to the architectural ornamentation. An Akkadian inscription on bricks of the Bit Rēš commemorates Anu 'Uballit whose other name (*šumšu šanu*) was Nikarkhos, governor of the city (*šaknu ša Uruk*) commissioned the work on the Bit Rēš in 244 BC.¹¹⁵ In 201 BC an Anu 'Uballit whose other name was Kephalon, likely a relative

¹¹⁴ Finkbeiner 1991, 211-213.

¹¹⁵ Falkenstein 1941, 6-10.

and perhaps ‘chief of the clergy of the Uruk temples’, carried out further work on the Bit Rēš and Irigal.¹¹⁶

The ornamentation of the third-century Bit Rēš and Irigal used traditional techniques and decorative conventions. On the exterior walls of the Bit Rēš enclosure and the façade of the Anu ziggurat are projections and recesses, often alternating with stepped rectangular niches with vertical bands. Series of projections and recesses are characteristic of Babylonian religious architecture across the centuries. Flanking the main entrance to the Bit Rēš were two towers decorated with a series of shallow rounded projections.¹¹⁷ The niches between these projections were painted with vertical yellow stripes.¹¹⁸ The decoration of other exterior walls of the Bit Rēš, the exterior of the Anu-Antum temple, and the façades of the Irigal and Bit Akitu was similar. The half-columns on the outside of the Bit Rēš were echoed on the façade of the Anu-Antum temple, decorated by niches and half-columns.¹¹⁹ The techniques complemented the existing decoration of Uruk’s religious buildings, such as the use of ‘pin mosaics’ in the Bit Rēš echoing that on the Eanna and its ziggurat.¹²⁰ Horizontal coloured terracotta pins with flat circular faces filled the niches between the projections on the twelve pilasters of the ‘Pfielerhalle’ in the Eanna.¹²¹ This produced a wall mosaic of densely packed circles; the colours pick out a variety of geometric patterns in red, black and yellow.¹²²

¹¹⁶ Falkenstein 1941, 30-39; Downey 1988, 17-32.

¹¹⁷ *UVB IX*, pl.34.

¹¹⁸ Downey 1988, 22; Jordan 1928, 11, 15, 18.

¹¹⁹ Jordan 1928, pl.40-42; *UVB II*, pl.1; *UVB XII*, pl.23a.

¹²⁰ *UVB VII*, pl.16-17.

¹²¹ *UVB IV*, pl.9; *UVB XXII*, 15-20, pl.26-27; Kose 1998.

¹²² *UVB XXII* pl.8, 23.

Another example of the use of traditional Babylonian architectural ornament at Uruk is glazed bricks, often with friezes of motifs in relief. Around the main entrance to the Bit Rēš were fragments of glazed bricks with relief decoration of stars, palmettes and animal motifs [34].¹²³ It is likely they formed friezes above the niches and projections on the outside of the Anu-Antum temple as well as the outer sanctuary walls. The façade of the Bit Rēš (**fig.6**) was likely crowned with triangular stepped merlons, another feature common to Babylonian architecture (such as on the Ištar Gate at Babylon) and to Iranian and Elamite architecture.¹²⁴ The Irigal Aramaic inscription of Kephalon behind the cult statue was also in glazed brick, written in white lettering.¹²⁵ The pillars flanking the main entrance of the Irigal were covered with blue and white glazed bricks. Some of these had relief decoration similar to those from the Bit Rēš, such as yellow flowers and parts of animals. Blue tiles covered the niches of the two main cellae.¹²⁶ Glazed brickwork covered the Neo-Babylonian Ištar Gate in Babylon and Achaemenid Palace of Darius I at Susa. Both monuments were visible and functioning in the third century BC. Traditional Babylonian forms of architectural ornament for religious buildings were not only maintained but were applied to new constructions after the Macedonian conquest.

Continuity and maintenance of visual forms in the religious sphere is illustrated by the fragment of the wooden statue from the Irigal, just as in the Esagila

¹²³ Jordan 1928, 24, pl.48-52.

¹²⁴ Ibid, pl.32. Compare 91; Koldewey 1918; Schmidt 1953; Potts 1999.

¹²⁵ *UVB* VII, 36-37; Falkenstein 1941, 31.

¹²⁶ *UVB* VI, 29.

of Babylon. In the main cella of the Irigal were three statue bases from the building level of Kephalon. One of these, a limestone block covered with gypsum plaster, lay 1.55m in front of the rear wall and niche, aligned with the main axis of the door and this niche.¹²⁷ Part of the wooden statue from this base is extant [35]. The statue was held together by wooden clamps and wedges. It represented a female figure clothed in a thin garment shown as wavy overlapping tongues, and a triangular opening at the back of the neck.¹²⁸ If it was the cult statue, it might represent Ištar or Nanaia – the two main goddesses who resided in the Irigal. The style of drapery (the wavy overlapping tongues) is very similar to that of the figure on the throne found in Esagila at Babylon [17], also carved in wood.

While there seems a conscious effort to uphold and revive tradition in the public religious space of Uruk, the coroplastic assemblage from the city appears perfectly amenable to employing Hellenistic styles and subjects. Just as at Seleucia-on-the-Tigris, the dating of these figurines is uncertain, and it is difficult to distinguish between Seleukid and early Parthian period figurines. Traditional Babylonian forms continue, such as horses, riders and the nude female figure supporting her breasts [41]. There was also a broadening of the iconographic repertoire to the common contemporary Babylonian types of figurine such as musicians [38], Herakles, male figures in Macedonian costume [39] and reclining nude female figures [40], many showing Hellenistic stylistic influence.¹²⁹

¹²⁷ Downey 1988, 31.

¹²⁸ UVB VII 37, pl.32a, b, 39a.

¹²⁹ Jordan 1928, pl.78-82; Ziegler 1962, 175-188, pl.23-44; Invernizzi 1970/71, 325-289.

A large body of iconographic evidence from Uruk is provided by the seal impressions found in the room in the north-east corner of the western court of the Bit Rēš and in the Irigal.¹³⁰ These are useful not only for discussion of the style and subject matter, but because the accompanying inscriptions often provide a name and date for when the impression was made. The seal impressions from Uruk take three forms: on clay tablets, bullae and clay tags.¹³¹ Since the tablets record personal names of those involved in the transactions, it is possible to see that during the period they represent (328-108 BC), the seals were used by people of both sexes, of Babylonian or Greek descent.¹³²

The Hellenistic form of seal impression, made from a signet ring, became the most common in Uruk and the other Babylonian sites after the Macedonian conquest, although they were present in the Achaemenid period.¹³³ There are only four examples of the use of the traditional Babylonian cylinder seal from this period, and they were made at the very beginning of Seleukid rule: three on a tablet of 312 BC, the fourth on a tablet of 303 BC.¹³⁴ The practice of using a fingernail impression on clay tablets, used since the Ur III period (21st – 20th centuries BC), disappears in this

¹³⁰ Rostovtzeff 1932.

¹³¹ The tablets, mostly from the early Seleukid period, number nearly 700 and include over 50 duplicates (one for the buyer and one for the seller, in the manner of traditional Babylonian transactions). Of the 79 inscribed gems, 67 names are completely Babylonian, only 5 have Greek patronymics, and only one is completely Greek.

¹³² Wallenfels 1996, 118 (although only 350 from 700 tablets are published); Wallenfels 1996, 119 estimates the average active lifetime of a seal was 8 years, although there was no specific length of time the seal should be used for and it was not confined to the use of one person.

¹³³ McEwan 1981, 184.

¹³⁴ Wallenfels 1996, 117.

period, but appears on some bullae from Uruk and Seleucia-on-the-Tigris over the seal impression.¹³⁵

The official seals (usually found on bullae and tags) are divided into two groups.¹³⁶ The first are larger oval or rectangular stamps, two to three centimetres long, which display motifs related to those on Seleukid coins. The second group are smaller rectangular or barrel-shaped stamps, most only marked by Greek inscriptions indicating a tax paid, the city's name, and the year of the Seleukid era. The majority of the larger impressions have the title of a Seleukid official and name of the city in which he served inscribed in Greek. There is only one example of a cuneiform inscription on a seal impression from Uruk, found on a clay tablet concerning a slave sale and dated to 275 BC, reading 'the seal of the king', which is partnered with the image of a horizontal anchor above a right-facing lion. An identical but unpublished seal has been found on an undated bulla from Seleucia-on-the-Tigris.¹³⁷ The iconography of the royal seals uses Seleukid motifs, in particular the anchor, horse's head and tripod *lebes*.¹³⁸ Royal portraits are used on seals of officials but not as the seals of rulers themselves.¹³⁹ The royal portraits on seals include divinising attributes or the *kausia* far more frequently than numismatic portraits (see **12**, from Seleucia-on-the-Tigris).¹⁴⁰

¹³⁵ Wallenfels 1994, 151.

¹³⁶ McDowell 1935, 26-31; Wallenfels 1996, 115-116.

¹³⁷ Wallenfels 1996, 117.

¹³⁸ Rostovtzeff 1932, 7.

¹³⁹ Fleischer 1996, 324.

¹⁴⁰ Fleischer 1996, 325.

Impressions of 'private' seals are only on bullae and tablets. The majority were produced by metal finger-rings with flat, almond-shaped bezels carved in *intaglio*, on average one to two centimetres long.¹⁴¹ This type came into use in the Mediterranean towards the end of the seventh century, and appeared in Babylonia in the second half of the fifth century. The images at Uruk from these rings include variations on Achaemenid and Graeco-Persian motifs, most of which have Neo-Babylonian, Neo-Assyrian, older Mesopotamian, and Archaic Greek antecedents.¹⁴² There are also some impressions formed by very convex gems: circular, rectangular or oval in shape.¹⁴³ This is a new development in the Hellenistic period.¹⁴⁴

The majority of these impressions of private seals on bullae show Mediterranean motifs such as mortal and divine figures, nude and clad in Greek dress, in poses reminiscent of the realistic relaxed poses of Classical Greek art, but some traditional Babylonian themes are also evident.¹⁴⁵ While the impressions are not always defined clearly due to the medium of clay, many of the seals were of very high quality.¹⁴⁶ The most popular iconography includes Greek deities (Apollo, Athena, Tyche and Nike in particular).¹⁴⁷ Some private seals display motifs very similar to those on coins, such as the horned horse *protome*, a nude Apollo leaning on a pedestal or bearded nude hero leaning on a spear.¹⁴⁸ There are several heads of men and women that have similar features and headdresses to those of royal Seleukid

¹⁴¹ Wallenfels 1996, 117.

¹⁴² Wallenfels 1994, 145, 151.

¹⁴³ Wallenfels 1996, 117.

¹⁴⁴ Boardman 1970, 359.

¹⁴⁵ Wallenfels 1996, 117.

¹⁴⁶ Fleischer 1996, 325.

¹⁴⁷ Lindström 2003.

¹⁴⁸ Wallenfels 1996, 119.

portraits from coins but are not specific enough to be identified as royal portraits.¹⁴⁹ A number of non-royal busts are very high in quality and show strong emphasis on the depiction of portrait features.¹⁵⁰ These individuals must have been of very high status, due to the divinising connotations still attached to portraiture in the third century BC.¹⁵¹ It is far more frequent for busts of men to appear in traditional Babylonian fashions but for women to appear in Hellenistic costume and hairstyles.

The motifs on these seals show the continuation of Babylonian imagery, as well as the appearance of Greek images. The four most common motifs are the lion, sphinx, winged bull [44] and goat-fish, and from the reign of Antiochus III signs of the zodiac are particularly prevalent. Stars are the most common filling ornament, as well as the triangle and crescent.¹⁵² These motifs reflect the importance of Uruk as a centre of astronomical and astrological study.¹⁵³ There are some motifs reminiscent of those from the Achaemenid period, such as the traditional royal hero figure, winged disc, or monsters wearing Persian feathered crowns, but they do not continue long into the Seleukid period.¹⁵⁴ The use of a 'fish-man' motif on the seals of a man called Kidin-Anu and his descendents indicates maintenance of an iconographic symbol through generations of the same family, in addition to examples of personal preference and contemporary fashions affecting the choice of imagery on a seal.¹⁵⁵

¹⁴⁹ Wallenfels 1996, 118.

¹⁵⁰ Rostovtzeff 1932, 20, pl.II, 1-3.

¹⁵¹ McDowell 1935a, 30.

¹⁵² Wallenfels 1996, 119.

¹⁵³ Hannestad 2012, 998.

¹⁵⁴ Wallenfels 1996, 119.

¹⁵⁵ Wallenfels 1996, 120.

Rostovtzeff's observation of the co-existence of Babylonian and Greek iconography in addition to some seals displaying the mingling of styles and subjects holds fast.¹⁵⁶

Outside Uruk's walls, c.2.5km north at Frēhāt en-Nufēgi, are three tumuli. Two of these were excavated to reveal brick corbel-vaulted tombs. As well as the scale of the tombs, the lavish burial goods indicate the vast wealth of those buried inside. Bernard and Pedde date the tombs to the fourth to mid-second century BC on stylistic grounds of the amphora and furniture.¹⁵⁷ The western tomb held the remains of four adults in urns. These urns rested on a baked brick postament and were enclosed by a wooden framework supporting a textile cover woven with gold leaf. The postament in the tomb of the eastern mound supported an adult skeleton on a silver-plated wooden *kline*.¹⁵⁸

The finds from these tombs show the wealth of the deceased but also extensive contacts with the rest of the Hellenistic world. The gold wreaths [36] are very delicate and high quality, similar to those also around amphorae in late fourth-century burials across the Hellenistic world, such as in the tombs at Vergina and at Kandahar.¹⁵⁹ They indicate the high social status of those buried in the tombs. The four gold-plated iron strigils suggest an interest and participation in Hellenistic athletics, and comparable examples can be found in late fourth-century Macedonian

¹⁵⁶ Rostovtzeff 1932, 20.

¹⁵⁷ Bernard 1970, 336 n.3; Pedde 1993, 218.

¹⁵⁸ Pedde 1993, 205.

¹⁵⁹ Andronikos 1984, 203; Bernard, Pinault & Rougemont 2004, 327 fig.24.

tombs and at Aï Khanoum, Derveni, Cypriot Salamis and Olynthus.¹⁶⁰ The gold plating makes these particular examples decorative rather than practical tools for scraping oil off the body, emphasising their symbolic importance to the deceased and the deceased's family. The mouldings of the silver-plated *kline* legs [37] have strong comparisons with the bronze furniture legs from Delos and *klinai* from Priene and the Mahdia shipwreck, and those in ivory from Old Nisa and Aï Khanoum, again suggesting contacts with wider Hellenistic visual cultural network.¹⁶¹

Whether the deceased were of Macedonian descent or from the Babylonian aristocracy, the funerary offerings conjure an image of wealthy men who saw themselves as participating in the culture of Macedonian elite. The similarities between the grave goods of these tombs and finds from sites from the Aegean and Black Sea to Bactria indicate active trade and cultural links between Uruk and the rest of the Hellenistic world.

As at Babylon, in Uruk we can see an emphasis on the maintenance and revival of the visual heritage in the public and religious spheres. More private and individual forms of visual culture, illustrated by seal impressions and terracotta figurines, were far more varied. The burials at Frēhāt en-Nufēgi demonstrate the presence of wealthy individuals who took great interest in the visual culture of the Macedonian elite. The members of the Uruk aristocracy who commissioned the renovation of the city's sanctuaries dedicated these buildings for the lives of the

¹⁶⁰ Pedde 1993, 207.

¹⁶¹ Bernard 1970, 336; Sobottka-Braun 1994; Andrianou 2009, 31 fig.7.

Seleukid kings and used the Greek names given to them by those kings as well as their Babylonian names.¹⁶² The city was not isolated from Hellenistic visual culture, but chose to maintain its traditional forms of public and religious space.

Failaka.

The island of Failaka, by the mouths of the Tigris and Euphrates, provided a strategic trading post on the route from Babylonia to the Gulf and beyond to India. The Hellenistic-period settlement was not a *polis* but was fortified, probably had a garrison, and was of importance to the Seleukid administration.¹⁶³ The central point of interest here is how the character of the visual culture of a remote and small settlement relates to larger and more central sites such as Babylon and Seleucia-on-the-Tigris.

The remains of architectural ornament at Failaka include modifications of Greek architectural elements from the two structures in the fortified settlement F5 labelled Temple A and Temple B. The palmette akroteria attributed to Temple A are highly symmetrical and very flat in their execution though retain a lightness and elegance to the composition [45]. The leaves of the palmettes are raised only slightly in relief and have plane faces not bevelled. Red paint is visible on the lateral akroterion AD and it is likely all the akroteria were painted. There are two lateral akroteria and one apical akroterion, which would have crowned a pediment. This

¹⁶² Falkenstein 1941, 6-7; Funck 1984, 291-294; Clancier 2011, 761.

¹⁶³ See the letter of Anaxarkhos to the people of Ikaros: *I.Estremo Oriente* 422, Roueché & Sherwin-White 1985, 16.

gabled façade would have given the illusion of a sloping roof like Greek temples of the Mediterranean, adding a touch of monumentality to the petite structure. This impression would have been enhanced by the restricted viewpoint in the limited space around the temples. The two smaller akroteria attributed to Temple B were designed for a flat roof with no pedimental façade.¹⁶⁴

The Ionic capital found in the pronaos of Temple A also has an emphasis on rigid symmetry coupled with a bas-relief form of carving [46]. The features of Ionic capitals are simplified. The outline of the scrolls is delineated by a thin raised border rather than forming structural elements. There is no egg-and-dart frieze on the echinus or moulding on the abacus, and no curve to the pulvinus, which is divided by a double astragal. The form of the capital was modified to the carving style, skill or knowledge of the craftsman. The Ionic capitals of the pronaos were used in conjunction with campaniform bases surmounted with tori [48].¹⁶⁵ This may be the result of re-use from an earlier structure on Failaka, or attests to the presence of craftsmen trained in Achaemenid architectural conventions. Re-use of existing carved elements would be expected in this area, which is low in natural resources of workable stone, though the likelihood of the existing base being the required size without any reworking is low. The smooth column drums are also a feature of Achaemenid architecture rather than Greek. The Ionic order was not the only Hellenic architectural order imitated on the island. Two Doric capitals are associated with

¹⁶⁴ Jeppesen 1989, 48.

¹⁶⁵ Jeppesen 1989, 31 fig.34.

Temple B [47].¹⁶⁶ The basic structures of capitals from two Greek architectural orders were imitated in a different, flatter and plainer style from the canon. The combination of elements from other orders, namely the Achaemenid campaniform base, also illustrates this flexible approach to architectural ornamentation of the religious buildings on the island.

The French excavators identified a stylistic progression of the terracotta figurines in the stratigraphy at Tell Khazneh.¹⁶⁷ The figurines of the earliest level follow eastern styles and preferred subjects, such as nude female figures, horses and riders and other animal figurines. The following level sees the introduction and co-existence of figurines in Hellenistic styles, whereas in the level above that there is an increase in Hellenistic-style figurines and a decrease in eastern styles. The excavators therefore date these three levels as an existing early settlement, the arrival of Greco-Macedonians and the establishment and expansion of their settlement.

At the fortified settlement of F5, however, we see the co-existence of coroplastic forms from eastern and Hellenistic traditions. As well as the traditional nude female figures with arms by side or supporting their breasts [51], there are female figures in *chiton* and *himation* and with Hellenistic hairstyles [50; 57]. There are representations of male figures following the model of Alexander, clean-shaven with short tousled hair and looking upwards slightly [54], yet also bearded men in pointed eastern hats [55]. Simple clay boats, similar to those at Failaka, were found

¹⁶⁶ 47 was found 17m east of Temple A, outside the fortification wall. A fragment of a Doric capital now missing was found immediately west of Temple A.

¹⁶⁷ Salles 1986, 176-178.

also at Babylon and Seleucia-on-the-Tigris [56].¹⁶⁸ There is a broad repertoire of iconography in the terracotta figurines, with a particular emphasis on riders, horses and boats. This may reflect the concerns of those living on and stopping at the island: the garrison of soldiers, traders and sailors on their route up or down the Gulf, and the population of the settlement. While there are a number of types from the Babylonian coroplastic *koine*, there are no representations of musicians, athletic figures or theatrical masks such as found at other Babylonian sites.

The many different fabrics among the coroplastic assemblage from Failaka support the assumption of many origins for the figurines. In addition to figurines brought to the island by travellers and traders, many of the figurines were made on Failaka, though there is disagreement as to what proportion of the figurines was manufactured on the island. Many of the figurines are of a similar fabric to the storage jars found on the island. Salles suggests only the fine orange clay is imported, whereas Mathiesen argues all the finer terracottas were imported.¹⁶⁹

Excavations at F4 revealed conclusive evidence of terracotta production: a workshop with traces of bronze in the kilns and many moulds scattered across the site.¹⁷⁰ The majority of the moulds show subjects from Hellenistic repertoire, such as **59**, which shows a skipping satyr carrying a *krater*. One twisting female torso with softly moulded anatomy wears a *chiton* that leaves her breasts bare; another is

¹⁶⁸ Koldewey 1913, 252 fig.176; Van Ingen 1939, 338-339, no.1588-1590, pl.LXXXII.608; Karvonen-Kannas 1995, no.729-743.

¹⁶⁹ Salles 1986, 173.

¹⁷⁰ Roussell 1958, 198-200.

wrapped tightly in *chiton* and *himation*, with her left hand clutching the material at her hip and presumably her right arm (now missing) folded up to her breast and tugging at her veil in the typical Hellenistic manner.¹⁷¹ Another female figure in a billowing *chiton* is reminiscent of the Classical Nike of Paionios [58]. A mould of an unbearded male head produced 54 – the scorings around the head are the aids on the lip of the mould to join up the front and back, rather than mouldings for a radiate crown.¹⁷² Another mould, used to make the bust of a Hellenistic woman [57] was also used to make the figurine of an Iranian ruler [53]. This illustrates the flexibility and blurred division between Hellenistic and Babylonian (or Iranian) subjects, and the creativity and expediency of the craftsman, who was able to cater to a wide range of tastes with as little effort as possible or the available tools (see Chapter VII for further discussion).¹⁷³

Karvonen-Kannas notes that cutting vent-holes in the back of figurines was a Greek coroplastic technique rare in Babylonia, despite the adoption of bivalve moulds.¹⁷⁴ She suggests the vent-hole was perhaps unnecessary due to the porosity of the clay, the thinness of the seam and the low firing temperatures used for Babylonian coroplastics. The Herakles figurine from F5 [60] has this vent-hole in the middle of his back, but the type of clay is unpublished and therefore its provenance is unknown.

¹⁷¹ Roussel 1958, 194, fig.4.

¹⁷² Roussel 1958, 195, fig.6; Roussel 1958, 197, fig.8; Connelly 1989, 154.

¹⁷³ Connelly 1989; Connelly 1990b.

¹⁷⁴ Karvonen-Kannas 1993, 24.

The epigraphic record allows some speculation on the composition of the inhabitants of the island and their relationship to the archaeological record. The letter of Anaxarchos addresses ‘the inhabitants of Ikaros’ – not a polis or recognised *demos*.¹⁷⁵ The erection of the letter on a *stèle* on the steps of Temple A in the centre of the settlement is a Greek practice and suggests the interaction with the Seleukid administration was of great importance to the community and perhaps a proportion of the population could read Greek. There was also a garrison of Greco-Macedonians, including Soteles the Athenian.¹⁷⁶ The gap in the occupation phase between the Kassite period and the Seleukid period makes it unlikely there was a sizeable local population, though the campaniform base [48] might suggest some Achaemenid-period construction.¹⁷⁷ The position of the F5 settlement on the coast of this island on the busy naval route of the Persian Gulf to Mesopotamian basin makes it likely there was a high changing population of sailors, traders and travellers. This was in addition to a small settled community residing in the houses in F5, some of whom were involved in the terracotta production at F4.

The cultic practice on the island involved the Saviour Goddess (presumably Artemis) though the terracotta figurines suggest the worship (perhaps unofficial or in domestic shrines) of many different deities. The cult of Artemis is identified through the altar inscription and the letter of Anaxarchos concerning the transferral of the cult of the Saviour Goddess to inside the settlement (perhaps to Temple A), which

¹⁷⁵ *I. Estremo Oriente* 421.

¹⁷⁶ *I. Estremo Oriente* 416.

¹⁷⁷ Howard-Carter 1991, 19.

perhaps built on an existing local cult.¹⁷⁸ This is supported by the references in ancient literary sources to the island which most consistently mention a shrine of Artemis.¹⁷⁹ The inscription of Soteles is dedicated to Zeus Soter and Poseidon as well as Artemis Soteria. The Greek character of the main cult is also suggested by the form and decoration of the two temples, adapted to the available materials and space. Temple A had a wide rectangular altar outside and a podium for a cult statue inside, and Temple B's altar is circular.¹⁸⁰ It is difficult to see the terracotta figurines as representative of an official cult, since the majority were found in domestic contexts, and those found in Temple A and B represent a wide variety of subjects.¹⁸¹ The considerable proportion of traditional Babylonian figurines suggest but do not confirm a Babylonian contingent present on Failaka. The variety of Hellenistic and local forms of art and architectural ornament at this small settlement suggests a mixed population interacting with predominantly Greek subjects and styles of iconography but comfortable using and creating Babylonian and Iranian artistic forms.

Discussion.

The material record of Babylonia after the Macedonian conquest is characterized by the continuation of visual forms, particularly in the religious sphere. This is not to say

¹⁷⁸ *I. Estremo Oriente* 416, 421, 422; Hannestad 1990, 104.

¹⁷⁹ *Arr. Anab.* VII.20.3-6; Strabo XVI.3.2; *Ael. NA.* XI.9.

¹⁸⁰ Jeppesen 1989, 24-67.

¹⁸¹ See Connelly 1990 on 'transferable' (personal and portable) cults. In Temple A this includes two nude female figures, one Hellenistic-style female head, one 'Persian rider' ten fragments of boats and one bird. In Temple B, two nude female figurines, one horse-rider, two horse legs and one boat fragment. Two sandstone bearded heads were found at B6 (Salles 1984, 151, fig.204, 242) similar to those from Mašjid-i Solaiman (Ghirshman 1976, pl.LXXI 1-3, 5-7) from the late Parthian period. Connelly 1989 argues tenuously these are evidence of Herakles cult on the island.

the visual repertoire was closed and unchanging, however. Many new subjects, styles and techniques were incorporated. New forms, such as architectural ornamentation, were adapted to the local construction techniques, such as the glazed terracotta ornament at Seleucia-on-the-Tigris, as well as the maintenance and revival of traditional architectural ornamentation such as at Uruk.

The similarity of several of the Hellenistic subjects taken up in the coroplastic corpus to subjects already popular in Babylonian terracottas, such as couples, riders and nude women, accentuates this sense of adaptation. The traditional form of nude static female figurines continues to be the most popular type in terracotta production, but a number of variations develop, including those showing Hellenistic influence. The adaption of Hellenistic patterns to existing tastes is seen also in the reformulation of reclining male figures in the Mediterranean terracottas to female figures in Babylonia.¹⁸² Figurines of musicians also become very common. It is possible the *cithara* and panpipes were introduced after the Macedonian conquest and that Hellenistic influence on figurines of musicians is mostly in the clothing and playing position, though the large increase in the production of these figures appears characteristic of the post-Achaemenid period.¹⁸³

The assemblage of terracotta figurines is central to the discussion of Babylonia's visual culture. Their amuletic and funerary functions or use in domestic shrines indicate they held significance to the owner or purchaser despite their

¹⁸² Karvonen-Kannas 1993, 63.

¹⁸³ Klengel-Brandt 1993, 190.

relatively low monetary value (suggested by their proliferation in the material record as well as the inexpensive material). This economy of scale and the quick production values suggest the assemblage represent the wide range of the subjects and styles on offer and the changing fashions and tastes.

There were several new features of terracotta production, such as the bivalve mould, taken up after the Macedonian conquest. Many images of Greek deities were incorporated into the repertoire of Babylonian visual culture. While there are some similarities between some of these motifs on seal impressions and coins, many of the Greek gods depicted on seals and as figurines develop types and variations independent from royal or official models. There are several instances of the iconography of Greek deities used together with the attributes of Babylonian gods. The potential for messages to different audiences, implications of syncretism and cultic significance are discussed further in Chapter V. Representations of naked and half-naked men were unknown in Babylonia before this period, but became widespread after the Macedonian conquest, particularly through the popularity of Herakles' iconography. There was a gymnasium in Babylon and perhaps a similar interest among the elite of Uruk in the Hellenistic athletic practices (indicated by the strigils among in the grave goods of Frēhāt en-Nufēği). The coroplastic corpus from each site demonstrates a shared Babylonian *koine* of terracotta production indicating the movement of people, trade and visual forms between these sites, supported by figurines from the same mould and impressions from the same seals found at the

sites.¹⁸⁴ There is little difference, for example, between the repertoire of figurines from the royal capital and Hellenistic foundation of Seleucia-on-the-Tigris and the ancient Babylonian city of Uruk.

While several new subjects, styles and techniques are included in the coroplastic production of Babylonia after the Macedonian conquest, there was also a conservative approach to the overall composition and form of the figurines. There are far more figurines of naked female figures in Babylonian coroplastics than in the Mediterranean, and they do not include the wide variety of active poses as in the Mediterranean.¹⁸⁵ This applies to all the subjects of Babylonian coroplastics. The dancing, flying and twisting figures with extended limbs of Mediterranean production are not seen in Babylonia. While new subjects and styles of execution are employed, the forms of the figurines are not as experimental but keep the figure contained. Klengel-Brandt suggests this represents strong conservatism on the part of local workshops and that the wish of the customer was responsible for variations in the types of figurines.¹⁸⁶ This seems unlikely concerning the adoption of the bivalve mould, which would be a practice taken on by the workshop rather than demanded by an individual customer. The wide variety of subjects and styles indicates local workshops (perhaps including settled Greco-Macedonian coroplasts) did, however, cater to the many diverse tastes of their potential customers. Further conservatism can be seen in the Babylonian use of these figurines. Babylonian-style figurines were found in domestic contexts (and some in graves), following Neo-Babylonian and Late

¹⁸⁴ Klengel-Brandt 1993, 192. Wallenfels 1994, 150.

¹⁸⁵ Klengel-Brandt 1993, 186.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 199.

Babylonian practices, while Greek figurines were more commonly associated with religious and funerary contexts, and a few in domestic contexts.¹⁸⁷ This assumes, however, a clear division between ethnicity and choice of form of figurine.

There were some Babylonian centres that were not as prosperous in the Seleukid period as in earlier periods, such as Nippur, where few Hellenistic remains have been found apart from a few seal impressions and a house with a peristyle court perhaps of the Parthian period.¹⁸⁸ The ziggurats of Nippur and Assur were turned into fortified citadels but work on the temples took place in the late Parthian period.¹⁸⁹ At Babylon and Uruk, however, the decline in prosperity was in the late Parthian period, before which there was a vibrant visual culture and a number of building works commissioned.

The art and architectural ornament of Babylonia after the Macedonian conquest adopted and adapted many features of Hellenistic repertoire, yet the long aesthetic traditions continued and in many areas were revived. At Babylon, Uruk and Telloh there was a post-Achaemenid resurgence of Babylonian visual heritage in the decoration of religious buildings. There are a few instances of the addition of forms following Greek architectural orders, such as palmette antefixes at Babylon and Seleucia-on-the-Tigris, and some instances of the production of 'hybrids', such as the application of Hellenistic ornament to the traditional Babylonian medium of glazed clay. While there is new iconography in the seal impressions and the old forms of seal

¹⁸⁷ Langin-Hooper 2007, 147, 154.

¹⁸⁸ Fisher 1904; Marquand 1905; Peters 1905; McCown 1967; Gibson 1975.

¹⁸⁹ Downey 1988, 145ff.

diminished, the clay tablets themselves – the administrative format – continued.¹⁹⁰ Continuity in the appearance of Babylonian religion, of the architecture, architectural ornament and sacred sculpture, is particularly noticeable. There was almost no change in the pantheon of Babylon, Borsippa and Cutha, except the movement of some gods from centres where the temples were no longer functioning into the temples of Babylon.¹⁹¹ Berossus' *Babyloniaka* illustrates how the Macedonian conquest and rule had a substantial impact on Babylonian culture but did not necessarily threaten it, instead acting as a facilitating device for the transport of new ideas and new expressions of Babylonian creativity.¹⁹² Berossos, a Babylonian and priest of Marduk/Bel, wrote his Babylonian history in Greek, without any implication he was compromising the integrity of his cultural heritage. As seen in the artistic development also, the introduction of Hellenistic influences did not always threaten the survival of local cultural traditions.

¹⁹⁰ McEwan 1981, 184.

¹⁹¹ Ibid, 189.

¹⁹² Verbrugge & Wickersham 1996.

Chapter III: Iran.

Introduction.

The archaeological record of Iranian sites is characterized by regional diversity between Elymais, Persis, Media and Parthia, reflecting the strong degree of political independence held by local dynasts.¹ The Arsacid centre at Old Nisa displays the impact of Greek and Steppe culture upon the visual language of the Parthians. Some features of Greek art such as naturalism and the practice of commissioning free-standing sculpture were adopted in rural areas of Elymais, illustrating that Greco-Macedonian influence was not confined to new urban centres. Additionally, a characteristic and overriding sense of frontality and stylised pattern emerged, distinct from earlier Iranian art. However anti-Hellenic the later Zoroastrian sources of the Sasanian period, it seems the rulers of the second century BC maintained and advertised their Iranian heritage (Parthian or Persian) and this did not necessitate the rejection of all traces of Greek artistic influences.²

This chapter, just as the regional chapters on Babylonia and Bactria, considers the material from each site (ordered, as before, from architectural ornament to small finds) followed by a discussion on the region as a whole. Before this, here follows a brief historical, geographical and topographical introduction to the four regions included in this chapter: Elymais, Persis, Media and Parthia.

¹ Kawami 1987, 31.

² Wiesehöfer 1991, 58; Boyce & Grenet 1991; De Jong 1997; Wiesehöfer 2011, 113-132.

Elymais, across the foothills of the Zagros Mountains, aligns roughly with modern Khuzestan in south-west Iran and ancient Elam.³ The sites discussed are the long-established urban centre of the region at Susa, the rural sanctuaries of Mašjid-i Solaiman and Shami, and the rock relief at Hung-i Aždar. This region consists of fertile plains and valleys connected by passes through the high mountains. The physical proximity to the Babylonian basin is reflected in the similar material culture. Elymais was prosperous in our period, as implied by the efforts of Antiochus III and IV to requisition the riches of the region's temples.⁴ In the mid-second century there were frequent political changes in Elymais as Seleukid, Parthian, Characenean and Elymaean rulers alternately took control of the region, culminating in the latter as client kings of the Parthians by the end of the century.⁵

Persis (modern Fars) was the heartland of the Achaemenid Empire. Literary sources describe how Alexander burned the Achaemenid terrace at Persepolis.⁶ He did not lay waste to the entire region, however, and there was occupation at Persepolis and Pasargadae immediately after the Macedonian conquest.⁷ Peucestas, satrap of Persis until 316 BC, proved very popular with his local subjects.⁸ He was the only Macedonian apart from Seleukos to keep the Persian wife he married at

³ Potts 1999, 354-409.

⁴ Antiochus III: Diod.XXVIII, XXIX.15; Justin XXXII.2.1-2; Antiochus IV: Polyb.XXXI.9.1; App.Syr.66; II *Macc.*1.13-15. Kuhrt & Sherwin-White 1993, 215.

⁵ Le Rider 1965, 426-430; Potts 1999, 391-401; Shayegan 2011, 115-116, 122-123.

⁶ Plut.*Vit.Alex.*38; Curt.V.7.1-10; Diod.XVII.72; Arr.*Anab.*III.18.11-12.

⁷ The date of the Da'ō Dokhtar rock-cut tomb (Callieri 2007, 97-98, fig.65) is uncertain. The relief imitates a portico: pilasters with stepped torus bases and flat scroll capitals support an entablature topped by stepped merlons. Stronach 1978, 304 suggests between the 5th to late 3rd century BC.

⁸ Diod.XIX.48.5.

Susa, adopt Persian dress and learn the language.⁹ At the end of the fourth century and beginning of the third, there was further construction at Persepolis: the so-called ‘*frataraka* temple’. ‘*Frataraka*’ was the title held by the first four Persid dynasts who minted their own coins. They are known only from these coin issues, which were perhaps minted at Persepolis.¹⁰ It seems they were client kings of the Seleukids and Parthians, with a few brief periods of independence.¹¹

‘Media’ denotes the region between the Elburz Mountains to the north and Zagros Mountains to the west (including the modern provinces of Kermanshah and Lorestan).¹² Polybius and Strabo express admiration of the prosperity and natural advantages of the region, and Polybius attributes the rebellious Seleukid satrap Molon’s powerful position to Media’s natural resources.¹³ The inscription from the Bisitun Herakles relief [86] shows the Seleukid governor was in place until at least 148 BC, but the region was conquered by the Parthians under Mithridates I by 141 BC.

Little is known of the archaeology of this period from the largest Median city, Ecbatana (modern Hamadan). This was a royal capital under the Medes, Persians, Seleukids and Parthians, and a Seleukid and Parthian mint.¹⁴ The wealth of the city in the third century BC is indicated by the precious metals, including gold and silver

⁹ Arr.*Anab.* VI.30, VII.6; Diod.XIX.14.

¹⁰ Alram 1986; Kritt 1997.

¹¹ Klose & Müseler 2008; Curtis 2010; Shayegan 2011; Wiesehöfer 2011.

¹² Greater Media, not Media Atropatene. Strabo XIII.5-6.

¹³ Polyb.V.43-54; Strabo XIII.7.

¹⁴ Strabo XI.13.5.

stripped from buildings, looted by Antiochus III amounting to 4,000 talents of coins.¹⁵ Ecbatana was renamed 'Epiphanaia' by Antiochus IV after himself.¹⁶ An Iranian team is investigating thick-walled buildings of the Parthian levels at Ecbatana, though the modern city over the ancient site hinders large-scale excavation.

Strabo credits Seleukos I with the foundation of Laodicea-Nihavend, but discussion here is limited since little archaeological material is published from this site.¹⁷ A small garlanded stone altar, an Ionic column base and capital, and six bronze figurines of deities may be from the Hellenistic or Roman period.¹⁸ A stele of Antiochus III concerning the cult of Laodice was found here.¹⁹ Strabo attributes the foundation of an Apameia in Media and Herakleia near Rhagae to Seleukos I also, as well as Rhaga, the Parthian capital, which he says was called Europus by Seleukos and Arsacia by the Parthians.²⁰ Parthian activity in the Seleukid foundations and re-named cities affirms the prosperity of the cities.²¹

Parthia (modern Khorasan) lies east of the Elburz mountains and the Caspian Sea, south-west of the Kopet Dağ mountain range. The Seleukid satrap Andragoras revolted and minted his own coinage c.245–238 BC, but was soon overthrown by the

¹⁵ Polyb.X.27.5, 13.

¹⁶ Steph.Byz. s.v. Agbatana.

¹⁷ Strabo XI.13.6.

¹⁸ Ghirshman 1962; Rahbar 1976.

¹⁹ *I.Estremo Oriente* 277; Robert 1949.

²⁰ Strabo XI.13.6; XI. 9. 1.

²¹ This section excludes the 'Temple of Anahita' at Kangavar, now identified as a Sasanian period palace (Azarnoush 1981) and the temple at Khorheh (Bivar 1969, Schippmann 1971) which has Ionic-influenced capitals but no evidence it was built in the 3rd or 2nd centuries BC. Choksy 2007, 16 dates a rock tomb relief at Eshaqvand to the Seleukid period, but there is insufficient detail to distinguish it from Achaemenid period reliefs.

Parni, a tribe of the Dahae led by Arsaces. After establishing themselves in Parthia, a brief period as a client kingdom of the Seleukids, dealing with Yuezhi incursions, and attacking the Greco-Bactrians, the Arsacids under Mithridates I (c.195-138 BC) encroached into Seleucid territory.

There have been limited excavations at Šar-e Qumis, the most likely candidate for the royal capital of Hecatompylos.²² Appian asserts Seleukos I founded Hecatompylos, but this was likely a ‘re-foundation’ or re-naming, as at so many other cities, especially since Alexander visited the city.²³ The mint was very active during the Seleukid and Parthian periods.²⁴ The excavations at ‘Old Nisa’ provide a vast quantity of material from the early Parthian period, much of it executed in a Hellenistic style or showing Greek iconography. This site is identified as Mithradatkert: the fortress of Mithridates, perhaps founded or monumentalized by Mithridates I. Isidore of Charax’s ‘Parthaunisa’ may be associated with the city of ‘New Nisa’ nearby.²⁵

Susa.

Susa, the ancient capital of Elam, was founded c.4000 BC. The city continued to hold significance for rulers after the Macedonian conquest, as suggested by the mass wedding ceremony held there in 324 BC by Alexander and the designation of the

²² Hansman & Stronach 1974, 12.

²³ App.Syr.57; Polyb.X.28.7; Robert 1960, 85-91 dates a Greek inscription from Gurgan in Hyrcania referring to Serapis to the third century BC. (*I.Estremo Oriente* 280: 281-261 BC).

²⁴ Newell 1938; Sellwood 1971.

²⁵ *Parthian Stations* 12. Masson & Pugachenkova 1982.

Seleukid patronymic as Seleucia-on-the-Eulaios.²⁶ There is little evidence to suggest a severe decline in its prosperity. Quite the contrary: the epigraphic record attests to the vitality of social institutions through to the late Parthian period, and the mint of the city produced coins for Seleukid, Parthian, Characenean and Elymaean kings. The city was a focal point in the struggles between these rulers for control of the region in the second half of the second century BC since it was the major urban hub on the crucial route between the neighbouring regions.²⁷ The visual culture of the city appears to have closely related to Babylonian traditions, reflecting its physical proximity to Babylonia on the western side of the Zagros range.

Susa was ‘re-founded’ as Seleucia-on-the-Eulaios and given a Macedonian garrison, but this did not equate to a razing and rebuilding of the city or an immediate eradication of its past importance.²⁸ It indicates the interest and importance attached to the city by the Seleukids. The epigraphic record attests that in addition to the garrison in the third century BC, certain social institutions of Greek *poleis* were set up, including a gymnasium and the position of archon.²⁹ It is likely there was a set physical space (*palaestra*) for this gymnasium in Susa. The Achaemenid palaces of Artaxerxes II and Darius I fell into gradual disrepair by the late Parthian period.³⁰ It seems many of the existing structures of the city were still in use, however, such as

²⁶ Arr.VII.4.4-5.6

²⁷ The first independent Elymaean king, Kamniskires I, perhaps held Susa c.147 BC while the Seleukids were occupied in conflict with the Parthians, but the Parthians captured the city c.140 BC. Demetrius II recovered it briefly in 140 BC, and Antiochus VII retook it 130-129 BC, before Phraates II defeated him.

²⁸ Curtius Rufus V.2.16-17; Le Rider 1965, 280ff.

²⁹ *I.Estremo Oriente* 183; *SEG* 17.1-4.

³⁰ Boucharlat 1990, 225-233.

the very ancient Temple of Nanaia.³¹ Dedications were made in Greek at this temple by men with Greek names, to Nanaia and to the Cappadocian goddess Ma (also a mother goddess, so perhaps associated with Nanaia).³² Manumission dedications in Greek, referring to people with Greek names, were made to Nanaia, Apollo and Artemis (among others) in the second century BC in the temple of Nanaia.³³ It was traditional practice in Greece to make manumission dedications in the temple of main deity of the city, and this practice was taken to Seleucia-on-the-Eulaios, respecting the existing sacred areas of the city.

Aside from the epigraphic and numismatic record, the main body of archaeological evidence from our period recorded at Susa is the corpus of terracotta figurines.³⁴ They attest to the spread of Greek iconography and the popularity of particular subjects among a wider cross-section of society, supplementing our knowledge of the official iconography spread by coinage. Some traditional forms such as nude female figures, riders and ‘puppets’ continue but the adoption of new repertoire is particularly noticeable, especially of subjects also popular at sites in Babylonia.

As in Babylonian coroplastics of this period, figurines of musicians and actors are particularly popular after the Macedonian conquest. These include female and

³¹ *I. Estremo Oriente* 189, 193, 197.

³² *Ibid.*, 180, 186.

³³ *Ibid.*, 189-200.

³⁴ Martinez-Sève 2002.

androgynous figures in long drapery and headdresses playing the harp or *aulos* [61].³⁵ The ‘actors’ are mantled figures with the distorted facial features of comic masks.³⁶ The vast majority of the terracotta figurines represent women, and children and couples are also popular subjects. These themes may reflect amuletic functions of the terracotta figurines for fertility.

The traditional Babylonian nude female figures, in a rigid pose with the arms by the sides or folded across the chest with arms supporting the breasts, often with cursorily executed anatomical detail are very popular. They perhaps represent a fertility goddess such as Nanaia or Ištar.³⁷ Alongside this traditional form of figurine are many representations of Greek gods, including Aphrodite, Apollo, Artemis and Athena, Dionysos and Herakles, forming 7.6% of the total coroplastic assemblage from the Seleukid-Parthian period at Susa.³⁸

Not all the figurines are finely detailed models. A popular type are humanoid forms made from a few finger pinches [62]. Another simple and popular form is the horse, or horse and rider. One type of these carries a round shield and wear a flat hat, perhaps the Macedonian *kausia*.³⁹ These ‘Macedonian cavalrymen’ figurines are very common at Susa and other Elymaean sites of Mašjid-i Solaiman [71] and Kalgue, as well as examples in nearby Babylonian sites such as Telloh [30] and Failaka [52].⁴⁰

³⁵ Martinez-Sève 2002, no.153-210, 217-231.

³⁶ Ibid, no.242-259.

³⁷ Ibid, no.382-576; Reclining women are not very common in Susa but those found fit the Babylonian type (Ibid, 267, no.307-312).

³⁸ Martinez-Sève 2008, 357.

³⁹ Martinez-Sève 2002, no.726-767 (see also no.761-765).

⁴⁰ See below and Ch.VII.

Terracotta appliqué of oval shields (with two central holes for suspension or attachment) also show the dispersal of Macedonian military forms [63]. This oval shield with the umbo divided by a central vertical bar – the *thureos* – was a Gallic type common to armies of the Diadochoi from the third century BC, not a traditional Iranian form.⁴¹

There was an active mint at Susa throughout the Seleukid and Parthian periods.⁴² The coins found here from many other mints illustrate the extensive economic and trade networks. The majority of the Seleukid coins show the profile of the ruler facing right on the obverse, clean-shaven and wearing a diadem, and the seated Apollo-on-the-*omphalos* on the reverse.⁴³ There were a few experiments with *en face* portraits on the obverse.⁴⁴ Other popular reverse motifs include seated Zeus holding Nike; a seated goddess (Demeter or Tyche) holding a cornucopia and a short sceptre.⁴⁵ Individual lone attributes of these three deities were also popular reverse motifs: the tripod, thunderbolt and cornucopia.

The iconography of Parthian coins minted at Susa developed a number of features of Seleukid issues. The portrait of the ruler of Parthian Susa issues faces right and wears the diadem as the Seleukids, with Phraates II shown as clean-shaven

⁴¹ Sekunda 1994, 19.

⁴² Le Rider 1965.

⁴³ Ibid, pl.II-VIII; Newell 1936.

⁴⁴ Le Rider 1965, pl.II.22, pl.XXIV.294-299, pl.X.97.

⁴⁵ Ibid: Demeter: pl.XXVII B-S; Zeus Nikephorus: pl.XXIX.311-G; tripod: pl.III.27, pl.XXI.254-256; thunderbolt: pl.VII.75, pl.XXIII, 293; cornucopia: pl.XXVIII.310, S. Other reverse motifs on Seleukid Susa issues include a bull: pl.II.2-5, 7; elephant: pl.II.6; Zeus Aetophorus: pl.II.A, 13, 15; Nike driving a chariot: pl.II.20-21; standing Nike: pl.VI-VII.73-74, A; herm: pl.VII 76-77; horse head: pl.VII 78-79.

or with short sideburns.⁴⁶ Through the issues of Artabanus I and Mithridates II at Susa the beard of the king becomes longer, and the torque and jacket are introduced.⁴⁷ Mithridates II adds the domed *tiyāra* and his portrait faces left.⁴⁸ Parthian Susa issues continue many of the Seleukid reverse motifs.⁴⁹ The figure of Apollo-on-the-*omphalos* is used by the Parthian kings, but also appears as the Iranian archer in *bašlyk*, *kandys* and long ribbed sleeves and trousers, facing right. The less stylised execution of the Mithridates II issue compared to those of his predecessors Phraates II and Mithridates I suggests there was not a straightforward chronological development from a Hellenistic naturalised style to linear patterned representation, but perhaps varied according to the mint.⁵⁰ A number of the reverse motifs on Parthian coins such as the club, eagle, crescent and rosette, appear in the architectural ornament of Old Nisa [89].⁵¹

Issues of the Elyamaean rulers also use isolated motifs, such as the eagle, thunderbolt or palm on the reverse of issues of Tigraios.⁵² Kamniskirid issues repeat a number of reverse motifs directly imitating Seleukid issues, such as Apollo-on-the-*omphalos*, horse head, cornucopia, anchor and tripod.⁵³ The numismatic portraits on tetradrachms of Kamniskires Nikephorus minted at Susa show the Elymaean ruler very much in the image of the Seleukids: clean-shaven, short tousled hair, diadem,

⁴⁶ Le Rider 1965, pl.X.A-B, 98-100.

⁴⁷ Ibid, pl.XI-XIV.112-144.

⁴⁸ Ibid, pl.XIV.145.

⁴⁹ Ibid: tripod, pl.XI.115; seated figure with cornucopia, pl.XII.116; standing Nike holding out a wreath, pl.XIV.145.

⁵⁰ Ibid, pl.XIV.144, pl.LXX.1-12.

⁵¹ Ibid: club, pl.XII.119; eagle, pl.XIII.135; crescent, pl.XIII.132; rosette, pl.XIII.133-134. standing Herakles holding club, pl.LXX.16-17, 19-20.

⁵² Ibid: eagle, pl.X.101; thunderbolt, pl.XI.108; palm, pl.XI.105-107.

⁵³ Ibid, pl.VIII-IX, 85-94.

heavy brow and strong nose [64].⁵⁴ The Boeotian helmet features on issues with *en face* or profile portrait on issues of Tigraios.⁵⁵ The coins minted at Susa retain much continuity in the format, style and content of the iconography whether the ruler was Seleukid, Parthian or Elymaean.

Mašjid-i Solaiman.

The terraced sanctuary at Mašjid-i Solaiman in the foothills of the Zagros Mountains lies roughly 100km ESE of Susa, by a small river and plain on the route between Susa and inner Elymais. The sanctuary and the small settlement south of the terrace were in continuous use from the Achaemenid period through to late Parthian and Sasanian times.⁵⁶ The expansion of the terrace to the west and north, towards the mountain, in the second century BC and extensive Parthian and Sasanian building activity obscure earlier occupation.

The large podium on the original, southern, part of the terrace suggests Achaemenid-period worship following the traditional Persian practice of open-air ceremonies. On the northern part of the terrace is the ‘Grand Temple’ and at the western end, furthest away from the main staircase, the ‘Temple of Herakles’. Ghirshman suggested the low wall separating the southern podium area from the

⁵⁴ Le Rider 1965, pl.VIII.D-H, among others. Shayegan 2011, 88ff on the identification of Kamnisikires I and II with Nikephoros and Soter.

⁵⁵ Le Rider 1965, pl.IX.90; pl.X.101.

⁵⁶ Some 2nd century BC and a few late 4th century BC coins were found. The majority were Elymaean from the late 2nd century/early 3rd century AD or Sasanian (Auge, Curiel & Le Rider 1979). The figurines also suggest occupation through the Seleukid to Sasanian period (Martinez-Seve 2004, 199).

temples indicates the Iranian and Greco-Macedonian population were separated and did not mix.⁵⁷ The staircase linking the terrace of the podium with the upper terrace with the temples makes this proposal highly unlikely. The wall delineated the areas for practical division of space and function as the sanctuary became more monumental, rather than because of ethnic or religious tension and segregation. The same argument applies to the interpretation of the movement of worshippers at Bard-i Nišandeh.⁵⁸ The small lower terrace on the eastern side, also an addition of the second century BC, provided access to an underground chamber.⁵⁹ To scholars of the ancient Greek world, this suggests a mystery cult, chthonic deity or seat of an oracle. The original purpose remains a mystery indeed, but the terrace contributes to the idea of multiple functions of this sanctuary, and perhaps even for separate religions. The enclosed religious structures built after the Macedonian conquest did not replace the podia at these sites but developed the existing sacred area.⁶⁰

The excavators suggest the Parthian-period ‘Grand Temple’ was built directly on top of a Seleukid-period building that followed a similar plan.⁶¹ This is based on the abnormal quantity of stones implying more than one phase of construction and because the votives include a number of images of Athena and other Hellenistic

⁵⁷ Ghirshman 1976, 76, 282.

⁵⁸ Seleukid coins in the terrace wall at Bard-i Nišandeh indicate 2nd century BC occupation (Ghirshman 1976, 13-38; Auge, Curiel & Le Rider 1979, x). Hannestad & Potts 1990, 115 suggest the podium is Achaemenid-period.

⁵⁹ Ghirshman 1976, plan III, Terrace II.

⁶⁰ Classical sources mention a number of temples in Elymais: Diod.XXVIII.3 of ‘Zeus’; also referred to as XXIX.15 of ‘Bel’; Just.*Epit.*XXXII.2.1-1 of ‘Jupiter Elymais’. Another is referred to as Polyb.XXXI.9.1 of ‘Artemis’; App.*Syr.*66 of ‘Aphrodite Elymeanæ’; II *Macc.*1.13-15 of ‘Nana’.

See also Aī Khanoum, where a podium on the acropolis was used contemporaneously with the temples in and outside the city walls.

⁶¹ Ghirshman 1976, 89.

subjects.⁶² This includes a small bronze head of Athena [67], a bronze plaque with a relief of her bust [66]. Ghirshman interprets the predominance of images of Athena and equestrian subjects [69, 71, 72] as indicative of a Seleukid temple to ‘Athena Hippiia’ and Parthian temple to Anahita and Mithra. This interpretation should be treated with caution due to the lack of epigraphic evidence for these deities and for a change in religious practice.

In addition to the image of Athena, the image of Herakles is also common at this site. The ‘Temple of Herakles’ at the north-west edge of the sanctuary is so named for the proliferation of Heraklean iconography in and around this building. There is no evidence for a Seleukid-period origin of this structure.⁶³ The statue 65 was found in three pieces built into the wall of the terrace outside the ‘Temple of Herakles’ (and the head does not belong to the body). There is no evidence for an original setting on a base inside the structure, even in front of the small niche on a central axis in the rear wall of the ‘cella’, so there is no evidence it was a cult statue.

The long-reaching influence of the image of Herakles in Iranian art, however, is clear. There are many fragments of *bas*-reliefs from this site and others showing Herakles, stylistically dated to the late Parthian/early Sasanian period.⁶⁴ 65 is dated variously to the first century AD, first half of the second century AD or beginning of the third century AD, largely on the basis of stylistic comparison with the Bisitun

⁶² There are also ceramic, iron, bronze and terracotta objects assigned to the Seleukid period.

⁶³ Boyce & Grenet 1991, 44.

⁶⁴ Ghirshman 1976, pl.19 (GMIS.13) lower half of nude Herakles with lion-skin; pl.34 (GMIS.463) fragment of nude male leg and hand; pl.69 (GMIS 3) fragment of human with lion. See also Herakles carrying club and rattle (British Museum, ME 127335). Kawami 1987, no.44: Tang-i Sarvak Rock I.

Herakles relief [86].⁶⁵ The hero wrestles the Nemean Lion, though the lack of dynamism makes it seem as if Herakles is embracing a cat rather than locked in mortal combat with a terrifying monster.⁶⁶ In the tradition of the 'lion-strangler' in Neo-Assyrian art, the lion is smaller to increase the heroic stature of the warrior.⁶⁷ Anatomical detail on this statue is cursory and limited to delineation of the knee-caps, nipples and small biceps. Drill use accentuates the earlobes and the 'snail curls' of his hair and beard. The head appears much too large for the body, but this is because it belongs to another statue. Despite the Hellenistic nudity of the hero, he also wears a torque around his neck, earrings and bracelets in the Parthian fashion, and a diadem. Two other stone heads from Mašjid-i Solaiman are similarly rounded with closely cropped hair of small curls, though one has a beard and moustache like the head now on the lion-strangler statue and wears a hoop earring, and the other is clean-shaven. These sculptures, likely from after our period, show the selective reception of Hellenistic iconography, artistic style and sculptural format in an Iranian religious context.⁶⁸

The presence of the iconography of Greek deities in this rural Iranian sanctuary prompts questions of religious syncretism, here between Athena and Anahita, and Herakles and Verethragna.⁶⁹ The Bisitun Herakles relief [86] of 148 BC presents us with his name next to his iconography. An inscription on the lintel of a

⁶⁵ Kawami 1987, 113ff; Ghirshman 1976, 247; Mathiesen 1988, 209.

⁶⁶ See 24.

⁶⁷ Kawami 1987, 113; Louvre AO10862 from the palace of Sargon II at Khorsabad.

⁶⁸ Kawami 1987, 116-117.

⁶⁹ See Ch.V

cave at Karafto in Media from the end of the fourth or beginning of the third century

BC attests to the veneration of Herakles in Iran as it calls upon his protection:

Ἡρακλῆ[ς] ἐν[θ]άδε κατοκεῖ·
μηθὲν [ε]ἰσέλθοι κακόν

Herakles resides here.
Nothing evil may enter.⁷⁰

The Iranian interpretation of his iconography, however, is more ambiguous. Herakles' image was associated later with and used to represent the Zoroastrian *yazata* Verethragna [4] and the Elymaean Bel.⁷¹ It is unclear when this association developed or if it was an immediate 'translation' and if simultaneous interpretations were possible.⁷² The domination of Heraklean imagery strongly suggests a relationship to cultic practice, but without epigraphic support the interpretation remains ambiguous.

There are many 'Macedonian cavalryman' terracotta figurines [71] from this site.⁷³ The flat hat implies and the round shield confirms the identification of these figurines as based on Macedonian soldiers. They are simple forms with little detail and probably were dedicated as votives. The figurines demonstrate the popularity of Hellenistic iconography among the wider populace, and also were found at Kalgue, Susa, Telloh and Failaka.⁷⁴

⁷⁰ *I. Estremo Oriente* 269; Stein 1940, 324-346, fig.97-99.

⁷¹ Frye 1984, 274; Melikian-Chirvani 1998.

⁷² Compare 4 and the *hierothesion* of Antiochus I of Commagene at Nemrud Dağ (Sanders 1996).

⁷³ References to 'Macedonian riders' denote figurines with flat hats, while 'Macedonian cavalrymen' denotes figurines of riders with flat hat and round shield.

⁷⁴ Ghirshman 1976, 78-81; Martinez-Sève 2002, no.726-727; 30; 52.

A common variation on this type, also at Susa and Uruk, places a small ‘oriental goddess’ figure between the necks of a double-headed horse, on which a human in a broad flat hat rides [72].⁷⁵ The ‘oriental goddess’ figurines are very common at this site and many other Elymaean and Babylonian sites.⁷⁶ The female figure is nude, in a rigid pose with legs together and arms by her sides. This may represent one of the figurines rather than a direct representation of the goddess or a mortal woman as military ‘loot’. The addition of the female figurine increases the votive and amuletic function of the figurine, calling on female fertility as well as male military strength.⁷⁷

Representations of men not in Parthian costume are illustrated by a fragment of the leg of a bronze statuette [70] and a bronze sandaled foot from Bard-i Nišandeh.⁷⁸ The leg of 70 is bare and the angle of the bend suggests it was perhaps part of a jockey statuette. A life-size bronze finger from Mašjid-i Solaiman indicates the bronze statuary from Shami was not anomalous in Elymais.⁷⁹ The date of these pieces cannot be pinpointed, but they show Hellenistic artistic influence.

A small terracotta amulet in the shape of the head of the Egyptian god Bes was found in the North-West Construction [75]. The date of the amulet is unknown since the image of Bes had little chronological variation. We know there was movement of goods from Egypt to Elymais on an imperial level during the

⁷⁵ Ziegler 1962, pl.41.524; Martinez-Sève 2002, no.761-765, 766-767.

⁷⁶ 5; 18; 31; 41; 51; 73; 74.

⁷⁷ Ghirshman 1976, 79-80; Martinez-Sève 2002, 481.

⁷⁸ Ghirshman 1976, pl.XXXVIII, 2 & 3.

⁷⁹ Ibid, pl.C.11; Kawami 1987, 27.

Achaemenid period (e.g. the statue of Darius at Susa), but this small terracotta amulet indicates the trade and circulation of ‘lesser’ goods. This small rural sanctuary in the mountains was not isolated completely. Similarly, a terracotta bust of Harpocrates found near Bard-i Nišandeh shows the movement of religious iconography from the Mediterranean.⁸⁰

Although much of the material from Mašjid-i Solaiman cannot be dated confidently in the Hellenistic period, it is clear there was continued use, maintenance and expansion of this sanctuary during the third and second centuries BC. Iranian worship at open-air podia continued here and at nearby Bard-e Nechandeh.⁸¹ Temples were built at these sites following Mesopotamian architectural plans and were used concurrently (though not in conjunction) with the podia. The terracotta figurines [72] show the combination of motifs from Iranian and Hellenistic visual culture into single objects. The iconography of Herakles was absorbed into the visual culture of Elymais and had a lasting presence.

Shami.

The small sanctuary at Kalchandar in the Shami valley lies in the foothills of the Bakhtiari Mountains, by the plain of Izeh. The foundations of a mud-brick wall outline an area 9.14m by 19.81m. Inside this *temenos* was a baked-brick altar and two

⁸⁰ Ghirshman 1976, pl.XXXVIII, 4-6.

⁸¹ Boyce & Grenet 1991, 43-48.

rectangular paved areas, aligned with the walls of the *temenos*.⁸² There was a large quantity of ash and charred wood along the south-west interior of the *temenos* wall, perhaps the remnants of some form of wooden roof. Seven stone bases were scattered across the site, not in their original position. Also scattered in and around the *temenos* were fragments of marble and bronze sculpture, which formed at least ten or eleven statues. The site was destroyed in the mid-first century AD.⁸³

The date of the life-size bronze statue of a 'Parthian ruler' [76] is ambiguous. The ribbed headband first appears on coins of Orodes II (c.57-38 BC), but was presumably a recognised symbol of power by that point.⁸⁴ The statue shows a combination of frontality with depth of detail and the free-standing format, and of stiffness of form and symmetry with naturalism of representation. The practice of erecting free-standing sculptures is far more associated with Hellenic artistic tradition than Iranian, but here represents an Iranian subject. The belted v-necked long-sleeved jacket and long baggy trousers are typical Parthian costume. There are several other fragments in different scales that confirm the popularity of erecting statues of men in Parthian costume in this sanctuary.⁸⁵

A life-size face from a bronze statue [80] presents a different style for a male. This man is clean-shaven and has thick short locks of wavy hair. His ears are slightly elongated, he has a straight ridge to the nose, a strong brow and small mouth. A

⁸² Stein 1940, 149 proposes the larger paved area was the floor of a cella, c.1.8x2.7m, the temple's entrance at the western end facing the altar.

⁸³ Ibid, 156

⁸⁴ Curtis 1993, 65; Curtis 2007, 16 compares 76 to 1st-century AD Parthian coins.

⁸⁵ Stein 1940, fig.48, pl.V.3; 77; 79.

section of the back of a head is associated with two fragments of the face. The rear fragment shows a knotted diadem, suggesting the Hellenistic ruler statue type was also set up here, as well as the Parthian ruler type [76]. This fragment, fragments of a bent bare arm and a three-fingered hand that once held a sceptre or spear are associated tentatively with 80.⁸⁶ There have been various attempts to identify this as a portrait. The most credible suggestion is Okkonapses, ruler of Elymais c.140 BC.⁸⁷ The portraits on his coins, just as this bronze sculpture, echo the image of Alexander and the Seleukids. A fragment of a bare thigh indicates a figure heroically nude (at the least not in Parthian costume) was set up here.⁸⁸ The marble head of a woman or goddess [78] with her hair drawn loosely into a bun also is related strongly to Hellenistic statuary types.

The statues from Shami show the selectivity of the sculptors (and patrons) in their use of Hellenistic artistic traditions. The Parthian costume and emphasis on frontality and surface pattern are prominent, but the touch of naturalism and format of free-standing sculpture in bronze or marble are influences from Greek practices. Features of Hellenistic art dispersed to 'peripheral' rural sites, such as this sanctuary in a narrow steep valley, and were not confined to new Seleukid city foundations.

⁸⁶ Stein 1940, pl.V.4; Kawami 1987, 28.

⁸⁷ Boyce & Grenet 1991, 43 n.47.

⁸⁸ Stein 1940, pl.V.6.

Hung-i Aždar.

The *bas*-relief on a boulder at Hung-i Aždar in the plain of Izeh shows a man and three attendants in Parthian or Elymaean costume saluting an equestrian figure followed by an attendant [81]. The relief is on the south side of the boulder facing towards the mountain, therefore not highly visible to passing traffic.⁸⁹ Near the top of the north face is a small processional relief in two registers from the Middle or Neo-Elamite period.⁹⁰ This format of a platform in front of a rock relief is a Elamite tradition of sacred sites, such as at Kūrāngān and Kūl-e Farah, and the potsherds and small bronze bells found scattered in the area support the identification of some form of ritual activity.

The relief is unusual because of the sharp contrast in representation of the rider and his attendant in comparison to the four standing men. The equestrian and attendant are carved in profile (the rider's torso in three-quarter view), which is exceedingly rare in Parthian *bas*-reliefs.⁹¹ The four figures on the right are also differentiated from the equestrian and attendant through their clothing and representational style. They wear belted tunics over baggy trousers with deep folds, and torques around their necks. The central man, with a headband and pointed moustache, is much larger than all other figures, including the rider, implying he is the focus of the scene but has a lower status than the equestrian. The figure immediately right of the large standing figure is identified as an Elymaean priest by

⁸⁹ Kawami 1987, 119 notes the nearby relief at Yar Alivand is also obscured.

⁹⁰ Messina & Mehrkian 2008, 1.

⁹¹ See the three-quarter view figure in the Hung-i Kamalwand relief (Mathiesen 1992 cat.no. 3).

the roll of material draped over his left shoulder.⁹² The two smaller figures with folded arms on the right have pudding-bowl haircuts of Elymais and the ‘priest’ and central figure have the tripartite hairstyle of the Parthians and later Elymaeans, their right hands raised in salutation.

The equestrian figure is identified as Mithridates I by Vanden Berghe through comparisons with coin portraits, with the suggestion the whole scene, carved c.140 BC, shows the investiture of an Elymaean ruler (perhaps Kamniskires I) by the Arsacid ruler.⁹³ Alternative interpretations include that the relief was carved in the late second or early third century AD, or that the equestrian and his attendant were carved much earlier due to the different style of representation and perhaps shallower carving.⁹⁴ If the relief was carved at one time the dramatic stylistic differences must have some significance, presumably emphasising ethnic difference such as between Parthian and Elymaean.⁹⁵ The loose trousers with many folds and the tripartite hairstyle did not appear on coins until the first century BC, but it is likely the costume developed popularity before its significant expression as numismatic iconography.⁹⁶

⁹² Ghirshman 1976, 22; Kawami 1987, 143.

⁹³ Vanden Berghe 1963.

⁹⁴ Ibid. Kawami 1987, 24, 119ff suggests the late 2nd century AD, illustrating the revival or survival of earlier iconography and styles to emphasize dynastic continuity from the Seleukids to the Elymaean rulers. Smith 1988, 101-102 prefers c.150-100 BC. Mathiesen 1992, 17ff suggests the equestrian and attendant were carved during the reign of Mithridates I c.140 BC and the right section in the beginning of the 3rd century AD. Most identifications hinge on comparison with **76**. See Mathiesen 1992, 119-121 and Shayegan 2011, 105-110.

⁹⁵ Mathiesen 1992, 18.

⁹⁶ Curtis 1988, 270.

The resemblance between the face of the equestrian and Mithridates I's coin portraits is strong.⁹⁷ According to the Babylonian *Astronomical Diaries*, however, Phraates II was the first Arsacid king to conquer Elymais (133 BC).⁹⁸ Phraates II, Artabanus I and Mithridates II have similar hair and beards to Mithridates I, but wear a torque like the Hung-i Aždar equestrian figure, unlike Mithridates I.⁹⁹ Shayegan proposes the equestrian represents Phraates II and the central figure Kamniskires II, invested in 132 BC, commemorating their joint victory (represented by the eagles carrying wreaths to the figures) over Tigraios.¹⁰⁰ His long nose and sculpted cheekbones, however, do not much resemble the features on the coin portraits of Phraates II.

It is possible Kamniskires II commissioned this relief, emphasising his role as an important vassal by depicting himself in Parthian costume (since he had previously lived under Parthian protection in Babylonia) saluting his philhellene Parthian patron. The equestrian might be an inaccurate portrait of Phraates II, a reference to his father Mithridates I, or a more general reference to the Parthian overlords since Phraates II and Artabanus I's reigns were brief. Just as the Bisitun Herakles relief [86] (perhaps carved less than twenty years before), this relief is Iranian in format (and far more so than the Herakles which is almost in the round), while the subject and style draw on a medley of Hellenistic and Iranian traditions.

⁹⁷ Kawami 1987, 124 identifies this figure as Kamniskires I; Invernizzi 1998, 256-258 as Demetrius II.

⁹⁸ Shayegan 2011, 108.

⁹⁹ Kawami 1987, 120.

¹⁰⁰ Shayegan 2011, 110 notes a potential problem that the standing figure does not resemble coin portraits of Kamniskires II Soter. Compare the flying Nikai with wreaths crowning riders on the Gotarzes Relief at Bisitun.

Persepolis.

The monumental complex on the terrace (Takht-i Jamšid) at Persepolis, built into the west face of the Kūh-e Rahmet, was the centre of the Achaemenid administration from the rule of Darius I, perhaps constructed after his conquest of Egypt in 518 BC. It was an important symbol of Persian power and Iranian heritage. Alexander's burning of the Achaemenid terrace, as narrated in the classical literary sources, has support in the archaeological record.¹⁰¹ The destruction made not only a political statement of conquest and purportedly of revenge for the sack of Athens, but also held tactical advantage in preventing any usurpers (such as Bessus) taking control of it. There was some construction work on the terrace after the conflagration and before the Islamic period, re-using blocks from the plentiful remains of the Achaemenid buildings.¹⁰² The ruins of the terrace must have provided visual stimulation and an enduring testament to the Achaemenid past even in its abandoned state.¹⁰³ The Achaemenid royal tombs cut into the cliffs near Persepolis also were visible in this period. There are three tombs in the cliff behind Persepolis, and four earlier rock tombs at Naqš-i Rostam on the southern face of Hosayn Kūh.¹⁰⁴ These provided a lasting reminder of Achaemenid power and the addition of Sasanian rock reliefs to the cliff face demonstrates the significance to the later Persian rulers.¹⁰⁵ Each Achaemenid king followed the model set by Darius I for the relief decoration of their

¹⁰¹ Plut.*Vit.Alex.*38; Curt.V.7.1-10; Diod.XVII.72; Arr.*Anab.*III.18.11-12; Schmidt 1953, 121; Wiesehöfer 1996, 104-6.

¹⁰² Schmidt 1953, 51, 55-6, 279; Tilia 1972-8, 315-316; Tilia 1977, 74-75; Kawami 1987, 17; see Schmidt 1953, 51 fig.17 E-G for a re-used Achaemenid doorway erected east of the *frataraka* temple.

¹⁰³ Root 1994, 36-37; Canepa 2010, 565.

¹⁰⁴ Kawami 1987, 18; Schmidt 1970, 80-118, pl.1-79.

¹⁰⁵ Schmidt 1970, 13. 8km south of Persepolis at Akhur-i Rostam are five small rock-cut tombs. Four are plain, but one has an Ionic *kymation* (Boyce & Grenet 1991, 121). The presence of Greek stone-workers and architects in the Achaemenid period is known (see Kawami 1987, 21-24). Greek artistic influence may not attest a post-Achaemenid date.

tomb, which seems also to have influenced the iconography of the *fratarakā*.¹⁰⁶ Traces of the site's occupation after the Macedonian conquest were found 200m north of the Achaemenid terrace at the so-called '*frataraka temple*'.¹⁰⁷ This appellation is a misnomer since it comprises two complexes linked by a passage or street and the function of both complexes is unclear.¹⁰⁸ It seems likely there was a distinct break between the construction of the northwest complex and the later southeast complex.

The style and subjects of the two *bas*-reliefs on the window jambs in the south-eastern complex indicate this complex may be from the early Parthian period [83]. The composition and position of these two figures with arms raised in front of them is similar to the many doorjamb reliefs on the Achaemenid terrace. The low level of polish on the *bas*-reliefs and the use of incision rather than modelling for details, however, suggests a date close to the Bisitun 'Mithridates Relief' [87].¹⁰⁹ The two figures carry *barsom* rods, the bundles of sticks used in Iranian ritual. It is problematic to suggest this iconography confirms a cultic function for the south-eastern complex.¹¹⁰

Although the argument for identifying the north-western complex as a fire temple seems weak, Room 5 does appear to have had some cultic function.¹¹¹ This is a square room accessed through a portico with a double row of four columns. The

¹⁰⁶ Discussed further below and in Ch.VI.

¹⁰⁷ Schmidt 1953, 56.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid; Bernard 1969, 337 n.1; Callieri 2007; Stronach 1985, 614, 696: the finds (including spindle whorls, Achaemenid objects, loom weights, whetstones, clay bowls) suggest an early date and domestic function.

¹⁰⁹ Kawami 1987, 18.

¹¹⁰ Wiesehöfer 1996, 108; Canepa 2010, 566.

¹¹¹ For evidence against the identification of this structure as a fire temple, see Callieri 2007.

entrance to this room, the four stepped column bases inside it, and the large rectangular base against the rear wall are axially aligned with the northernmost intercolumniation of the portico. In Rooms 11, 14 and 20 are campaniform bases, likely re-used here from the Achaemenid terrace.¹¹² The three-stepped torus bases [82] have no parallels on the terrace, but are similar to column bases at Achaemenid Pasargadae and at many sites in Iran and Bactria after the Macedonian conquest (including Susa, Old Nisa, Takht-i Sangin and Ai Khanoum).¹¹³

The cuttings found on the top of the rectangular base in Room 5 belie the identification of this room as a fire temple.¹¹⁴ The rectangular mortise and traces of metal indicate the base supported a marble statue (as bronze sculptures were fixed with round mortise and tenon joints or none at all).¹¹⁵ The mouldings around the base are comparable to Greek forms of the fifth and fourth centuries BC.¹¹⁶ The position of the base axial to the entrance and against the back wall suggests a cult statue. A marble foot carved in the Hellenistic naturalistic style found in recent excavations of the complex may be part of the statue from this base.¹¹⁷ The erection of a cult statue was not part of Iranian religious practice and free-standing sculpture itself was not a commonplace part of Iranian visual culture in the secular sphere.¹¹⁸ It appears the

¹¹² Schmidt 1953, 56; Herzfeld 1941, pl.LXXXV.2, Callieri 2007, 56.

¹¹³ Schmidt 1953, 56. Nylander 1970, 103 identifies compares these to Achaemenid bases Pasargadae (Schmidt 1978, 59, 61, fig.28a). Litvinskij & Pičikyan 2002, 76-83 for comparison of stepped torus bases.

¹¹⁴ Callieri 2007, 60-61, fig.32-34.

¹¹⁵ Tilia in Boyce 1982, 226; Callieri 2007, 61.

¹¹⁶ Schmidt 1953, 55-56; Schmidt 1971a, 177-182; Callieri 2007, 61.

¹¹⁷ Callieri 2007, 62.

¹¹⁸ Berossus *FHG* II, 508-9 on Artaxerxes II's erection of statues of Anahita in Babylon, Susa, Persepolis, Ecbatana and Bactra. See the statue of Darius found in Susa imported from Egypt (Kervran 1972); the white marble 5th century BC 'Penelope' from Persepolis; Plut.*Alex.*37 mentions a toppled

heightened channels of exchange in visual culture after the Macedonian conquest facilitated the development of a statue habit and the use of cult statues.¹¹⁹

Five limestone plaques with Greek inscriptions were found in Room 5.¹²⁰ They have no holes to attach them to a fitting so it is possible they were set into, for example, a brick construction.¹²¹ The inscriptions are genitives of Zeus Megistos, Helios, Athena Basileia, Artemis and Apollo. These dedicatory inscriptions support the impression of religious activity concerning Greek deities in Room 5 of the north-west complex.

The mouldings and inscriptions from the north-west complex suggest this building was occupied in the period of Macedonian rule at the end of the fourth century.¹²² Post-Achaemenid activity is attested at Persepolis in the classical sources, when Peukestas holds a banquet in 316 BC.¹²³ The south-eastern complex was perhaps built in the early third century under the *fratarakā* (see discussion of the latest chronology for the *fratarakā* below).¹²⁴

statue of Xerxes at Persepolis, but its form is unknown and this may be a narrative tool. Hdt.7.69 Darius commissions a gold statue of his wife Artystone.

¹¹⁹ See also statuary from Shami, discussed above, **144**, remains of feet of a bronze statue at Takht-i Sangin (Litvinskij & Pičikyan 200, pl.13, 34) and base for a cult statue in Temple A in F5 on Failaka (Jeppesen 1989, fig.35, 55-62).

¹²⁰ Robert 1967, 282; Rougemont 1999; *I.Estremo Oriente* 241-245.

¹²¹ Callieri 2007, 66.

¹²² *I.Estremo Oriente* 241-245 dated to the 'time of Alexander', following Herzfeld. Robert 1967, 282 suggests the High Hellenistic period and Rougemont 1999 the 3rd century BC.

¹²³ Diod.XIX.22.2.

¹²⁴ Harnestad & Potts 1990, 112-113.

Pasargadae. There is no sign of destruction at end of Achaemenid period on the Tall-e Takht, but evidence of a fire c.280 BC, perhaps a rebellion of the *fratarakā* who then occupied the site until c.180 BC.¹²⁵ A stepped merlon with Greek inscriptions on both faces was found on the latest (Seleukid period) floor level of the citadel.¹²⁶ Such crenulations are common crowning ornamentation to Babylonian, Achaemenid and Parthian monumental architecture. The text is badly damaged but two lines of an Aramaic summary below the Greek are visible.¹²⁷ Another fragment of a stepped merlon from the plain of Persepolis, near Marv Dašt, also has Greek inscriptions on both faces.¹²⁸ The inscription denotes a distance in stadia and perhaps dates to the end of the fourth century or beginning of the third century BC. There are no attestations of such milestones before Macedonian rule.¹²⁹ These indicate Seleukid maintenance and enhancement of the Achaemenid road network and continuation of official multilingualism.¹³⁰ The anecdote that Alexander restored the tomb of Cyrus the Great also indicates Macedonian respect for the physical legacy of the Achaemenids at Pasargadae.¹³¹

Coins of Persis. Little is known about the independent and semi-independent rulers of Persis after the Macedonian conquest. Their names are known from their numismatic issues and various interpretations have been proffered for their

¹²⁵ Stronach 1978, 155-156.

¹²⁶ Ibid, 160-161, pl.135-136; *I.Estremo Oriente* 248.

¹²⁷ Bivar 1978, 161-162.

¹²⁸ Bernard 1995, 73-96; Callieri 1995, 65-73; *I.Estremo Oriente* 127.

¹²⁹ Bernard 1995, 92.

¹³⁰ Callieri 2007, 34.

¹³¹ Plut.*Alex.*LXIX.2; Strabo XV.3.7; Arr.6.29.4-14.

chronology.¹³² These so-called '*fratarakā*' dynasts of Persis issued their own coinage following Seleukids by using the Attic standard.¹³³ The coins were not excavated at Persepolis, but the location of the mint was likely at the presumed centre of the dynasts' power and Persepolis is presumed the main urban centre of Persis.¹³⁴ These tetradrachms were not the main coins in circulation but were 'Prestigeprägung', of great symbolic value.¹³⁵

Since the 1986 hoard contained only issues of Wahbarz, Ardaxšīr and Seleukos I, and a number of overstrikes, Hoover proposes a convincing new chronology for the known Persid rulers.¹³⁶ The first ruler, Ardaxšīr, seized independence and overstruck Seleukid issues before c.295 BC, while Seleukos I and Antiochus were occupied in Asia Minor.¹³⁷ Wahbarz followed Ardaxšīr, also before c.295 BC. An Aramaic graffito of *bgdt* (Baydād) scratched onto a drachm of Wādfraḏād I and an overstrike of Wādfraḏād I on a tetradrachm of Baydād suggests the two were contemporary rivals.¹³⁸ The need for a stronger presentation of legitimacy and power presented by this solution also explains the unusual issue of Baydād where the reverse investiture scene echoes Achaemenid ruler iconography

¹³² Curtis 2010, 387ff for a summary of the scholarship.

¹³³ Naster 1968 on *frataraka* (governor); *fratadara* (guardian of the fire) or *fratakara*; Skjaervo 1997, 102ff translates as 'who is before, ahead of, prior, superior'.

¹³⁴ Kritt 1997.

¹³⁵ Alram 1987, 162.

¹³⁶ Hoover 2008, 213-215. The Alram 1986 sequence is one group without break from the beginning of the 3rd century BC: Baydād; Ardaxšīr; Wahbarz; Wādfraḏād I, Wādfraḏād II(?) (2nd century BC); 'unknown ruler'; Dārāyān I; Wādfraḏād III (by 100BC). Klose & Müseler 2008 follow the Alram sequence but place a break after Wādfraḏād I, resuming in the 2nd century BC. Wiesehöfer 2011, 117 follows Hoover's sequence but proposes a later chronology, with Ardaxšīr a sub-Seleukid dynast at the beginning of the 2nd century BC to Wādfraḏād II, a Parthian 'vassal king' c.140 BC.

¹³⁷ Hoover 2008, 215; Curtis 2010, 390.

¹³⁸ Hoover 2008, 215: Wādfraḏād I succeeding Wahbarz and ruling until after c.281, succeeded by Baydād; or Baydād ruling c.295 until Wādfraḏād I.

[84].¹³⁹ It is only these first four rulers who use the title *frataraka*. Wādfraḏād II does not use this title and has a very different type of coinage.¹⁴⁰ Seleukid control of Persis in the late third century is suggested in Polybius' mention of an Alexander, satrap of Persis at the time of his brother Molon's revolt c.222-220 BC.¹⁴¹ It is possible Wādfraḏād II ruled Persis in the later second century as a sub-Seleukid dynast. A similarity in the portrait of Wādfraḏād III with Mithridates I and II, may indicate Parthian overlordship and a date after 140 BC for this Persid ruler.¹⁴²

The Persid rulers wear the Iranian *bašlyk* with the Hellenistic diadem. Thus, they can display their cultural affiliations and emphasise their Iranian identity, but also connect with a wider audience accustomed to diademed portraits of rulers on their coins, whether of Seleukid or Parthian.¹⁴³ The majority of Persid ruler portraits show the 'satrapal' peaked *bašlyk* with the cheeks and chin covered [85].¹⁴⁴ One issue of Bayḏād [84] is distinct from other Persid issues. His *bašlyk* leaves the face uncovered and on the reverse he is enthroned rather than standing and saluting a structure [85].¹⁴⁵ The face-covering *bašlyk* is often called a priestly attribute, but it is

¹³⁹ Curtis 2010, 388.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid, 391.

¹⁴¹ Polyb.V.40.7.

¹⁴² Curtis 2010, 391.

¹⁴³ The proposition this is the diadem worn by the Achaemenid king's *syngeneis* (Wiesehöfer 2007, 43) is not convincing. See Strootman 2011, 366ff.

¹⁴⁴ Wiesehöfer 2011, 115. Curtis 2011, 394 n.9 says a distinction between a priestly or royal *bašlyk* and satrapal *bašlyk* should be treated with caution.

¹⁴⁵ Curtis 2010, 215 suggests this issue was the model for the cruder second series of Persis in the late 2nd century BC (Wādfraḏād II, the 'unknown ruler' and Dareyān).

also seen on the tribute-carrying figures of the Persepolis staircase reliefs, suggesting primarily it denotes Persian ethnicity.¹⁴⁶

The reverse of the first issue of Baydād [84] shows a seated figure (presumably the *frataraka*) holding a sceptre and a cup. His high-backed chair, clothing (long-sleeves, *kandys* and long robes), sceptre, cup and the fringed standard in front of him are all very similar to Achaemenid motifs, particularly the relief of Darius from the *apadana*. Wiesehöfer suggests this is not a precise replication of Achaemenid motifs, but a carefully altered and calculated construction, where the *frataraka* holds the Seleukid, not Achaemenid, sceptre; the *bašlyk* is not that of the Great King; the bow is recurve not single-arched; and the ruler holds a cup instead of a lotus.¹⁴⁷ The status of the Persid rulers as client kings, at times claiming further independence, placed them in a more delicate position. This slightly more diplomatic image asserted their Persian heritage but did not publicize a claim to the title of ‘Great King’ and thereby did not imply direct competition with the Seleukids and Parthians.

The majority of Persid issues show a figure in *bašlyk*, *kandys* and long robes (presumably the ruler) standing with raised arms in front of a rectangular structure [85]. On the other side of the structure is a tasselled standard with an ‘X’ design and a

¹⁴⁶ Zoroastrian priests wear this form of head-covering, but whether the head-covering alone identifies a priest is doubtful. De Jong 1997, 403. Strabo 5.13.15 describes Persian priests in this headwear, with *barsom* rods.

¹⁴⁷ Wiesehöfer 2007, 43; Alram 1986, no.533.

dot in each field. This is an Achaemenid military standard.¹⁴⁸ The importance of this standard is certain since it is the only motif to appear on all coins of the first four rulers.¹⁴⁹ The clothing, gesture and juxtaposition of the standing figure with the *faravahar* have been interpreted as indicating the religious role of the figure, though it is unclear whether they are worshippers or ‘priest-kings’ and ‘guardian of the shrine’.¹⁵⁰ The gesture of the raised arm is shown on the Tomb of Darius I, where Darius stands in front of a fire altar, and on the Bisitun Relief, where he punishes the rebels. The figure in the *faravahar* at the centre of the tomb’s relief and at Bisitun also raises an arm.¹⁵¹ This gesture, therefore, perhaps indicates salutation rather than worship.

The identification of the structure in front of the ruler on these coins is ambivalent.¹⁵² It has two three-panelled doors and a frieze of dentils under the entablature, topped with three horned merlons resembling those on the south-west wall of the Achaemenid terrace at Persepolis (Palace H).¹⁵³ The abbreviated structure on coins of Wādfradād II has stepped triangular merlons, similar to **91** and common to Iranian, Elamite and Babylonian architecture. The structures bear comparison with the Achaemenid structures of the Ka’ba-i Zardošt at Naqš-i Rostam and Zendan-i Solaiman at Pasargadae (although there is no evidence of merlons on the roofs of

¹⁴⁸ Nylander 1983, 19-37; Bernard 1984, 263-264; Cohen 1997, 124-126; Douris cup c.490 BC (Louvre G117); Hdt.9.59.2. De Jong 2003 argues this standard is a religious symbol.

¹⁴⁹ De Jong 2003, 191.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid, 215; Curtis 2010, 201.

¹⁵¹ See also **81**.

¹⁵² See Potts 2007 for summary of the scholarship on this issue.

¹⁵³ Tilia 1972, fig.128-129; Callieri 2007, 120.

these structures).¹⁵⁴ The religious function of the motif, as receptacle, shrine or altar, is suggested since the royal *khvarnah* (glory), represented by the *faravahar* above this structure, was supposed to reside in the fire, though the motif is seen without the fire in many Achaemenid motifs, including at Takht-i Jamšid and Bisitun.¹⁵⁵ The motif is very different from fire altars on Achaemenid and Sasanian coins, and since we have no certain fire temples of the third and second centuries BC (or before) this cannot be corroborated.¹⁵⁶ At the least, we can say this image promotes the Persid rulers as guardians of this Persepolitan building, perhaps signifying Persian culture, heritage or Persepolis itself, caring for and favoured by Auramazdā.

The merlons, standard, tower, *faravahar* and ruler representation with raised arms or seated in a high-backed chair all show the adoption of motifs from the Achaemenid reliefs and architecture of Persepolis and Naqš-i Rostam, rather than imitation of Achaemenid coinage.¹⁵⁷ The name of Darayan (Darius) (ruled after 133 BC) also implies a concerted effort to resuscitate links to their Achaemenid heritage, and he is the first of the Persid rulers to use the title ‘šah’.¹⁵⁸ Even if the status of Great King was not claimed and, indeed, carefully avoided, their Persian heritage, including the Achaemenids, was central to the representation of these rulers.

¹⁵⁴ Jackson 1906, 302-303; Potts 2007, 296. The lack of access to the roof of either structure (Potts 2007, 281) makes it unlikely they were used for exposing the dead. Curtis 2010, 389 notes it unlikely these structures’ functions were forgotten by the time of the *fratarakā*, perhaps only 40 years after Achaemenid rule.

¹⁵⁵ Houtkamp 1991, 25.

¹⁵⁶ PFS66 shows both motifs, affirming their separate function, with two ‘worshippers’ (Garrison 2011, 53).

¹⁵⁷ Kawami 1987, 18.

¹⁵⁸ Callieri 2007, 125.

On the reverse of issues of Wādfradād I, Nike crowns the ruler in the otherwise typical *frataraka* reverse scene. This is perhaps a specific reference to the trophy coins of Seleukos I, which many of the early Persid issues overstrike.¹⁵⁹ Once again, a selective receptivity and iconographic freedom is illustrated by the use of the Hellenistic Nike in combination with the Achaemenid standard, Persepolitan architecture, Iranian costume and *faravahar*). Although the *fratarakā* emphasised their Persian heritage in their iconography, they were not restricted from using Hellenistic motifs where it suited their purposes.

An issue of Wahbarz presents a different reverse image of a *frataraka*.¹⁶⁰ The large figure stabs a smaller fallen man with short hair who wears Greco-Macedonian tunic and carries the hoplite's round shield. The victor wears Persian dress: a belted tunic with long sleeves but not the *kandys*. The drapery around his striding legs is very similar to that of the Darius and guards on the Bisitun Relief, on the 'seal of Darius' PFT 007, the archer on darics and in particular Artaxerxes III defeating Nectanebo on a seal in the Hermitage.¹⁶¹ Instead of a *bašlyk*, as other *fratarakā* issues, Wahbarz wears a tall hat and has a full pointed beard. This is not a specifically royal headgear, however, but the fluted hat of the Persians, as seen on the guards of the *apadana* relief at Persepolis.¹⁶² He is using a dagger but is also armed extraneously (and therefore perhaps symbolically) with the traditional Iranian bow

¹⁵⁹ Wiesehöfer 2011, 113. See also the Gotarzes Relief at Bisitun.

¹⁶⁰ There are only two examples of this issue. Alram 1987a, pl.20.7; Bivar 1998, fig.26b; Klose & Müseler 2008, 36, pl.6, type 2/16a & b. Wiesehöfer 2011, n.38 doubts their authenticity. Klose & Müseler 2008 and Shayegan 2011 accept them.

¹⁶¹ Klose & Müseler 2008, fig.19.

¹⁶² Schmidt 1953, 52.

and quiver. A palm of victory hangs down his back, emphasising the theme of the Aramaic legend: ‘*whbrz wnt ZY krny*’ - ‘Wahbarz was/may be victorious, (he) who (is) the commander’ (κάρανος).¹⁶³

This issue is suggestive of Polyaeus’ account of the massacre of 3,000 Greek κατοίκοι by Oborzos (presumed a Greek transliteration of Wahbarz).¹⁶⁴ The use of the military title ‘κάρανος’ (rather than ‘*frataraka*’) is surely significant, though whether the issue commemorates a specific event or general anti-Hellenic sentiment is conjecture.¹⁶⁵ While the issue does not necessarily indicate independence, it is certainly not a very diplomatic image if Wahbarz was still a client of the Seleukids.¹⁶⁶

The *fratarakā* are shown consistently as defending Persian heritage. The title *frataraka* (governor) is administrative rather than the sacred *fratadara* (guardian of the fire). If the standard repeated on their coinage relates to royal or military Achaemenid heritage and the building shown is not primarily religious but definitely Persepolitan, then perhaps the *fratarakā* were concerned to be shown as the protectors of Persis as much as upholders of Zoroastrianism. The depiction of the *faravahar*, priestly costume and pose show the religious role was a major part of their ruler representation even if we cannot identify the precise function of the so-called ‘altar shrine’ structure.¹⁶⁷ The two meanings might be construed as inseparable. Achaemenid visual culture, so dominant in the monumental landscape of the region,

¹⁶³ Shayegan 2011, 170.

¹⁶⁴ Polyaeus.7.40; Wiesehöfer 1994, 101.

¹⁶⁵ Shayegan 2011, 176-7.

¹⁶⁶ Klose & Müseler 2008, 27-30.

¹⁶⁷ Curtis 2011, 390.

was renegotiated for new purposes. The new dating of the *fratarakā* to less than forty years after the death of Darius III softens the concept of an ‘Iranian decline’ in visual culture.¹⁶⁸ These Persid rulers ‘engaged Achaemenid visual culture as a prestigious starting point for their official representation’ alongside Hellenistic motifs which did not infringe the presentation of their Iranian identity.¹⁶⁹

Bisitun.

The rock-cut reliefs of Bisitun demonstrate succinctly the theme of continuity within change. In the shadow of the relief of Darius I lies that of Hyakinthos [86], the ‘Mithridates II relief’ [87] and the Gotarzes Relief, showing continuity in the carving of rock-cut reliefs at this site by those in power from the Achaemenid through the Seleukid and Parthian periods.

The relief low down on the south face of the Bisitun mountain, dedicated by Hyakinthos son of Pantaukhos (names of Macedonian and Thessalian origin), is accompanied by a Greek inscription on a stele [86].¹⁷⁰ The inscription dedicates the relief for the Seleukid governor of the Upper Satrapies in 148 BC, shortly before the Parthian conquest of the region c.141 BC.¹⁷¹ The precise date is invaluable not only as a basis for stylistic and technical comparison with other monuments, attesting to Herakles’ image in Media, but also to Seleukid rule in Media up to this point.

¹⁶⁸ Hermann 1977.

¹⁶⁹ Canepa 2010, 518.

¹⁷⁰ *I.Estremo Oriente* 274; Robert 1963, 76, n.7.

¹⁷¹ Robert 1949, 23-24; Robert 1950, 73-75.

The relief shows a nude bearded male figure reclining on his left side on a lion skin, holding a small curved cup or bowl in his left hand. Behind him are a club, a bow in a *gorytos*, a quiver of arrows, a tree (perhaps an olive tree) and a stele crowned with a pediment. Nudity is rare in Iranian artistic traditions, yet the rock-relief format is very much part of those traditions. The Iranian rock-reliefs are most commonly in *bas*-relief, however, much shallower than this Herakles, which is almost in the round. The sculptor has attempted to show relaxed naturalistic limbs, yet there remains rigidity to the figure, in addition to the stocky proportions and almost cursory attention to the anatomy. The side-view of this pointed beard of snail-curly, that is, the view from the road, is not dissimilar from the Achaemenid fashion.¹⁷²

The Herakles relief, roughly 1m high, sits on a small ridge overlooking the main thoroughfare past the site: a busy highway linking Babylon and Ecbatana. It was easily visible to anyone passing by. The Parthian *bas*-reliefs are also on lower rock faces, while the relief of Darius I looms high above them. These later reliefs are associated with the relief of Darius through their location, but are far more visible to travellers and visitors.

The question of interpretation of the Herakles relief by the contemporary audience rests upon the development of syncretism. The figure here is labelled clearly as the Greek god Herakles Kallinikos. Herakles was known ‘as himself’ at a number

¹⁷² Stronach suggests the lion *bas*-relief is an Achaemenid relief (Kleiss 1970, 145).

of sites across the Iranian plateau, such as at Karafto.¹⁷³ The inscription on the bronze statue from Seleucia-on-the-Tigris [4] specifically aligns Herakles and Verethragna, but how early this association was made and to what degree it became syncretism of worship, if ever, is unclear.¹⁷⁴

The relief of Sheikh Ali Khan Zangeneh (1669-1691 AD) has erased almost all the ‘Mithridates Relief’ [87] at Bisitun. Any discussion of the relief is heavily reliant on a 17th-century drawing by Grelot. Kawami points out numerous features of the drawing do not correlate to the remains, undermining the drawing’s reliability for detailed analysis of the relief and eradicating evidence for the words ‘*basileus megas*’ and ‘Mithridates’ (the name is ‘Mithrates’), and thereby any association with Mithridates II.¹⁷⁵ There are added complications to its interpretation since it is possible the relief and accompanying inscription were not executed at the same time and are unfinished.¹⁷⁶ The flat and incised style of the relief similar to 83 contrasts with Achaemenid styles, which, in addition to the Greek inscription, indicates an early Parthian date (second half of the second century BC or beginning of the first century BC).¹⁷⁷ The over-lapping by the Gotarzes (either I c.95-90 BC, or II 40-51 AD) Relief to the right supports this attribution.

Grelot’s sketch shows four figures in right profile facing a man in left profile, all in long robes. The inscription names a ‘satrap of satraps’ which may refer to one

¹⁷³ *I.Estremo Oriente* 269.

¹⁷⁴ See Ch.V.

¹⁷⁵ Kawami 1987, 35-37.

¹⁷⁶ Mathiesen 1992, 19; *I.Estremo Oriente* 275.

¹⁷⁷ Kawami 1987, 36.

of the figures in the relief, such as the figure on the right (usually identified as Mithridates II) or the leading right-facing man who is the only other figure in headgear. The scene of procession and gift-giving is very much part of Achaemenid ruler representation: the relief of Darius 60m above shows a similar composition of the Great King in front of a row of subjects with his right arm raised.¹⁷⁸ This differs to Achaemenid ruler representation in that he is not distinguished by scale. The figure on the right (only visible in Grelot's drawing) is, if anything, shorter than the approaching dignitaries.

The difference in subject and patron may have affected the form as much as the sculptors' ethnicity. The visual links of proximity, style, form and content of the 'Mithridates Relief' to the Darius Relief send a slightly different political message that closely ties the commissioner of the relief to the Achaemenid forebears. The Herakles relief publicizes the local governor, but does not present such a direct link, since the Seleukid elite are taking part in the Iranian visual traditions but combining the format with their own subjects and style of representation. It seems a particular representation of Herakles, with bow and cup, was popular in Iran. Herakles is not shown with a bow in Greece after the Classical period, and although he is occasionally shown reclining at a *symposion*, cup in hand, it is not as common as standing with club and lion-skin.¹⁷⁹ The 'Mithridates Relief', commissioned by or for a Parthian satrap of satraps, demonstrates the continued influence of Achaemenid art, the importance of Achaemenid heritage (suggested by the choice of location near the

¹⁷⁸ Mathiesen 1992, 21.

¹⁷⁹ Himmelmann 2008.

relief of Darius) and the inclusion of Hellenistic features (the inscription and perhaps the Nike if it existed) in a new Parthian style.

Ecbatana.

The ‘Stone Lion of Hamadan’ [88], badly damaged, lies on top of a Parthian cemetery in a park in the modern city.¹⁸⁰ The lion originally sat on a mound west of the city, overlooking the Khorasan Highway.¹⁸¹ The Hellenistic sculptural style suggests a late fourth century BC date for the erection of the monument.¹⁸² The statue, when complete, sat upright on its hind legs, in the manner of victory monuments at Amphipolis and Chaeronea, both from the second half of the fourth century.¹⁸³ A connection with Alexander’s second visit in 324 BC is suggested by the tenth-century AD inhabitants’ belief Alexander dedicated the statue on his return from Khorasan as a talisman to protect the city.¹⁸⁴ Both this eastern *anabasis* and the battle of Gaugamela that preceded his first visit in 330 BC do not present obvious candidates for commemoration at Ecbatana. An association with Antigonos or Seleukos is usually discounted due to Polybius’ description of their stripping the precious metals rather than adding to the decoration of the city.¹⁸⁵ There is no recorded battle at Ecbatana in the late fourth century, but the notable event recorded during Alexander’s second visit was the death of Hephæstion.¹⁸⁶ There are erect

¹⁸⁰ Al-Mas’udi *Le Prairies D’Or* IX.CXXX, 22; Yakut *Dictionnaire*, 606-608.

¹⁸¹ Al-Mas’udi *Le Prairies D’Or* IX.CXXX, 21.

¹⁸² Lushey 1968, 120.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁴ Al-Mas’udi *Le Prairies D’Or* IX.CXXX, 21.

¹⁸⁵ Polyb.XXVII.11.

¹⁸⁶ Arr.*Anab.* VII.14; Lushey 1968, 121-122.

sitting marble lions as funerary markers in Greece at the end of the fourth century, and the extramural original position of the statue suits a funerary purpose. A direct funerary context (a marker rather than a monument) should be treated with caution since Hephaestion's funeral took place at Babylon.¹⁸⁷

While we cannot be sure of the monument's original purpose, it attests the presence of Hellenistic sculptural styles of very high quality in Media. The tenth-century AD writer Al-Mas'udi comments upon the incredibly realistic depiction.¹⁸⁸ The movement of craftsmen, such as the 3,000 artists (including actors, musicians and highly skilled sculptors) ordered from Greece to Alexander in Ecbatana, created a surge in Hellenistic art in Iran.¹⁸⁹ A previous sculptural tradition in Ecbatana is attested in the dedications of Artaxerxes II to Anahita, the first example of 'honouring statues in human shape' in Iran.¹⁹⁰ The 'Lion of Hamadan' was a highly visible monument in a Hellenistic style that became an integral symbol of the city's identity.

Old Nisa.

In the fortified citadel of 'Old Nisa' are the remains of a monumental building complex (**fig.17**). From inscriptions on two ostraka the excavators identify the site as

¹⁸⁷ See the grave marker from Marathon (Getty Museum 73.AA.121), similar to the victory monuments of Chaeronea and Amphipolis. Palagia 2012, 370-371 unconvincingly proposes it was a funerary monument of Parmenio.

¹⁸⁸ Al-Mas'udi *Le Prairies D'Or* IX.CXXX, 21.

¹⁸⁹ Plut. *Vit. Alex.* 72.

¹⁹⁰ De Jong 1997, 278; Berossus *FGrH* G80 F.11. See also: Polyb. X.27.12 on Ecbatana, Temple of Anaitis; Plut. *Vit. Art.* 27.4 on Artemis of Ecbatana who the Persians call Anaitis.

‘Mithradatkert’ (‘fortress of Mithridates’, presumed Mithridates I, 171-138 BC).¹⁹¹ 1km north of Old Nisa is the larger acropolis of ‘New Nisa’, associated with the Arsacid capital ‘Parthounisa’.¹⁹² Coins from the ‘Square House’ indicate occupation at Old Nisa was most active during the third and second centuries BC.¹⁹³ The function of every building is ambiguous.¹⁹⁴ The monumental scale of the buildings (and therefore the cost and organisation required for such a project), the extensive fortifications and strategic location commanding this valley in central Parthia suggests a ceremonial complex built by a Parthian king or satrap. We cannot use the term ‘palace’ since no residential structures are identified, but it seems safe to assume an Arsacid connection with and involvement at the site. The architectural ornament, sculpture and small finds show the adoption of Hellenistic iconography and styles, and the adaptation to suit the existing preferences and ideologies of Parthians and the Arsacid court.

There are extensive remains of architectural ornament from the excavations at Old Nisa. Many of these fragments show forms common to Hellenistic visual culture adapted to the traditions of Parthia, northern Iranian lands and the Steppes. Assembled terracotta ‘pseudo-Corinthian’ pilaster capitals, where the acanthus leaves and scrolls were made individually [93], decorated the Red Building, Tower Building, Building with the Square Hall and the Round Hall. Traces of red paint

¹⁹¹ Djakonov & Livsic 1960, 22-23, 111: ostrakon 1963 and 681: ‘MDT’ and the scribe ‘Frahenaq, who is from Mithradatkert’.

¹⁹² Masson & Pugachenkova 1982; Isidore of Charax *Parthian Stations* 12.

¹⁹³ Masson & Pugachenkova 1982, 17: 40 coins, mostly from the 3rd and 2nd centuries, of Alexander, Seleukids, Greco-Bactrians, Sogdian and Pontic kingdoms. Only three Parthian coins were found

¹⁹⁴ Masson & Pugachenkova 1982, 13 and Messina 2008, 329-343 identify deposits in the Red Building of small gypsum balls containing seeds and marked with impressions as the result of cultic activity.

indicate they were originally brightly coloured. The Corinthian architectural order was adapted to suit the local requirements of available materials, since there are few sources of hard stone in the region and mud-brick and clay construction was the preferred technique for building in northern Iranian lands. This shows ingenuity and creativity in the reinterpretation of Hellenistic artistic forms. Similarly, ‘pseudo-Ionic’ terracotta capitals with simple outlines of volutes in low relief were found in the Building with the Square Hall and at New Nisa.¹⁹⁵ These capitals were used in combination with Iranian architectural forms, such as stepped merlons [90] and stepped torus bases [89].¹⁹⁶ These bases had Achaemenid precedents, and were also a popular contemporary architectural form.¹⁹⁷ A similar reformulation of Hellenistic architectural ornament is seen in the portico of the Red Building, where a multi-coloured bead-and-reel frieze above fluting formed a socle under a series of projections and niches.¹⁹⁸

Other pieces of architectural ornament refer more directly to specific aspects of Hellenistic culture. The metope-like plaques that adorned the Red Building, Tower Building and the Building with the Square Hall [91] repeat a number of motifs connected to the iconography of Seleukid kingship. The club imparts generic messages of strength and physical power, but also refers to the club of Herakles, the divine ancestor and patron of Alexander and the Seleukids. The motif appears in isolation on the reverse of Seleukid coin issues, and therefore had an established

¹⁹⁵ Masson & Pugachenkova 1982, 11; Pilipko 1996, 108, fig.6.

¹⁹⁶ See also at Takht-i Sangin [106-107].

¹⁹⁷ Nylander 1970, 103; Bernard 1973, 20; **82; 108.**

¹⁹⁸ Invernizzi & Lippolis 2008, pl.VIII-IX; Invernizzi 2011, 651.

connection with the royal sphere.¹⁹⁹ The iconography of Herakles was widely embraced in Iranian lands for many centuries after the Macedonian conquest, as himself or as Verethragna.²⁰⁰ His was a versatile image with appropriate connotations for a monumental display of power such as this citadel. Placed next to the club, the quiver also elicits connections with Herakles (see **86**) or the Seleukids' other patron and proclaimed ancestor, Apollo. The *gorytos* was as common to Parthia and the Steppes as to Macedonia and the Mediterranean. Connections are visible between the representation of Apollo-on-the-*omphalos* and the royal archer on Arsacid coins. While raising visual links with the Seleukids for some viewers, this motif could also be read as a reference to the prized Parthian skill in archery and the long-established motif of the Iranian royal archer. Both motifs simultaneously held Hellenistic and Iranian interpretations.

The versatility or potential for disassociation with Seleukid iconography is less obvious for the anchor motif (since it is an unrealistic anchor with its second stock and the Parthians were never a naval power).²⁰¹ The omens related by Appian concerning the fortunes of Seleukos include the repeated motif of the anchor. The motif appears on Seleukid coins, seal impressions and supposedly on Seleukos' own signet ring.²⁰² The Nisaeen audience would likely have recognised its Seleukid origins, but perhaps it now marked the Arsacids' assumption of the Seleukids'

¹⁹⁹ Le Rider 1998, 11, pl.1, 23-24.

²⁰⁰ See discussion above of **4**, **65**, **86** and Ch.V.

²⁰¹ Kennedy 1975, 117.

²⁰² See **28**; App.Syr.IX.56.

territories and would be interpreted as a broader symbol of royal power, rather than restricted to promoting Seleukid kingship.

Among the plaques are examples decorated with lion heads – a subject familiar to the iconography of rulers from many different lands and times. The original position of these plaques and the style bear direct comparison with lion-head water-spouts common to Greek public architecture. The Hellenistic style and form presents a familiar and appropriate motif in a new manner.

The other plaques show symbols perhaps connected to Iranian religion and familiar to Parthian repertoire: the crescent and disc representing the celestial bodies of moon (or Anahita) and sun (or Mithra), while the rosette is perhaps a ‘solar symbol of life and eternity’.²⁰³ These symbols on the clay architectural ornament of Old Nisa, of rosettes, crescents and eagles, are also motifs on the reverse of issues of Mithridates II minted at Susa.²⁰⁴ These other motifs underscore the choice involved in the design of symbols with Hellenistic connotations.

Around 100 fragments of unbaked clay sculpture were found in the Building with the Square Hall.²⁰⁵ These were made from layers of clay built up around wooden armatures. The final surface was shaped by hand, impressed with moulds and finished with polychrome paint.²⁰⁶ This medium appears to be the main sculptural medium in

²⁰³ Boyce & Grenet 1991; Invernizzi 2007, 172.

²⁰⁴ Le Rider 1965, pl.XIII, no.132-135. Invernizzi & Lippolis 2008, 262.

²⁰⁵ Pilipko 1995; Invernizzi & Lippolis 2008, 167-215.

²⁰⁶ Invernizzi & Lippolis 2008, 196.

Bactria at this time (see **109-115** and **149**) and was popular in the region for many centuries afterwards.

The three clay heads of men [**101-103**] look upwards with a tilt and twist to the neck in the Lysippan manner. The execution of all three young, dynamic male heads is idealized naturalism, with plastic locks of wavy hair. They are very much in the mode of Hellenistic ruler portraits, though without diadems and with the addition of luxuriant facial hair. Two of these heads wear variations on Greek helmet types of the third to first centuries BC, with Hellenistic iconography on the cheekflaps.²⁰⁷ It is possible the thunderbolts on the cheekflaps of **102** should be read as generic symbols of military strength rather than a direct reference to Zeus, but the Hellenistic origin of the motif is clear.²⁰⁸ The winged anguipedes on **101**'s cheekflaps are also part of Hellenistic repertoire not Iranian. The fragmentary head [**100**] presents a very different style of representation, and is identified optimistically by the excavators as a portrait of Mithridates I.²⁰⁹ This head has a much longer beard with more emphasis on incision for the waves of the hair.

In addition to the naturalistic style, many of the fragments of clay bodies show Hellenistic influence in their forms of clothing. The figures were life-size or slightly larger and perhaps decorated the walls of the Square and Round Halls.²¹⁰ The

²⁰⁷ Pilipko 1995, 17. Compare Louvre Ma 3597.

²⁰⁸ Invernizzi 1998, 49.

²⁰⁹ A fifth clay male head is said to show indications of age, but an image is elusive (Pilipko 1995, 17-18).

²¹⁰ The identification of the Round Hall as a continuous elliptical vault (Masturzo 2008, 43-65) rather than dome on cylindrical drum makes Pugachenkova 1958, 104's reconstruction of the statues in niches untenable.

fragments include a number of females dressed in Hellenistic garments (swathes of material wrapping the body resembling the *chiton* and *himation*) and men in cuirasses with short sleeves and bare legs.²¹¹ The female figure **99** is very comparable to marble honorific statues from the Mediterranean in the Hellenistic period.²¹² There are also fragments of male bodies dressed in Parthian or Scythian garments, their arms wrapped in long creased sleeves.²¹³ The use of Hellenistic representational styles did not necessitate an overwrite of all Parthian content, but could express Parthian characteristics.

Selectivity is illustrated also in the execution of Parthian subjects in the Hellenistic format and style of the wall-paintings of the Tower Building. The main frieze portrayed a battle between mounted archers **[94]**.²¹⁴ Figurative painting on plaster itself shows the choice of a Hellenistic decorative form (rather than Iranian techniques of wall decoration such as stone bas-relief, unbaked clay relief or glazed brickwork).²¹⁵ The style indicates the presence of Greek or Greek-trained artists, suggested also by the Greek letters painted next to a clean-shaven head **[94]**. The wall-paintings are of very high quality, with 'light, precise strokes, often with no preliminary sketch'.²¹⁶ There is no sign of frontality, linearity or flatness of representation innate to Parthian art.²¹⁷ The subject, however, is distinctly part of Parthian consciousness. What is left of the riders shows nomadic costume, and the

²¹¹ Pilipko 1995, 14-15.

²¹² Smith 1991, fig.111-113.

²¹³ Pilipko 1995, 16.

²¹⁴ Pilipko 2000, 70.

²¹⁵ See also the red socles in four rooms of the Red Building and geometric patterns in the Tower Building: Pilipko 2000, 69-86; Invernizzi & Lippolis 2008, pl.IX-XIII.

²¹⁶ Pilipko 2000, 75.

²¹⁷ Ibid, 76.

scene is plausibly reconstructed as Parthians fighting Saka.²¹⁸ This scene reiterates the importance of horses to Parthian culture and to Parthian kingship. Though equestrian prowess was typical of Iranian royalty, the Arsacids and Sasanians favoured representation on horseback, distinct from the Achaemenid preference of the royal hunting chariot.²¹⁹ Riding dress remained an important feature of Parthian royal attire, perhaps reflecting the continued significance of the nomadic heritage of the dynasty.²²⁰ The Hellenistic art form is used to portray a familiar and ‘personal’ subject. Fragments of a gypsum mould found at Old Nisa for a sculpture of a horse in full gallop might have been used to create another celebration of this theme.²²¹

There were many works of art discovered in the ‘Square House’.²²² The majority are Hellenistic in style or subject, including gilded silver statuettes of Eros [96] and Athena [95], and scenes of the Twelve Gods and Dionysian friezes on the *rhyta* [104]. The Hellenistic architectural decoration of the site and the evidence of the manufacture of Hellenistic art at or near the site makes it unlikely these artefacts were all imported gifts to the Arsacids.²²³

The presence of different styles of Greek art indicates an interest that was not superficial and confined to one idea of Greek visual culture. There is the late fourth century style of the drapery on the clay standing female figure 99, or a statuette of the

²¹⁸ Pilipko 2000, 75.

²¹⁹ Invernizzi 1992, 251.

²²⁰ Curtis 1998, 532; see also 76.

²²¹ Lippolis 2011.

²²² Masson & Pugachenkova 1982, 16: textiles, weapons, jewellery, gold-covered terracotta figurines, and items in coloured stones.

²²³ Wiesehöfer 1991, 61.

popular Hellenistic statuary type Aphrodite Anadyomene [97], and another marble statuette [98] that might indicate an interest in the 'archaizing' fashion in Hellenistic art.²²⁴ Other fragments of marble sculpture include statuettes perhaps identifiable as Greek deities, all very high quality and with a strong affinity with Hellenistic sculpture of the Mediterranean.²²⁵

The ivory *rhyta* [104] were likely made in the vicinity of the site, due to stylistic features and because it is possible they were not carved contemporaneously since they are different sizes and the decoration differs in style and quality, but commissions were made sporadically to a local workshop.²²⁶ Fragments of unworked ivory were found in nearby Ašgabat.²²⁷ It is possible the different scales, styles and levels of quality were due to the unique nature of the material and the single commission of a workshop with many craftsmen of varying abilities. The similarity of composition indicates they were based on the same model.²²⁸ Artistic activity at Old Nisa in Hellenistic styles is attested also by the wall-paintings and clay sculptures (made on site by necessity of the medium) and the mould 105.²²⁹

²²⁴ Invernizzi 1998, 49. Invernizzi 2009, 43ff identifies the statuette as Hekate among other possibilities.

²²⁵ Invernizzi 2009, 71-76 'Aphrodite'; 77-89 'Dionysos'; 91-92 bare male leg; 93-101 'Artemis'; 103-105 left arm of an archer; 107-123 fragments of hands and limbs.

²²⁶ Masson & Pugachenkova 1982, 139 suggest the *rhyta* were made in the 2nd century BC and had a century of use. Some were restored in antiquity. Bernard 1991, 35. Pappalardo 2010, 330 proposes eight stylistic groups ranging from the late 4th century to the 1st century AD.

²²⁷ Pappalardo 2011.

²²⁸ Masson & Pugachenkova 1982, 6.

²²⁹ Invernizzi 2009 argues the marble statuettes were made locally.

The friezes on the *rhyta* show a variety of subjects in relief, the majority showing the Twelve Gods and Dionysiac scenes.²³⁰ Greek deities are identifiable but include some uncanonical features, such as wings on Hera's head.²³¹ A number of figures are repeated on different *rhyta*, including common Hellenistic motifs such as the philosopher mantle figure leaning on a stick on Rhyton 47 also representing Hephaestus in scenes of the Twelve Gods. There are many different subjects for the *protomoi*, including centaurs, water-carriers and winged felines. Under the lip of many *rhyta* hang disembodied human heads, in the manner of gargoyles. Some *rhyta* had platings in precious metal, such as over the lips or on the terminal figures, and some ovoid insets of glass or precious stones instead of heads below the lip.²³²

The unwieldy size of the *rhyta*, their elaborate decoration and delicate, expensive medium were interpreted as suggesting they were used only for libations, not drinking.²³³ Advocators of the presence of ruler cult at Old Nisa (for whom the clay sculptures in the Square Hall represent venerated Arsacid ancestors) suggest the *rhyta* were used in the ceremonies for this cult.²³⁴ Scenes of Dionysian ritual and the Twelve Olympian Gods were hardly appropriate on implements for a Zoroastrian religious ceremony.²³⁵ The inscription 'Ἑστιας' on one rhyton should be read as a dedication to the Greek goddess and indicative of Greek-trained craftsmen rather than an assimilation of the hearth goddess to the Iranian sacred fire.²³⁶ As to the practical

²³⁰ Pappalardo 2011 identifies eight themes.

²³¹ Ibid 2011, 327.

²³² Masson & Pugachenkova 1982, 6, 36.

²³³ Ibid, 6, 38-39.

²³⁴ Ibid, 6.

²³⁵ Bernard 1991, 33.

²³⁶ Košelenko 1967, 167-170; Bernard 1991, 31.

function of the *rhyta*, they were carried, presumably by servants, in the crook of the arms so the flow of wine was controlled with one finger.²³⁷ The quantity of *rhyta* (at least forty) and their large scale (varying from c.30cm in height to 60cm) indicates large-scale feasting with many wine-servers.

This assemblage of finds supports the interpretation the Arsacid kings did not only use Hellenistic visual culture as a cynical political ploy or useful tool to speak to their Greco-Macedonian subjects or Hellenistic royal rivals, but that they had an independent appreciation of Greek art. The terracotta mould of a Greek comic mask [105], for example, indicates an interest in Greek social institutions as well as art, corroborated by Plutarch's account of Orodes II's enjoyment of Euripides.²³⁸ This was a fertile period full of lively exchange and transmission between cultural traditions. Appreciation of Hellenistic culture (neither superficial or unconditional) did not necessitate an infringement on the Arsacid's Iranian identity.²³⁹

The plentiful and varied material from Old Nisa illustrates the result of the dispersion of techniques, forms, subjects and styles from Hellenistic visual culture, combined with those of Iran and the Steppes. The artefacts from Old Nisa show none of the frontality and linearity so distinctive of Parthian art.²⁴⁰ It is likely trade links had a strong influence, but also itinerant craftsmen since much of the material was made at or near the site. There was a thriving artistic environment where Hellenistic

²³⁷ Bernard 1991, 32.

²³⁸ Plut. *Vit. Crass.* XXXIII.

²³⁹ Wiesehöfer 1991, 58, 62.

²⁴⁰ Pilipko 2000, 76.

art was patronized to celebrate Arsacid kingship.²⁴¹ The Parthians employed Hellenistic visual forms at home as well as on their coins minted in the cities of Babylonia, Media and Elymais with large Greek populations. The co-existence of philhellenism with the prominent display of Steppe heritage are central to the art of Old Nisa.

Discussion.

The Macedonian conquest of Iranian lands brought the cultures into closer contact, with the subtle and varied interaction manifested in the material record. Hellenistic iconography and artistic forms were adopted into Iranian repertoire and contexts.

Aspects of Achaemenid religious iconography were sustained in the visual culture of this period in Persis, alongside alterations and developments. The fire altar from Achaemenid scenes of devotional ruler representation is replaced on Persid coins by the 'altar shrine'. While the precise function is unknown, the structure similarly is underneath the *faravahar*, saluted by the ruler, and likely held the sacred fire. This structure echoes the Achaemenid architecture of Persepolis, thus incorporating further political and cultural inferences into the scene. Achaemenid influence continued for these Persid rulers but was not a strong consideration for other rulers. Although the Arsacids took the title 'Great King' after their Mesopotamian conquests, their iconographic representation emphasises Parthian features rather than emulating the Achaemenid model.

²⁴¹ Invernizzi 1998, 49; Invernizzi 2011, 655.

While we can cite a few sporadic examples of free-standing sculpture in Achaemenid Iran, the statue habit, innate to Greek art, was rare. After the Macedonian conquest, there were high quality statues and statuettes in bronze and marble in rural valley sanctuaries such as Shami as well as urban centres. These were not cult statues but were erected to honour rulers and elite. The statues of Herakles at Mašjid-i Solaiman perhaps had iconographic religious associations but were not cult statues. There may have been a cult statue, however, in Room 5 of the ‘*fratarakā* temple’ at Persepolis. This is particularly significant since, despite the commissions of Artaxerxes II, the religious practices of the Achaemenids and *fratarakā* did not include the veneration of cult statues.

The terracotta votive objects from Susa and Mašjid-i Solaiman provide an insight into the wider dissemination of Hellenistic visual culture. These simply-made items, small-scale in a cheap fabric, show the spread of figured images pertaining to military and religious themes. ‘Macedonian cavalryman’ figurines are numerous and widespread across Elymais and southern Babylonia, and terracotta appliqués of *thureos* shields are common in the coroplastics of Susa. These images might be attributed to the military conquest and the settling of Greco-Macedonian veterans. The figurines of Greek deities and men in comic theatrical masks became part of the local iconographical output, many dedicated in existing Iranian religious sites. The coroplastics of the remote Mašjid-i Solaiman sanctuary are not as high quality as the Susa figurines and show a narrower repertoire. The traditional nude female figurines

continued to be made and dedicated at both sites. Terracottas of cavalymen on two-headed horses holding female figurines illustrate the inventive combination of Macedonian and eastern motifs. It is unclear whether these figurines were made to appeal to a broader spectrum of patrons, or, for example, Macedonian cavalymen sought the protection of local fertility goddesses.

While contact and exchange between Hellenic and Iranian cultures was active long before the Macedonian conquest, there was a substantial increase in demand for Hellenistic styles in all areas of artistic production.²⁴² This demand came from a broad selection of patrons including Macedonian elite, those wishing to emulate the Macedonian elite, Greco-Macedonian settlers and their local neighbours. The motif of Herakles, for example, was espoused by Seleukid rulers and officials, Parthian kings and also by people in remote areas, and had a widespread and long impact on Iranian visual culture in the religious and political sphere. The strong Hellenistic tone to the art of Old Nisa shows this political and aesthetic choice was used to present the Arsacids to their Parthian audience as well as Greco-Macedonian subjects. On Persid coinage, there was a strong emphasis on the Achaemenid heritage (renegotiated for their situation) but this did not exclude the use of Hellenistic motifs. The Iranian tradition of rock reliefs continued through this period, subject to changes in style perhaps caused by the time of execution, iconography or patron's preferences. Various iconographies co-existed in Iran in this period, demonstrating the reformulation and adaptation of existing visual languages.

²⁴² Kawami 1987, 31.

Chapter IV: Bactria.

Introduction.

The popularity and longevity of Hellenistic iconography and styles in Central Asian visual culture after the Macedonian conquest has long fascinated archaeological research. The adaptation of these motifs and styles to suit the available techniques and existing repertoire is striking. The patrons and craftsmen were receptive to numerous influences, not only Hellenistic models. A number of technical characteristics were popular across Bactrian art, such as unbaked clay and acrolithic sculpture. Some of these characteristics are also seen at Old Nisa, suggesting broader 'north Iranian' artistic connections. Elements of Greek architectural orders pervade the ornamentation of public buildings, yet often appear solely decorative additions to traditional forms of architecture, rather than integral to the design of the building. During Greco-Bactrian rule there was a wealth of cultural exchanges characterized by vitality and nuance in the methods and results of these interactions.

The designation of 'Bactria' refers to the river basin of the Amu Darya (Oxus), northwest of the Hindu Kush, which was a nodal point for interaction between different cultures for many centuries. In the third and second centuries BC was the crystallization of trade routes later part of the Silk Road. Bactria's fertile agricultural land with many natural mineral resources, particularly lapis lazuli also

contributed to its attractiveness to empires.¹ The position of satrap of the Upper Satrapies for intended heirs of the Achaemenid and Seleukid empires affirms the important status the region held in antiquity.

Bactria has a long history of proving unruly and difficult to subdue, and our period is no less volatile. The pretender Bessos was satrap of Bactria prior to his claim to succeed Darius III and the region was never fully quiet under Alexander, so that Seleukos I re-invaded in 308 BC. Around sixty years later (c.250 BC), the satrap of Bactria, Diodotus, revolted from Seleukid rule and formed an independent kingdom.² This Greco-Bactrian kingdom fractured into several dynasties where, variously, the kingdom was divided, usurpers overthrew the ruler or encroached on one another's territory.³ These rulers are known only from their coinage and a few mentions in Greco-Roman accounts of further hostilities with the Seleukids.⁴ In addition to internal strife in the Greco-Bactrian kingdom, Antiochus III invaded unsuccessfully in 206 BC, the Parni encroached from the west, and nomadic tribes from the northwest (Saka) and northeast (Yuezhi) were a constant threat. The Yuezhi overran the region c.145-130 BC, pushed from their traditional territories by other nomadic tribes.

¹ Curt.7.4.26. Bernard 1978, 454-456, fig.19 for piles of semi-precious stones in the treasury at Ai Khanoum.

² See Lerner 1999, Coloru 2009 and Widemann 2009 on the chronology of the Greco-Bactrian rulers.

³ Bopearachchi 1999; Holt 1999; Coloru 2009.

⁴ Holt 1999, 178-184.

Field surveys of the region revealed many sites occupied in the Achaemenid and Greco-Bactrian periods.⁵ There have been few official excavations, however, and iconographic material is limited. There are many attempts to link these sites with cities mentioned in accounts of Alexander's *anabasis*, such as Alexandria-Oxiana (Termez), -Margiana (Merv), -Aria (Herat), -Arachosia (Kandahar), -Eschate (Samarkhand), and Ai Khanoum as another candidate for Alexandria-Oxiana, perhaps re-founded as Eukratidia.⁶ The current excavations in Balkh (Bactra) are adding considerably to the interpretation of the Achaemenid and Greco-Bactrian archaeology of the region.⁷ A number of sites revealed evidence of Greco-Macedonian artistic influence but date after 100 BC. This discussion, therefore, is heavily dependent on material from the city at Ai Khanoum and the Temple of the Oxus at Takht-i Sangin.

The *Délégation archéologique française en Afghanistan*, led by Paul Bernard, excavated Ai Khanoum from 1964 to 1978. The reports are extensive but not fully published. The Russian invasion of Afghanistan curtailed excavations of the remainder of the city, which now is looted thoroughly so little remains. The understandable focus on excavation of the impressive public buildings of the city, in addition to the lack of excavated settlements on a similar scale (including the capital at Balkh) means we must exert caution in the analysis of the character of Ai Khanoum as model or anomaly in Bactria. Excavations at Takht-i Sangin in the 1970s also were curtailed by warfare but have recommenced.⁸ They now focus on the

⁵ Ball & Gardin 1982.

⁶ Fraser 1996; Grenet & Rapin 1998.

⁷ Besenval, Marquis & Fouache 2009, 1019-1025, 1030-1032.

⁸ Drujinina 2001; Drujinina & Boroffka 2006; Drujinina 2008; Drujinina 2009.

temenos of the sanctuary and the surrounding settlement. This chapter will examine the issues raised by the evidence of the visual culture of Takht-i Sangin and Ai Khanoum. A discussion of the iconography of Greco-Bactrian coinage follows, and a brief summary of later material from Bactrian sites that helps to elucidate themes raised in the analyses of earlier evidence.

Takht-i Sangin.

The Temple of the Oxus at Takht-i Sangin is a construction of the early Seleucid period. The fortified sanctuary on the bank of the Oxus in the centre of the walled settlement at Takht-i Sangin was built on a platform and surrounded by a moat or ditch. It faces east to the river rather than to the settlement and the ramp from the main entrance leads directly to the edge of the water. The threat of raids from nomadic tribes was most likely the motivation for the strong defences of both the temple and settlement. The cult of the river Oxus was important in Bactria and the Amu Darya's wide catchment area, attested by the references to the god, his cult and theophoric names in Achaemenid, Hellenistic and post-Hellenistic period documents.⁹ The 'Oxus Treasure', discovered in 1877 in the area, perhaps to the south at Takht-i Kobad, contained many gold artefacts including votive plaques with Achaemenid-style reliefs of men in Iranian costume holding *barsom* rods (suggesting Iranian cult), has led to speculation of an earlier religious site in the area.¹⁰ There is no pottery or architectonic evidence of earlier occupation, however, at Takht-i

⁹ Boyce & Grenet 1991, 180; Shaked 2004; Sims-Williams 2012.

¹⁰ Dalton 1964; Grenet & Rapin 1998, 85; Litvinskij & Pičikyan 2000, 490.

Sangin.¹¹ It is possible this earlier sanctuary for Iranian cult, perhaps also dedicated to Oxus, at Takht-i Kobad was replaced by the temple to the north after the Seleukid conquest.¹²

The majority of finds from the Temple of the Oxus are c.5000 votive objects deposited in *bothroi* (pits) in the far corners of the long corridors at the back of the temple.¹³ These objects clearly were valued after their active life as dedications in the temple since they were kept in storage rather than discarded. Most of the votive objects are functional, ceremonial and miniature examples of arms and armour.¹⁴ This is common to Mediterranean dedicatory practice but the quantity here is unprecedented.¹⁵ The historical framework of frequent conflict in the area between different rulers provides plenty of scope for soldiers and mercenaries travelling through the area and supplicating for the protection of the god or displaying their thanks.

Many of the objects likely had active functioning lives before their use as votives.¹⁶ It is possible some of the purely decorative artefacts were also requisitioned for a votive purpose. Other votives such as the clay sculptures and miniature weapons have no practical function and perhaps were made specifically for dedication at this temple. There are also direct epigraphic dedications to Oxus, such as the votive altar

¹¹ Drujinina 2009, 177.

¹² Bernard 1994, 106, 167.

¹³ The temple was in use until the Kushan period so votives discussed here are those most confidently ascribed to use or creation c.330-c.100 BC.

¹⁴ Litvinskij 2001.

¹⁵ Pritchett 1979, ch.7.

¹⁶ Kopytoff 1986; Gosden & Marshall 1999.

of Atrosōkēs [108], by ‘Seiromios’ and on a stone bowl sherd.¹⁷ The variety of votive forms considered appropriate dedications in this temple is particularly impressive.

The Temple of the Oxus follows an Iranian plan of long corridors around a central hall with a wide columned portico.¹⁸ The familiarity of roofed structures to Iranian ritual is discussed further in Chapter 5. The structure is mudbrick (locally available and commonly used in Iranian and Mesopotamian architecture) with some architectural elements articulated in limestone. The columns of the portico combined Ionic capitals with the smooth shafts and double-stepped torus bases of Persian architecture seen at several monumental structures across Iran and Bactria in this period.¹⁹ The straight horizontal line of the volutes’ cushion above the echinus corresponds with developments in Ionic capitals in the Greek mainland c.300 BC.²⁰ The full impact of the monumental space was of Iranian character with touches of Greco-Macedonian ornamentation, such as the Ionic capitals and moulded limestone monumental altars, similar to the architecture of Old Nisa.²¹ The houses in the surrounding settlement were similarly built following Iranian architectural traditions: to cope with the extremes of weather, the houses had thick mud-brick walls and many were sunk up to 2.8m into the ground. They were surmounted with flat roofs, stone thresholds and stepped torus or Attic bases.²²

¹⁷ *I. Estremo Oriente* 311-312; Drujinina & Boroffka 2006, 67-69. The discovery of 109 identified the temple as dedicated to Oxus due to the consistency of Greek votive altars naming the tutelary god of the sanctuary.

¹⁸ Litvinskij & Pičikyan 2002, 96 suggest this is a precursor of the Sasanian *iwan*; see Shenkar 2011, 122 on four-columned halls in Iranian architecture.

¹⁹ Pičikyan 1987a; Litvinskij & Pičikyan 2000, 490; See 82; 89; and Aī Khanoum (Bernard 1973, 20).

²⁰ Litvinskij & Pičikyan 1994, 54.

²¹ Pičikyan 1987b.

²² Drujinina 2009, 177-181.

In the courtyard of the Temple of the Oxus was a monumental bronze statue of a human figure on a stone base.²³ Its position outside the temple, in front and slightly south of the portico, means it is unlikely to be a cult statue, but perhaps represented a god or ruler. Since only traces of the feet remain we cannot comment on stylistic features, but the presence of a monumental anthropomorphic sculpture in a religious area is noteworthy itself.²⁴ Some miniature stepped torus bases perhaps also held votive statuary.²⁵ The adoption of a sculpture habit in a religious context is a marked change in the use of visual culture in Bactria and altered the shape of monumental space.

The variety of traditions of visual culture represented by the assemblage of votive objects indicates the wide networks of trade routes and exchange in and around Bactria. The location of the site on the long, wide and fast-flowing Oxus, which links the Hindu Kush to the Aral Sea, provided an immediate trade link for the settlement. The geographical position of the site facilitated interaction with the Scythian steppes, Iranian heartland and India, and the location on the river may explain such a large number of people passing through. We might expect to see evidence of the activity and presence of traders, migrant settlers and soldiers or mercenaries, and there is also evidence of craftsmen versed in Hellenistic forms active at this site.

²³ Litvinskij & Pičikyan 2000, pl.13, 34.

²⁴ Hdt.1.131; Strabo XV.3.13. See Ch.V.

²⁵ Litvinskij & Pičikyan 2000, pl.43; compare miniature bases of the *temple à redans* at Ai Khanoum (Bernard 1969, 329; Bernard 1970, 323; Bernard 1972, 625).

Interpretation of the votives is affected considerably by whether they were made on site or are the result of trade, in addition to the relationship to the patron who dedicated them. There is explicit evidence of artisan activity in the *temenos* of the temple itself, let alone the possibility of workshops in the surrounding settlement. Fragments of a clay mould for a basin made of seven talents of bronze were found in the *temenos*. A Greek inscription around the rim identifies the worth of the vessel and the dedicator: one Seiromios son of Nemiskos.²⁶ The Greek script is displayed prominently. This is the only example of this name so may be a Hellenicized transcription of an Iranian name, such as Atrosōkēs [108]. The Greek letters on blocks of the monumental limestone altars in the temple complex do not indicate Greek literacy or ethnicity, though these stonemasons worked with Hellenistic forms and used Greek letters for their masons' marks.²⁷

Other evidence for local manufacture is inferred rather than proven. Unbaked clay sculptures are unsuited to long-distance travel and trade due to their fragile nature. It is therefore likely such items were made in the vicinity of their dedication. It therefore seems there were craftsmen at the site working with bronze, terracotta and polychrome clay. Whether these were itinerant craftsmen constantly on the move, settled here, or were local men who picked up and developed new visual motifs and styles from other sources is unknown.

²⁶ Drujinina & Boroffka 2006, 67-69; Drujinina 2008, 121-135.

²⁷ Pičikyan 1987b. Greek letters were adapted to write the Bactrian language in the 1st-2nd century AD.

The overall impression from the votive assemblage is of the cultural co-existence and ‘visual multilingualism’ of the viewers and users of the objects rather than the mixing of iconographies to produce individual ‘hybrids’. Apart from the unbaked clay sculpture (a north Iranian medium used for Iranian and Hellenistic subjects executed in a Hellenistic style), the individual votives appear to be the products of particular visual cultures and traditions with little visible overlap and exchange.

The forms of arms and armour dedicated at the site display the presence of many different traditions from outside Bactria. There are Greek, Near Eastern and Iranian types of spear and javelin-heads, Iranian and Greek swords, and the few fragments of shields [130] and five Greek forms of helmet cheek-flaps.²⁸ Local innovation is identified in the majority of arrowheads and scale armour, which show traits peculiar to Bactria in this period.²⁹ Few items combine features from the different traditions into one object, implying the co-existence of forms of arms and armour from different cultures rather than the production of individual ‘hybridised’ objects.

The continued presence of Achaemenid Persian visual culture is represented among the votives by a number of examples including ivories such as a *makhaira* handle carved as a griffin’s head [116] and an *akinakes* scabbard with the relief of a

²⁸ Litvinskij 2001, 520-524.

²⁹ Abdullaev 1995b; Litvinskij 2001, 516-522.

lion clutching a stag [117].³⁰ The ivory rhyton lion *protome* [118] is another form firmly entrenched within Achaemenid visual culture that continued to be used by craftsmen of our period and after, such as at Old Nisa [104] and in other media such as the gilt silver examples of the Mir Zakah hoard.³¹ The torso in a Parthian tunic [115] shows the continuation of Iranian visual forms at this site and that such forms were not confined to nostalgic repetitions of Achaemenid forms, but evolved and presented contemporary Iranian features. The medium, technique and subject matter of the miniature enamelled gold plaque of a man leading a camel [131] and unbaked clay sculpture of a thickly-bearded male head in a white *bašlyk* [111] are also very much part of Iranian visual traditions. This head appears to demonstrate a mingling and hybridisation of artistic forms since the flowing textured incisions on the beard of 111 and the soft naturalistic moulding of the features is not common to Iranian styles, however, but conforms to the same style as the other unbaked clay sculpture from the site, one more common to Greek sculpture.

Some of the votives illustrate the movement of styles from the north to Takhti Sangin. A gold pommel decorated with overlapping fighting panthers [124] and a nephrite jade finial in the form of an carnivorous animal's head ('wolf-dragon') [125] are common in style and subject to the Scytho-Siberian 'Animal Style'.³² They indicate interaction (peaceful or hostile) between nomadic tribes and the settlement on the bank of the Oxus prior to the nomads' invasion. There was a taste for the

³⁰ Litvinskij 1995; Compare Persepolis reliefs of *akinakes* (Schmidt 1953, pl.65).

³¹ Miho Museum 2002.

³² Rostovtzeff 1929; compare teardrop-shaped turquoise insets at Tillya Tepe (see below).

highly ornate and stylised energy of the art of the Steppes in addition to the formalism of Persian art or the naturalistic Greek representation.

In addition to these northern links, connections with territories further east are seen in the style of decoration covering an ivory cylinder, perhaps showing Hindu deities [123].³³ The shallow thin relief lines and dots for filling ornament resemble the decorative style of the shell disc from the palace treasury in Ai Khanoum [153]. Greco-Bactrian rulers made a number of conquests across the Hindu Kush and India is the closest and therefore likeliest source of ivory, though when and whether carved in Bactria or traded as finished works is unknown. Half-finished and unworked tusks were found among the later deposit of artefacts at Begram, so it seems there was some form of Bactrian carved ivory production. The majority of the many ivories found at Begram were carved in deep relief rather than the shallow incision of 123 and 153.³⁴

The Greek statue habit was keenly embraced by craftsmen in Bactria who worked with unbaked clay rather than the traditional materials of Greek statuary, marble and bronze. This was perhaps more because of the availability of such materials and an established local sculptural tradition in this medium, rather than cost: the monumental bronze sculpture in the *temenos*, the dedication of Seiomios, and the proliferation of gold in the 'Oxus Treasure' attest to material wealth in the area. The fragments of clay *korai* [114], probably originally constituting four statues,

³³ Pičikyan 1992, fig.19; Rapin 1995.

³⁴ Cambon 2007, no.147-157.

show not only the adoption of the Greek statue habit, subject matter (a woman in *chiton*) and sculptural style, but also their adaption to the local medium of unbaked clay. Two male heads [109 & 110] show another genre of the iconography of Hellenistic statuary: that of the Hellenistic ruler with diadem, short wavy locks, clean-shaven cheeks, sunken eyes below a ridged brow and small parted lips.³⁵ The pupils look up to the ruler's left, just as Lysippan representations of Alexander. The image presented here contrasts dramatically in style and form with earlier modes of ruler representation in the region. The remains of gold leaf on 110 suggest veneration of a Hellenistic ruler.³⁶ Although there is not evidence for direct involvement of kings and governors at this site, the image of Hellenistic rulers still pervaded the visual culture. The unbaked clay heads of clean-shaven men wearing the diadem are clear representations of Hellenistic rulers, presumably based on Greco-Bactrian or early Seleukid models. The image of the king reached outside his immediate capital and court, not only in the form of numismatic iconography.

Unbaked clay sculpture, formed in layers over a wooden armature and painted, is a prevalent feature of Bactrian visual culture in this period and later. Whether or not an accident of preservation, the unbaked clay sculpture is peculiar to Bactria and northern Iran. Judging from the angle and curvature of the base of the neck of 109, this illustrates the application of the acrolithic sculptural technique, popular in Greek statuary, adapted to Bactrian clay sculpture. It was perhaps attached

³⁵ See also 129.

³⁶ See Ch.V on ruler cult.

to a body in another material, probably wood, just as the faience head [147] (also possibly a Hellenistic ruler portrait) and marble foot from the *temple à redans* [144].

Images of Greek deities are also seen among the votives at the temple to this Bactrian river god. The iconography of Herakles is very common in the art of this period from the Mediterranean to the Hindu Kush, and this site is no exception. In addition to the sword handle carved with Herakles and Acheloos [120], a miniature ivory pommel was carved in the form of a clean-shaven Herakles in his lion-skin scalp [121]. The clean-shaven head of Herakles, very similar to Alexander's image, had a widespread diffusion through the coinage of Alexander and early Seleukids. 113, a clay sculpture of a nude archer, probably Eros, illustrates further transmission of Greek iconography (not necessarily cult).³⁷ The image of a nude male figure is novel to Iranian art. The limbs show an attempt to portray the chubby undeveloped physique of the child Eros. Young and undeveloped male figures are also portrayed by two clay heads [112]. Children were a popular subject in Hellenistic statuary but are rarely, if at all, seen in Iranian art. A number of the ivory votives display naturalistic plastic representation of more unusual Greek iconography, such as Herakles wrestling Acheloos and an ichthyocentauress [122]. These are both, perhaps coincidentally, appropriately watery subjects as dedications to the river Oxus.³⁸

A relief frieze on a miniature ivory *makhaira* scabbard [120] shows three figures fighting with Greco-Macedonian costume and weapons. The motif of a

³⁷ Litvinskij 2004, 69.

³⁸ Litvinskij & Pičikyan 1995.

charging cavalryman with a spear (or *sarissa*) recurs throughout Hellenistic, Achaemenid and Assyrian visual culture to portray a brave and dynamic warrior figure, but the style and content of the scene emphasise the Greco-Macedonian links. The infantryman with sword raised over his arm also resembles a stock motif of Hellenistic military representations.³⁹ This scene echoes the contemporary political situation of the many Greek mercenaries and Macedonian soldiers in the region and the conflicts between Greco-Bactrian and Seleukid rulers. This votive indicates the popularization of stock artistic motifs symbolising Macedonian military prowess.

A more detailed insight into the users of particular forms of visual culture at this site is provided by the miniature limestone altar dedicated by Atrosōkēs [108]. The dedication by this man with an Iranian name uses a Greek visual language in the form of the altar and the bronze figurine of a satyr playing an *aulos*, in addition to the Greek inscription.⁴⁰ The Greek practice of the dedication of votive altars was common to third and second century Bactria: many were found scattered around the *temenos* of the *temple à redans* at Aï Khanoum.⁴¹ Although the dedicator has an Iranian name, (Atrošokes, meaning ‘he that possesses a strong fire’) it is hellenized to convey it in Greek letters. This contrasts with Adad-nadin-akhe at Telloh, who inscribed bricks with his name in Aramaic and Greek but used a transliteration in Greek letters rather than hellenizing his name, or Anu ‘Uballit Nikarkhos and Kephalon at Uruk who took Greek cognomens but did not hellenize their Babylonian

³⁹ Rossi 2010, 240-241.

⁴⁰ Bernard 1987 identifies this as Marsyas, though it is not the lean Marsyas of Hellenistic art and the *aulos* was played by many satyrs.

⁴¹ Bernard 1969, 329; Bernard 1970, 323; Bernard 1972, 625.

names.⁴² The dedicator was not tied to dedicating objects reflecting his ethnic identity, or relating to the cultural heritage associated with the deity.

In the recent excavations of the *temenos* was found a broken terracotta relief of a semi-clothed female figure with a small child next to her [132]. The drapery is very much in the naturalistic flowing style of Greek coroplastics. Representations of semi-draped female figures are found at several sites across Central Asia from the third century onwards, such as the 'Aphrodite of Bactria' and 'Kushan Aphrodite' from Tillya Tepe and the 'Aphrodite of India' from Taxila gold appliqués or the ivory 'Indian river goddesses' from Begram.⁴³ These show different interpretations of a similar subject perhaps influenced by the Greek iconography of Aphrodite but that simultaneously holds much in common with local traditions. 132 is broken above the waistline, so it is not possible to discern whether the woman replicated Hellenistic terracottas of the Mediterranean and Seleucia-on-the-Tigris, or was an adaptation like the examples mentioned above that add features such as wings, a bindi and elaborate jewellery.

There is perhaps a hybridisation or co-existence of forms of religious practice at this site (discussed further in Ch.V). The importance of fire, water and a high position to Iranian sacred sites is catered for here.⁴⁴ Attempts to use the iconography of the votive objects to identify the cult in the sanctuary stumble upon the numerous possibilities raised by the variety of representations. The dedication of votive objects,

⁴² See Litvinskij & Pičikyan 1981, 153 on 'Oxus' as Greek transcription of 'Vaksh'.

⁴³ Cambon 2007, 81, nos.60, 135, 147-149.

⁴⁴ Hdt.1.131; Strabo XV.3.13.

erection of statuary, monumental altars in the *temenos* and perhaps with construction of a roofed religious structure itself (even with an Iranian architectural plan) suggest the adoption of Greek modes of religious practice for the local cult, by Greeks or Bactrians.⁴⁵ The position of the Hellenistic-style altars is not in accordance with Hellenistic cult, however, and there is no evidence for a cult statue. Even the circumspect description of the site as ‘an image sanctuary with accessory fire chambers’ may be too constrictive of the available evidence.⁴⁶ The only certain identification of cult at this sanctuary is of the Oxus. Without further evidence, we must assume there were several simultaneous forms of worshipping the deity at this site, including animal sacrifice (indicated by the many sheep and goat bones around the monumental altars), dedication of votive offerings and the maintenance of fire, and involving Greek and Iranian worshippers.⁴⁷

The material record of Takht-i Sangin demonstrates cultural co-existence in the visual sphere – the coming together of diverse forms of artistic expression. There was very little mixing or hybridisation of forms in the creation of individual items, but rather the dialogue is represented in the composition of the votive assemblage as a whole or in confections such as the crowning of Achaemenid-style smooth column and stepped torus bases with Ionic capitals. We see the burgeoning local production of unbaked clay sculpture, as at the other northern Iranian sites of Old Nisa and Aï

⁴⁵ For a summary of the debate on identification as a pre-Sasanian fire temple and the development of fire temples, see Bernard 1994 and Shenkar 2007. Discussed further in Ch.V.

⁴⁶ Boyce & Grenet 1991, 178.

⁴⁷ Litvinskij & Pičikyan 2000, 172.

Khanoum. The votives display the strong 'visual multi-lingualism' present in Bactria in this period.⁴⁸

Aï Khanoum.

The foundation of the city at Aï Khanoum developed earlier occupation of the plain around the Kokcha-Panj confluence. Achaemenid-period material was found in the city, but occupation may have focused on the walled circular town on a hill 1km north of the city.⁴⁹ The irrigation network that watered the plain and connected to the city was perhaps also part of the Achaemenid development of the area.⁵⁰ The city was abandoned c.145 BC under threat of nomadic invasion but there is no conclusive evidence of contemporaneous attack or mass destruction.⁵¹ As in the discussions of the sites above, the structure of this section begins with analysis of the architectural ornament in the city, followed by sculpture and concluding with a discussion of the small finds.

The palatial structure, a complex of large courtyards and narrow corridors. dominated the centre of the lower town.⁵² The structure was made of baked and

⁴⁸ Wallace-Hadrill 2008, 13; see Ch.VII.

⁴⁹ Gardin 1976, 78-79, pl.xix-xxiii; Leriche 1986, 71-72, 85-196; Excavations at the ramparts produced sherds from the Bronze Age to the Islamic period (Lerner 2003-4, 395). See below, the campaniform base re-used in the palace.

⁵⁰ Gardin 1976.

⁵¹ Fussmann 1996, 247; Lerner 2003/2004.

⁵² The alternative term 'administrative quarter' is more accurate since the precise function is unknown and a royal residence is not identifiable. This thesis uses the more prevalent term 'palace' as a clear reference to the complex rather than a statement of its function.

unbaked mud-brick with stucco, terracotta and limestone ornamentation.⁵³ A visitor entered through the Corinthian-columned façade [133] and vestibule of a monumental Propylon, decorated with terracotta palmette [135] and bulb antefixes and tiles, which faces onto the main arterial street of the city. To reach the palace proper the visitor continues along a wide L-shaped way, past the Temenos of Kineas, to the main entrance. This entrance, decorated with winged antefixes [136] and a double row of columns with Corinthian capitals and stepped torus bases, opens onto a monumental peristyle court with Corinthian capitals.⁵⁴ An 18-columned vestibule [134] at the far end leads to the central section of a set of rooms encircled by a corridor in the manner of the Mesopotamian ‘Zingel’.⁵⁵ The openings into each section of the building are offset slightly against the axis of the main entrance, restricting the sightline and accessibility of the innermost rooms. The colonnades of the peristyle and vestibules accentuated this obscuring effect, as did the sharply angled turn in the processional way.

The 18-columned vestibule is comparable in form and function to Iranian examples such as the so-called ‘proto-type *iwān*’ of the Temple of the Oxus at Takhti Sangin or, on a much larger scale, the Hall of 100 Columns at Persepolis. The treasury’s long corridors leading from a central court also draws on Iranian architectural traditions. Apart from the colossal peristyle (a Hellenistic form), the

⁵³ Bernard 1973, 117 on Bactrian architectural construction innovations.

⁵⁴ Ibid, 25, pl.29. A full peristyle is presumed for Court 1 because of the many drum fragments, despite only three bases found on the northern side (including two in the northeast and northwest corners).

⁵⁵ See the sanctuaries of Uruk and Babylon (Downey 1988, 8-29).

palace presents Iranian architecture with touches of Hellenistic ornament, in a similar manner to the Temple of the Oxus or the buildings at Old Nisa.

A ‘pseudo-Corinthian’ capital type [133] adorned the columns of the Propylon and Court 1 of the palace, the Citadel on the acropolis and ‘*la maison hors les murs*’.⁵⁶ The bell is square where it joins the abacus and four rows of over-lapping short acanthus leaves encircle the base of the drum. The thick cauliculi have smooth concave surfaces and squared edges, ending in small volutes with large eyes. There are no inner helices or fleurons, as in the Corinthian ‘canon’ (though it is possible these were added in paint). The canonical form for the Corinthian order was not developed until the third and second centuries BC, however, and there are many examples of variations during these two centuries.⁵⁷ Architectural ornament in the Hellenistic period is most noted for flexibility between the orders and particularly in experimentation with vegetal capitals, and the capitals from Aï Khanoum are no exception.⁵⁸

The 133 capital type has a heavy sense of monumentality disregarded in other Corinthian capitals in preference for ornate delicacy and decorative over structural function.⁵⁹ The placement on the exterior of a building, and a secular building at that, is unusual for Corinthian capitals. The vast majority decorate interior columns or half-columns, normally in the cella of a temple. As they were the most expensive and

⁵⁶ Bernard 1973, pl.37; pl.23; Guillaume 1983, pl.26d.

⁵⁷ Börner 1996, 1.

⁵⁸ Winter 2006, 220; Very similar capitals to 133 were found nearby at Saksanokhur, perhaps re-used from Aï Khanoum (Bernard 1970, 312-313).

⁵⁹ Winter 2006, 219.

fragile type of capital due to the detail of ornament it was both practical and appropriate to place them inside, in the most important part of the building. Buildings with probable Seleukid involvement were the first to move Corinthian capitals to prominent positions on the exterior.⁶⁰ The capitals of the palace at Ai Khanoum thereby conform to eastern modes of Hellenistic architecture, perhaps referring to Seleukid visual culture as well as ostentatiously displaying the wealth of the patron. These volute capitals are distinct from Syrian, Mesopotamian and Iranian precursors in the addition of acanthus leaves, the same view on each face, separated volutes and smaller eye.⁶¹

The Hypostyle Hall capital type [134] is far more elaborate and delicate than **133**. This has thin fluted cauliculi with small helix offshoots above a band and leaf of acanthus, either side of a central spadex flower. The rows of overlapping acanthus are slimmer and have extra detailing of scaled midribs. The upper part of the abacus has egg-and-dart moulding. These ornate capitals were used in a more enclosed area, signifying the transition into a more privileged area of the palace, and were added to the hall in a later building phase. The South Portico capitals are similar but slightly squatter in proportion than the **133** type.⁶² The short stubby leaves bear little resemblance an acanthus plant, but are similar to the palmette antefixes. There was not a sole Bactrian type of Corinthian order, but rather the Corinthian capital was modified to suit its situation (perhaps including the skill and preferences of the

⁶⁰ Börner 1996, 37.

⁶¹ Cambon 2007, 139-140; Bernard 1968, 129-140, Bernard 1973, 19, 32, pl.23, 37; Leriche 1986; Betancourt 1977.

⁶² Guillaume 1983, pl.26.

stonemason, the aesthetics of the patron and the position of the capital). The acanthus leaves of the Old Nisa fragments are slightly different to the Aï Khanoum forms. The divisions of the acanthus leaves on **134** all lead directly from the central stem. The edges are rounded rather than pointed and the central stalks of the leaves are plain rather than the slightly ridged versions at Old Nisa. The scrolls are also quite different: they are slimmer and ridged. This implies there was not a rigidly followed prototype or ‘deposited’ canon, but that artisans had some freedom to adapt the design according to the medium, monumentality of the situation and their skill and preference.

Also in the west wing of the South Portico of Court 1 (and in Rooms 6 and 9) were the remains of half-capitals for pilasters in the same ‘pseudo-Corinthian’ style as **133**.⁶³ In this way, the architects maintained visual continuity despite there not being enough room for a full row of columns. Other variations of spadex flower designs on pilaster capitals are found throughout the palace.⁶⁴ This use of pilasters and half-columns to ornament interior walls is a characteristic feature of Hellenistic architecture.⁶⁵ Pilasters were also used at Old Nisa, where the Corinthian half-capitals were assembled from terracotta sections [**92**].

The only stone capitals of the Ionic order discovered at Aï Khanoum were those of the peristyle of the ‘Stone-vault Mausoleum’.⁶⁶ This likely made the impact

⁶³ Bernard 1973, pl.38.

⁶⁴ Ibid, pl.40a, pl.80a-b.

⁶⁵ Ibid, 115.

⁶⁶ Ibid, 187 fig.15.

of the building on the viewer even more extraordinary. It was already high on a stepped platform overlooking the main street, next to the monumental entrance to the palace. This is the only peripteral building found at not only Ai Khanoum, but among all the sites referenced in this thesis. A wooden Ionic capital was found in the *temple à redans*.⁶⁷ It also has a plain domed echinus and flattened volutes but is without the egg-and-dart and bead-and-reel decoration of the Stone-vault Mausoleum capitals. The plain domed echinus is not part of the Mediterranean Ionic order (compare the Ionic capital from Failaka [46] and terracotta capitals from New Nisa, on which the echinus is omitted completely, in contrast to 106 at Takht-i Sangin).⁶⁸ The Doric order is represented at Ai Khanoum by a court in the palace sixty limestone capitals in the gymnasium.⁶⁹ This extensive mudbrick structure, which housed a social institution previously unknown in Bactria, was ornamented with stone columns in the north, south and east *exedrae* with the combination of smooth drums, stepped torus bases and Doric capitals.⁷⁰ A votive ‘pseudo-Doric’ capital with a bulbous echinus and no additional moulding was found in the gymnasium, perhaps indicating the diffusion of forms of public architecture to the dedications of individuals, just as the votive stepped torus bases in the *temenos* of the *temple à redans*.⁷¹

There are two main types of column base found at Ai Khanoum: the stepped torus and ‘attico-asiatique’. The first consists of three steps surmounted by a bulbous torus crowned with a thin fillet. This type is used in the interior of the entrance to

⁶⁷ Bernard 1969, fig.24-25.

⁶⁸ Bernard 1975, 187.

⁶⁹ Ibid, 193, fig.20; Bernard 1978, 446-447.

⁷⁰ Veuve 1987, pl.49f.

⁷¹ Ibid, pl.48.

Court 1 with the ‘pseudo-Corinthian’ capitals [133] and smooth column drums.⁷² This type is common to Iranian structures of the third and second centuries BC, also seen in the Temple of the Oxus [107], at Old Nisa [93] and in the ‘*frataraka* temple’ at Persepolis [82]. There are precursors from Achaemenid Persia.⁷³ Some of the miniature bases in the sanctuary of the *temple à redans* and in the Temple of the Oxus, presumably the votives of individuals, mimic this form.⁷⁴ The ‘attico-asiatique’ bases are found in the east and west wings of the South Portico of Court 1, and the adjacent Hypostyle Hall (and a variant in the East Portico).⁷⁵ These bases are very similar to the Corinthian and Ionic orders in the contemporary Mediterranean, and are paired with the ‘pseudo-Corinthian’ capitals.⁷⁶ A single campaniform base, with smooth surfaces and a squat bell, was found re-used in the foundation of the South Portico of Court 1.⁷⁷ It is possible this indicates a previous structure on the site from the Achaemenid period.⁷⁸

Although the architects employed Greek forms of architectural ornament, they did not use fluted drums for the columns, which would have considerably altered the impact of the building.⁷⁹ Smooth column shafts are characteristic of Achaemenid architecture and are seen also in the Temple of the Oxus. The stonemasons at Aï Khanoum were highly skilled so it is unlikely they lacked the skill to flute the column

⁷² Bernard 1973, fig.1, pl.24.

⁷³ Nylander 1970, 103; Stronach 1978, 59, 61, fig.28a; Litvinskij & Pičikyan 2002, 76-83.

⁷⁴ Francfort 1984 pl.28-29, XXXVI-XXXVII; Litvinskij & Pičikyan 2002, pl.31.

⁷⁵ Bernard 1973, 29 fig.4, pl.35; 37, fig.6; 26, fig.3; pl.36a.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 115.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 30, fig.5, 120, pl.34.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, pl.34. On Achaemenid irrigation systems and occupation at the citadel 3km to the north, see Mairs 2011a, 28-29.

⁷⁹ One fluted drum was found near the gymnasium (Bernard 1973, 31 n.10).

drums. The smooth drums make a strong visual impact on the character of the palace, whether this was a conscious decision to merge Iranian and Hellenistic architectural traditions to reflect the character of the population and cultural heritage of the city, or a more pragmatic result of stonemasons trained in Iranian carving techniques working alongside stonemasons trained in Hellenistic conventions.

The roof ornament of the palace included flat terracotta tiles (of the ‘Corinthian type’) and cover-joints, but the quantity found implies these only trimmed the edges of the roofs.⁸⁰ The roofs of the public buildings of Aï Khanoum are reconstructed as flat terraces.⁸¹ As only the edges of the roofs of the tall public buildings would be visible from the ground, the terracotta tiles and antefixes would be visible.⁸² It would only be if the viewer were in the theatre or on the acropolis that they would be able to see the tiles did not cover the whole roof. The ends of the cover-joints were disguised with terracotta antefixes, such as the palmette antefixes that crowned the Propylon [135].⁸³ The palmettes are quite individual and free in their execution, as even within the two types identified by Cambon (one more squat) they are slightly different sizes and have flexibility to the lines and freedom to the symmetry.⁸⁴ The winged antefixes, found on the façade of the palace, consist of a bulbous vegetal base sprouting two ornate curling wings either side of a central pistil [136]. There are no direct parallels in the ancient world.⁸⁵ The architects of the

⁸⁰ Bernard 1973, pl.99.

⁸¹ Lecuyot 2007, pl.3.

⁸² The Hypostyle Hall is reconstructed as 9m high (Bernard 1967, 313?).

⁸³ Guillaume 1983, pl.24, C-I.

⁸⁴ Cambon 2007, 143.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

Propylon used bulb antefixes (more simple versions of the winged antefixes) as well as palmettes.⁸⁶ These bulb antefixes (and possibly palmettes as well) were also used on the Tomb of Kineas, forming a visual connection between the two neighbouring structures.⁸⁷ These antefixes show a high degree of technical artistry and creativity of composition. They are less convincing as demonstrations of an ‘oriental lavishness’ of art when compared with the far more elaborate painted palmettes of Vergina or the acanthus figured akroterion from the Temple of Artemis at Magnesia.⁸⁸ There are no traces of sculptured simas or friezes common to contemporary Mediterranean public buildings.

The Temenos of Kineas and the Stone-vault Mausoleum are in the centre of the civic space and commemorate public figures, presumably founders (real or mythical) of the city. The Stone-vault Mausoleum, 150m north of the Temenos of Kineas, took the form of a small Greek temple (a *pronaos* with two columns in antis, cella, *opisthodomos* and Ionic peristyle, elevated by a three-stepped *crepis*).⁸⁹ Five skeletons and two sarcophagi were found in the underground vault. The ‘Tomb of Kineas’ was a single-roomed structure containing three sarcophagi, with two wooden columns in antis, topped with terracotta antefixes (bulbs, and possibly palmettes).⁹⁰ A limestone stele and base inscribed in Greek record the name of Kineas as founder of the city and a list of Delphic maxims.⁹¹ Both these monumental structures in the very

⁸⁶ Guillaume 1983, pl.24, J.

⁸⁷ Bernard 1973, 93.

⁸⁸ Webb 1996, fig.60-61.

⁸⁹ Cambon 2007, 51; Bernard 1975, 180-189.

⁹⁰ Bernard 1973, 93.

⁹¹ *I.Estremo Oriente* 382-384.

centre of the city, next to the main thoroughfare and palace, proclaim the Greco-Macedonian heritage of the city.

The interior decoration of the palace indicates a taste for Greco-Macedonian visual forms. Details of Greek architectural ornament, painted or made of stucco, are carefully reproduced. A similar technique of painted walls with pilasters, stucco moulding and clay relief sculpture is seen at Old Nisa. The over-life-size fingers and paws found in Room 6 indicate a relief including at least one human figure and a lion.⁹² The decoration of Room 9 included a clothed human figure and there are fragments of bare limbs, probably male legs.⁹³ A fragment of a face in unbaked clay was found in Vestibule 10.⁹⁴ From the extant evidence of the interior decoration of rich houses (which perhaps emulated palatial styles) this appears to be far more inventive and elaborate than contemporary decoration in the Mediterranean, such as on Delos and at Priene. Stucco details there are confined to the occasional architectural ornament such as a Doric entablature or pilasters rather than elaborate figural relief sculpture.⁹⁵ The addition of stucco (and painted) replications of monumental architectural ornament is seen in the palace at Ai Khanoum. In Room 3, there was a row of dentils (such as part of a Doric entablature) and lion head appliqués that echo the drain-spout gargoyles on Classical and Hellenistic public buildings.⁹⁶ These are accompanied by painted geometric panels.⁹⁷ Room 3 was

⁹² Bernard 1973, pl.105a; Bernard 1973, pl.105b.

⁹³ Ibid, pl.106-107.

⁹⁴ Ibid, pl.104.

⁹⁵ Westgate 2000, 400.

⁹⁶ Bernard 1973, 116, pl.59.

⁹⁷ Ibid, 115; also in Room 9: pl.103.

decorated with pilasters at regular intervals, and Rooms 6 and 9 were adorned with red painted plaster.⁹⁸ This has some similarities to the ‘Masonry Style’ of the Hellenistic period in breaking up walls with pilasters and blocks of colour, though the extant fragments do not imitate marble revetment (comparable to the Red Building at Old Nisa).⁹⁹ The expense of decoration seen in this building befits its grand scale and its presumed role as palace to a governor or ruler. Clay relief continued to be an appropriate form of decoration for the public rooms of rulers, such as at Old Nisa and Khalchayan.

The floors of the palace are not as elaborate as those of the palace at Vergina, the Pergamene buildings or even the small domestic structures of Delos. Most are packed earth surfaces. Two decorated mosaic floors, both probably for bathing areas, are made of dark-red/brown pebbles with designs picked out in white pebbles.¹⁰⁰ One has a simple design of a central rosette in a square border, surrounded by a larger square border enclosing palmettes in each corner, framed in turn by a wave border. The other [141] is more refined, with sharper delineation, more detail and more complicated motifs. It features the Macedonian star in the central tondo, surrounded by real and fantastical sea-life and a border of scrolling waves with palmettes at the corners. The prominence of the star emphasises the importance Greco-Bactrian rulers placed on their Macedonian identity. Pebble mosaics were still used in the third century, but by the middle of the century tessellated mosaics were far more popular,

⁹⁸ Bernard 1973, 52-53, 66-69, 76-78.

⁹⁹ Westgate 2000, 397.

¹⁰⁰ Bernard 1976, 292; There are other bath complexes with pebble floors at Ai Khanoum, but not all are decorated.

with stone chips for plain areas. It is possible the mosaic was installed with the palace and therefore does not indicate a 'behind the fashions' backward culture, but the careful preservation of the original floor until c.145 BC. Alternatively, this may show a conscious preference for an older style of mosaic in full knowledge of more modern techniques, just as the public monuments (see below). The mosaic resembles (though not necessarily an intentionally specific reference) the pebble mosaics of the Macedonian capital of Pella and implies the construction of a traditional physical space to express the rulers' Macedonian heritage, more explicit with the inclusion of the star motif. There were also pebble mosaics and stone 'attico-asiatique' bases in the large houses of the Kokcha quarter.

Little remains of the architectural ornamentation of the main temple of the city, the *temple à redans*.¹⁰¹ The sanctuary faced the main arterial street, to the south of the Propylon. The entrance, on an axis with the temple itself, was marked by two columns of wood or brick with stone bases. This central position in the city and its proximity to the palace indicate its importance. The temple would have been highly visible placed on its stepped podium. This mud-brick temple's plan is similar to the Mesopotamian 'broad-room' temple form (though without direct access to the flanking 'cellae') and the exterior indented niches also resemble Mesopotamian religious architecture (such as at Uruk). The larger *temple hors les murs*, 100km north of the walls, also follows a broad-room plan, with three cellae, thick mudbrick walls

¹⁰¹ Also known as, more accurately, the 'Temple with Indented Niches' (*temple à niches indentées*).

and exterior stepped indented niches.¹⁰² These features suggest the Meso-Iranian connections in visual culture fostered by the Achaemenid empire were not diminished.

The material record of Aī Khanoum includes touches of Hellenistic ornament scattered across the city's architecture. These select features did not conform to one model, were used in combination with other architectural models and were adapted to local resources. The decoration also included local innovations such as the winged antefixes and clay relief sculpture, and the preference of Mesopotamian decoration of the temples.

Similarly to the 'old-fashioned' mosaics discussed above, there is a visible conservatism in the forms of public monuments at odds with the up-to-date nature of other evidence such as the ceramics and economic texts. The monuments referred to older styles to construct and display the Greco-Macedonian heritage of the city.

The Fountain of the Oxus would have been a vital public monument in community life. It is presumable many people used it, particularly since it was accessed from a long street to the southern residential district. All that remains are the large limestone blocks and three carved limestone waterspouts. The first, in the shape of a fish head is a suitably watery motif.¹⁰³ The other two spouts are in the form of a

¹⁰² There were no finds from this temple. Bernard 1974, 287-289; 1976a, 303-307 fig.11; Bernard 1976, 303-307; Bernard 1990a, 75; Downey 1988, 73-75; Boyce & Grenet 1991, 172.

¹⁰³ Bernard 1976, fig.16.

theatre mask [139] and a hound's head [140].¹⁰⁴ The former illustrates the dissemination of the iconography of the theatre in the visual culture of Bactria, along with a fragment of a dramatic text found in the treasury and the colossal theatre itself, cut into the acropolis and looking out over the city.¹⁰⁵ All three spouts are carved to a high standard, include details such as the fish-scales or the fur of the hound, and show the Hellenistic concern with heightened dramatic realism. Two other spouts from Aï Khanoum take the form of cartoon-like lion and lioness heads.¹⁰⁶

Several limestone monuments and a bronze life-size humanoid statue (only fragments extant) were set up within the gymnasium.¹⁰⁷ Two stone sundials illustrate part of the intellectual culture of Aï Khanoum and the trade and cultural networks across the Iranian Plateau.¹⁰⁸ The hemispherical sundial is a Babylonian type (credited by Vitruvius to Berossus) with Greek decoration of hyper-realistic lion-paws created for the area of Aï Khanoum; the other was perhaps created in Egypt or India (due to the specifications of the latitude).¹⁰⁹ A limestone hermaic statue [142] was small but held a prominent position on a base in the central exedra in the northern colonnade. The Greek inscription on the base read 'Triballos and Strato, sons of Strato, to Hermes and Herakles', patron deities of the *paideia*.¹¹⁰ The statue depicts an old man in a thick cloak, his age suggested by his beard, protruding stomach, sallow cheeks, lines on his forehead, receding hairline and thinning on the

¹⁰⁴ Bernard 1976, fig.17-18.

¹⁰⁵ *I.Estremo Oriente* 458.

¹⁰⁶ Bernard 1974, 305, fig.16; Hansen, Wieczorek & Tellenbach 2009, 347, no.227.

¹⁰⁷ Veuve 1987, 113-114.

¹⁰⁸ Veuve 1982; Veuve 1987, 86-88, 88-91; Bernard 1976, 299-302.

¹⁰⁹ Vit.VIII.8.1.

¹¹⁰ *I.Estremo Oriente* 381.

crown of his head. The thick cloak pulled in to his chest with his right hand and thick natural beard give him the appearance of a respectable Greek citizen. The fillet around his head denotes a special public role or social status. His left hand is curled, presumably around a metal addition, perhaps the rod of the gymnasiarch. The sculpture is of high quality, with attention to detail such as the incised lines indicating hair within each separate lock. The indication of portrait features and the mantle link this statue to the sculptural trends of the Mediterranean. It is not a dynamic sculpture in the Hellenistic manner (both in the rendering of the features of the man and the shallow folds of the cloak) but more restrained and subtle, in the mode of Classical Greek sculpture.

The only artefacts confidently assigned an original context in the *temple à redans* are one stucco and two unbaked clay sculptures that stood on pedestals and framed the entrance to the cella from the *pronaos* (the clay to the north and the stucco to the south). The surviving clay face may be an idealized female [149] and the stucco head a male with portrait features.¹¹¹ The latter is highly reminiscent of 109, with its uplifted eyes, ridged brow, parted lips and traces of thick locks of hair, typical of the representation of Hellenistic rulers. This stylistic interpretation aligns the heads with the sculptural trends of the Late Classical and Hellenistic Mediterranean, where depictions of male faces began to include portrait features but representations of women remained idealized. The prominent position of the statues

¹¹¹ Bernard 1969, 345, fig.19 & 20.

in the temple on pedestals implies significant social status, and the remains of gold on the clay face might imply a royal or cultic status.¹¹²

Two fragments perhaps found near their original setting are a marble left foot [144] and left hand two to three times life-size from near the baked brick podium against the centre of the rear wall of the cella. They are thought to be the remains of an acrolithic statue from this podium that was the focus of the cult of the temple (see the similarly positioned podia in Uruk's Irigal and the '*fratarakā* temple' at Persepolis). The sharp L-shaped wedge at the break of the foot suggests an acrolithic original, rather than a broken fragment of a marble statue. Marble, clay or faience (see 147) represented the visible flesh of the figure and the body was perhaps of wood covered in drapery or gilded. Acrolithic sculpture was rarely seen in Greek art and appears to have flourished in Bactria during this period (see 109-113).¹¹³ The identity of the deity worshipped in the *temple à redans* is ambiguous (discussed further in Ch.V). The Greek style of rendering of the naturalistic toes and the motif of the thunderbolt on the sandal have led to the proposal of Zeus, while its context in a Mesopotamian form of temple and Bactrian city have been interpreted as a syncretistic cult of Zeus with an eastern deity. Zeus and his thunderbolt were common to coins of Diodotus, founder of the Greco-Bactrian kingdom, and therefore this motif held a particularly poignant local symbolism for a Greco-Bactrian city such as Ai Khanoum.¹¹⁴

¹¹² See also bronze fragments of a large humanoid statue from the gymnasium (Veuve 1987, 113-114).

¹¹³ Bopearachchi 1998, 24.

¹¹⁴ A rectangular bronze plaque also shows this motif (Francfort 1984, pl.XX no.26).

There are also monuments to private individuals on public display, such as the small limestone *stèle* with a high relief of a young man [143], set up outside the Extra-Mural Mausoleum. He is nude, with long hair falling onto his shoulders and a *petasos* hanging over his shoulder and *chlamys* over his arm.¹¹⁵ The well-defined musculature emphasises Greek ideals of physical beauty and heroism. The *petasos* and *chlamys* were typical parts of the Greco-Macedonian traveller's costume, worn by Hermes and *ephebes*.¹¹⁶ His eyes were deep-set and raised, in the manner of Hellenistic sculpture, though his stocky build is rendered softly, more akin to Classical styles than the exaggerated musculature common to Hellenistic sculpture.

The majority of small finds were discovered in the *temple à redans*. They cannot be identified as votives since theirs is a secondary context of deposition in the temple. Fragments of ivory furniture legs are very similar in form to examples from Nisa and Taxila and the silver *kline* legs from Frēhāt en-Nufēgi [37], illustrating a visual *koine* across Babylonia to Bactria in functional decorated objects.¹¹⁷ Other ivory finds indicate trade links with India more explicitly. A small bone figurine of a nude female with articulated arms might at first be compared to Babylonian nude female figurines, yet this figure has a *bindi* marked on her forehead.¹¹⁸ In the treasury of the palace was a shell disc [153] with figural and vegetal decoration picked out in small dots with inlaid coloured glass and gold thread. The style of decoration is very

¹¹⁵ Narain 1957, 18 notes the *petasos* on Hermes on bronze Diodotid issues in the name of Antiochus. See also Nisean *rhyta* no.4, 22, 27 & 65.

¹¹⁶ Cambon 2007, 151 proposes this fits the model of a Greek *ephebe* except for the long hair, which marks the man's Bactrian ethnicity. There is no evidence, however, to suggest long hair was a Bactrian characteristic (see the Persepolis relief Bactrian tribute-bearers).

¹¹⁷ Bernard 1970.

¹¹⁸ Bernard 1974, fig.15.

similar to the cylinder from Takht-i Sangin [123]. A precise identification of the Hindu myth of Dushyanta and Śakuntalā may be overconfident since many Indian myths involve a royal man in a forest or pleasure grove, and the scene is very fragmentary.¹¹⁹ In addition to trade links, Greco-Bactrian conquests in India in the second century BC are likely to have resulted in Indian artefacts brought back to Bactria.

The prolific schist *pyxides* [148] from Aï Khanoum were incised, painted and inlaid with distinctive stylised designs on the domed lids. The outlines of incised leaping horses and a thistle-like floral motif are very common, along with rosettes.¹²⁰ Similar examples were found at Takht-i Sangin, adding to the impression of established independent Bactrian artistic repertoire.¹²¹ As at Takht-i Sangin, there are not many terracotta figurines published. There are a few female figures or busts in terracotta and in stucco, including Tanagra-like heads of women, veiled, with their hair tied up from central partings.¹²² In contrast to the Classicizing styles of much of the public visual culture of Aï Khanoum, it seems the smaller, more private and portable items were perfectly up-to-date with contemporaneous Mediterranean forms, as well as developing their own local styles.¹²³

Another example of the quick movement and receptivity of iconographic repertoire is seen in a bronze handle found in the *temple à redans* ornamented with

¹¹⁹ Rapin 1992, 192-197; Fussmann 1996, 248.

¹²⁰ Francfort 1984, pl.14-15; Guillaume & Rouguelle 1987, pl.II-III.

¹²¹ Hansen, Wiczorek & Tellenbach 2009, no.259.

¹²² Ibid, no.230-231; Guillaume & Rouguelle 1987, pl.XVI-XVII.

¹²³ Gardin 1985; Clarysse & Thompson 2007.

two busts of horned female figures on a vine leaf, each with a bare breast [150]. In Classical Greek iconography, the followers of Dionysus are male satyrs or female maenads (humans), not women with animal features. These ‘satyresses’ are a novel reformulation of the Dionysiac repertoire, in line with developments in the Hellenistic-period Mediterranean repertoire, such as the satyr family in the megalography of the Villa dei Misteri in Pompeii.¹²⁴

Perhaps the most famous find from the *temple à redans* is the gilded silver ‘Cybele disc’ [152]. The disc was ripped from its wooden frame and deposited in the temple. It shows Cybele approaching a stepped podium in her lion-drawn *biga* driven by Nike. Cybele wears a *chiton*, *himation* and *polos*, while Nike wears only a long-sleeved *chiton* (her usual garb, but also accentuating her youth and subsidiary role here). An attendant attends to an incense-burner on a high six-stepped podium. This podium resembles Iranian podia such as at Pasargadae or the *atešgah* of Room 7 in the Temple of the Oxus, rather than the broad monumental altars with moulding used in Greek cult or the wider stepped form of podium such as at Mašjid-i Solaiman, Bard-i Nišandeh and the seven-stepped podium at Aï Khanoum. In the sky above these figures, along with a crescent and star, is a male radiate bust clean-shaven with short hair and highlighted in gold. Although this is the iconography of the sun-god Helios, the identification is a little ambivalent since the Zoroastrian Mithra took on these same attributes.¹²⁵ The cult of Cybele originated in the Near East before it became popular in Greece, though this is clearly a Greek depiction of the goddess. A

¹²⁴ See also Lucian *Zeuxis or Antiochus* 3 on Zeuxis’ painting of a centaur family.

¹²⁵ See Sasanian reliefs at Naqš-i Rostam (Schmidt 1970); Hdt.1.131 says Persians worshipped the sun and moon; Strabo XV.3.13 says the Persians worshipped Helios, whom they call Mithra.

silver plate from Takht-i Sangin [126] showed a similar subject, in the same material as the Aï Khanoum disc. This suggests a Bactrian origin for both these reliefs.

Herakles is particularly popular in the visual culture of Bactria after the Macedonian conquest, just as in Babylonia and Iran.¹²⁶ Herakles seated on a rock appears on the reverse of many issues of Euthydemus I, among others.¹²⁷ His image appears at Aï Khanoum as a bronze statuette [151] of a clean-shaven Herakles standing holding his club and wearing a wreath. It is not particularly well executed (the left arm is far too long and the hand much too big) but was well cared for – traces of soldering on the base show the statuette was repaired in antiquity. The clean-shaven standing Herakles wearing a wreath, holding a club and lion-skin (the latter is omitted in the bronze statuette) is depicted on the reverses of Demetrius I and Euthydemus II.¹²⁸ The Herakles of Demetrius also raises his right arm to the wreath on his head, just as the statuette. Intriguingly, the reverses of a bronze issue of Demetrius show a slightly feminine figure in the same pose but wearing a belted knee-length tunic, trousers and short tight boots.¹²⁹ The club and lion-skin are gone and the leaves of the wreath are now pointed rays around the head of the figure. The combination of Iranian costume and radiate crown suggest this figure represents Mithra. Bopearachchi's identification as Artemis in her hunting garb, drawing an arrow from her quiver, is questionable since Artemis' costume is usually a shorter tunic with tall hunting boots and without trousers and while it is rare but not

¹²⁶ Abdullaev 2007.

¹²⁷ Bopearachchi 1991, pl.2-3, series 1-16.

¹²⁸ Ibid, pl.4-6, Demetrius series 1-3; Euthydemus series 1-4.

¹²⁹ Ibid, pl.5, 11-13.

inconceivable for her to be radiate, her main attributes of the quiver and bow are not visible.

Some limestone sculpture was made at the site, as demonstrated by the unfinished statuette found in the *temple à redans* [145].¹³⁰ This may represent an athletic victor, though the pose and wreath bear resemblance to the Herakles figurine [151]. A limestone statuette of a woman in a *chiton* [146] renders a Hellenistic subject (a heavily draped woman in Greek garb with one leg forward) with a more flat and linear style of carving. If this statuette was also made here, it is possible it indicates the reception and alteration of Greek visual forms.

There is a notable difference between features of Greek derivation with a public and commemorative function and that with a private or functional role. Visual forms with a more private or transitional and day-to-day function, such as pottery or private records and communication bear comparison to contemporary styles of the Mediterranean. The script used for two Greek documents from the palace treasury is very similar to scribal hands of mid-third century Egypt.¹³¹ This contrasts with the early third century script used to display the Delphic maxims on the stele of the tomb of Kineas in the centre of the city, and the mid-third-century-style inscription on the mid-second-century base of the fourth-century-style hermaic statue [142] from the gymnasium.¹³² Some difference should be expected between different media, but the

¹³⁰ **145** and the feet and base for an anthropomorphic statue (Hansen, Wieczorek & Tellenbach, no.224) are the only marble statuary found at Aï Khanoum.

¹³¹ *I.Estremo Oriente* 457; Clarysse & Thompson 2007, 273-274.

¹³² Lerner 2004, 390-392.

consistency of classicizing forms among public visual culture of different media (such as between epigraphic and sculptural forms) suggests this is a wider trend. The ceramics from Ai Khanoum indicate contact between the Mediterranean and Bactria continued throughout the Hellenistic period that were not limited to the trade of expensive items, and enabled the replication, imitation or adaptation of such items in Bactria.¹³³ At the same time, Achaemenid forms of administration were maintained.¹³⁴ The visual culture of the monumental public space of Ai Khanoum derived from and expanded upon the visual heritage of Classical Greece, Babylonia and Iran. Civic identity was both expressed and shaped by the construction of a visual heritage combining these influences. The Greek heritage was adapted to the situation of the city, in terms of the use of locally available raw materials and in accommodating its Iranian heritage and native population. The city at Ai Khanoum was founded on the site of an existing settlement and although Greek visual culture is predominant, there were many features that maintained this continuity: it was not a Greek city transplanted onto a Bactrian landscape but a Greco-Bactrian city.

Greco-Bactrian coinage.

The coinage issues of the Greco-Bactrian rulers provide much material for iconographic discussion. The first Greco-Bactrian ruler, Diodotus, minted coins in the name of Antiochus II but with his own portrait and distinctive motif of the 'thundering Zeus'. Coins in the name of Diodotus and with a new portrait are

¹³³ Gardin 1985, 447-460.

¹³⁴ Shaked 2004.

attributed to his son and successor, Diodotus II.¹³⁵ It is highly likely there were mints at Ai Khanoum and Bactra.¹³⁶

Almost all the Greco-Bactrian rulers are depicted in the clean-shaven, short-haired and diademed image of the typical Hellenistic ruler on the model of Alexander. Additional headgear includes the Macedonian *kausia* (Antimachus I **155** and Apollodotus I) emphasising their Macedonian heritage, and the Boeotian helmet (Eukratides I) implying Greco-Macedonian connections and military leadership. Portraits of Demetrius I show him wearing the elephant scalp, an allusion to victories in India, with the flowing tassels of his diadem visible underneath. The kings are presented as active competitors with the dynasties of Alexander's generals: the Seleukids, Ptolemies and Antigonids. There are several 'pedigree' issues of Agathokles showing portraits of Alexander, 'Antiochus Nikator' (probably Antiochus III), Diodotus I, Diodotus II, Euthydemus I and Demetrius I. These portraits connect Agathokles to great military rulers and the founders of the independent Greco-Bactrian kingdom, glorifying his predecessors and by association himself.

Their issue of square bronze flans as well as circular silver coins demonstrates the flexibility in the kings' use of features from visual cultures other than their own. The later Greco-Bactrian rulers issued these, presumably after their conquests of Indian lands. This continues a format recognisable to the local population since square issues were in circulation before the Macedonian conquest. Some, such as

¹³⁵ Holt 1999.

¹³⁶ Kritt 2001, 167-183.

issues of Agathokles [156] and Pantaleon, show local iconography of Hindu gods or Buddhist motifs but frame these with Greek legends.¹³⁷ The use of such motifs is novel to Indian coinage, however, which previously were rectangular strips with small patterned stamps (*karshapana* coins) rather than elaborate figurative compositions. The overall designs of these issues are ‘visually bilingual’ in the combination of Greek script and local iconography. Apollodotus, the first Indo-Greek king to rule only Indian lands, issued bilingual square coins with an elephant and Greek legend on the obverse, and a bull and the legend translated into Kharosthi (*‘Maharajasa tratarasa Apaladatasā’*) on the reverse.¹³⁸ The bull and elephant are perhaps Hindu or Buddhist symbols. The multiple permutations of this bilingual coinage is illustrated further by Apollodotus and Antimachus II’s circular (‘Greek format’) issues that use Indian motifs and legends, and their square (‘Indian format’) issues that use Greek iconography of a nude deity and Apollo’s tripod.¹³⁹ Apollo’s tripod is framed with an Indian script. Although in many areas they are keen to uphold their Macedonian image, the Greco-Bactrian rulers were also willing to compromise in order to communicate to a wider audience via a form with which people were familiar. This communication assisted both economic and social trust in the coinage, by the cultivation of some degree of loyalty to the ruler through acceptance of their authority to mint coins and participation in a shared material culture. This mingling and co-existence is corroborated by the Greek and Indian

¹³⁷ Bopearachchi 1991, pl.7-8, series 9-11; pl.9, series 6.

¹³⁸ Ibid, pl.11, series 3-5.

¹³⁹ Ibid, pl.11, series 2 and pl.14-15, series I.

currency and in the economic texts from the treasury at Ai Khanoum, where there are Bactrian and Iranian names of individuals as well as Greek names.¹⁴⁰

The issues of Greco-Bactrian kings are not only creative in their combinations of motifs, forms and legends, but also in their artistic representation. Many of the coins, particularly the pedigree issues, are very high quality, such as the level of detail on the reverse of Eukratides' issues showing the Dioskouroi.¹⁴¹ A particularly high-quality issue of Eukratides [157] shows the bare muscled shoulders of the king, facing left and hoisting a spear.¹⁴² This also shows experimentation in iconography, reiterated by the depiction of progressive ageing on the coins of Euthydemus.¹⁴³ They used a great variety of subject matter, including Greek gods and Hindu and Buddhist motifs. Greco-Bactrian coinage expressed the rulers' Greco-Macedonian heritage, emphasising their links to Alexander and status as equals in power to the Seleukids and other Hellenistic dynasties. They were not limited to this, but issued forms, motifs and legends recognisable to the local populations in a variety of combinations.

Other Bactrian sites.

There are a number of sites in Bactria where material is dated broadly to the first century BC or AD, but continues themes raised by the visual culture of Takht-i

¹⁴⁰ *I. Estremo Oriente* 322-357; Rapin 1983; Rapin 1992, 95-114.

¹⁴¹ Bopearachchi 1991, pl.16, series 4; pl.17-9, series 5-8.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, pl.19, series 8.

¹⁴³ Kritt 2001, pl.15a-b.

Sangin and Aï Khanoum.¹⁴⁴ Other sites, such as Emshi Tepe and Termez, show signs of occupation in the third and second centuries BC but the iconographic record is limited.

Excavations at Tepe Zargaran and Bala Hisar in Balkh (ancient Bactra) are on-going, but have already revealed Greco-Bactrian and Achaemenid levels.¹⁴⁵ The ‘pseudo-Corinthian’ limestone capital from Tepe Zargaran is the same scale and style as **133** but differs in that the bell is circular not square where it joins the abacus, adding to the multiple adaptations of the Corinthian order seen at Aï Khanoum.¹⁴⁶

The fortified citadel of Kampyr Tepe lies on the right bank of the Amu Darya, 30km west of Termez.¹⁴⁷ The lowest layers contained third- and second-century BC ceramics.¹⁴⁸ The coins indicate continuous occupation from Antiochus I (though these were unstratified) through to Kanishka. A small terracotta plaque shows a man with a circular shield, *pteryges*, sword and cuirass similar to a Greek hoplite, but wearing a tall conical helmet with a cheek-piece, nosepiece, topped with a knob and long trailing plume. The emblem on the shield is structurally but not stylistically similar to the thunderbolt of Zeus.¹⁴⁹ The style of the image, with its distorted anatomy, suggests a Kushan soldier, yet the plaque was found two layers below a coin of Eukratides.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁴ See Mairs 2011, 29-37 for a comprehensive survey of Greco-Bactrian sites.

¹⁴⁵ Besenval, Marquis & Fouache 2009.

¹⁴⁶ Besenval, Bernard and Jarrige 2002, 1403-1411.

¹⁴⁷ Abdullaev et al. 1991; Rtveladze 1994; Rusanov 1994.

¹⁴⁸ Abdullaev 1995, 167.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid, 167. Nikanorov 1997, 38.

¹⁵⁰ Nikonorov & Savchuk 1992, 50.

The treasures from Begram were found in two sealed chambers in a building near the fortification wall, perhaps warehouses of a merchant rather than a palace treasury.¹⁵¹ The rooms were perhaps sealed in the first century AD, though many of the objects show stylistic similarities to material from the third and second centuries BC.¹⁵² This ‘treasure’ consisted of ornately decorated coloured glass receptacles (including depictions of the Alexandrian Pharos and Roman gladiators), intricately carved ivory (most likely for furniture), small bronze items and a series of plaster medallions showing Greek iconography.¹⁵³ The bronzes include representations of Athena, Hermes, Herakles-Serapis, Eros, Silenus and Harpocrates. The plaster medallions are of little intrinsic monetary worth but they would be valuable to a craftsman since they are the means of creating a finished product rather than the precious artefact itself. The medallions are small and portable, and are likely casts for silver plates or perhaps ornate mirror-backs.

The wall-paintings and elaborate clay sculpted reliefs from the first-century AD reception hall at Khalchayan and the first to third-century AD sculptures from Dal’verzin Tepe show the continuation of the medium popular at Old Nisa, Takht-i Sangin and Ai Khanoum.¹⁵⁴ The central scene on the west and north wall at Khalchayan showed seated members of the family of the Kushan ruler Herais.¹⁵⁵ On

¹⁵¹ Hackin 1939; Mehendale 2011.

¹⁵² Mehendale 1997 (referenced in Cambon 2007, 77). Menninger 1996, 225 proposes the 3rd century AD.

¹⁵³ Menninger 1996.

¹⁵⁴ Pugachenkova 1966; Pugachenkova 1971; Nehru 1999/2000.

¹⁵⁵ Nehru 1999/2000, 219; Pugachenkova 51, 61, 71.

the southern wall was a battle scene of cavalymen, perhaps showing the defeat of another nomadic tribe such as the Saka.¹⁵⁶ There are also a number of figures in these wall-reliefs identified as Greek deities, including Herakles, Nike, Athena and Cybele, and satyrs among the garland friezes. The heads of the human and equine figures are highly expressive. The stone column bases are the stepped torus type popular in the architecture of third and second-century BC Bactria. The style of the clay and terracotta sculpture from Dal'verzin Tepe (a small Greco-Bactrian settlement that expanded in the first century BC and became an important Kushan centre from the first to third century AD) are very different to the roughly textured and animated figures of Khalchayan.¹⁵⁷ The plastic curling waves of hair in particular would seem stylistically to owe much to Hellenistic art, but are combined with extremely large ears, smooth symmetrical brows and eyes, and only slight animation of the mouth.

Six burials from the mound of Tillya Tepe, c.500m northwest of the circular settlement at Emshi Tepe and 100km west of Balkh, excavated in 1978, revealed thousands of gold objects that decorated the wealthy deceased personages.¹⁵⁸ They are dated to the mid-late first century AD, but were buried with antique items (possibly 100-150 years old before burial), presumably heirlooms, which supports the idea of the ceremonial function of the dress. These extremely wealthy people are not representational of the whole population, but these graves illustrate artistic features the society used as signifiers of status on an exclusive ceremonial level. Gold predominates, highlighted with various semi-precious stones. Blue glass and

¹⁵⁶ Abdullaev 1995; Abdullaev 2004.

¹⁵⁷ Pugachenkova 1986, 109.

¹⁵⁸ Sarianidi 1985; Cambon 2007.

turquoise replace the rare and expensive lapis, perhaps since the nomadic tribes lacked the centralized administration needed to exploit the Bactrian lapis. Necklaces of series of hollow gold balls are common. The most frequent motifs are small curved appliqué: moons, rosettes, hearts and droplets. The craftsmen were very skilled and used a number of different techniques including castings from moulds and sheet gold, repoussé and granulation. The distinctive Steppe art here incorporates features of Greek iconography, such as the 'Aphrodite of Bactria' gold appliqué and the pair of clasps showing Dionysus, Ariadne, Nike and Silenus.¹⁵⁹ The inclusion of naked human figures is novel to Steppe art, though the reverted hindquarters and predations continue to be popular (see **124**).

The wall-paintings in the temple at Dilberdjin, from the second or third century AD, 40km northwest of Balkh, include a symmetrical composition of two men, naked except for a white *chlamys* and conical *pilos* hat, each leading a white horse.¹⁶⁰ The Dioskouroi were popular on Greco-Bactrian coins [**157**], but whether this image retained association with these Greek gods is questionable.¹⁶¹ It is possible the use of white, red, black and yellow was a conscious replication of the four-colour palette that began in the late fourth-century Mediterranean. The ornament underneath, including a meander, adds to this impression. Other motifs at the site include a repeated seal impression of Nike on a potsherd.¹⁶² There were column bases similar

¹⁵⁹ Cambon 2007, 218-219, cat.135; 220-222, cat.136.

¹⁶⁰ Kruglikova 1974; Kruglikova 1977; Kruglikova 1986; Lo Muzio 1999, 41-71.

¹⁶¹ Lo Muzio 1999.

¹⁶² Kruglikova 1986, 93, fig.65.

to the ‘attico-asiatique’ bases from Aï Khanoum.¹⁶³ This site shows the longevity of Hellenistic forms and iconography in the visual culture of Bactria long after the demise of the Greco-Bactrian rulers.

Discussion.

The material culture of Aï Khanoum and Takht-i Sangin demonstrates continuing and developing relations with numerous visual traditions that originated outside Bactria. The Macedonian conquest facilitated the growth and solidification of existing links, such as to Babylonia, Iran and India, while bringing a host of Greco-Macedonian iconography, styles and visual practices to the region. Distinctly Bactrian features include unbaked clay sculpture and schist *pyxides*. There is also a marked preference for certain motifs and forms, such as Herakles iconography and the gilded silver Cybele reliefs [126, 152], which also demonstrate highly skilled local manufacture.

Unbaked clay sculpture for wall reliefs and acrolithic statuary was a distinctive and innovative Bactrian art form in this period, often following Hellenistic and Classical Greek styles.¹⁶⁴ It is also popular at Old Nisa, perhaps indicating a certain ‘north Iranian’ visual *koine* and artistic network. Clay sculpture was used later at sites such as Khalchayan, Dal’verzin Tepe and blossomed in Buddhist art, such as the fifth-century AD sanctuary at Mes Aynak.

¹⁶³ Kruglikova 1986.

¹⁶⁴ Bernard 1982a, 158f.

This reception and alteration of Greek visual forms is also evident in the architectural ornamentation of the public buildings at Bactrian sites. There are features from Greek architectural orders, but they are selected in isolation and are adapted to the available materials, requirements of the structure and used in combination with other architectural orders (such as Ionic capitals in the Temple of the Oxus with stepped torus bases).

Although we have evidence of at least four sacred areas in Takht-i Sangin and Aï Khanoum (excluding the Temenos of Kineas and the Stone-vault Mausoleum), the character of the cults is ambiguous. This is more difficult to discern in the *temple à redans* due to the disrupted context, though the miniature altars found in its *temenos* imply dedicatory activity. A wide variety of votive offerings is evident at Takht-i Sangin. The monumental altars in the Temple of the Oxus emulate Greek forms, yet are not placed outside the temple in line with the demands of Greek cult. The altars in the side-chambers suggest the maintenance of fire. The architectural designs of the temples at Takht-i Sangin and Aï Khanoum follow Iranian and Mesopotamian models of construction respectively. The additions of Hellenistic forms of architectural ornament are not structurally integral and do not make a significant impact on the overall aesthetic impression of the buildings. The Temenos of Kineas and Stone-vault Mausoleum probably had some form of cultic significance and their extreme importance to the society at Aï Khanoum is underscored by their location in the heart of the city, next to the administrative centre. At Aï Khanoum there was simultaneous cultic activity in the two Mesopotamian-style temples and at the podium on the

acropolis. While these two forms of sacred space are not necessarily antithetical (see the discussion of Elamite religious architecture in Ch.III and V), they do suggest the concurrent observance of different religions and perhaps therefore the co-habitation of different ethnicities.

Aspects of Hellenistic visual culture were adopted throughout the visual culture of Bactria after the Macedonian conquest. These adoptions were not limited to propagation by or imitation of rulers, although the wide circulation of Hellenistic iconography from Greco-Bactrian and Indo-Greek coinage should not be underestimated. The participation in Greek culture and utilisation of the associated visual culture is seen in the public buildings used by the wider population, such as the gymnasium and theatre. The erection of the Delphic maxims in the centre of the city propagates a symbolic cultural affiliation. The self-consciously Classical images of the hermaic statue [143] and the funerary stele [144] promote Greek ideals of wisdom and *sophrosyne* for the elder man and athletic prowess in the younger. The place of Greek theatrical traditions in society at Ai Khanoum is indicated not only by the massive theatre cut into the side of the acropolis, but is also illustrated across the city such as the Greek dramatic texts found in the treasury and the design of a fountain spout [139].¹⁶⁵ There is no sign of royal involvement at Takht-i Sangin (perhaps bar the substantial cost in constructing such a large temple), yet Hellenistic artistic forms abound among the votives and are also used in the architectural ornament, alongside forms associated with Achaemenid, Parthian, Indian and Steppe traditions. Equally, the Greco-Bactrian rulers were not restricted to using Hellenistic motifs but could use

¹⁶⁵ *I.Estremo Oriente* 458.

local visual forms when it suited their purposes (such as the bilingual coinage, **156**). They used visual multi-lingualism to advance their political purposes.

There is little of western manufacture in the material record of Ai Khanoum, emphasising local impetus in Bactrian visual culture.¹⁶⁶ The ‘perpetuation of outdated styles’ in the visual culture of public space in Ai Khanoum might be read as a conscious construction of visual heritage rather than unintentional backwardness. There is clear evidence of up-to-date forms in more functional aspects of material life, such as pottery and letter forms.¹⁶⁷ The use of Greek forms was not a passive reception of motifs but active adaption and the development of their own forms of expressing Hellenistic visual ideas. The impact of the assimilation of Hellenistic iconography and forms into the visual culture of Bactria is attested by the wide variety of reactions, modulations, and the continuation of such influences long after the period of Greco-Bactrian rule.

¹⁶⁶ Rapin 1992, 295.

¹⁶⁷ Gardin 1985; Clarysse & Thompson 2007.

Chapter V: The Sphere of Gods.

Introduction.

This chapter considers the character of the art and architectural ornament that shaped the visual culture of sacred space and ritual, and forms of religious iconography both inside and outside of a specifically religious context. Many different religions were followed in Babylonia, Iran and Bactria at the time of the Macedonian conquest. The Babylonian and Elamite pantheons were long-established. Achaemenid kings promoted the cult of Auramazdā (likely predating Zoroastrianism but similarly involving veneration of the elements, in particular fire and water, in a high place), but Persian religion outside the royal court was a ‘heterogeneous unity of religious beliefs and cultic practices that emerged from a long Elamite-Iranian coexistence’.¹ There was marked development in cult of sacred fire and Mazdaism under the patronage of the Parthians and the *fratarakā*.² Into this mix of existing religious activities, the Macedonian conquest introduced the Greek pantheon and the ruler cult of the Seleukid kings.

This chapter examines the material record of religious activity and iconography. This entails firstly the decoration of sacred space and forms of ritual apparatus included in that space. The iconography of religious symbols, deities and their attributes follows. This leads to an analysis of religious syncretism using case

¹ Hdt.1.131; Strabo XV.13.3; Henkelman 2008, 59.

² Boyce & Grenet 1991; Brosius 2006, 102-103.

studies of Herakles' iconography, the *temple à redans* and the Temple of the Oxus. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the establishment and development of ruler cult in Babylonia, Iran and Bactria.

The shape of sacred space in the archaeological record of Iran and Bactria dramatically altered after the Macedonian conquest. There is no firm evidence to suggest enclosed structures for religious purposes were a prominent feature of Persian religion before the Macedonian conquest. Zoroastrian fire-temples are not identified convincingly until the Sasanian period, though our period was clearly significant in the development of later forms.³ The construction of temples was long-established in Babylonia, however, (in complex sanctuaries and with accompanying ziggurats) and in other Iranian regions.⁴ Traditional Babylonian forms of structure, technique and ornamentation for these temples were employed for structures built or repaired in this period. There were a variety of religious structures in Elam, including temples, ziggurats and open-air podia.⁵ In Elymais and Babylonia, the temples were important administrative systems that continued to flourish in the third century BC.⁶ In contrast to the proliferation of the iconography of Greek gods, the influence of Greco-Macedonian religious architecture is very limited during our period. The movement of architectural forms was not limited to Hellenistic models, but is also seen in the

³ Boyce & Grenet 1991. Litvinskij & Pičikyan 2002, 96 on the Temple of the Oxus as a fire temple and, *contra*, Bernard 1994.

⁴ On the complex at Nuš-i Jan in Media, see Root 2010, 173. The function of the 'Achaemenid temple' at Susa is unclear. A religious function is proposed due to the tetrastyle hall, long-corridors and two 'side-chapels' which *later* became a feature of Iranian religious architecture (Shenkar 2007). The building is no longer extant (Dieulafoy 1890; Schippmann 1971, 266-274). Bernard 1969, 337 n.1 suggests the bases were reused from an Achaemenid monument.

⁵ Root 2010.

⁶ McEwan 1981.

use of Mesopotamian religious architecture in Bactria (though there is little archaeological evidence from Bactria before the Macedonian conquest).

The scarce archaeological evidence for Iranian sacred sites before the Macedonian conquest makes it difficult to distinguish between innovations and developments in ritual. The dedication of votive objects, for example, becomes far more visible in the archaeological record of Iran and Bactria. Classical sources tell us Iranian religion did not include cult statues (though there are a few anecdotes of Achaemenid dedications of statues of gods), whereas the focus of ritual on a cult statue had long been part of Babylonian religion.

The Macedonian conquest facilitated the transmission of many new motifs from the iconographical corpus of Greek deities to the artistic repertoire of Babylonia, Iran and Bactria. There were established networks of exchange during the Achaemenid period, but not on this scale or to such an extent throughout society. The scale and diversity of forms and subjects requires a more subtle interpretation than a cultural agenda deliberately implemented by Hellenistic kings. The motifs not only decorate objects associated with religious practice, but also permeate many other forms and contexts of figural representation. In addition to straight transmission of the appearance and attributes of Greek gods, there are many instances of the independent interpretation, alteration and reconfiguration of the Greek religious iconography. Deciphering the meaning originally inferred from these images forms the core of this discussion. This involves the relationship between images that

retained their original meaning (even if the depictions vary from the Mediterranean ‘canonical’ presentation), images with the same appearance that took on multiple meanings to different audiences and images adopted by another religion to represent a different deity.

Does syncretisation of image, however, imply syncretism of cult? The widespread iconography of Greek deities could convey multiple messages, whether related to other religions or without religious connotations. Ambiguity lies in that iconography can be an ‘indirect’ indicator of cult, in comparison to ‘direct’ indicators such as dedicatory inscriptions in sacred space.⁷ The visual culture of the religious sphere conveys heterogeneity in the local innovations and receptiveness to new influences alongside the maintenance of traditional forms.⁸ The continuation of local religious traditions was particularly important to Alexander and the Seleukids as a useful tool in maintaining stability by respecting the local power structures inexorably intertwined with the established religion.⁹ There was, however, no royal-driven political program of religious syncretism such as in Ptolemaic Egypt.¹⁰

Sacred space.

The heterogeneous forms of sacred space in Babylonia, Iran and Bactria at the time of the Macedonian conquest included open-air podia in elevated sanctuaries, temples,

⁷ Bernard 1991; Mairs *forthcoming* (2009).

⁸ Hannestad & Potts 1990, 122.

⁹ McEwan 1981; Kuhrt & Sherwin-White 1993; Linssen 2004.

¹⁰ McEwan 1981, 188; Hannestad & Potts 1990, 123.

ziggurats and platforms in front of rock reliefs, all of which continued to be used in the succeeding centuries. It is particularly notable how traditional forms of decoration of sacred space in Babylonian continued and were in fact revived after the Macedonian conquest. This religious continuity is seen also at sacred sites of Elymais. The transmission of religious architecture is demonstrated in the uptake of Mesopotamian religious architectural styles in Bactria and in the three antae structures at Failaka and Aï Khanoum, but while Greek architectural ornament was used occasionally on Iranian religious architecture, it is the development of this Iranian religious architecture that is most characteristic of this period. This section concludes with discussions of developments in ritual apparatus such as altars and cult statues.

Babylonian religious architecture. The distinctive forms of Babylonian religious architecture were not only maintained after the Macedonian conquest, but new sanctuaries revived these ancient techniques and styles. Typical Babylonian sacred sites were composed of a sanctuary complex with a main temple (usually the ‘broad-room’ or ‘Zingel’ – encircling corridor – types) where the cult statue resided in the cella with offertory tables. Particularly important sanctuaries included a ziggurat in the sacred enclosure. Temples were not only dominant in Babylonian urban space, but were integral parts of the economic and administrative running of these regions.¹¹

¹¹ McEwan 1981, 192ff; Kuhrt & Sherwin-White 1993; Linssen 2004, 163.

Some Babylonian temples, however, fell into disuse after the Macedonian conquest and so their cults were transferred to temples in Babylon.¹² Some ziggurats, such as at Nippur and Assur, lost their religious function and were used as citadels. Another transition from religious function is seen at Telloh, where the ancient sanctuary of Ngirsu maintained its appearance but became the palace of the local dynast. The traditional gods still had a visible presence through the preservation of the exterior appearance of the temple and the prominent display of ancient statues of Gudea with their dedicatory inscriptions. The structure lost its active cultic importance, but this heritage was vital to Adad-nadin-akhe's choice of the site.

The archaeological and epigraphic evidence contradicts the conceptions derived from Classical authors that Xerxes and then Alexander's Successors destroyed or left Babylon's temples to ruin.¹³ The foundation text on the 'Borsippa cylinder' records Antiochus I's involvement in reconstruction work of Ezida and Esagila.¹⁴ Many cuneiform texts from Babylon and Uruk show the continuation of rituals and administrative practices in the temples.¹⁵ There are traces of Seleukid building work on the external walls of the enclosure of Etemananki.¹⁶ In Esagila there is a floor above the Neo-Babylonian level though no material confidently attributed to the Hellenistic period.¹⁷ The absence of residential buildings between Esagila and Etemananki until the Parthian period, in addition to clay tablets indicating cult

¹² McEwan 1981, 189.

¹³ Hdt.1.183; Strabo XVI.1.5; Arr.*Anab.*III.16.3; Kuhrt 2010.

¹⁴ Kuhrt & Sherwin-White 1991.

¹⁵ McEwan 1981; Downey 1988, 11; Boiy 2004, 194-206.

¹⁶ Mallwitz, Schmidt & Wetzel 1957, 29-53.

¹⁷ Ibid, 29-30; Boiy 2010, 215.

continuation, make it highly unlikely Babylon's temples were abandoned or neglected under Seleukid rule.¹⁸ This continuity is seen also in the Babylonian pantheon itself, where there was little change apart from an emphasis shift from Ištar to Anu at Uruk.¹⁹ The destruction of Babylon's temples ascribed by Diodorus to Phraates II was not the end of the temples, though perhaps aligns with the 'decline' here and at Uruk of small residential structures built among the sanctuaries.²⁰

Continuity in the architectural ornament of Babylonian sacred space is particularly evident in the third-century activity at the sanctuaries at Uruk. Construction work took place in 244 and 201 BC on the Anu-Antum complex of the Bit Reš, ziggurat of the Eanna, Irigal sanctuary and Bit Akitu. These used traditional Babylonian forms of architectural ornament (see Ch.II and **34**). Texts on clay tablets from Uruk provide us with clear evidence for the continuation of the cult and ritual function of these buildings. This architecture characterized this space for the rest of the Seleukid period since it was not until some time after the Parthian conquest that the sanctuaries were destroyed by fire and filled with small residential buildings.²¹ Downey sees this building activity as a revival rather than just continuation: that 'they do not represent merely a restoration of earlier temples; rather, they are either new creations or radical redesignings of the earlier structures'.²²

¹⁸ Mallwitz, Schmidt & Wetzel 1957, 31; McEwan 1981, 183.

¹⁹ McEwan 1981, 187.

²⁰ Diod.XXXIV.21; Downey 1988, 17; Boiy 2004, 158-192.

²¹ Downey 1988, 17.

²² Ibid, 16.

The two men responsible for these projects (Anu ‘Uballit Nikarkhos and Anu ‘Uballit Kephalon) were both members of the established Babylonian elite (probably from the same family) and were governors of the city. The style of architecture and the Aramaic inscriptions recording their deeds follow the local patterns. They had additional Greek names given by the Seleukid kings and Nikarkhos’ inscription records he dedicated the building projects ‘for the lives of Antiochus and Seleukos’.²³ While not the active involvement demonstrated by Antiochus I at Borsippa, this may represent tacit support and approval from the Seleukid administration.²⁴ McEwan considers the policy of rulers towards Babylonian temples ‘magnanimous’ and flexible in approach, realising the benefits of stability and legitimacy of rule that lay in supporting existing social structures.²⁵ The Seleukids were not involved heavily in Uruk’s affairs, but left room for local innovation and regeneration that revitalized the traditional appearance of sacred space.

Although the wealthy Babylonian patrons of the Uruk sanctuaries used Greek epithets, they commemorated their dedications in Akkadian and Aramaic and commissioned monumental building projects following traditional Babylonian religious architectural styles. They adopted some elements of Greek culture into their lives, but the importance of their local heritage is clear. Mesopotamian temples were relatively accessible to the common worshipper so it is likely the Aramaic brick inscriptions and the conservative-looking cult statue in the Irigal [35] were not only

²³ Falkenstein 1941, 5.

²⁴ Downey 1988, 45.

²⁵ McEwan 1981, 193.

seen by the priests.²⁶ The persistence of Babylonian theophoric onomastics on clay tablets and seals, in addition to the Anu ‘Uballits (Anu, the sky god) at Uruk and Adad-nadin-akhe (Adad, the storm god) at Telloh, illustrates the wider scope of the religious continuation demonstrated by the architectural schemes.²⁷

Mesopotamian religious architecture in Bactria. The transmission of Mesopotamian architectural ornament to northern Iran and Bactria is particularly noticeable. The two temples at Aï Khanoum follow the Mesopotamian broad-room type, and their exteriors are adorned with the stepped niches common to Babylonian religious architecture, such as on the sanctuary walls at Uruk. The character of the cult of the temples, however, is unclear (discussed further below). A fourth-century Aramaic inscription mentioning ‘libation for the temple, to Bel’, however, attests to the worship of Babylonian gods in Bactrian temples perhaps before the Macedonian conquest.²⁸ There was movement of Babylonian religion during the Achaemenid period, but there is no evidence for earlier transmission of such similar architectural construction patterns from Mesopotamia to Bactria. The causation behind the transmission of Mesopotamian religious architecture at Aï Khanoum is uncertain. Suggestions range from the establishment of Mesopotamian cult to the transportation of a large Babylonian population and the artificial construction of a syncretistic architectural and cultural monument for purposes of political unity.²⁹ Some existing similarities between Mesopotamian and Bactrian architecture include the use of

²⁶ Bottero 2001, 118-119.

²⁷ McEwan 1981, 184.

²⁸ Shenkar 2011, 129; Naveh & Shaked *forthcoming*.

²⁹ Bernard 1969, 336-337; Downey 1988, 64.

niches, such as at the Bronze Age Gonur-Tepe and Shortughai, but these are on interior walls and not coupled with the broad-room plan. Interior series of niches and projections are also used in the portico of the Red Building at Old Nisa (**fig.18**). The Building with the Square Hall at Old Nisa, and the north and west walls of the Phase III incarnation of the Tomb of Kineas at Aï Khanoum also had niches on the exterior. This decoration on the Tomb of Kineas created visual links with its neighbour, the *temple à redans*.³⁰ It is possible this form of architecture would not have seemed alien to a Bactrian viewer.³¹

Elymaean religious architecture. Continuation of the use of sacred space in Elymais is indicated at the terrace sanctuaries of Mašjid-i Solaiman and Bard-i Nišandeh. These sites show evidence of Achaemenid period occupation, and both expanded and developed after the Macedonian conquest. The renowned wealth of Elymaean temples, from which Antiochus III and Antiochus IV attempted to requisition for their own purposes in times of need, suggests their continuing prosperity.³² Not only is there a variety of identifiable Elamite religious architecture, including temples, ziggurats, podia, but also many more Elamite words referring to unidentified forms of religious architecture.³³ The epigraphic record indicates the 12th-century BC sanctuary of Nanaia in Susa was still active in the Seleukid period.³⁴ Greek-inscribed manumission plaques dedicated to Nanaia, Ma, Apollo and Artemis Daittai suggest

³⁰ Hannestad & Potts 1990, 98.

³¹ Mairs *forthcoming* (2009).

³² Diod.XXVIII.3, XXIX.15; Just.*Epit.*XXXII.2.1-2. Polyb.XXXI. 9; App.*Syr.*66; I *Macc.*13; II *Macc.*9; II *Macc.*1. See also Polyb.X.27.12 on Ecbatana.

³³ Potts 2010, 64.

³⁴ Boyce & Grenet 1991, 36.

the temple was used by a variety of Greek-speaking worshippers.³⁵ The finds scattered around the platform in front of the Hung-i Aždar relief [81] suggest the continuation of this Elamite form of sacred space (compare similar reliefs and platforms at Kūrāngān and Kūl-e Farah, and later Parthian reliefs in Elymais).³⁶

Greek religious architecture. There is little evidence for temples built in a Greco-Macedonian manner in Babylonia, Iran and Bactria. There are three examples of the small *antae* structures typical of Hellenistic-period religious architecture.³⁷ The small Temple A in the fortified settlement 'F5' on Failaka with columns in antis and palmette akroteria is the only one of these three to have an altar and cult statue. The Tomb of Kineas is a similar structure and perhaps had a cultic function but primarily marked and housed three sarcophagi. The only peripteral building from our period between the Euphrates and Hindu Kush is the Stone-vault Mausoleum at Ai Khanoum. This also contained burials, and the location in the centre of the city and architectural style emulating Greek temples suggests a cultic function as a heroon. The central and raised position on their podia placed the Greek religious architecture in a prominent position in the city. The two temples proper of the city, however, were built according to Mesopotamian religious architectural traditions.

Where Greek architectural ornament appears on a religious building it is confined to small decorative features, such as the Ionic capitals [106] and mouldings on the monumental altars at Takht-i Sangin used in conjunction with stepped torus

³⁵ *J.Estremo Oriente* 189, 193, 197; Le Rider 1965, 292-3.

³⁶ Kawami 1987, 88ff.

³⁷ Lauter 1986, 190-94.

bases [107]. Temple A at F5 on Failaka also combines Ionic capitals [46] with Persian smooth columns, campaniform and torus bases [48], in addition to palmette akroteria [45].³⁸ Unlike the highly ornate Ionic capitals of Takht-i Sangin and the Stone-Vault Mausoleum at Aï Khanoum, however, the rendering of the decoration on the akroteria and the capitals is very low relief in the Iranian manner, such as the Ionic wooden capitals from the *temple à redans*, and terracotta from Old and New Nisa.³⁹ The Greco-Macedonian elements to the architectural ornamentation of religious structures are very limited and are incorporated alongside Mesopotamian or Iranian elements.

Iranian religious architecture. There is little evidence to contradict Herodotus and Strabo's statements that Persians made sacrifices in high open places.⁴⁰ The extension to other Iranian lands, however, is suspect.⁴¹ The structure at Nuš-i Jan in Media is the most reliable pre-Achaemenid Iranian religious site, but associations with Zoroastrianism should be avoided, even though fire was an important part of the ritual there.⁴² Root suggests the term 'temple' is misleading for early Persian religion, and proposes religious aspects to palaces such as at Persepolis, which provided a 'multi-purpose elite installation with ritual/religious import'.⁴³ 'Fire temples' are known from the Sasanian period but the *Avesta* and Achaemenid royal inscriptions

³⁸ Jeppesen 1989, 26ff.

³⁹ Bernard 1969, fig.24-25; Bernard 1975, fig.15; Pilipko 2001, 272; Hansen, Wiczorek & Tellenback 2009, no.217).

⁴⁰ Strabo XV.3.13f; Hdt.1.131-2.

⁴¹ Shenkar 2007; Kalili-Gir 2, Chorasmia, was occupied from the mid-4th to the start of the 2nd century BC but the identification of the round building as a temple is unconvincing (Vainberg 1994). Sarianidi 1998's identification of the structure at Gonur-Tepe as the earliest Zoroastrian fire temple (c.2500 BC) is also problematic.

⁴² Choksy 2007, 235-237; Root 2010, 173.

⁴³ Root 2010, 175.

make no mention of religious buildings so it appears anachronistic to apply the term to temples any earlier than the Sassanid or late Parthian period.⁴⁴

It therefore still seems the biggest change to Iranian sacred space was in the development of closed monumental religious structures, such as those at Persepolis, Takht-i Sangin, Ai Khanoum and perhaps Mašjid-i Solaiman (where the chronology is unclear) and Old Nisa (where the function is unclear). The new temples of Bactria are associated chronologically with the Greco-Macedonian conquest but use Iranian and Mesopotamian architectural styles and techniques for their construction. There was no Iranian form of temple before this period, yet architects, such as those of the Temple of the Oxus, used the long-corridor and wide portico features of Iranian architecture and applied them to a building with a new religious function. The central tetrastyle hall and *iwan* with long corridors became a typical feature of Iranian religious architecture.⁴⁵

The motif represented on the reverse of Persid coins may represent a structure with religious function (see **85**, among others).⁴⁶ The form has precursors in Achaemenid iconography, such as on PFS 75. The horn merlons also crowned the royal Terrace at Persepolis. Horns had a long-founded religious significance in Iranian iconography and architecture, particularly in Elam, such as the bronze horns

⁴⁴ Particularly the *Avesta* was likely written long after Alexander, despite his supposed burning of the *Avesta* at Persepolis (Garrison 2011, 20-23).

⁴⁵ Shenkar 2007 & 2011.

⁴⁶ Root 2010, 199.

on the ziggurat of Susa.⁴⁷ The associated iconography on the reverse of Wādfraḏād's issue supports a religious interpretation or angle to the scene, but identification of the precise function of the building (such as a 'fire temple') should be avoided. Comparison with the probably-Achaemenid structures of the Ka'ba-i Zardošt at Naqš-i Rostam and the Zendan-i Suleiāman at Pasargadae is clear (see discussion below), but we have no archaeological evidence of solely religious architecture in Persis built by the *fratarakā* and their successors.

It is likely there was a cultic function to Room 5 of the northwestern complex of the so-called '*fratarakā* temple' at Persepolis (see further discussion below and in Chapter III), perhaps built at the end of the fourth century BC. The layout and function of the building as a whole, however, is unclear. The reliefs on the window-jambes of the southeastern complex of the '*fratarakā* temple' show figures holding the Zoroastrian cultic *barsom* rods [83]. These are often used to argue tenuously for a cultic function of both the southeastern and northwestern complexes and for a syncretism of the five Greek deities named on the limestone plaques found in this structure with Zoroastrian divinities.⁴⁸ Such syncretism is undermined by the separate nature of the complexes, divided by a street or corridor, and by the probable later construction of the southeastern complex.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ *Annals of Assurburnipal* prism A VII. 9-13; Hoover 2011.

⁴⁸ *I. Estremo Oriente* 241-245.

⁴⁹ Bernard 1969, 337 n.1. See Ch.III.

Podia. There is evidence of activity at podia at Mašjid-i Solaiaman, Bard-i Nišandeh and Aï Khanoum.⁵⁰ Later additions of temples to the Elymaean sanctuaries did not render the podia obsolete, but were used simultaneously, just as the Mesopotamian-style temples at Aï Khanoum were used contemporaneously with the podium on the acropolis. Ghirshman's suggestion the low wall separating the podium area at Mašjid-i Solaiman from the new terrace and temple represents segregation ignores the access between the two in the western corner of the lower terrace.⁵¹ The wall delineated the function of the different spaces rather than keeping people apart. If anything, the emphasis should be on the shared sacredness of the site for different ritual functions.

The character of ritual at these podia is often difficult to reconstruct, particularly in the case of Aï Khanoum, where no artefacts were found around it. The three-stepped square monumental podium at Pačmak-Tepe, c.100km northeast of Aï Khanoum, is similar in form and scale to the Aï Khanoum podium. There is evidence of a superstructure on top of the podium, but no conclusive evidence of the maintenance of sacred fire.⁵² It is possible this podium and similar examples in Pšchak-Tepe in Bactria and Kok-Tepe in Sogdiana were in use during the end of the Achaemenid period and continued into the Hellenistic period.⁵³ This dating is credible for the podium at Aï Khanoum, where there was Achaemenid-period occupation before the foundation of the Greco-Bactrian city.

⁵⁰ Ghirshman 1976, 13-28, 76-81, 89; Bernard 1976, 306-307; Downey 1988, 75-76; Hannestad & Potts 1990; Bernard 1990a, 54; Boyce & Grenet 1991, 181-184.

⁵¹ Ghirshman 1976, 76, 282.

⁵² Boyce & Grenet 1991, 182-183.

⁵³ Shenkar 2007, 177.

The scene on the ‘Cybele disc’ from Aï Khanoum [152] presents an idea of the use of this type of podium. In this relief, an attendant of the goddess stands by a three-stepped structure crowned by a *thymiaterion*, on a wider three-stepped podium. The importance of the incense-burner is clear since it is picked out in gold. This image is similar to Elymaean practice, where the high position was used to make offerings and libations on a *baetyl* or *thymiaterion* rather than to maintain a sacred fire.⁵⁴

Altars. Herodotus 1.131’s assertion the Persians did not use altars, the focal point of Greek ritual, may not be a comprehensive rule. De Jong interprets this as specifically the *bomos*: the structure upon which sacrificial portions to the gods are burned, as opposed to the high stepped platform on which a fire altar was placed.⁵⁵ The monumental altars with Ionic mouldings from Takht-i Sangin are the only extant physical examples of *bomoi* in Iranian lands. Remnants of an altar of burned brick were found in the sanctuary at Shami, but little can be said of its original form or precise function.⁵⁶ The use of altars in Bactria by Greeks is indicated by the Heliodotos inscription on a limestone block (probably from Kuliab, c.100km northwest of Aï Khanoum), which proclaims his dedication of a *bomos* to Hestia, in the grove of Zeus, on which he will make libations and burned offerings.⁵⁷ Miniature altars were found at Failaka (including 49) and Takht-i Sangin [106]. The miniature

⁵⁴ Boyce & Grenet 1991, 46-47. Compare the stepped plinth at Pasargadae (Stronach 1978).

⁵⁵ De Jong 1997, 94.

⁵⁶ Stein 1940, 147.

⁵⁷ Bernard, Pinault & Rougemont 2004, 333.

altar of Atrosōkēs [106] suggests similar forms could be used by Iranian dedicators, though this is not a functioning apparatus for libations and sacrifices.

Altars for offerings to the gods were part of Babylonian cult practice. Unlike Greek practice, however, where offerings were burned outside, food was laid out in front of the god's image inside the temple. The altar of the Irigal, for example, was in the main cella in front of the cult statue.⁵⁸ This is because the gods were thought to live in the temple, rather than be represented there. The altar from Temple A at Failaka follows Greek tradition in form and position.⁵⁹ It is a wide rectangular stepped podium of large limestone blocks in front of the temple, axially aligned with the entrance. Temple B's round stepped altar is more unusual in shape, though also axially aligned in front of the structure.⁶⁰ In contrast, despite the Ionic moulding of the Temple of the Oxus altars, none were positioned axially in front of the temple as in the Greek manner, but instead are off-centre against the rear walls of the central hall and *iwan*, and against the north and south walls of the courtyard. The two altars in the courtyard were the focus of animal sacrifice, indicated by the many sheep and goat bones found around them.⁶¹

The multitude of ash in two small rooms on the wings of the Temple of the Oxus is interpreted by the excavators as evidence of 'fire altars' (*atešgahs*). The publication describes scorched rooms, a central altar and small altars in the corner

⁵⁸ Downey 1988, 31.

⁵⁹ Jeppesen 1989, 37.

⁶⁰ Jeppesen 1989, 39.

⁶¹ Litvinskij & Pičikyan 2000, 172.

with ash and charcoal deposits (four in Room 5, five in Room 7).⁶² The central ‘altars’ in these rooms are rectangular baked brick podia with a small flight of steps on one long side. Whether they were the focus of a fire cult, however, is unclear.⁶³ The excavators identify also numerous pits for ashes in the corridors and in the *iwān* of the temple. Not only are altars used for the burning of sacrifices in many different forms of cult, but the spreading of ashes over a sacred area is a common practice to deconsecrate the site or when rebuilding or renovating the structure. A well-maintained and constantly attended sacred fire would surely require the removal of excess ashes.

Cult statues. Cult statues were central to ritual in Babylonia long before the Macedonian conquest. The temple was the dwelling place of the god and the statue would be offered food and on festivals taken to visit other deities in processions to other temples.⁶⁴ The archives of Uruk record the creation of statues for the Akitu (new year) festival in the Seleukid period.⁶⁵ We cannot know what these particular statues looked like, except that they were made of wood, gold and precious stones, but there is other evidence that shows traditional styles of cult statue were maintained at Babylon and Uruk during this period. The style of the wooden statue in the Irigal [35] (presumably of Ištar) and the imprint of the throne in Esagila [17] attest to continuity in the appearance of cult statues. Both are Neo-Babylonian in style and may be much older objects kept in use after the rebuilding of the sanctuaries that

⁶² Litvinskij & Pičikyan 1994, fig.11; Litvinskij & Pičikyan 2000, 490 fig.16.

⁶³ Bernard 1994.

⁶⁴ Bottero 2001, 126, 133.

⁶⁵ McEwan 1981, 38-39.

housed them. Two other bases in the main cella of the Irigal presumably supported statues of Ištar's companions and divine family.⁶⁶ **17** may not have been part of a cult statue as such, but it attests to the continuity of religious iconography at the heart of sacred space. The cult statue in the modestly-scaled Temple A on Failaka would therefore not have been wholly alien to any Babylonians on the island.⁶⁷

Herodotus 1.131 and Strabo XV.3.13 tell us the Persians had no cult statues (*agalma*). Diogenes Laertius 1.6-9 (third century AD) goes as far as to say the *magi* of Xerxes' time actively condemned the use of images, though this is likely an anachronism of Sasanian iconoclasm.⁶⁸ The Babylonian Berossus, writing in the third century BC, describes Artaxerxes II's dedication of statues of Anahita. It is unclear, however, whether these statues were the focus of cult.⁶⁹ If there were any cult statues in Persian or Iranian sanctuaries before the Macedonian conquest, they were extremely rare. There was perhaps a cult statue on a podium against the rear wall of Room 5 of the '*fratarakā* temple' at Persepolis, though the limestone plaques dedicated to Greek gods found nearby suggest this was not a statue for Iranian cult.⁷⁰

There are no traces of a cult statue or statue base from the Temple of the Oxus. A colossal bronze humanoid statue was set up in the courtyard, south of the central axis.⁷¹ The exterior and off-centre position of this statue makes it unlikely it

⁶⁶ Downey 1988, 31; Bottero 2001, 116.

⁶⁷ Jeppesen 1989, 55f.

⁶⁸ Kuhrt 2010.

⁶⁹ De Jong 1997, 92f; Boyce 1975, 456.

⁷⁰ Boyce 1982, 226 on Anahita; Callieri 2007, 61ff.

⁷¹ Litvinskij & Pičikyan 2000, 34, pl.13.

was a cult statue. The small votive altar of Atrosōkēs [108] suggests the god was perhaps considered in anthropomorphic form by at least one Iranian worshipper (see further discussion below). It is possible statues to *yazatā* were used in combination with the maintenance of sacred fire (until the iconoclasm of Sassanid rule) since they served a different function to a cult statue.⁷²

The most commonly cited indication of a cult statue in Iranian lands are the fragments of a marble foot [144] and hand from the *temple à redans* at Aï Khanoum. It is carved in the Hellenistic naturalistic and rounded style, and wears a Greek sandal decorated with vegetal motifs and a thunderbolt. It was found by a collapsed baked brick podium with a large rectangular mortise at the centre of the rear wall of the cella (the conventional location for a cult statue).⁷³ While the later use of the temple for storage clouds the original context, the monumental scale and rarity (and therefore expense) of marble in Bactria suggests it is credible these fragments came from the cult statue. Deliberate cuts at the bridge of the marble foot indicate this was part of an acrolithic statue, suggesting realism was heightened by the use of drapery over a wooden armature for the body of the figure, and a softly moulded face such as the many unbaked clay heads [149] from this temple. The discussion of which deity this statue portrayed and the cult of the temple has been the focus of many studies. Most studies attempt to pinpoint a syncretistic identity due to the Greek style of sculpture,

⁷² Boyce 1975, 456.

⁷³ Bernard 1969, 329.

perhaps linked to Zeus because of the thunderbolt motif, placed in a Mesopotamian-style temple (see below).⁷⁴

Other ritual apparatus. In the archaeological record of ritual practice there is a distinct change after the Macedonian conquest in the dramatic increase of votive offerings. It is very possible, however, that this is an accident of discovery. The Persepolis Fortification Archive lists many offerings of produce to the gods, but we have little in the way of Achaemenid-period votive objects in the archaeological record. The insecurely provenanced ‘Oxus Treasure’ seems to consist of many such Achaemenid-period votive objects, particularly gold votive plaques.⁷⁵ The following discussion will summarize the different forms of objects associated with ritual discovered at sites, and assess whether we can pinpoint any developments or modifications in the use of objects in sacred space.

There is a commonly held opinion that no music was involved in Iranian religion, since Herodotus 1.132 states flutes were not used during Persian rituals.⁷⁶ Miniature bells from sanctuaries such as at Aï Khanoum and Mašjid-i Solaiman would therefore represent a change in practice. Fragments of flutes were found in the Temple of the Oxus and in the *temple à redans*. Music was an important part of Babylonian and Greek religion and if Herodotus is correct, it seems likely this cultic practice disseminated into Iranian ritual.⁷⁷ The Elamite Kūl-e Farah I relief from the

⁷⁴ Francfort 1984, Grenet 1991; Mairs *forthcoming* (2009); Shenkar 2011.

⁷⁵ Dalton 1905.

⁷⁶ De Jong 1997, 112.

⁷⁷ Bottero 2001, 131.

last quarter of the seventh century shows religious processions including musicians and indicates he may be too strident in his assertion. There is little evidence to support or disprove Herodotus' statement for Persia itself.

Terracotta figurines from before our period are found in sacred contexts in Babylonia and Elymais. This dedicatory practice appears to have increased dramatically and widened in the quantity of dedications and the variety of subjects. They include representations of Greek deities such as Herakles, Eros and Psyche, nude female figurines that likely represent fertility goddesses or Aphrodite. It is noticeable there are far fewer such dedications of terracotta figurines in the Bactrian sanctuaries at Takht-i Sangin and Ai Khanoum than at Babylonian and Elymaean sites, though this may be an accident of discovery since the more expensive votives were stored in the temples, or a mirage created by the publications.⁷⁸

Although statues from Shami may date from after our period, they are useful here since they illustrate the adoption of the Greek votive statue habit by Parthian and Elymaean elite. The erection of such large and expensive statues filling the *temenos*, also seen in the Temple of the Oxus, would demonstrably have changed the visual impact of sanctuaries on the visitor.⁷⁹ As discussed above, statuary in the round was not completely unknown to Iranian sacred space, but even with allowance for the imbalance caused by the archaeological record, it seems there was an increase in free-standing sculptural dedications.

⁷⁸ Mairs *forthcoming* (2009), although see **132, 154**, Hansen, Wieczorek & Tellenbach 2009, no.230-231 and the ivory figurine: Francfort 1984, 14-17.

⁷⁹ Litvinskij & Pičikyan 2000, 34, pl.13.

The vast assemblage of votive objects from the Temple of the Oxus includes a wide array of forms, styles, subjects and quality. Dedicators contributed to a heterogeneous assortment of votive offerings, which draw individually on Achaemenid, Hellenistic, Indian and Scythian styles. There was no rigid expectation of the form a votive object in this temple should take. Thousands of items of weaponry and armour were dedicated, along with jewellery and images of female figures. The dedicators proffered what was valuable to them and therefore worthy of a gift to whichever deity they were entreating or thanking. This variety of votive offerings seen in the Temple of the Oxus illustrates the difficulty there can be in pinpointing the identity of the deity involved from the iconography and style of the dedications rather than epigraphic testimony. While many studies of coroplastic assemblages attempt to identify the cults worshipped in the vicinity from the iconographic corpus, they often conclude with contradictory, multiple or hopeful identifications.⁸⁰ The subjects of the terracotta corpus from Failaka do not align with deities referred to in the inscriptions from the island. Connelly's distinction between established or local cult and informal or movable cult (the latter visible from terracotta figurines and not necessarily found in a sacred context) is a useful way to interpret this variance.⁸¹ For votives not directly representing the iconography of a deity, it may be more useful to avoid restrictive interpretations of these representing the presence of a specific cult. Rather, they may indicate the concerns or capabilities (what was available and affordable) of the dedicator.

⁸⁰ Matheisen 1982 connects model boats to the worship of Nanaia, 'Persian riders' to a solar deity and female heads wearing *kalathoi* to a chthonic deity.

⁸¹ Connelly 1989; Connelly 1990a; Connelly 1990b.

The character of sacred space changed dramatically after the Macedonian conquest. This period saw the development of Iranian religious architecture, though in Babylonia, where enclosed sacred spaces were already established, there is little evidence of any change in the character of religious architecture. On the contrary, Babylonian forms were encouraged and renewed. Hellenistic ornament was occasionally included in religious buildings that followed Iranian architectural forms, but we have no evidence of the canonical peripteral Greek temple with *naos*, *pronaos* and *opisthodomos*. These Iranian temples did not replace open-air stepped podia, however, which were in active use contemporaneously. The introduction of cult statues to Iranian sacred sites was also a distinct change in ritual practice, particularly in Persis.

Religious iconography.

This section will discuss the significant changes in the representations of deities and religious motifs, concerning many different religious practices. There undoubtedly were forms of cultural exchange taking place under Achaemenid rule, but this period sees an outburst of new iconography in the repertoire of these regions, much of it related to religious themes. The mechanisms behind this transmission are of particular interest: how the transmission relates to centre and periphery, to power structures, and how the iconography appears outside a sacred context on non-cultic objects. The new iconography was adopted into the visual vocabulary but also was often altered and

adapted independently from its original source. In many areas, this adaptation also extends to the function as well as the appearance of the subject matter, including appropriation for a different religion. How ambivalent were the meanings inferred from these images? Does this appropriation always attest to syncretism of cultic practice rather than the syncretism of iconography alone? In addition to these new influences and changes, we see the continuation of traditional Babylonian and Iranian religious motifs and their development.

Transmission of Greek religious iconography. This period saw the circulation of many new motifs of iconography connected to religions not previously common to the regions. Apart from the nude female figurines and perhaps rider figurines, there are few anthropomorphic coroplastic forms connected to cult in Babylonia before the Macedonian conquest, in contrast to after the late fourth century BC. In the extensive assemblage of terracotta figurines from Susa the most commonly represented Greek deities are Aphrodite, Apollo, Artemis, Athena, Dionysos, Eros and Psyche, and, by far the most popular, Herakles.⁸² The selection is very similar in the assemblage from Failaka.⁸³ The depiction of the naked male figure, through the representation of Greek divinities, is another novel feature to Iranian and Babylonian art. We see these subjects repeated in different guises in bronze, ivory, silver from across these regions.

The similarity between popular subjects in the artistic production and the iconography of coinage suggests coins were a prominent means of transmission of the

⁸² Martinez-Sève 2002, no.77-152.

⁸³ Matheisen 1982.

images of Greek deities. Herakles and Athena are two such popular deities on coins and also very common to other media. Often they appear in the same pose and guise as on the coins, such as a figure of Poseidon on Rhyton 22 from Old Nisa, leaning on the trident in his left hand and with *himation* swirling around his hips, which is similar to a reverse of Antimachus I (perhaps both imitating the well-known statue type).⁸⁴ This is clearly not the only means of dissemination, since other Greek divinities such as Eros and satyrs are very popular but do not appear on coins. Additionally, the images of deities such as Tyche, Zeus and Apollo are not so common in the wider sphere, though, even though extremely common on coins. The importance of other mechanisms of dissemination outside the royal sphere, such as motivated by individual migrants (such as settlers and mercenaries), traders and itinerant craftsmen, should not be underestimated.

The representations of the gods' figures often correlate to the Hellenistic-period formulations: Dionysos on the ivory *rhyta* of Old Nisa is young, effeminate and clean-shaven; while Eros (in silver at Old Nisa [97] or terracotta at Susa) is a baby rather than a youth. Popular statuary types such as the Weary Herakles (in terracotta at Failaka [60]) and Aphrodite Anadyomene (in marble at Old Nisa [98]) also appear in the iconography of Babylonia, Iran and Bactria after the Macedonian conquest. The figures on the friezes of the Old Nisa ivory *rhyta* follow a number of stock types for the representation of Greek deities, such as Hephaestus represented as an old man in leaning on a stick, similar to the mantle-clad figures of Classical Greek

⁸⁴ Pappalardo 2010, 152.

vase-painting.⁸⁵ The ‘new’ Hellenistic gods that dominate the art of the Mediterranean are less popular: the Greco-Egyptian gods Serapis and Harpokrates appear as a few statuettes from Taxila and Begram, perhaps from the early centuries AD.⁸⁶ Asklepios does not appear at all in the archaeological record of Babylonia, Iran and Bactria, though Cybele and Tyche are popular. Irano-Egyptian links were established since the Achaemenid period (see the statue of Darius in Susa made in Egypt). An amulet of Bes at Mašjid-i Solaiman [74] and faience amulets in Bactria attest to the continuation of this contact, if sporadic.⁸⁷ The iconography of Greek gods in the east appears to be up-to-date, yet forming a distinctive selection of deities.

Adaptations of Greek religious iconography. The appearance of Greek religious iconography in the art of Babylonia, Iran and Bactria is not always a straightforward transmission. While perhaps apt in some instances, to label all alterations as ‘misunderstandings’ rather than allowing for some intentional variation seems a somewhat colonialist approach and ignores the heterogeneity presented by the media, location and the transformations. The bearded seated figure in *chiton* and *polos* on the reverse of tetradrachms of Phraates II, for example, resembles other depictions at Seleucia-on-the-Tigris of a bearded god in long garment and *polos* (see Ch.II), suggesting an intentional representation of a particular deity (perhaps Zeus Belos or Serapis) rather than an erroneous representation of Demeter/Tyche.⁸⁸

⁸⁵ Pappalardo 2010, 123-159.

⁸⁶ Cambon 2007, 270, 273; Mairs 2007, 77ff; See, however, a manumission dedication to Serapis, probably from Hyrcania, dated to the reign of Antiochus I: Robert 1960, 85; Boyce & Grenet 1991, 25; *I. Estremo Oriente* 280.

⁸⁷ Mairs 2007.

⁸⁸ Grenet 1991, 148; Curtis 2007b, 420.

A similar multiplicity of meaning is seen also via the addition of a crescent moon and a torch to a figure of a helmeted woman [10], which changes the iconography of a seal impression from showing Athena to a composite figure of Athena and Hekate or Artemis, or even Nanaia. In contrast to the conglomerate seated archer figure, here the attribute of each is individually recognisable and separate so the image communicates multiple messages. Whether this image represents one goddess with multiple attributes or was intended to embody several deities is unclear.

Another aspect in which the meaning of divine motifs is transmuted is the disassociation from primarily religious connotations. A number of motifs related to the images of deities were chosen because of their political overtones. The extensive Seleukid use of Apollo Toxotes seated on the *omphalos* on coins was a particularly astute iconographic choice since it developed the long-standing Iranian archer motif.⁸⁹ The image of Apollo can be interpreted as Nabû by Babylonians and as the royal archer (the king himself) in Parthia and Persia, but simultaneously and consistently emphasises Seleukid power and legitimacy.⁹⁰ Iranian dynasts, such as Kamniskires Nikephorus [64], also used the motif of Apollo-on-the-*omphalos*, building on established Iranian and Seleukid inferences. There may also be an intentional syncretistic ambivalence in the succession of Zeus on Seleukos' coinage to his son Apollo on the coinage of Seleukos' son Antiochus, since Bel-Marduk, king

⁸⁹ Curtis 2007b, 414; Iossif 2011.

⁹⁰ Erickson 2010, 132.

of the gods, is succeeded in the Babylonian pantheon by his son Nabû.⁹¹ There may be, therefore, a concurrent Babylonian interpretation to this change in Greek iconography on Seleukid coinage.

Early Parthian coinage referenced the Seleukid motif of Apollo-on-the-*omphalos* through the different subject of the Arsacid seated archer. Such adaption of the image of a Greek divinity for a different subject matter is seen at the very beginning of our period on the coins of Mazaios [25] and Babylonian tetradrachms of Alexander [27] and Seleukos [28]; the visible difference between the representation of Ba'al and Zeus is negligible and the figures are only distinguished through the accompanying inscriptions.

The Parthian seated archer was not a straightforward imitation of the Seleukid motif. The linear and stylised depiction of the seated archer in his long-sleeved jacket and trousers, surrounded by a field of dots, bears only a loose connection to its original inspiration. This shows stylistic adaptation of the Apollo-on-the-*omphalos* motif as well as the transition from one cultural iconographic program to another. Adaptations within the repertoire of Greek deities are seen in the use of Herakles seated on a rock holding his club on the reverse of issues of Characenean and Greco-Bactrian rulers.⁹² While developing an independent motif for association with these dynasties, the seated Herakles draws upon its visual connections with the Apollo-on-

⁹¹ Kosmin *forthcoming*.

⁹² Le Rider 1965, pl.LXXII.5-10; Bopearachchi 1991, pl.2-3.

the-*omphalos* and Arsacid archer thereby retaining messages of royal power and legitimacy.

The iconography at Old Nisa further demonstrates how the use of iconography related to Greek deities does not necessitate the presence of their cult but instead refers to political and cultural themes. The terracotta plaques place Herakles' club, Apollo's bow and the Seleukid anchor alongside the divine astral symbols of the crescent, solar disc, and rosette (the latter either decorative or referring to the solar symbol of life).⁹³ The symbols may indicate the syncretism of the iconography of Herakles and perhaps Apollo into Parthian religious repertoire (for the *yazata* Verethragna and the royal archer), but the addition of the particularly Seleukid anchor implies the images had a new function as symbols of royal power.⁹⁴ The iconography on the friezes on the ivory *rhyta* includes depictions of Greek rituals, the Twelve Gods and the labours of Herakles among others, and one rhyton was inscribed with 'ΕΣΤΙΑΣ'.⁹⁵ These scenes displayed the Arsacid philhellenism rather than a devotion to Greek cult.

The use of Greek religious iconography for its political associations can be seen also in the use of minor deities, such as Tyche on Parthian coins [14] and Nike alongside Iranian religious iconography on Persid coinage [85]. Nike crowning the ruler with a wreath emphasises divine favour bestowed on the *frataraka*, a message also implied by the *faravahar* in the same scene. These examples show the use of the

⁹³ Invernizzi 2007, 172.

⁹⁴ The bow-case may refer to the Parthian royal archer, Apollo, or Herakles.

⁹⁵ Bernard 1991; Pappalardo 2010.

iconography of Greek deities to align the rulers with the power and status of the Seleukids.

Babylonian religious iconography. Simultaneous to these new iconographical permutations, traditional religious iconography continues to be used, particularly in Babylonia. The terracotta figurines from all the Babylonian sites include the nude female figures with accentuated hips holding their breasts or with their arms by their sides (see **51**, among others). These represent or appeal to a fertility goddess and are present in the archaeological record of Babylonian sites for centuries before our period. Other motifs particular to Babylonian divinities visible during this period include the star of Ištar and *mušušu*, the lion-dragon of Marduk, on the walls of the rebuilt Uruk sanctuaries. Just as those still visible today on the Ištar Gate of Babylon, the reliefs prominently placed the city's defences under the protection of the Babylonian deities. *Mušušu* and the traditional bottle-holder figure appear in the bitumen imprint of the throne from Esagila kept in the central sacred space until the temple was destroyed by fire. There are many Hellenistic-period Babylonian seals and seal impressions from Seleucia, Babylon and Uruk decorated with astrological symbols [**44**] or deities such as the river-god [**43**]. These show the new use of traditional Babylonian motifs in the Hellenistic period alongside the interaction with existing monuments of Babylonian religious iconography.

Indian religious iconography. We can see also the movement of the iconography from other religions, such as Buddhist and Hindu motifs in Bactrian art. The figures

on the ivory cylinder from Takht-i Sangin [124] and those on the shell disc from Aī Khanoum [153] may represent Hindu myths.⁹⁶ Hindu and Buddhist motifs were employed as official iconography on the coins of later Greco-Bactrian rulers who made incursions into Indian lands, such as on the bronze issues of Agathokles [156].

Iranian religious iconography. The question of whether the Achaemenids were Zoroastrian continues in scholarship.⁹⁷ There is no doubt of the importance of fire in Persian religion, and of the importance of Auramazdā to the Achaemenids, but there are many differences between the religion of pre-Sasanian Persia and Zoroastrianism in its established form. There is a widespread tendency to project the later evidence onto the earlier, more ambivalent, period.⁹⁸ From the discrepancy between the prominence of Auramazdā in the Achaemenid royal texts and the rarity of sacrifices to him in the Persepolis Fortification Texts, it is likely Auramazdā was a royal god (in the same way as Marduk, Inšušinak and Aššur).⁹⁹ It seems unlikely the Achaemenids followed the teachings of Zoroaster, but venerated their ‘Wise Lord’ among a broader pantheon. The Iranian cults share many similarities, and the iconography of Zoroastrianism and Iranian religion after the Macedonian conquest builds upon the foundations laid by Achaemenid iconography.

⁹⁶ Rapin 1995.

⁹⁷ See, among others, Boyce 1982; Henkelman 2008; Basirov 2010; Kreyenbroek 2010; Garrison 2011.

⁹⁸ Soudavar 2010, 111-112; Wiesehöfer 2011. 10th-century AD documents suggest Zoroaster was born in the 7th century BC. The *Avesta* was first written down under Khosrow I (r.531-579 AD). The earliest extant copy, discovered in the 18th century, perhaps dates to the 14th century. Shayegan 2011, 295-307 on the Zoroastrian negative portrayal of Alexander (plundering, killing priests, destroying the Avesta, putting out sacred fires) and the positive image in the *Šāhnāme* (Alexander the Persian prince who promises to protect the fire-temples). See also Boyce & Grenet 1991; De Jong 1997.

⁹⁹ Henkelman 2008, 58-63.

The winged disc or ring, the *faravahar*, is a prominent feature of Achaemenid, Persian and Sasanian iconography, and is now the best-known symbol of Zoroastrianism. There are a number of interpretations of the precise meaning of this symbol and the identity of the bearded male figure in the centre of the motif, often identified as Auramazdā but now most commonly identified as the royal *kvarnah* (fortune/glory).¹⁰⁰ This scene is repeated on the reverse of many Persian coins in the third and second centuries BC [85]. The *faravahar* was used also in conjunction with motifs from other religious traditions, such as with Nike on 85. This simultaneous use indicates these rulers of Fars were perhaps not culturally self-segregated in their display of their religious and cultural identity.¹⁰¹

The iconography of Iranian religious structures in the third and second centuries BC is ambivalent. The stepped ‘fire altar’ of Achaemenid royal reliefs and seals are not seen again until the coins of the later rulers of Persis and Sasanians.¹⁰² The definition of the large rectangular structure on the reverse of Persian coins as a ‘fire temple’ or ‘fire altar’ is also disputed.¹⁰³ The merlons on this tower structure are at times stepped and in other examples horn-shaped [85].¹⁰⁴ Horns are a prominent feature of Elamite religious architecture and iconography.¹⁰⁵ Such horned merlons crown the Achaemenid terrace at Persepolis (which may imply a religious aspect to

¹⁰⁰ Shahbazi 1974; Shahbazi 1980; Houtkamp 1991, 25; Garrison 2011, 39.

¹⁰¹ Boyce & Grenet 1991, 48.

¹⁰² See the Tomb of Darius I at Naqš-e Rostam (Schmidt 1978, 80-90, pl.18-39) and PFS 75. Garrison 2011, 51-53 calls this a ‘fire structure’ since it is not clear it received offerings or veneration, but is a receptacle of fire.

¹⁰³ Houtkamp 1991.

¹⁰⁴ Klose & Müseler 2008, pl.7.

¹⁰⁵ *Annals of Assurbanipul* prism A VII.9-15; Kūrāngūn rock relief; Hoover 2011.

the palatial structures).¹⁰⁶ It is likely the terrace, the Zendan-i Solaiman at Pasargadae and Ka'ba-i Zardošt at Naqš-i Rostam influenced the form of this structure.¹⁰⁷ The structure also has direct Achaemenid iconographic forebears (see PFS 66 and PFS 75). Houtkamp notes the royal *kvarnah* was supposed to reside in fire, but the *faravahar* is depicted in many instances (including at Bisitun and Takht-i Jamšid) not above a fire, so the presence of the *faravahar* does not confirm the tower structure as a vestibule for the sacred fire.¹⁰⁸ Any identification of the tower structure as a form of 'fire shrine' should therefore be kept at a broad and tentative level.

The '*frataraka* temple' relief from Persepolis [83] shows a figure in long robes holding out a bundle of sticks: the *barsom* rods of Iranian priests. A similar image is seen on the gold plaques of the Oxus Treasure, probably from the Achaemenid period.¹⁰⁹ Strabo describes first-century BC Persian magi praying by 'holding before the fire their bundles of rods and wearing round their heads high turbans of felt, which reach down over their cheeks far enough to cover their lips', such as on 83 and 85. In light of Achaemenid precursors of tribute bearers in the reliefs at Persepolis, however, the *bašlyk* covering the head, cheeks and chin in the third century BC may primarily signify Persian, not religious, identity. While a white *bašlyk* later became a signifier of Zoroastrian priests, it is unclear whether the head from Takht-i Sangin [111] represents a priest since the face is uncovered.

¹⁰⁶ Tilia 1978, pl.XV fig.35; Root 2010, 199.

¹⁰⁷ Jackson 1906, 302-303; Potts 2007; Curtis 2010.

¹⁰⁸ Houtkamp 1991, 25.

¹⁰⁹ Litvinskij 2001, pl.50; Strabo V.13.15.

Religious syncretism.

The term 'syncretism' incorporates multiple permutations of interaction and synthesis between different religions.¹¹⁰ The ambivalence of meaning discussed above can make the iconography of two deities from different religions inseparable, such as Mithra and Helios (see **127** and **152**). This syncretism of image naturally leads to the more complex discussion of how it relates to the syncretism of cult. While we see many examples of syncretism of iconography and cult, there is no indication this was a politically motivated tool intended to enhance social cohesion and the power of the kings, unlike Ptolemaic Egypt.¹¹¹ Syncretism was not necessarily a desperate attempt at religious reconciliation and was not a foreign process to Babylonia, where the Akkadians assimilated the Sumerian gods into their own pantheon. From the fourth century onwards 'a more frequent, more immediate contact with foreign divinities than occurred before seems to have revived an ancient penchant for syncretism, which had long been active in the land'.¹¹² We see this in the Achaemenid period where Babylonian transcriptions of the Darius I's proclamation recorded in the Bisitun Inscription replace the name of Auramazdā with Bel.¹¹³

This discussion of religious syncretism uses three case-studies to present some of the aspects of this debate. The first centres on the reception and use of iconography (the image of Herakles), while the latter focus on two Bactrian contexts: the Temple

¹¹⁰ Potter 2005, 420.

¹¹¹ McEwan 1981, 188, 196-201.

¹¹² Bottero 2001, 46, 210.

¹¹³ Henkelman 2008, 336.

of the Oxus at Takht-i Sangin and the *temple à redans* at Aī Khanoum. This is intended to highlight the subtleties that can be overlooked when using the broad term ‘syncretism’.

Herakles. Herakles is perhaps the most well-travelled and commonly reused image of a Greek god.¹¹⁴ The bronze statue of Herakles from Seleucia-on-the-Tigris [4] names him in Aramaic as the Zoroastrian *yazata* Verethragna. The Greek and Aramaic inscriptions of c.151 AD on this statue explicitly align the two deities in the same figure. The two are aligned in inscriptions of Antiochus I of Commagene (c.62 BC), along with the local god Artagenes.¹¹⁵ There are also late Parthian reliefs of Heraklean figures with lion-skin and club from Mašjid-i Solaiman.¹¹⁶ The longevity and flexibility of the Herakles image is attested by his appearance as the *bodhisattva* Vajrapani, guide and protector of the Buddha, in a number of different examples including at Hadda (second to seventh century AD) and second-century AD statuary from Gandhara. In Ferdowsi’s tenth-century AD *Šāhnāme*, the Iranian hero Rostam bears similarity to Herakles in attributes and deeds. Melikian-Chirvani is perhaps overly keen, however, to see a second-first century BC origin to the Rostam story and its affiliation with Herakles.¹¹⁷ The appropriation of Herakles into Iranian iconography to represent Iranian deities is particularly remarkable due to the alien nature of male nudity to Iranian art.

¹¹⁴ Abdullaev 2007.

¹¹⁵ Sanders & Goell 2001.

¹¹⁶ Ghirshman 1976; Kawami 1987; Mathiesen 1992.

¹¹⁷ Melikian-Chirvani 1998, 186.

These much later uses of Herakles' image to portray divinities from other religions makes interpretation of earlier depictions of Herakles in Babylonia, Iran and Bactria more difficult to pinpoint. Some, such as the statue from Mašjid-i Solaiman [65], the Babylonian seal impression [23] and the ivory sword handle from Takht-i Sangin [121] illustrate myths specific to Herakles (here, wrestling the Nemean lion and Achelous). This indicates they maintained some link to the original meaning of the Herakles image. Inscriptions such as at Karafto, which invokes Herakles directly, or by the immediate juxtaposition of his image and name such as Herakles Kallinikos at Bisitun [86], dated explicitly to 148 BC, support the presence of mythology of Herakles in his original form in Media.¹¹⁸ To the patron of 86, Hyakinthos friend of the Seleukid governor Kleomenes, this was Herakles in Iran. It is likely that potential association with an Iranian deity was a useful means of engaging Iranian passers-by, especially in this instance where the iconography of Herakles has here been adapted to the Iranian format of a rock relief. A Sogdian imitative tetradrachm of Euthydemus shows the reverse motif of Herakles seated on a rock, but whether the audience (or indeed the Sogdian patron) recognised the deity, it had an alternative 'translation', or alternatively the motif was recognised as part of authentic coinage is unknown.¹¹⁹ Megasthenes, Seleukid ambassador to Chandragupta, recorded there were versions of Herakles and Dionysos already in India and that Porus' vanguard had the image of Herakles on their shields when they marched out to meet Alexander.¹²⁰ The character of this Indian Herakles is little like the Greek god, though the Indian Dionysos has

¹¹⁸ *I.Estrema Oriente* 274. Also the gymnasium inscription from Ai Khanoum, *I.Estrema Oriente* 143.

¹¹⁹ Abdullaev 2007, 542-543.

¹²⁰ *Arr.Anab.*IV.28.2; *Curt.*VIII.14.11, *Curt.*VIII.11.2 on Herakles and Aornos.

similarities to his Greek counterpart.¹²¹ The attributions appear to be translations by Megasthenes (and others) in order to make sense of the diverse Indian pantheon. The Indian Dionysos and Herakles are thought to combine elements of a number of Hindu deities.¹²² Such ambiguity and flexibility in the use of Herakles' image was familiar from numismatic portraits of Alexander wearing the Heraklean lion-skin.

In literary sources of the following centuries, the Greek and Roman authors often use names that the local divinities most resemble.¹²³ These authors syncretise deities by translating the eastern cult into their own religious language and conceptions. It is unlikely this necessitates a correspondence with syncretism of cult. It is unclear, for example, whether the translation of the 'temple of Nabû' in Seleucia-on-the-Tigris to the 'temple of Apollo' on **4** was a translation for convenience in this inscription, or whether there was joint worship or sharing of the temples by the followers of different religious practices.

The temple à redans. The character of the cult of the *temple à redans* at Aï Khanoum has long been the focus of the debate over religious syncretism in the Hellenistic East. The identifications of a Greek or syncretistic character of the cult are based on the Hellenistic style of carving for the marble fragment possibly from the cult statue [145]. The thunderbolt motif on the sandal has been used to identify the figure as Zeus, in different syncretistic combinations, such as Zeus-Auramazdā and Zeus-Belos. The basis of the syncretistic interpretation of the cult is that the architecture

¹²¹ Dahlquist 1962.

¹²² Goyal 2000, 58.

¹²³ See above, n.32.

and style of cult statue must both be indicative of the character of the deity worshipped there. The character of the ritual should be emphasised, however, in order to ascertain how the term 'religious syncretism' applies here, if at all.

The signifiers of ritual practice in the temple and its sanctuary are heterogeneous and unusual. There is no evidence of an altar. There are three bases in the vestibule that may have carried statues and two more at the top of the platform by the entrance to the temple.¹²⁴ The benches around the central *cella* could be compared tentatively to the Babylonian practice of making offerings at the tables before the statues of the gods. The niche behind the baked brick podium in centre of rear wall of the *cella* is another feature common to Babylonian religious architecture (see Esagila in Babylon and Anu-Antum temple in Uruk). The accompanying two rooms either side of the *cella* also echo the architecture of Babylonian broad-room temples such as the Anu-Antum temple in Uruk, but the lack of direct access from the *antecella*, their narrow shape and absence of niches in the centre of the rear walls suggest these were not additional *cellae* for the cults of other deities.

Thirty-two vases with pierced bottoms were found buried in the *crepis* with interior traces of the residue of a liquid.¹²⁵ Libations were poured into the earth via these vases (the fourth-century Aramaic inscription mentioned above supports the role of libations in Bactrian cult).¹²⁶ This chthonic practice does not appear to indicate a particular ethnic origin of the cult, however, since it is also seen in Syria,

¹²⁴ Bernard 1969, 329; Bernard 1970, 323.

¹²⁵ Bernard 1970, 327-30; Bernard 1971, 427-9; Grenet 1991, 150.

¹²⁶ Shenkar 2001, 128.

Mesopotamia, Greece and Central Asia since the late Bronze Age.¹²⁷ The position of these vases at the rear of the temple is also significant since it would be possible to make libations here without involvement in the main activity at the front of the temple.¹²⁸

Also in the sanctuary were two smaller chapels, water channels and a number of small votive bases and incense-burners.¹²⁹ Whether the open water channels on the south side of the sanctuary had a primary cultic function (such as for a water-deity such as Anahita), secondary cultic function (such as for ritual washing) or supported vegetation is unknown.¹³⁰ The water flowed south to north, contrary to the irrigation system of the rest of the city, suggesting some particular significance to the channel.¹³¹ The heterogeneity of worship at the temple was reflective of the population of the city, and inclusive of the heterogeneity of an individual's behaviour (i.e. overlap and movement between groups).¹³²

Many studies have been devoted to pinpointing the precise identity of the cult. The suggestion of Zeus-Ahura Mazda relies on correlation to the cult at Nemrud Dağ and the iconography of Kushan coins, which is tenuous since both are so far removed in location and time.¹³³ The alignment of Zeus and Bel is well attested in Syria and Mesopotamia by the third century BC (such as on coins of Mazaios [25] and Seleukos

¹²⁷ Grenet 1991, 150; Mairs *forthcoming* (2009): C.f. Hieron of Samothrace; *Odyssey* 10.508ff; Hammond 1967, 65ff; Boyce & Grenet 1991, 169-71.

¹²⁸ Mairs *forthcoming* (2009).

¹²⁹ Bernard 1970, 337-9; Bernard 1972, 625; Francfort 1984, pl.XXXVI-XXXVII.

¹³⁰ Bernard 1974, 298; Grenet 1991, 150.

¹³¹ L. Martinez-Sève, personal correspondence.

¹³² Boyce & Grenet 1991, 169; Mairs *forthcoming* (2009).

¹³³ Bernard 1969, 338-341; Shenkar 2011, 129.

I [28]) and is also made by later authors when referring to Elymaean temples.¹³⁴ A fourth-century Aramaic document referring to a ‘libation for the temple, to Bel’ indicates his worship in Bactria.¹³⁵ While Bel is used as a translation of Auramazdā in Babylonian copies of the Bisitun inscription this does not necessarily confirm the same alignment in this particular Bactrian temple (though ‘Lord’ could apply to the patriarch of many pantheons). The proposal of Zeus-Mithra is largely based on the appearance of the coins of the Greco-Bactrian ruler Heliocles I (c.145-130 BC) depicting Zeus with a radiate crown, which also became an attribute of Mithra.¹³⁶ The radiate crown in the depiction of Hellenistic kings connoted divine power and status, and was an attribute of the sun god Helios before the development of the iconography of Mithra. Even without this ambiguity, the transposition from a numismatic image of Zeus-Mithra to a cult in this particular temple is insecure. We see the winged thunderbolt of Zeus also held by Athena Alkidemos (who features on Indo-Greek coins after Menander I), on the helmet of a goddess on a Babylonian seal [10] and on the helmet of a Parthian man [102], so, as Francfort points out, even the connection of the god of this temple with Zeus is uncertain.¹³⁷

Syncretistic features in the cult of the *temple à redans* are evident in the multiplicity of ritual activities in the sanctuary. This may attest to the gathering of different cultural groups to worship one similar deity whom they identify with different names, but may also be the result of the cults of several deities. It seems

¹³⁴ See above, n.32.

¹³⁵ Shaked and Naveh *forthcoming*.

¹³⁶ Grenet 1991, 149.

¹³⁷ Francfort 1984, 125.

likely this central temple catered for the majority of the population of the city, who were from a number of cultural and ethnic groups.¹³⁸ While there are features of Greek and Mesopotamian art and architecture used for this temple, the relationship of these features to cultic practice is not straightforward.

The Temple of the Oxus. As with the *temple à redans*, there is a temptation to directly impose the character of the architecture of the Temple of the Oxus (Iranian with some Greek ornamentation) onto the interpretation of the cult. The position of the temple displays the importance of water and a high position, central tenets to Iranian worship. In addition to its position next to and facing the river (the god), two wells in the *temenos* may have been used for cultic purposes (though they perhaps also had a more practical purpose as a defensive precaution in the fortified sanctuary or held a secondary cultic role). There is no evidence of a cult statue or base for a cult statue in the temple. There are three pairs of altars with very different positions and therefore presumably different functions in ritual. The two exterior limestone altars, with Greek moulding, are placed against the wall either side of the sanctuary rather than the axial position of altars in Greek and Babylonian sanctuaries. There were many bones found around these altars, implying animal sacrifice.¹³⁹ The interior limestone altars, one in the central hall and one in the portico, are against the rear walls of their respective rooms but are offset. The ‘*atešgahs*’ are sheltered in the rear rooms of the wings of the temple. In these rooms were only ashes and no bones, suggesting the maintenance of some form of sacred fire. This symmetrical positioning

¹³⁸ See Ch.VII.

¹³⁹ Litvinskij & Pičikyan 2000, 172.

of much of the sanctuary's cultic activity has led to a suggestion of dual cult in the temple, though none of the epigraphic evidence attests to the worship of a god other than Oxus.¹⁴⁰ In addition to animal sacrifice and the maintenance of sacred fire, there were many votives of many different forms dedicated in the temple.¹⁴¹ Distinguishing the Hellenistic-period cult is complicated by later Kushan activity at the site, but the heterogeneity of ritual activities in the Hellenistic period seems clear.¹⁴²

Despite this multiplicity of ritual activities and the unusual combination of architectural forms, the epigraphic attestations of cult (all in Greek) at this site are consistent in their references to the god Oxus. Bactrian inscriptions attest to the significance of the cult of the river in the region, evident through the theophoric names, through the record of the god as a witness in the transactions, and explicit statements such as 'the god Wakhsh whom we worship here in Warnu' (perhaps Aornos).¹⁴³

The iconography of this deity is more ambiguous. The votive altar of Atrosōkēs [109], dedicated to Oxus, supports a statuette of a nude balding pot-bellied man playing a double *aulos*. This satyr figure is almost unanimously assumed to represent the god Oxus.¹⁴⁴ Although Bernard identifies the image as Marsyas, this statuette contrasts with the lean muscular depictions of Marsyas in Hellenistic

¹⁴⁰ *I. Estremo Oriente* 311-312; Litvinskij & Pičikyan 2000, 353; Drujinina & Boroffka 2006, 67-69.

¹⁴¹ See Ch.IV.

¹⁴² Bernard 1994.

¹⁴³ Sims-Williams 2012, 58.

¹⁴⁴ Litvinskij et al 1985; Bernard 1987.

sculpture and the *aulos* is not exclusive to Marsyas among satyrs.¹⁴⁵ Additionally, there are many votives from this temple and others where the dedication does not correspond to the image of the deity. This dedicator felt this form to be an appropriate dedication, but whether this satyr figure was a common conception of the Oxus is unknown. An alternative iconography of Oxus/Waksh is seen on a signet ring from the Oxus Treasure where he is depicted as a bull-man.¹⁴⁶

The widely understood representations of different gods through one image, ‘translating’ the deities from one pantheon to another in order to convey similar ideas to different audiences, was widespread in the Hellenistic period, such as Herakles-Verethragna, Zeus-Belos, Aphrodite-Ištar and Megasthenes’ Dionysos and Herakles. These translations were from Greek into conceptions of the local pantheons as well as *interpretatio graeca*, particularly on the numismatic iconography of the Seleukids. Some images of Greek deities, particularly Nike and Tyche, retained their original messages (for example, of victory or fortune) in their use by patrons who worshipped different deities, though whether they were recognised as such or given new identities is unknown. Syncretistic interpretations are often quickly assigned to the archaeological record without firm grounding. For example, it is not clear the iconography of Herakles represented any other deity during this period, despite his later popularity for transformation into other pantheons. It is highly likely there was an informal or growing alignment, or perhaps only a potential ambiguity at this point. The addition of a crescent moon to the image of Athena Dadophoros (as well as the

¹⁴⁵ Bernard 1987 on the conscious choice of the Maeander tributary Marsyas’ image to represent the personification of a similar river.

¹⁴⁶ Grenet 2005, 377.

unconventional thunderbolt of Zeus on her helmet) on a seal impression [10] shows individuals could motivate syncretism of divine iconography. This also suggests individual attributes could be adopted in order to convey extra divine characteristics, perhaps without syncretism between pantheons. There are several sites, such as Mašjid-i Solaiman, Bard-i Nišandeh, Takht-i Sangin and Aī Khanoum, where several distinct religious practices occurred at the same sacred site. These show the co-existence of ritual practice but there is little indication of the syncretism of cultic rituals. It seems those groups and individuals using the sites could worship a divine conception who held similar attributes, phrased in their own established terminology. It may be this sprang from a sense of expediency coupled with the openness of polytheistic religions, rather than a politically motivated drive for social cohesion.

Ruler cult.

The establishment of ruler cult in temples of the Seleukid empire was another novel religious development in these regions. Hellenistic ruler cult is regarded widely as manifesting a way for the Greek poleis to come to terms with new type of power, for communication and negotiation between the king and *polis*.¹⁴⁷ The kings were given honours equal to the gods, *isotheoi timai*, rather than proclaimed as deities in their own right.¹⁴⁸ In the former Achaemenid empire, however, the politico-religious situation was very different. These regions were familiar with kings so it was not necessary to make excuses for their power. Achaemenid kings were venerated as on a

¹⁴⁷ Diod.XIX.22; Price 1984, 29.

¹⁴⁸ Chaniotis 2005, 439.

different level to men but were not the subject of cult offerings and worship.¹⁴⁹ The giving of gifts to the king was regarded as a holy obligation, but these offerings were whatever the subject could afford (usually produce) and were not dedicated in a ritual context.¹⁵⁰ While Achaemenid kings were not the focus of a particular cult, the style of the Achaemenid royal inscriptions ‘employs or references obliquely a syntax and vocabulary of the divine’.¹⁵¹ Additionally, the Persepolis Fortification Archive records offerings made at the tombs of royal Achaemenids.¹⁵² The concept of the elevated status of kings between gods and men was not alien to Babylonia, Iran and Bactria, though the precise formulation of Hellenistic ruler cult was a novel addition to ritual practice.

The cult of the Seleukid rulers in Babylonia was incorporated into existing cult practices, rather than replacing them or standing alone as a separate entity.¹⁵³ There is only one explicit reference in the Babylonian Chronicles to ritual for ‘Seleukos and his offspring’, which took place in Esagila, though offerings were presented ‘at the table of the statues of the kings’ in Uruk.¹⁵⁴ This was a subtle addition to cultic practice since there were many such tables and statues in Uruk’s temples.¹⁵⁵ This sensitivity of approach in the Seleukid dissemination of their personal cult was an expedient method of exploiting an existing and receptive audience. The gold leaf on the clay diademed head [110] found in the Temple of the

¹⁴⁹ Arr.*Anab.* VI.29.4.7 & Strabo XV.3.7 on sacrifices at Cyrus’ tomb in the late 4th century BC; Garrison 2011; Rollinger 2011.

¹⁵⁰ Plut.*Vit.Art.* 4.5-5.1.

¹⁵¹ Garrison 2011, 65.

¹⁵² Henkelman 2003.

¹⁵³ McEwan 1981, 194.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 161.

¹⁵⁵ Downey 1988, 45.

Oxus implies a divine status to this ruler portrait and perhaps the incorporation of some form of ruler cult in the temple as *synnaoi theoi*.¹⁵⁶

The inscription on the stele from Laodicea-Nihavend is the first attestation of the cult of a living Seleukid ruler.¹⁵⁷ While we have mostly seen heterogeneity between local cults, here we see Antiochus III introduced the same cult of himself, his wife Laodice and his ancestors in Media as in Asia Minor. This decree adds to established locations of dedicated priesthoods of the dynasty across the empire.¹⁵⁸ Seleukid ruler cult was active at Seleucia-on-the-Tigris, indicated by the inscription found beneath the 'Parthian Villa'.¹⁵⁹

Evidence of cult for Arsacid rulers is more ambivalent. Arguments for the gypsum spheroids from the Red Building and the ivory *rhyta* from the Square Hall at Old Nisa as evidence of Arsacid ruler cult are unconvincing.¹⁶⁰ Invernizzi proposes the low clay benches in the long narrow rooms of the Square Hall were for diners to recline during ritual banquets for the cult of the kings, whose statues were placed around the walls of the Round Hall and Square Hall.¹⁶¹ The decorative schemes of the ivory *rhyta* including Greek gods and animal sacrifice are not very appropriate for ritual banquets celebrating Arsacid kingship, despite the rulers' renowned philhellenism.¹⁶² While a ceremonial aspect to the buildings of Old Nisa is certain, it

¹⁵⁶ Chaniotis 2005, 439.

¹⁵⁷ *I.Estremo Oriente* 278; Robert 1949, 5-22. See also *I.Estremo Oriente* 271 & *SEG* 37.1010.

¹⁵⁸ *I.Estremo Oriente* 181.

¹⁵⁹ Hopkins 1972, 13-25; *I.Estremo Oriente* 76.

¹⁶⁰ Masson & Pugachenkova 1982, 13.

¹⁶¹ Invernizzi 2011, 654-655.

¹⁶² Bernard 1991, 33.

is not possible to pinpoint a cultic function (let alone Arsacid ruler cult) due to the lack of furnishings, votives and anything resembling an altar or podium.

The iconographic depiction of the divinity of Hellenistic kings through the addition of small ram or bull's horns touched upon a motif already embedded within Iranian and Babylonian visual tradition.¹⁶³ While they referenced Dionysos, who was prominent in Macedonia, the motif also had similarities with Iranian traditions. As mentioned above, horns were a prominent indicator of sacred status in Elamite culture, such as on the temple of Susa and on the deities in the Kūrāngūn relief, and likely maintained this significance in Achaemenid architecture. Bulls were prominent also in Babylonian and Achaemenid architectural reliefs, such as on the Istar Gate and the *apadana* reliefs at Persepolis. The many parallels (also from the Mediterranean and Near East), in addition to the portrayal of the Oxus as a bull-man, suggest many interpretations for the seven bull-man *protomoi* on Nisaeen *rhyta* (rather than Acheloos or the Avestan Gopatshah) and it is doubtful we can confine ourselves to one specific reading.¹⁶⁴ Taurine iconography held important sacred resonances across the ancient world and could therefore be used to connect with several audiences at once.

¹⁶³ Lindström 2003, 77. See the association of *Dhul-Qarnayn* ('the Two-Horned One') with Alexander (Wiesehöfer 2011).

¹⁶⁴ Masson & Pugachenkova 1982, 135-136; Grenet 2005, 377; Pappalardo 2010, 228.

Conclusion.

There was much exchange, transmission and transformation in the religious visual culture of Babylonia, Iran and Bactria. New developments in religious architecture developed local forms. Local architectural and iconographical religious conventions were maintained and encouraged. The heterogeneity of cultic practice under the Achaemenids left its legacy into the Seleukid and Parthian period. The transmission and exchange between the polytheistic religions was mainly in visual ideas rather than in details of cultic practice. While cult took place side-by-side at many sites, there is no evidence to suggest these merged into homogenous practices.

A number of developments occurred in the visual culture of the religious sphere, such as the construction of enclosed sacred buildings in Iranian lands. Occasionally the architectural ornamentation and plan of these buildings included Greco-Macedonian features, but more commonly we see the existing Mesopotamian religious architectural traditions were used, or Iranian architectural models employed for a new function. This was perhaps due to the expediency of employing local craftsmen and materials (mudbrick and terracotta), and it also contributes to dispel the now outdated concept of Greek visual culture unsubtly deposited in the Babylonian, Iranian and Bactrian landscapes. The revival of Babylonian religious architecture is complemented by other areas of Babylonian religion, such as sacred sculpture, seal iconography and the archives. The use of cult statues in Iranian lands is a new feature in this period. The depiction of nude male figures, intrinsic to the representation of Greek deities, was previously alien to Babylonian and Iranian art.

There is a dramatic increase in the number of votive dedications in the archaeological record at sacred sites, appearing in many forms and styles. Whether this is a true reflection of a change or increase in dedicatory practice is ambivalent.

The appearance of the iconography of Greek deities is notable across all three regions and in many different forms. This includes 'official' images such as coins and 'unofficial' forms such as terracotta figurines. The iconography of Greek deities permeated both the centre and periphery, of royal court, urban settlements and remote mountainside sanctuary. Although there are several cases of political messages behind the use of religious imagery, such as the Seleukid Apollo-on-the-*omphalos* coinage or the Herakles dedication of Hyakinthos at Bisitun, there are also plenty of instances where the images are used by the wider population, uninitiated by a higher human authority.

The ambiguity of religious images and the potential syncretism was highly important in order to communicate to the widest audience possible. Cults of different religions co-existed at the sites, not necessarily in a smooth amalgamation or losing their original identities, yet tolerating and where necessary or convenient highlighting their similar ideas through syncretism of individual divinities. This flexibility of cultic practice is suggested at the Temple of the Oxus, where it seems different forms of ritual were conducted to worship the same deity. The flexibility is more prominent in iconography, such as the inclusion by the *fratarakā* of motifs originating with Hellenistic deities alongside motifs of Iranian cult. This does not mean the original

meaning was lost completely or misunderstood. For *frataraka* coinage the opposite is the case: the precise meaning of divine favour and victory is maintained despite the new setting. Transmission of Greek religious iconography to the new physical location resulted in an eventual transformation into the representation of Iranian deities.

Chapter VI: Sphere of Kings.

Introduction.

The adoption of recognised paraphernalia of kingship was especially important in times of political upheaval and the transition of power. Hellenistic kings are renowned for their involvement in lavish spectacle, and the appearance of their immediate environs and person was as important as the vast amounts of wealth required for such displays. Plutarch comments that ‘in their outward show of majesty they were like actors on a stage’.¹ This chapter discusses the costumes and stages of these actors: the image and physical paraphernalia of kingship in Babylonia, Iran and Bactria after the Macedonian conquest.

The image of the king helped communicate the character of the king, his rule, dynasty and kingdom.² It showed how he wished to be seen, but it is likely the choice of individual rulers was tempered by the expectations of local tradition of ruler representation.³ This was particularly important for break-away rulers seeking to establish a dynasty. The portrayal of a king often represents a balance between their level of power (whether independent or a client king), their own ethnicity, the ethnic mix included within their territory, the traditions of kingship already established in the land they rule, the more widely recognised contemporary motifs of kingship and the requirement to create a distinctive image of power. The presentation of rulers’

¹ Plut. *Vit. Dem.* 41.3.

² Price 1984, 7.

³ Briant 1990, 60.

power to their immediate court, subjects across their kingdoms and to foreign powers promoted their legitimacy to rule, the prosperity brought to the realm by their personal governance and their strength to discourage would-be usurpers or invaders. This chapter focuses on the visual language and iconography by which they chose to create this manifestation of their power and rule.

This study includes rulers of many different statuses and territories of various scales, from vast empires to small vassal kingdoms. They therefore had different iconographic agendas. In addition to the Seleukid and Arsacid dynasties ruling vast empires, some of our case studies were local dynasts varying in dependency on their Seleukid or Parthian overlords, such as the rulers of Persis, Elymais and Characene. Others, such as Andragoras in Parthia or Diodotus in Bactria, were Seleukid satraps who established their own independent kingdoms (to greater and lesser success). The Seleukids, Parthians and Yuezhi were invading powers that settled and ruled over people of different cultural heritages and ethnicities to themselves. The *fratarakā*, however, could present themselves as the local champions of Persian heritage and identity.

It is possible to read a multiplicity of meanings from much of the visual culture in the sphere of kings. This reflects the multiplicity of their roles and the heterogeneous composition of the populations they ruled, reinforcing that traditions from Iranian and Greek visual heritage were not mutually exclusive.⁴ The conscious employment of ambivalent imagery represents a requirement to communicate to a

⁴ Wiesehöfer 1991.

wide and complex audience, especially as the low level of literacy among this audience raised the importance of the languages of images.

This balancing of old and new is a prevalent feature throughout the sphere of kings, particularly in administrative practices.⁵ This chapter addresses whether similar continuity is visible in the royal image and the appearance and contents of royal buildings. There is a certain amount of selectivity in this process, rather than whole-scale adoption of an existing template.⁶ Even where relationships to established models (whether Assyrian, Babylonian, Achaemenid or Hellenistic) are more distinct, continuity does not predicate absence of change in the relationships with the persisting traditions; there is a distinction between processes of survival and revival of the past, where traditions are employed consciously for new purposes.⁷

This chapter first deals with the iconography of kingship and power. The image of Alexander developed under the Successors was long-lasting and wide-reaching in its influence on royal iconography in Babylonia, Iran and Bactria, just as for the Hellenistic kings further west. Rulers not of Macedonian origin received, adopted, transformed and presented this image. They had no blood connection to Alexander or the Seleukids, yet chose to represent themselves in a similar manner. The modifications to this model are particularly interesting. Rather than the ghost of Alexander looming over successive rulers, they were actively choosing the features most useful to their situation in response to the iconography of their contemporaries

⁵ Kuhrt & Sherwin-White 1993; Briant 1996; Apherdis 2004.

⁶ Briant 1990, 42.

⁷ Root 1994, 9.

and rivals, creating their own distinct portraiture. The freedom of interpretation and constant negotiation of the image brings the rulers out of the shadow of Alexander and into the theatrical limelight as active protagonists in the formulation of ruler representation. This manipulation of established iconographies of kingship was also applied to the Achaemenid royal image. This is yet another demonstration of ‘continuity and change’ or ‘continuity in change’.⁸ These remodellings often show how kings catered to or anticipated expectations of their appearance. They used ambivalent iconographies that can be read in the context of different visual traditions and therefore speak to a wider proportion of the heterogeneous audience. A ‘chameleon quality’ was very useful in order to fulfil local roles and expectations alongside the image of the ruler as a Hellenistic king.⁹

The second half of this chapter focuses on the appearance of the immediate physical space around the king. The court and *philoï* were the king’s immediate source of support and power. It was important to impress upon them the power and success of the dynasty, in addition to fulfilling their expectations of the behaviour, apparel and surrounds of the king.¹⁰ Any visitors to the court, whether official representatives of other powers, musicians, philosophers, craftsmen, mercenaries or supplicants would be impressed by the physical surroundings of the ruler. The appearance of those physical surroundings, therefore, carries political significance. This discussion first focuses on the decoration of ‘royal space’ – the influences and

⁸ Root 1994, 9; Briant & Joannès 2006.

⁹ Ma 2005, 179.

¹⁰ See the problems faced by Alexander upon his adoption of Iranian costume, Plut.*Vit.Alex.*45; Arr.*Anab.*VII.6. Similarly on *proskynesis*: Arr.*Anab.*4.10.5-12.5.

developments visible in the architectural ornament of royal palaces and other monumental constructions that likely had royal involvement. In particular, the decoration considered appropriate for these politically-charged spaces and the political or cultural affiliations and associations are hinted at or prompted by such decoration. This is followed by a discussion centring on the more portable works of art found in such places. The combination of the stimulus of royal patronage of the arts and wide trade networks created vibrant artistic arenas, and it is also noteworthy whether the character of the visual culture at these royal centres reflects similar forms, messages and cultural affiliations broadcast in the image of the ruler propagated to a wider audience.

The royal image.

The dissemination of the king's image was particularly important due to the significance attached to his personal authority. The king's image had to be recognisable and present a clear and digestible message promoting the strength and legitimacy of his rule. Here, we will discuss the use and renegotiation of royal models by the rulers of Babylonia, Iran and Bactria in response to previous traditions and the expectations of their contemporaries.

Out of the shadow of Alexander. The portrait of Alexander on the coinage of the Successors was a novel image of a king, as much in Pella as in Persepolis. It presented a new visual language of power, where youthful dynamism and virility was

conveyed through clean-shaven cheeks, tousled short hair and a strong brow over deep-set intently staring eyes, the head tilted up and to the left.¹¹ Alexander was the first to use the diadem, a plain fillet, as a marker of royal status.¹² This headband was incorporated into the iconography of rulers from Egypt to Afghanistan for more than five hundred years after Alexander's death. The other features of Alexander's portrait were echoed in portraits of successive rulers across the Hellenistic world, whether of Macedonian origin or not. These other features were negotiable, however, unlike the diadem. Portrait features were sacrificed to a greater or lesser extent in order to incorporate characteristics of the Hellenistic ruler, based upon the image of Alexander, alongside features stemming from territories they ruled and their ethnic inheritance.

The royal diadem was a thin plain band of cloth worn about the head, tied at the back in a knot from which the two ends hung loose. It was not, however, common on portraits of Alexander – only under the Successors did it become the *prima facie* symbol of royalty.¹³ The inclusion of the diadem in every numismatic portrait of Hellenistic rulers affirms its important role, corroborated by the literary sources indications that the 'assumption of the diadem' was equivalent to proclamation of kingship.¹⁴ It was a motif adapted by succeeding rulers: often the sole headwear, with short tassels flying animatedly behind or long ribbons falling straight down the back,

¹¹ Smith 1988, 47 on the divine connotations of this pose.

¹² The proposed eastern origins for the diadem as signifier of kingship are not convincing, see Smith 1988, 35-36; Strootman 2007, 369. The royal motif of the diadem by itself is particular to Alexander's instigation. The accounts of Eumenes' dreams in Diod.18.60.5-61.2 and Polyæn.4.8.2 also include the sceptre prominently among the regalia of Alexander.

¹³ Smith 1988, 61.

¹⁴ Plut.*Mor.*184a-b; Plut.*Vit.Dem.*18; Diod.31.15.2.

but also was used frequently in combination with other headdresses. The *fratarakā* and early Arsacids wear it with the *bašlyk*, later Arsacids wear it under their domed and beaded *tiyāra*, and Greco-Bactrian rulers combined it with a variety of different headdresses including elephant scalps, the *kausia* and the Boeotian helmet. The Parthian thick, ridged headband (see 76) may be a first-century BC development on the diadem of the Hellenistic rulers.¹⁵ The effort to include the diadem, no matter what other form of headdress the ruler is shown in, accentuates its role as a compulsory emblem of power. Other echoes of Alexander's image were optional or flexible.

The diadem was worn by the rulers of all the kingdoms within the geographic and chronological framework of this study, and beyond: from the Seleukids of Macedonian heritage to the Parthian Arsacids, the Persid *fratarakā*, the Greco-Bactrians and Indo-Greeks, the kings of Elymais and Spasinou Charax, and briefly-reigning usurpers such as Andragoras. The Kushan leader Heraios (AD 1-30) included the diadem in his portrait on coins that echo Greco-Bactrian issues in form, but his ethnicity is clear from his almond-shaped eyes, hairstyle and clothing.

Eumenes' utilization of Alexander's regalia in 317 BC reiterates the importance of the physical appearance of Alexander and the paraphernalia of kingship in the immediate aftermath of his death.¹⁶ Alignment with his image and by association his power was particularly important during the turbulence of the Wars of

¹⁵ Curtis 2007a, 16.

¹⁶ Diod.18.60.5-61.2; Plut.*Vit.Eum.* 13.3-4; Polyen.4.8.2.

the Successors since none were connected to him by blood. They used Alexander's portrait on their coinage initially, but later replaced it with their own portraits that bore strong similarities to the dead Argead king. Successive rulers from a variety of ethnicities, heritages and positions of power for centuries after Alexander's death emulated and reinterpreted his portrait, amalgamating it with their own.

Extant portraits of Seleukid rulers from the archaeological record of Babylonia, Iran and Bactria are confined to representations on coins and in seal impressions. From the coins of Antiochus I (the first Seleukid ruler to portray the current ruler), the portrait features of Seleukid kings show much individuality between monarchs and also freedom of individual mints in details of the portraiture.¹⁷ The early Seleukid rulers have shorter hair than Alexander's image, emphasising military strength, whereas the longer hair of the later Seleukids added to the aura of *tryphē*. The evocation of *tryphē*, emphasising the prosperity and benefits of their rule, was particularly important in the dynastic conflicts of the later Seleukids. Individualising characteristics, such as Antiochus VIII Grypus' hooked nose and spiral curls, were vital in distinguishing the ruler as distinct (and preferable) to his many competitors. An emphasis on the individual character and strength of the ruler was particularly important in the absence of a cohesive and strong dynasty, though the simultaneous portrayal of legitimacy through dynastic continuity doubtless remained significant.¹⁸ This is demonstrated in the prominent position in the obverse jugate portraits on coins of Alexander Balas given to Cleopatra Thea (his firmest

¹⁷ Fleischer 1991, 137.

¹⁸ Chrubasik 2011, 241ff.

claim to legitimacy) and her attribute of a *polos*, the headwear of Cybele, Demeter and other mother goddesses, emphasising her maternal role in the continuation of the dynasty.

The model of royal presentation set by Alexander had a wide-reaching dissemination geographically, chronologically and through different media. The smooth-cheeked bronze face with thick locks of hair found in the rural sanctuary at Shami [80] is perhaps a portrait of the Elymaean king Okkonapses (c.139/8 BC).¹⁹ Fragments of the back of the head show he wore a diadem. The clay heads wearing diadems found in the Temple of the Oxus at Takht-i Sangin also show indications of portrait features, particularly 110 with its thin face, pointed nose and receding hairline. These examples follow the 'typical' Hellenistic ruler portrait most frequently attested by coins: smooth cheeks, short tousled hair, parted lips and a heavy brow over deep-set eyes.

As well as this emulation in royal portraits, facial characteristics of the image of Alexander had a far-reaching transmission. The tousled hair, strong brow over deep-set eyes, small mouth, straight nose, clean-shaven cheeks and tilt of the head upwards and to the left are seen in a number of examples that do not wear the diadem. They cannot be identified as kings, therefore, but they do illustrate the reception of an Alexander-like image. One such representation is a terracotta figurine from Failaka, perhaps of an athletic victor [54]. The settlement on this island was a military or

¹⁹ Boyce & Grenet 1991.

trading outpost not a royal centre and so illustrates the transmission of the Hellenistic ruler type beyond the cities.

Other examples that echo the Alexander image adapt the type quite freely. Elements were modified or left out according to the requirements of the artist or patron. The clay head of a young man from the Building with the Square Hall at Old Nisa has the tousled flowing hair and upwards tilt to the face and eyes of the Lysippan portrayals of Alexander, with straight nose, small mouth with lips parted slightly [103]. Yet there is the addition of a moustache and goatee beard. The Alexandrian model was adapted to the pogonographic fashions of the Parthian capital. 103 is thought roughly contemporaneous or later than the fragments of a clay face with a long beard identified as a portrait of Mithridates I also found at Old Nisa [100]. The two forms of representation were either contemporary options or at least suggest any 'Iranian revival' did not require the rejection of all Hellenistic influences once the image of a king included a beard. The moustachioed head could indicate the younger age of the subject or could represent a popular fashion.

Variations on the 'Hellenistic ruler' type utilized a recognised appearance of power and were not constant emulations of and references to Alexander but became semi-independent models demonstrating competition between contemporaries. The presentation of rulers subservient to the Seleukids and later the Parthians did not follow one model alone, but could vary and develop according to the contemporary dominant image of kingship. The dynasties of Elymais and Characene gained

independence during the Seleukid-Parthian conflicts and retained varying degrees of autonomy. The Characenean rulers took the appearance of Hellenistic kings when the dominant power was Seleukid and developed it once their dynasty was established and after the expulsion of the Seleukids from Mesopotamia. The image of Elymaean rulers changed dramatically with the accession of Kamniskires III slightly later, at the beginning of the first century BC, from the Hellenistic ruler type to an image very much indebted to the contemporary Parthian model of kingship but with distinctive Elymaean touches.

Numismatic portraits of the first Elymaean kings (Kamniskires Nikephorus [64], Kamniskires Soter, Okkonaspes, Tigraios and Darius) are very close to the 'typical' Hellenistic ruler image: clean-shaven, tousled hair, strong brow, facing right, wearing the diadem.²⁰ Kamniskires I won independence during the weakness of the Seleukids after Apamea in 188 BC and their subsequent conflicts with the Parthians, by at least 145 BC. Phraates II conquered the region and installed Kamniskires II (perhaps Soter) as a client king. Coins of Parthian kings were struck at Susa from this period and it is possible Elymaean kings lost their independence until the rule of Kamniskires III c.85 BC. The portraits of Kamniskires III and his successors, in contrast, face left, wear pointed beards, moustaches, and earrings, and their clothes are visible at the neckline (often including a torque or patterned garment).²¹ These echo the image of power constructed by Mithridates II and his successors at the end

²⁰ The chronology and identity of these rulers is disputed. Le Rider 1965 suggests Kamniskires I Soter, Kamniskires II Nikephorus, Okkonaspes, Tigraios and Darius. Shayegan 2011, 88ff follows the alternative school who suggest Kamniskires I Nikephorus and Kamniskires II Soter, and places Okkonaspes and Tigraios in a six-year *interregnum* between the Kamniskiri.

²¹ Alram 1986, pl.14-15.

of the second century BC. There are a few distinctly Elymaean features, however, such as the headdress of Anzaze, and they do not presume to include the Parthian royal *tiyāra*. Similarly to their Parthian contemporary Orodes I, links with Hellenistic models are maintained on the reverse, where a seated male Nikephorus figure, reminiscent of Zeus Aetophorus or Baal'tars, is framed by Greek legends. The Seleukid anchor is included also, perhaps as a mint mark, behind the obverse jugate portraits, and on other Elymaean issues until the second century AD. The replacement of the Seleukids by the Parthians as the major power prompted an 'Iranian revival' in the image of kingship at the end of the second century BC.²² Once emulators of the Seleukids, the Parthians now set the tone for the royal image. This new iconography of power necessitated a similar shift by client kings indebted to the Parthians. The dynasts were involved in a constant system of negotiation and adaptation to the political balance; it was vital to balance the promotion of allegiance and signifiers of their own power without over-reaching and antagonising the dominant power.²³

The dynasts of Characene were also Iranian rulers who portrayed themselves in the Hellenistic ruler model. The founder of the dynasty, Hyspaosines, had an Iranian name (Aspasine) and may have been of Arab parentage.²⁴ He was a Seleukid *eparch* under Antiochus IV and declared independence c.138 BC, minting coins in his own name with his portrait and the title βασιλεύς. Hyspaosines' wide diadem with long flowing tassels is tied around Alexandrian short thick locks of hair that are ordered into a neat 'pudding-bowl' fringe, in the manner of his contemporary

²² Herrmann 1977.

²³ See discussion of Persid rulers, below.

²⁴ Pliny *HN*.139.

Phraates II.²⁵ His clean-shaven square jaw, heavy brows over deep-set upturned eyes, straight nose and parted lips present him as a strong Hellenistic ruler. Shortly after Hyspaosines won independence and conquered Babylonia (he was recognised as king of Babylon until 127 BC) amidst the distractions of the Seleukid-Parthian conflict, Characene was conquered by the Parthians c.124 BC and lost some but not all of their autonomy.²⁶ After the Parthian conquest of Seleukid territories, Characenean rulers retain right-facing portrait and continued to truncate the portrait at the bare neck, but portraits of succeeding rulers (Apodokas, Tiraios I and II) include successively longer, fuller and slightly unkempt beards and bushy hair. These dynasts did not emulate their Parthian overlords as closely as their rivals in Elymais.

While the Iranian Hyspaosines of Characene's portrait is very Hellenistic in many ways, it does not bear resemblance to contemporary Seleukid portraits, which promote *tryphē*. His square-cut jaw promotes a stronger, more masculine image (such as of the early Seleukids), and the tidy fringe recalls the style of Parthian kings such as Mithridates II and Phraates II. These features developed aspects of the contemporary strongest powers he is in competition with, presenting an independent alternative. Andragoras and other usurpers of Seleukid power such as Molon, Achaios and Timarkhos did not follow the Seleukid model either. Andragoras and Molon were Iranian Seleukid satraps of Parthyene and Media respectively. Rather than emphasising their links to the Seleukid authority that had given them power, they asserted their own distinctive image (though including the most important

²⁵ Le Rider 1965, pl.XXXV, 407-409.

²⁶ Schuol 2000, 454; Shayegan 2011, 111.

symbol of power, the diadem).²⁷ Similarly, Demetrius II's full beard distinguishes him from his rival Alexander Balas. These portraits contrast the current Seleukid king's image to promote themselves as an alternative.²⁸ The portraits of these rulers mark clear distinctions within a recognised format so their individual rule is distinguished within the accepted representations of power and the coinage is accepted as legitimate currency.

Alexander's image had a long-lasting effect on the image of rulers in Babylonia, Iran and Bactria in the two hundred years after his death and beyond, but from the very first Successors this was a selective process of adaptation. A wide range of rulers, including less powerful dynasts of Iranian origin, used features of his image. Rather than a passive continuation or complete adoption of the model, there are many imaginative re-workings and modifications to suit the needs of the particular ruler, especially in reaction to the iconography of contemporary rivals. The most enduring feature of Alexander's portrait, however, was the diadem – the motif popularized by the Successors, not part of Alexander's own image – the meaning of which 'became simply 'kingship', rather than specifically 'Greco-Macedonian kingship'.²⁹

²⁷ While the minting of coins is not in itself a sign of autonomy since dynasts and cities had some autonomy in this regard, the assumption of the diadem remains a clear indicator of royal status (Plut. *Vit. Dem.* 18; Diod. *IV.4.4*; Smith 1988, 34-38). Andragoras issue 1: BM 1888,1208.59; issue 2: Diakonoff/Zejmajl (1988), pl.3.1. Molon: Chrubasik 2011, pl.3.3-4.

²⁸ Chrubasik 2011, 243.

²⁹ Smith 1988, 38.

Manipulation of the past. The employment of elements of visual heritage is not a passive and unimaginative process. The elements are chosen and often reinterpreted and given new associations through their accompaniment with new features or in a new setting. The image of the Persid rulers presents their Achaemenid and Persid heritage, but with subtle changes to avoid claiming the title of Great King and thereby antagonising the Seleukids and later the Parthians.³⁰ The Arsacids asserted the Great King title (after Mithridates I) yet attached it to new images of the royal person. These changing relationships with the past represent conscious revival as well as the survival of visual traditions.³¹

Unusual among Persid issues, the reverse of Baydād's first issue [84] shows the seated ruler in a high-backed chair wearing a garment with long ribbed sleeves, trousers and *kandys* (full-length coat with long open sleeves) and holding a sceptre and cup or lotus flower. The composition and costume of the figure are very reminiscent of Achaemenid depictions of the Great King such as the north stairs *apadana* relief at Persepolis.³² Baydād's obverse portrait is also anomalous since he is the only Persid ruler wearing a *bašlyk* that exposes his cheeks and chin. This emphasis on enthronement and Achaemenid heritage was perhaps driven by a need to assert his claim in opposition to his rival Wādfradād I.³³ The reverse of other Persid issues, which usually show a figure (presumably the ruler) standing with their arm raised in front of a structure [85], bear resemblance to other Achaemenid reliefs, such

³⁰ Wiesehöfer 2007, 43.

³¹ Root 1994, 9.

³² Schmidt 1953, pl.99.

³³ Hoover 2008, 215; Curtis 2010, 388.

as on the Tomb of Darius at Naqš-i Rostam.³⁴ The square standard in these compositions also emphasises the Achaemenid links. As for the Seleukid usurpers and rivals discussed above, we see the iconography of rulers on coins as a useful medium in competition for power.

Persid ruler representation presented a new interpretation of past iconography of power. The sceptre of the Persid rulers is the Seleukid rather than the Achaemenid type, the bow limbs form a double not single curve and they do not wear the crenellated crown of the Great King.³⁵ The title used by the earlier Persid rulers as well as their headwear indicates a status lower than a king, since Achaemenid sub-satrapes in Egypt were also called *fratarakā*.³⁶ This balance displayed their Iranian heritage while avoiding antagonising their Seleukid overlords and later their powerful Parthian neighbours.³⁷ The visual emphasis is on Persian heritage and local power, rather than a claim to the Achaemenid empire. This targeting of a local audience is reiterated in the use of Aramaic legends rather than Greek, in contrast to the Seleukid, Arsacid, Elymaean and Characenean rulers.³⁸

One less diplomatic image of a Persid ruler is that on an issue of Wahbarz, perhaps relating to Oborzos' massacre of 3,000 Greco-Macedonian *katoikoi*.³⁹ The striding bearded man subduing a Greco-Macedonian fighter wears a very similar

³⁴ Schmidt 1953, 57.

³⁵ Wiesehöfer 2007, 43.

³⁶ Wiesehöfer 1994, 106-108.

³⁷ Wiesehöfer 2011, 116.

³⁸ An Aramaic legend and the *bašlyk* are used on Andragoras' second issue, though Coloru 2009, 158 argues this is an early Arsacid issue.

³⁹ Polyaeus.7.40; Klose & Müseler 2008, 2/16a, plate 6; Shayegan 2011, 171; Wiesehöfer 2011, 114, fig.4. See Ch.III, n.160.

costume to the king on the 'seal of Darius I' (PFS 7). He does not wear the Achaemenid crenellated crown, however, but the tall fluted Persian hat so prominent on the Persepolis reliefs. The purposefully archaizing costume of the victor presents him as a defender of Persian culture and identity as well as militarily strong.

Just as the *fratarakā* used Achaemenid and Seleukid symbols of power in new contexts, we see a similar modification in the life-size marble female bust from Susa that wears the Achaemenid crenellated crown, carved locally in the first century AD by an Antiochus, son of Dryas (dated stylistically and by the letter forms of the inscription). Cumont dismisses an identification as Tyche due to the type of crown and portrait features and proposes the bust is a portrait of Thea Musa, a slave of Augustus married to Phraates IV.⁴⁰ Iranian royal women, however, are rarely seen in this form of crown.⁴¹ The portrayal of a Parthian queen in an Achaemenid crown by a Greek sculptor in a Hellenistic style and format long after the end of the Achaemenid and Seleukid empires demonstrates the flexibility of iconographic exchange and the continuance and reinterpretation of established symbols of royalty.

Another demonstration of this form of conflation of symbols from different dynasties and periods, perhaps an unconscious manipulation of iconography, is seen in an 'unofficial' art form: a terracotta figurine from Failaka [53]. The head and chest of the figure was made from the mould for a figurine of a Hellenistic woman, perhaps made in the third or second century BC [57]. The lower body in Parthian costume,

⁴⁰ Cumont 1939, 337.

⁴¹ Spycket 1980, 43-44.

crown with pointed crenulations, beard and throne of the figurine were moulded by hand to adapt the subject matter. The Parthians did not use the Achaemenid crown with stepped crenulations on their coins, but, as the marble bust from Susa also demonstrates, there were lasting Achaemenid influences in the popular visual language of Iranian kingship.⁴²

The Greco-Bactrian dynasts present themselves as Hellenistic rulers on their coins and accentuate their Greco-Macedonian heritage in the obverse portraits. The Boeotian helmet is seen occasionally on Seleukid coins but the use of the *kausia* [155] (over the diadem) is unique to the Greco-Bactrian dynasts.⁴³ This is the distinctive flat hunting or travelling hat of the Macedonians, without connotations of royalty or military strength. Antimachus was of Greek extraction, but his choice of championing himself as a humble Macedonian citizen seems more than a little contrived.⁴⁴

The various dynasties in Babylonia, Iran and Bactria after the Macedonian conquest constructed their own distinct image – the visual language of their rule. They selected and combined features from their cultural heritage and promoted these motifs to establish the character of their rule while engaging in the ‘international’ visual language of power, placing themselves on a platform alongside other rulers. Their choices related their status and power to the preceding and contemporaneous rulers.

⁴² Mathiesen 1992, 21.

⁴³ Bopearachchi 1991 pl.8; Le Rider 1998, pl.1.35.

⁴⁴ Strabo XI.11.1; Polyb.XI.34.

Anticipating the audience. The rulers needed to send clear messages of their power and person to the wide and varied audience of their subjects. The Seleukid administration was multi-lingual, but the visual multi-lingualism of the images of the Seleukid and Parthian kings and others such as the Persid and Greco-Bactrian rulers was also important in communicating their message to the people.⁴⁵ The Hung-i Aždar bas-relief [81], for example, uses two different presentations of rulers in one image. This was not a novelty to the region. The Achaemenids also had to contend with the multi-ethnic range of their empire. Such clear multiple messages can be read in the statue of Darius found in Susa.⁴⁶ Despite the Egyptian format of the sculpture the clothes, lotus flower and sceptre are very much of the Iranian tradition, and the hieroglyphic inscription names him as ‘the Persian, an Achaemenid, who conquered Egypt’. This is similar to how the inscription on the Borsippa Cylinder presents Antiochus I as supporting the local temples and taking part in traditional festivals, yet ‘the Macedonian’ is kept among his titulature.⁴⁷

The image of the Arsacid kings on their coinage changes dramatically depending on the location of the mint that struck them, the extent of their empire and therefore the immediate audience receiving the image. On issues from Hecatompylos, Mithridates I appears facing left clean-shaven in the *bašlyk* and diadem, just as the portrait on coins by the founder of his dynasty, Arsaces I. Later, on issues from Seleucia-on-the-Tigris, however, he is bearded, wearing a diadem and facing right.

⁴⁵ Kuhrt & Sherwin-White 1993, 144-5.

⁴⁶ Kervran et al. 1972.

⁴⁷ Kuhrt & Sherwin-White 1991.

The diadem and Greek legend on the reverse of the Hecatompylos issue attest to Arsacid familiarity with Hellenistic iconography before the omission of the *bašlyk*. It seems this development reflects the conquest of Iran and Babylonia and the consequent change in the king's status and the ethnic makeup of his kingdom. The epithet '*philhellenos*' appears on tetradrachms of Mithridates I struck at Seleucia-on-the-Tigris, which he adopted once he conquered this area presumably in order to win allegiance of the Greco-Macedonian populations.⁴⁸ The epithet was used until the beginning of the first century AD, longer-lasting than Arsacid Hellenistic portraiture.

Images of Mithridates II undergo a number of transformations in style and subject. Sellwood Type 23, minted at Seleucia-on-the-Tigris, shows him with a short beard, and, as initiated by his predecessor Artabanus I [15], he wears the distinctively Parthian many-banded torque around his neck and a beaded collar of a jacket or coat.⁴⁹ He wears a thick diadem around the set fine waves of his hair. Two examples of other issues demonstrate very different numismatic portrayals of Mithridates II, where he faces left in contrast to the Hellenistic norm. The rounded style of portrait on Sellwood Type 24-27, minted at Seleucia-on-the-Tigris, Ecbatana and Rhagae, is used to portray distinctly Parthian features, such as the long beard, torque and jacket. The portraits here include a prominently hooked nose. Sellwood Type 28, minted at Ecbatana and Rhagae, introduces the high domed and beaded mitre that becomes common to the images of Arsacid kings. Here, the king has a long free-flowing beard and the features are far less rounded, with emphasis on linearity. The remaining

⁴⁸ Curtis 2007, 11.

⁴⁹ Curtis 1998, 62.

connection to Hellenistic royal iconography is the diadem, whose loose ends are long and lie flat, rather than the short waving tassels of early Hellenistic kings. These variations in the representation suggest the Arsacid king appeared in different guises to fulfil the expectations of their different audiences, in addition to chronological distinctions affected by the contemporary status and political situation. The use of a Hellenistic representational style did not exclude the portrayal of Parthian costume.

It was important to the Hellenistic ruler to retain as much ambivalence as possible in the visual messages they display to their ethnically mixed peoples.⁵⁰ The ability to project multiple messages is also central to the choices of headgear on the coin portraits of rulers, in addition to the choice of accompanying patron deity on the reverse. The diadem is a constant feature, but can be combined with horns, elephant scalps, a variety of helmets or hats such as the *bašlyk*. The additions make associations of military prowess (helmets), commemorate victories (elephant scalp), imply divine origin or status (horns) or make explicit statements of ethnicity and cultural allegiance (*kausia* and *bašlyk*). The additional motifs contribute to the overall statement about the king's rule. The combination of the diadem with the *kausia* projects a very different message of the king's status and relationship to his subjects than a portrait of the king wearing diadem and radiate crown. When the coinage of Mithridates II introduced the domed mitre into royal iconography, the diadem was retained, thus sending out the same message in a variety of forms to his mixed audience.

⁵⁰ See discussion of Apollo-on-the-*omphalos* in Ch.V.

The reverse of the Persid coins [84-85] and perhaps the Shami bronze [76] and Hung-i Aždar relief [81] are the only full-length images extant of third and second century BC rulers. The Arsacid and Greco-Bactrian numismatic portraits provide the occasional clue from neckwear. The torque and studded jacket on the coins of Arsacid rulers discussed above suggest a v-necked tunic and baggy trousers similar to the Shami bronze statue. The acrolithic nature of the majority of the extant sculptures (such as 109, 110 and 147) implies the statues were clothed, since the medium is suited to covering an armature for the body with drapery or armour in order to heighten the realism of the clay head and hands. Historical sources suggest Seleukid kings wore Macedonian clothing (civilian or military, as appropriate) but distinguished themselves by the regalia of diadem, sceptre and signet ring, and expensive or highly embellished fabrics.⁵¹ Nude male figures (the most prominent type of Hellenistic ruler portrait) were uncommon to the art of Babylonia, Iran and Bactria, unlike Greco-Macedonian artistic traditions.⁵² Applying a Hellenistic ruler portrait type to a body type less outlandish to these regions than the heroic nude warrior eased the reception of the new styles.

Conclusions. The model set by Alexander and the Successors heavily influenced images of kings in Babylonia, Iran and Bactria after the Macedonian conquest. This model, however, was adapted according to the specific needs of the ruler, according to factors such as the traditions of kingship, the ethnic make-up of his subjects and examples set by the contemporary ‘superpower’. The shared visual links to Alexander

⁵¹ Strootman 2007, 360-366, 374-384.

⁵² Smith 1988, 32-34.

and the Successors developed an ‘international’ iconographic vocabulary of kingship, and a platform for competition and display between rival dynasties.

While in many areas kings attempted to communicate to as wide a demographic as possible, it is noticeable the Seleukids did not include any Iranian or Babylonian signifiers of kingship in their portraits (apart from, perhaps, small bull-horns on the portrait of Seleukos I).⁵³ There are some indications of continuities in court practices after the Achaemenids, such as Alexander’s retention of the ‘apple-bearers’ as his bodyguard and Peucestas’ traditional Persian arrangement of his Persepolitan banquet in 317 BC.⁵⁴ These early and perhaps ‘token’ gestures did not represent a claim to Achaemenid heritage (see the opposition to Alexander’s adoption of Oriental dress and to the Macedonian equipment and training given to Persian *epigonoï*).⁵⁵ This impression is supported by the iconography of the Seleukids, and contrasts with their maintenance of the Achaemenid administrative structures, their relationship with the Babylonian temples and the marriage of Seleukos I to the Iranian Apame.⁵⁶

The versatility of Hellenistic ruler representation was key to its continued influence through its modulations and adaptations. A different emphasis and weight can be attached to the various components, with features selected or discarded as appropriate for the particular dynast. Additional headgear, facial hair or clothing

⁵³ Lindström 2003, 77; Hoover 2011.

⁵⁴ Ael. *VH* 9.3. Henkelman 2010, 115-117.

⁵⁵ Arri. *Anab.* VII.8; Lane Fox 2007, 290.

⁵⁶ Briant 1990; Lindström 2003, 77; Aperghis 2004. See the Borsippa Cylinder where ‘the Macedonian’ is included in the half-Iranian Antiochus I’s titles (Kuhrt & Sherwin-White 1991).

contributes to constructing a distinct image for a ruler or their dynasty. The hair is generally short and tousled. Only the diadem is present consistently. Even that ranges in appearance from a thin fillet with short waving tassels to a thick ridged band with long straight tails. Portrait features are more common to the less naturalistic portraits, such as of the Parthians, than to the idealized portraits of the Seleukids. This can also be seen in the issues of the Yuezhi, imitative of Heliocles, where the portrait modelled on Heliocles is distorted to emphasis the new ruler's ethnicity.

There are clear examples of conscious decisions to use iconography from multiple visual traditions, yet there is no indication viewers found this problematic. Although created after our period and further west than the focus of this study, the sanctuary of Antiochus I of Commagene (69-36 BC) at Nemrud Dağ provides a suitable comparandum for the creative use of cultural heritage by a Hellenistic ruler. The statues, reliefs and inscriptions combine strands of the Commagenian, Iranian and Greco-Macedonian inheritances of Antiochus I in a 'conscious and artificial construction'.⁵⁷ The real and more tenuous ancestral links are presented alongside each other, displaying multiple messages of the king's heritage, legitimate claims to power, and the divine (and ancestral) favour on his person.

The visual language of the royal court.

The physical surroundings of the Hellenistic rulers were of vital importance to their status and the character of their rule. The ruler was expected to conform to the

⁵⁷ Smith 1998, 103.

expectations of his *philoï* and court. Lavish spectacle, theatricality and prosperity were hallmarks of many Hellenistic kings, such as the Ptolemaic pavilion and Nile yacht, or the Attalid mosaics and sculptural groups.⁵⁸ These commissions are testaments to the power of the ruler. The courts of Hellenistic kings were hives of artistic activity where craftsmen could find ready and willing patrons to commission or purchase their work. This created a fertile space for the mingling and transferral of skills and aesthetic ideas, particularly the movement and transformation of Hellenistic art.

There are no structures identified certainly as royal palaces built in the Hellenistic period within the regions covered by this thesis. A local dynast renovated and resided in what was once the sanctuary of Ngirsu at Telloh and the ‘palace’ at Nippur is likely from this period.⁵⁹ At Ai Khanoum was a large palatial structure that was perhaps a royal residence or the seat of the region’s governor, since the capital of the Greco-Bactrian kingdom was Bactra (Balkh) where excavations have not yet revealed a palace. It is possible Ai Khanoum was one of many royal residences – part of a system of royal capitals just as that used by the Achaemenids and the Seleukids. The monumental complex on the acropolis of Old Nisa very likely had royal involvement in its construction and functions. The finds from the two complexes of the ‘*fratarakā* temple’ north of the Achaemenid terrace at Persepolis indicate it may

⁵⁸ Ath.V.196-7, 203-206; Pollitt 1986; Andrae 2003.

⁵⁹ Fisher 1904; Marquand 1905.

have been a residential structure.⁶⁰ The construction of such large decorated complexes indicate an occupant of some status, perhaps the Persid rulers.

The palaces of the Achaemenid and Neo-Babylonian kings were occupied in this period, though whether by the Seleukid and Parthian kings themselves is unclear. There was some additional ornamentation made to the Summer Palace of Nebuchadnezzar II in Babylon. While Susa remained an important urban centre to the Seleukid kings, emphasised by the renaming as Seleucia-on-the-Eulaios and the active mint, the palaces of Artaxerxes II and Darius I were used but not maintained and thus went into gradual decline.⁶¹ The permanent abandonment of the Achaemenid terrace at Persepolis has been doubted, though there is evidence of conflagration in the excavations.⁶² In many of these royal cities it is during the Parthian period that traditional Babylonian and Achaemenid centres fall out of use, as burials and small domestic structures appear in temples and palaces. The importance of the paraphernalia of kingship raises questions concerning the relationship between the aesthetics of the 'royal court' and political statements or inclinations of the rulers concerned. For example, how integral to the appearance of their court was the 'philhellenism' professed publicly on Arsacid coins?

Royal architectural ornament. Hellenistic visual culture heavily influenced the character of ornamentation of buildings patronised by rulers, particularly the Arsacids at Old Nisa and Greco-Bactrians at Aï Khanoum. This was not, however, an absolute

⁶⁰ Schmidt 1953, 56.

⁶¹ Boucharlat 1990.

⁶² Schmidt 1953, 51, 279; Tilia 1972, 315-316, Kawami 1987, 17.

transportation and adoption of an area of visual culture. Motifs are often reproduced in a different style or medium from the Hellenistic norm, or used in combination with features of architectural orders from other visual cultures. The public nature of buildings closely associated with rulers provides an idea of the image of the character of the ruler's authority and heritage propagated by that ruler to his court, local power base, and those visiting as, for example, ambassadors, mercenaries and craftsmen. Were the rulers under consideration 'buying into' Greek culture wholeheartedly in the adornment of their palaces, ceremonial and administrative buildings? This prompts the question of whether the use of Greek iconography was motivated on a purely aesthetic level, whether motifs were reformulated to present new messages, representative of a general concept of kingship, or were employed to provide visual associations to the power and rule of Alexander and the Seleukids.

Unbaked clay sculpture dominated the figural internal decoration of royal architecture in northern Iran, particularly in the monumental complexes at Old Nisa and Aï Khanoum. The remaining fragments of over-life-size unbaked clay sculptures of women in the Round Hall of Old Nisa [99] are very similar in style and form to honorific marble statues from the Mediterranean in the third century BC. The cuirassed clay figures, perhaps with heads such as **101-103**, also evoke Hellenistic styles of statuary. These large sculptures were on prominent display (though the function of the Round Hall is unknown, so who had access and viewed these sculptures is equally debatable). Alongside clay sculptures, the walls at Old Nisa were decorated with wall-paintings of large socles of red in the Red Building and

more complex wall-paintings in the Tower Building and the Square Hall. The Square Hall was painted with geometric designs among the fields of colour, while the murals of the Tower Building included a large figural frieze of a mounted battle scene [94], perhaps between Parthians and Saka. This combination of clay relief decoration and wall-painting was used also in the palace at Aï Khanoum. The walls of the rooms in the inner complex were decorated with stucco geometric designs of rays, hearts and dentils, lion heads, clay figural sculpture (including a large equestrian group) and large blocks of painted plaster divided by pilasters, loosely similar to the 'Masonry style' of the early Hellenistic period, some with details in bronze.⁶³ The royal structures at Aï Khanoum and Old Nisa chose Hellenistic-style decoration of wall-painting and the style of the clay relief sculpture, but there is no Hellenistic parallel for clay sculpture itself. This may be an elite prerogative peculiar to Bactria and northern Iran. The clay reliefs of Khalchayan and the developments in Buddhist art testify to the longevity of this practice in the region.

Much of the architectural decoration of royal structures in the east echoes Hellenistic styles and forms. Corinthian capitals, Attic bases, palmette antefixes and metope-like plaques are among the new forms espoused by the architecture of the east. However, these are often not exact replicas of Mediterranean examples but can vary in medium (often by necessity due to availability of materials) and style. Much technical skill is required to transfer a form from a model sculpted from stone to a clay creation, particularly concerning the Corinthian capitals composed of sections of

⁶³ Bernard 1973, 116, 189-193, pl.103-107.

terracotta acanthus leaves at Old Nisa [92].⁶⁴ The style of the ‘pseudo-Corinthian’ limestone capitals from the palace at Ai Khanoum [133], where wide volutes grow directly from four rows of acanthus leaves and there is a plain field between the volutes, contrasts with the more elaborate contemporary Hellenistic Corinthian types that have ridged cauliculi and fewer rows of larger acanthus leaves.⁶⁵ This simpler, heavier style was not chosen through lack of knowledge or skill, since they also carved a more elaborate type [134]. The intricate type was used in the smaller, slightly enclosed hall, whereas the simpler, heavier type was used in the colonnade around the immense courtyard. The appropriate type was chosen according to the scale of the space and the impact it would make. Palmette akroteria and antefixes are popular in public architecture across Babylonia, Iran and Bactria, in many permutations. Terracotta palmette antefixes were incorporated into old royal residences such as Babylon’s ‘Summer Palace’ of Nebuchadnezzar II [16] alongside the traditional Babylonian glazed brick decoration, as well as on new structures in Hellenistic foundations [135]. The Babylonian example is rigidly symmetrical whereas Ai Khanoum palmettes have loose rambling fronds. This flexibility of form extends to the way a number of different variations of palmette antefixes were added to the same building: they follow the same basic pattern and scale but there is little uniformity.

137 and **90** illustrate ways palmette antefixes were adapted. **137** places the palmette motif in a rigid triangular frame surmounted by two volutes and a spear-

⁶⁴ Invernizzi 1998, 51.

⁶⁵ See the Propylon of Ptolemy II, Samothrace (285-246 BC).

head. Unusually, the spindly fronds emerge directly from the base of the triangle. **90** presents the reconfiguration of the palmette to the rectangular format of a plaque, used in a repeating frieze reminiscent of Doric metopes. Influences were taken into a creative arena where they were modified and adapted into different convolutions to suit particular requirements of the building or capabilities of the local artistic traditions. The winged antefixes [136] at Aï Khanoum are a novel, unique and imaginative development on the terracotta antefix.

These floral and geometric designs in architectural ornament become politically charged symbols of power when used in the royal sphere, not only reflections of the aesthetic tastes and fashions of public and royal architectural ornament, or even the skills of the available craftsmen. They show participation in particular visual vocabularies and thereby cultural and political affiliations.

The use of Hellenistic iconography was not always a reference to Hellenistic culture alone, but certain motifs and styles were independent symbols of power in Babylonia, Iran and Bactria in the third and second centuries BC. A clear example of such use is the terracotta plaques from the Red Building at Old Nisa [89]. The lion, club, bow and quiver, and anchor were all common images to Seleukid coinage and thus reached a wide-ranging audience in this area before the construction of this building. They were known motifs, recognised from (but not only) visual forms patronised by the Seleukids. The lion head as a gargoyle is common to Greek public architecture and here is executed in a Hellenistic style, but the lion itself was a

popular symbol of royalty and power throughout the visual culture of many different cultures. It would, therefore, not have been seen as an ‘alien’ or inappropriate image for the decoration of a royal Parthian structure. Herakles’ image was very common in Iranian art of our period, as himself and in more ambiguous guises, mostly later, where his image is used to represent other deities such as Verethragna or Bel. The use of his club here, like the use of the bow and *gorytos* (of the Seleukid patron Apollo or Herakles Kallinikos), could relate to the Greek gods or have developed its own independent meaning. The Parthians used the seated archer figure of Seleukid coinage on their own coinage, and the Parthians were renowned for their archers. The use of the anchor (particularly in light of the ‘ΦΙΛΕΛΛΗΝΟΥ’ label and employment of motifs echoing Seleukid models on their coinage) implies the Parthian kings of Old Nisa took these symbols from the Seleukid canon both as a direct reference to their Seleukid predecessors and to convey their own power and royal status.⁶⁶ The anchor also appears on coins of Kamniskires III, perhaps as a mintmark. Although the Greek authors tell us the anchor was personal to the Seleukids, it is possible it became viewed in Iran as part of the package of Hellenistic royal motifs. Alternatively, the Seleukid connotations were important in displaying Arsacid appropriation of Seleukid power.

The display of cultural heritage through the architectural ornament of monumental buildings was very important to local dynasts as much as rulers of vast territories. At Telloh, we see the efforts of Adad-nadin-akhe in occupying the building associated with this great ruler of Lagash, adapting it to his own purposes,

⁶⁶ App.Syr.IX.56.

even to the detailed extent of imitating Gudea's bricks. At Persepolis, the complex perhaps associated with the Persid rulers shows the re-use of Achaemenid material from the Terrace and the use of similar decorative practices, such as the carving of standing figures in the window-jambes [83]. These reliefs are a similar format to the Achaemenid reliefs, but develop a new carving style.⁶⁷ The location of the complex in the vicinity of the ruined but still highly conspicuous Achaemenid Terrace rather than occupying the palaces of the Terrace itself echoes the iconography on Persid coinage where they associate themselves with the Achaemenid Persian heritage but do not seek to directly replace the Great Kings.⁶⁸

The Iranian heritage of the Parthians is emphasised in the architecture of the complex at Old Nisa and in some of the decoration, such as the wall-paintings in the Tower Building of mounted archers in battle [94] or the costume of some of the clay figures.⁶⁹ It is the architectural ornament that references Hellenistic forms, however, rather than the architecture. The complex used Iranian architectural forms, such as the domed Round Hall and enclosed corridor layout of the Square House.⁷⁰ Traditional Iranian elements of architectural ornament are also visible in the stepped merlons [91] and stepped torus column bases [93]. These forms reflect the Parthian and local Iranian heritage of the Arsacids, rather than referring to the Achaemenids.⁷¹ Stepped torus bases, for example, are used in the majority of the monumental Iranian

⁶⁷ Canepa 2010, 570.

⁶⁸ Tilia 1972-1978, 316; 1977, 74-5 on the spoliation and perhaps occupation of the Terrace in this period. Root 1994, 37.

⁶⁹ Pilipko 1995.

⁷⁰ Lippolis 2004.

⁷¹ Kuhrt 1994, 532.

constructions of the third or second century BC: at Persepolis, Takht-i Sangin and Aï Khanoum as well as Old Nisa. The Arsacid complex at Old Nisa displays Iranian characteristics in addition to Hellenistic motifs that suit their prerogatives.

The colonnades of the palace at Aï Khanoum were ornamented with Corinthian capitals, the architectural order first made prevalent in Seleukid architecture.⁷² This was a very expensive choice, due to not only the scale and number of capitals but also because the Corinthian order was the most intricate and fragile to carve. Corinthian capitals become popular in architecture from c.200 BC elsewhere in the Hellenistic world. In this way, the ornamentation of the palace displays the wealth and cultural heritage of the Greco-Bactrians.

Royal paraphernalia. The precious objects and works of art that populated the royal sphere influenced the visual impression of kingship. Rulers commissioned and collected expensive artworks to display their wealth and demonstrate the character of their power. The visual stimulus of the immediate environs causes a response from the viewer, which is highly important in a politically charged situation such as the area surrounding the king. These portable works of art can present an expression of aesthetic ideals, personal experiences or aspects of cultural identity. The degree to which the king's personal taste was visible, however, is ambiguous. The contents of his court might be more likely to represent what the court and subjects expected of the ruler.

⁷² Börner 1996.

The complex at Old Nisa, most likely a royal establishment, had a vast collection of high quality artworks that, despite looting, still include ivory, marble and silver. The majority of these objects show strong connections with Hellenistic artistic production. These artefacts are examples of ‘Greek art to celebrate Arsacid kingship’.⁷³ Greek motifs are highly prevalent in the iconography, from the Twelve Gods and Dionysiac scenes on the ivory *rhyta* [104] to silver statuettes of Athena [95] and Eros [96] or an Aphrodite Anadyomene [97] made of two marbles, including one from Chios.⁷⁴

Arsacid patronage of Hellenistic art included a large proportion of artefacts made at or near Old Nisa, rather than imported items. Direct evidence of artistic activity at the site includes moulds for a horse and a comic mask [105], wall paintings and clay relief sculpture.⁷⁵ The ivory *rhyta* [104], decorated with Hellenistic themes including the Twelve Gods and Dionysiac ritual, were probably from a local workshop, and fragments of unworked ivory in Ašgabat also suggest ivory craftsmen in the vicinity.⁷⁶ In light of this extensive and varied artistic activity at the site, Invernizzi proposes the marble sculptures from the Square House were carved locally.⁷⁷ Local production of Hellenistic art emphasises the conscious choice of iconography by the Iranian patrons. There is no evidence of a cultural misunderstanding.⁷⁸ The scenes of Dionysiac festivities are very appropriate to the

⁷³ Invernizzi 2011b.

⁷⁴ Masson & Pugachenkova; Invernizzi 1999; Pilipko 1996.

⁷⁵ Lippolis 2011.

⁷⁶ Pappalardo 2010.

⁷⁷ Invernizzi 1998, 47.

⁷⁸ Bernard 1991; Pilipko 1988.

ivory ceremonial wine vessels.⁷⁹ The artefacts demonstrate not only an appreciation of established Greek artistic forms but also contemporary Hellenistic modes such as the Aphrodite Anadyomene [97] and an archaising *kore* [98]. The Greek inscription on a wall-painting [94] and the Ἑστίας inscription on Rhyton No.76 suggest the presence of Greek or Greek-literate artists, as well as those trained in Greek artistic styles and iconography. Hellenistic courts provided an important source of artistic patronage for Greek art and the Parthian royal arena at Old Nisa was no exception.⁸⁰

The large ivory *rhyta* indicate banqueting on a grand scale.⁸¹ Banqueting was part of the culture of the east long before this period, and Persians are credited with much influence on the development of the Greek *symposion*. Indications of a similar practice here (though on a large scale) once again illustrate the existing shared culture. Elements of Hellenistic art were adopted that already fitted or complemented the existing visual traditions and cultural practices. The cultural differences emphasised by modern scholars and by ancient historians often mask areas of overlap in favour of a dramatic dichotomy. This is not to say there were no differences or conflicts, but only to add a cautionary note when approaching such material.

The *philhellene* interest appears to be far more than a political veneer promoted solely on the coinage minted at Seleucia-on-the-Tigris upon their initial conquest of the region. The Arsacids were *philhellenes* at home as well as when it suited them on an international platform. Their interest in Greek culture included the

⁷⁹ Chuvin 1991.

⁸⁰ Invernizzi 1998, 47.

⁸¹ Bernard 1991, 32.

art, drama and social practices. The terracotta mould for a comic mask expands the impression given by Plutarch's anecdote of Arsacid interest in Greek dramatic productions.⁸² It appears there was not always a conflict between an interest in Hellenistic culture and the maintenance of Parthian identity, however artificial the set-up.⁸³

The work of Adad-nadin-akhe at Telloh shows the conscious promotion of cultural heritage through the erection of old statuary in new situations. This local dynast collected statues of Gudea (ruler of Lagash/Telloh in the late third millennium BC), seated and standing, and set them up in his palace [29]. As discussed above, this palace was rebuilt from the temple of Ngirsu, originally built by Gudea. Adad-nadin-akhe re-used bricks inscribed with Gudea's name alongside new bricks imitative of Gudea's but inscribed with Adad-nadin-akhe's name in Aramaic and Greek.⁸⁴ It was important for this dynast to express his appreciation for his ancient Babylonian cultural heritage, as well as associating himself with the power and status of the great ruler Gudea, and presenting himself as the embodiment, maintainer and protector of the local heritage and identity.

Although there is nothing to confirm a royal title on the occupants of the tumuli at Frēhāt en-Nufēgi, the scale of the tombs and the expense of the funerary goods suggest members of the highest levels of Uruk's society. The accompanying artefacts placed in the tomb with the remains of the deceased echo the funerary

⁸² Plut. *Vit. Crass.* XXXIII.

⁸³ Wiesehöfer 1991, 58.

⁸⁴ Parrot 1912; Downey 1988.

offerings of the royal Macedonian tombs at Vergina, and gold wreaths [36] are found in wealthy burials across the Hellenistic world.⁸⁵ Silver *kline* legs [37], similar to examples from Old Nisa and Aï Khanoum, and gold-plated strigils support the impression of Babylonian elite participation in Hellenistic visual culture.⁸⁶

Conclusions. Participation in different visual languages by the royal sphere did not necessarily equate to a display of political affiliations, but were used for a variety of purposes, most frequently the implications of power. Concerning the Arsacid appropriation of Seleukid symbols and styles, the motifs and styles chosen assemble an aura of power by using established modes made prominent and widespread by Alexander and the Seleukids. Artefacts such as the ivory *rhyta* show an appreciation of Hellenistic aesthetics alongside the strategic employment of Hellenistic motifs to speak to Greek subjects and to build on established manifestations of power in visual culture. Characteristic of this is selectivity and a wealth of creative adaptations. The trouble that Adad-nadin-akhe went to in replicating the bricks of Gudea in size and with inscriptions, in addition to assembling a sculpture collection, emphasises that the form of architectural details were important to rulers in proclaiming their power through association with distinguished rulers of the past.

Conclusion.

The construction of the visual identity of rulers draws upon various existing models in order to compose the message best suited to that particular ruler. The model

⁸⁵ Andronikos 1984,203; Bernard, Pinault & Rougemont 2004.

⁸⁶ Bernard 1970a; Pedde 1993, 207.

initiated by Alexander and set by his Successors was reinterpreted and adapted to varying degrees by kings and dynasts of greater and lesser power and influence and from different ethnic backgrounds. The diadem was the most prevalent and enduring legacy of the image of Hellenistic kingship. It was included even in portraits that use other headgear indicative of royal power, such as the *tiyāra*. The rulers manipulated their cultural heritage to enhance their own position, both in personal image (such as the *fratarakā*) and in their surroundings (for example, Adad-nadin-akhe). The appearance of the arena that formed their base of power was an important tool to display their success, cultural affiliations and aspirations. They maintained their local roots while participating to a greater or lesser degree in an ‘international’ visual language of power. Motifs with the potential to be understood by many audiences (such as the Hellenistic, Iranian and Babylonian interpretations of the seated archer), therefore carried great political weight.

The image of kingship set by the portrait of Alexander remained significant in ruler representation, but its influence was combined with responses to royal contemporaries. The establishment of new dynasties and kingdoms required added emphasis on independent distinctive characteristics, such as Greco-Bactrian use of headgear or the *fratarakā*’ allusion to their Persian heritage, while retaining links to commonly recognised symbols of power (such as the diadem). Dramatic changes in Parthian ruler representation, even within the repertoire of a single ruler, such as the portraits of Mithridates II, demonstrate how the king’s image was malleable in the face of the changing political landscape. The concepts of survival, revival and

adaptability apply to Hellenistic elements of the iconography of kingship as much as the 'local' characteristics.

Chapter VII: Sphere of Citizens & Subjects.

Introduction.

This chapter aims to show that the visual culture of the wider populace outside the royal court was affected by Hellenistic artistic influences widely and through many different processes, while retaining individual local characteristics. Where the uptake of Hellenistic visual culture was strong, this did not overwrite all local identities and interpretations of iconographies. While in some instances the original meaning was maintained, there was often a slow and unintentional modulation of meaning caused by the iconography's new geographical context. Maintenance of local visual culture was not, however, the result of unawareness of Hellenistic visual forms. The 'citizens and subjects' visible in the material record includes men, women, and identifiable groups such as businessmen, soldiers and craftsmen. This chapter focuses on the people making, buying and looking at art, and how this human agency influences our interpretation of the visual culture.

Into the visual culture of this sphere of the wider populace came a wide variety of new artistic repertoire. Many of the cultural links visible in these regions were established in some form before the Macedonian conquest but there was a substantial increase afterwards. This widespread uptake of Hellenistic artistic forms was likely caused by the waves of migrants and settlers to Babylonia, Iran and Bactria from the Mediterranean, bringing demand and production of Hellenistic-style art with them.

The visual culture used by citizens and subjects of Babylonia, Iran and Bactria displays numerous methods of exchange, transmission and transformation of subjects, techniques and styles. This involved not only the influx of new visual repertoire, but also the continuation of existing traditions and various combinations of features from these different visual cultures: more facets than one term such as ‘hybridization’ can convey.¹ These networks were not created solely by royal impetus but also by independent activity, as demonstrated in the smaller and cheaper products such as terracotta figurines. These networks existed across the civic space of old cities (such as Telloh, Uruk and Babylon) and new royal foundations (such as Seleucia-on-the-Tigris and Ai Khanoum). In long-established settlements there are few Hellenistic forms of ornament of civic space but rather an emphasis on the renewal of traditional forms, despite the reception of Hellenistic influences and involvement in other media at these sites.

This chapter presents thematic discussions of the visual culture of citizens and subjects. The first section identifies new artistic characteristics, focusing on, but not confined to, the terracotta figurines that provide a large iconographical corpus used by the wider populace. This is followed by a discussion of the identifiable networks and agents involved in the transmission of these iconographic developments, including focus on three groups prominent in the material record: soldiers, businessmen and craftsmen. The final section sets these networks in the context of the space the citizens and subjects inhabited and

¹ Mairs 2011b.

interacted with, including public space, infrastructure, domestic and funerary contexts.

New modes of visual culture.

The visual culture of Babylonia, Iran and Bactria after the Macedonian conquest adopted a number of new features of iconography, style and form. These features were not confined to the royal sphere, or even to emulation of the royal sphere. The Hellenistic naturalistic and plastic mode of representation was taken up outside the royal sphere for a wide range of subjects and media. Existing local artistic traditions continued while also adopting various Hellenistic features into their repertoire without comprehensive replacement and alteration. Independent characteristics developed in this period also, such as the Parthian attention to linearity and frontality, often in used in combination with Hellenistic artistic conventions.

Artistic representation of the nude male figure was not common to Babylonian, Iranian and Bactrian visual culture before the Macedonian conquest, in contrast to the long-established tradition in Greek art. The unfinished and broken limestone statue from Aï Khanoum [145] may have been intended to represent an athletic victor (or perhaps Herakles). The stele 143 also from Aï Khanoum shows a similarly Classical Greek representation of the nude male figure. While we cannot assume this is meant as a direct representation of the deceased individual, the stele declares an appreciation of the Greek ideals of male physical beauty. The figurines of athletes among the terracottas from Seleucia-on-the-Tigris [9] are comparatively rare, just as in Mediterranean figurine

assemblages, which were dominated by female iconography. The most prevalent male subjects are riders, and some figures in Macedonian or Iranian costume. The image of a nude male figure is still comparatively rare in these three regions in the third and second centuries BC apart from in the iconography of Greek deities, which were widely adopted into local repertoires and used by Iranians (see the dedication of Atrosōkēs, **116**). It is striking, however, that the iconography of Greek gods, for which nudity was an innate feature, developed to represent deities of Babylonian and Iranian lands, such as Herakles' image for Verethragna (**4**), where the depiction of the male nude figure was previously alien.²

A novel iconographic introduction into the visual culture is the representation of theatrical masks and actors. These are very common in the coroplastic assemblages from Babylonia and Susa. It is difficult to conceive these motifs were popular without any conception of the social institution of Greek theatre in which they were integral. The theatres at Babylon, Aī Khanoum and perhaps Seleucia-on-the-Tigris suggest theatrical productions were staged in the east, but it is other material such as the fragments of dramatic text from the treasury at Aī Khanoum that suggests performances in the monumental *cavea* built into the city's acropolis may have been similar to Greek productions.³ It was believable in Plutarch's time that the Parthian kings might host productions of Greek tragedy in the first century BC.⁴ The archaeological record from these sites shows this interest in Greek theatre was widespread beyond the sphere of kings or a select, confined Greek audience. Craftsmen at Parthian Nisa were replicating

² See the discussion below of the Bisitun Herakles relief.

³ *I. Estremo Oriente* 458. See Van der Spek 2001, following Ma, on Babylon's theatre as a meeting place.

⁴ *Plut. Vit. Crass.* XXXIII.

comic theatre masks [105].⁵ The fountain spout at Aï Khanoum in the shape of a mask [139] was part of a public monument, used by the entire city's population. Contact with the iconography of Greek social institutions was not limited to direct participation in those institutions.

Another form common to Greek art widely adopted in the repertoire of Babylonia, Iran and Bactria was that of the Hellenistic woman standing tightly wrapped in drapery with one hand folded into the chest, clutching at her veil [7]. A similar pose, usually holding a flower rather than holding the veil, was used in the Achaemenid period for depictions of women.⁶ The style of these new representations, however, resembles large-scale honorific statuary from the Mediterranean and Tanagra figurines in the fashion of clothing, hairstyle and the naturalistic depiction. Plenty of variations are made on this subject. The *chiton* on limestone statuette 147 from Aï Khanoum is defined with shallow incised lines, in contrast to 115 from Takht-i Sangin where the *chiton*'s billowing folds are highly plastic. Similar female figures are executed also in a Parthian style, with a tripartite hairstyle and clothing marked by repetitive linear rendering. A broad and flexible type could be adopted into many areas of visual culture and transformed by the medium and also the quality and style of craftsmanship.

One of the most common subjects in the coroplastic assemblages from these sites is musicians. These are often androgynous figures wearing large bulbous headdresses [20]. They play instruments including the *aulos*, *tympanon*, *trigonon*, lyre, panpipes and *cithara*. Apart from the *cithara* and pan-pipes, these

⁵ The scale of this mould is not published, so it is unclear whether it would create a full-size mask or a model.

⁶ Spycket 1980.

instruments were used in Iran and Babylonia before the Macedonian conquest (musicians were a central part of Babylonian festivals and banquets), but are not represented so widely in the material record, particularly the coroplastic repertoire.⁷ This demonstrates not a new concept but a change of iconographic practice after the late fourth century BC, perhaps driven by demand from the new influx of patrons.

Traditional forms remain popular in the minor arts of Babylonia as well as in the architectural ornament of Babylonian sanctuaries. A prominent example is the nude female figure cast from a single mould. The legs are straight and together; the arms lie flat by her sides [51]. Alternatively, one or both arms fold into the chest and the hands support the breasts [31]. The figures are either smoothed almost into an ellipse with shallow curves indicating the subject, or have exaggerated small waist and large hips [18]. The facial features are often barely hinted at with a slight point for the nose and dips for the eyes. Anatomical detail is similarly cursive. At the most, there are incised lines on the abdomen, naval and pubic triangle. Other popular subjects in the coroplastic assemblages of Babylonia and Elymais established before the Macedonian conquest include horses, riders and couples.⁸

In addition to new subjects and the continuation of established forms in the coroplastic repertoire, many variations on traditional subjects were developed. Details of coiffured hair and jewellery are added to some nude female figures [5]. Other variations include reclining nude female figurines [6]. This develops an

⁷ Klengel-Brandt 1993, 190-192; Boiy 2004, 24-25.

⁸ See Ch.II & III.

existing popular subject, incorporating new stylistic features of realism to convey the natural bending of the body. Variations on the reclining figure include semi-nude and clothed, sometimes wearing a pointed Phrygian hat [19].

As mentioned above, the pose of the Hellenistic-style draped standing female figure with one hand folded into the chest holding her veil resembles existing popular subjects of the Babylonian nude female figure supporting one breast or Achaemenid draped figures holding a flower in front of their chest. The flower elucidates the same themes of fertility as the nude female figures with exaggerated hips. This pose also echoes a form common to Telloh centuries before in the Ur III and Isin-Larsa periods, of terracotta reliefs of women holding discs to chest.⁹ The Hellenistic execution and style evokes existing iconographic preferences in a new permutation.

A number of the new subjects that became most popular in the terracottas built upon existing popular forms, just as the figurines of women discussed above. The ‘Macedonian cavalryman’ figurines [71] develop an existing penchant for simple figurines of horses with or without riders with the addition of a flat hat and a round shield. The motif of Eros and Psyche embracing differs from earlier terracottas of embracing couples often only in the Hellenistic style of anatomical rendering and the addition of drapery gently swirling around their hips [8]. These figures retain the short, child-like proportions rather than using the adult, lithe limbs of contemporary Mediterranean depictions of Eros and Psyche. The

⁹ Downey 2003, 83.

repertoire blossomed into a wider range that developed existing common subjects, elaborating detail and the quality of depiction.

In addition to developments influenced by Hellenistic art and local traditions, there were other new elements in the networks of exchange and transmission among the visual culture of the wider populace. Representations of male figures in long-sleeved Parthian trouser-suits appear not only in elite-commissioned rock reliefs in Media and Elymais but also among the terracotta figurines of Babylonia.¹⁰ The artefacts from Aï Khanoum and Takht-i Sangin indicate trade or some other interaction (such as the Greco-Bactrian conquests) resulting in the presence of objects following Indian and Steppe artistic traditions.

Independent local innovations and developments also can be discerned in the material record. In Uruk glyptics there is a particular interest in astrological and astronomical symbols, evocative of Babylonia's fame as a centre for these studies.¹¹ At the Bactrian sites of Aï Khanoum and Takht-i Sangin there are grey schist *pyxides* [148] with similar distinctive decoration of inset stones forming geometric patterns interspersed with floral and horse motifs.

While we can identify a widespread adoption of Hellenistic subjects and styles in the terracottas, there is also a strong conservatism of forms. The figurines are very self-contained. There are no flying figures or twisting dancers such as are frequent in Hellenistic terracottas of the Mediterranean, with their outstretched limbs and fragile additions of wings or detailed costumes. The production of

¹⁰ See Ch.II, n.87.

¹¹ Wallenfels 1994, 153-157.

genre figures – of old women, dwarves and grotesques – is also low in comparison to Asia Minor. Even the figurines of women directly comparable to Tanagras in style of drapery only stand (or occasionally sit), without the range of subtle variations. They also do not have the delicate additions common to Tanagra figurines such as fans and broad-rimmed hats. The Iranian ruler figurine from Failaka [53] is rare in its high-quality detailed additional moulding. This cannot be explained by the difficulty of transporting such delicate figurines since there were also itinerant craftsmen capable of replicating the Mediterranean types. The high quality of the assemblages indicates lack of skill was not an obstacle, either, and the large scale and variety of the assemblages suggests the absence of intricately posed and detailed figures is not an accident of discovery. It is possible the fragility of the clay and lower temperature of Babylonian firing techniques caused limitations to the delicacy of the figurines, though the production of large hollow figures of sitting or squatting boys (nude or wearing a *chlamys*) at Seleucia-on-the-Tigris, Borsippa and Uruk required tensile strength in the clay and careful execution.¹² Alternatively, this perhaps represents an aesthetic preference, supported by the conservatism in the use of terracotta figurines in Babylonia.¹³

Iconographic traditions and forms of visual culture were not kept separate but responded to each other and were used in many formulations of style and subject. In the figurines of Seleucia-on-the-Tigris, for example, a Parthian hairstyle could be added to a traditional Babylonian nude female figurine [5] or to a figure with a naturalism to the anatomy and pose that suggests the influence of

¹² Van Ingen 1939, 22; Karvonen-Kannas 1995, 24, 73-74. Klengel-Brandt 1993, 193 suggests these figurines are imported.

¹³ Langin-Hooper 2008, 154.

Hellenistic art [6]. The wide scope of variations in subject, style and quality suggest craftsmen with different aesthetic backgrounds were participating in creating the popular coroplastic subjects. This convergence is shown explicitly in the figurines from Mašjid-i Solaiman [71] where the Babylonian nude female figure is added to the Macedonian cavalryman figurine type. This combination of two popular forms of votive shows motifs derived from different visual languages could be used in the same object, replicated by craftsmen at many sites, and that individual patrons were happy to offer such votives to their gods (whether the figurines were dedicated to two deities or represented two concepts, such as fertility and military strength). The use of the mould for a figurine of a Hellenistic woman [57] for a figurine of a Parthian ruler [53] also emphasises this flexibility. Both the audience and the craftsmen were ‘multi-lingual’ in their use and reception of visual languages (see further discussion below).

These examples have shown the significant role played by cheaper and more portable artistic products in the transmission of visual languages.¹⁴ Artistic repertoire was highly receptive, while maintaining the most popular traditional forms. There is a notable conservatism in the way this new repertoire was adopted in the terracotta figurines. The multiplicity of iconographic variations and combinations of features from different artistic traditions into one object suggests the involvement of different types of people and a consequent continually evolving repertoire. The transmission of new artistic influences suggests complex networks of exchange and agency, discussed in the following section.

¹⁴ Connelly 1990, 98.

Networks of exchange, transmission and transformation.

The significance of local networks is visible through the maintenance and development of distinctive regional features. The Babylonian (and Susian) coroplastic *koine* focus on female figures, both nude ‘oriental goddess’ figures and clothed women in contemporary fashions, and musicians. The main groups of subjects are developed in many variations of detail at each site, while retaining an overall cohesion. There is a similar repertoire at old Babylonian centres such as Babylon and Uruk compared to the new Hellenistic settlements such as Seleucia-on-the-Tigris. There is also coherence between the coroplastic assemblages of the more peripheral sites such as on Failaka and the established urban centres. This section will discuss networks and exchange as evident from the wide range of media in the catalogue, with a focus on the roles and agency of three groups prominent in the material record: soldiers, businessmen, craftsmen.

While commissioned by rulers and created in local mints, the iconography on coins was widespread and frequently used in the ‘sphere of citizens and subjects’; therefore forming, whether intentionally or not, an important means of iconographic transmission. The bilingual coinage of Greco-Bactrian and Indo-Greek rulers who conquered Indian territories combined Hellenistic and Indian iconography on individual issues. The earliest are quadrangular bronze issues of Agathokles (c.190-180 BC) and Pantaleon (c.190-185 BC), following Indian tradition in the form of the flan, but adding Greek motifs and legends to the obverse and reverse rather than the stamps of Indian coins. Both rulers issued a similar series where the obverse shows the Hindu goddess Lakshmi with a Brahmi legend naming the king as ‘*rajane*’, while on the reverse a Buddhist standing lion

is framed by a Greek legend naming the king as *basileus* (see also **156**).¹⁵ The successive rulers Antimachus Theos, Apollodotus, Antimachus Nikephorus and Eukratides also issued quadrangular bronze bilingual issues in addition to circular silver issues. The kings portrayed their message through a combination of visual traditions on one object (though not merging iconographies into one motif).

The bilingual coins catered for the mixed audience created by the Greco-Bactrians' incursions into India. The interaction of Greek and local populations in Bactria is attested also epigraphically at Ai Khanoum. The economic texts from the treasury at Ai Khanoum include three Greek-named supervisors whose subordinates include those with Greek names and three with Iranian names.¹⁶ This suggests Bactrians were involved in the administration of the city and interacted closely on a daily basis with the Greek settlers (although Rapin proposes this shows Iranians could not occupy the highest positions).¹⁷ Several jars of coins from Taxila and perhaps some men with Indian names attest connections with India at Ai Khanoum.¹⁸ The bilingual issues were intended to be versatile and used by Greeks and Indians, facilitating interaction between the two and smoothing the economic situation. These examples attest to close interactions between different ethnic populations.

While undoubtedly emulation of the visual culture associated with the ruling Macedonian elite was a significant factor in the transmission of Hellenistic art, there are not many direct references to motifs popular in the royal sphere.

¹⁵ Bopearachchi 1991, 176, series 10, pl.7; 182, series 6, pl.9.

¹⁶ *I.Estremo Oriente* 323-334, 342, 345-349, 358-359.

¹⁷ Rapin 1987, 54.

¹⁸ *I.Estremo Oriente* 328, 331, 348.

There are a number of similarities in iconographic choices between numismatic iconography and minor arts such as seals and figurines, but the subjects are rarely (if ever) replicated from a royal model on non-official seals.¹⁹ Apollo-on-the-*omphalos* predominates on Seleukid reverses, for example, though seal impressions from Seleucia-on-the-Tigris include many different guises of Apollo.²⁰ Eros and Psyche are very popular in the coroplastic repertoire (they are the second most popular subject among the terracotta figurines at Susa after Herakles).²¹ Since this motif was not part of Seleukid political iconography on coinage, it seems there were other means of dissemination of Hellenistic motifs. This is corroborated by the Hellenistic motifs on the seal impressions at Seleucia-on-the-Tigris, where the most popular Greek deities are Athena, Apollo, Artemis, Tyche and Eros. These deities appear in a number of different poses and cult configurations, suggesting numerous networks and nodes of transmission.

The transmission and exchange of iconographies outside the royal sphere was widespread and involved many different groups of people. Waves of settlers from the Mediterranean moved eastwards, as well as mercenaries, soldiers and official ambassadors (such as Heliodoros).²² The onomastics of funerary and economic texts from Aï Khanoum include many Greek and Macedonian names. Alexander and his Successors settled veterans and citizens in the Upper Satrapies.²³ The cosmopolitanism of the Hellenistic period applies to the regions between the Euphrates and Hindu Kush as well as to the cities around the Aegean. Whether or not the famous philosopher of Soli, the inscription at Aï Khanoum

¹⁹ Lindström 2003, 78.

²⁰ Invernizzi 2004 (vol.II), pl.16-28.

²¹ Martinez-Sevé 2002, 704-705.

²² Bernard, Pinault & Rougemont 2004; Austin 2006, no.190.

²³ Diod.XVII.99.5-6; Curt.IX.7.1-11.

claims a Klearchos brought the maxims from Delphi itself to Bactria.²⁴ The increase in travel, trade and migration in this period, as well as the settling of veterans and the movement of soldiers and mercenaries augmented the individual agents behind the exchange and transmission of the artistic repertoire.

Soldiers. A considerable motivating force behind exchange and transmission in the visual culture was the constant warring between various powers that transported soldiers away from their homelands, many of whom were settled in the newly conquered regions. This also increased the mobility and high demand for mercenaries. These soldiers came from many regions of the ancient world in search for work provided by rulers in Babylonia, Iran and Bactria.

The demand for mercenaries and the feasibility of far-off travel was an accepted concept in the psyche of the Mediterranean, as demonstrated in Menander's *Samia* (vv.627-629) where the central character speaks of going to Bactria to fight as a mercenary as a conceivable option.²⁵ Once far away from their homeland it was conceivable they would not return, such as the five hundred Thracian riders from the colonies of the 'Upper Country'.²⁶ These Greeks in the east would take with them and maintain their culture and visual traditions, such as Soteles the Athenian, posted on Failaka, who continued to call upon Greek deities.²⁷

²⁴ *I.Estremo Oriente*, 384; Robert 1968; Lerner 2003/2004.

²⁵ Nikanorov 1997, 31.

²⁶ Diod.XIX.27.5.

²⁷ *I.Estremo Oriente* 416.

Military conflict also provided the arena for exchange in visual culture through the victorious acquisition of booty and the establishment of trade links. Thus, we see precious Scythian and Indian artefacts dedicated at the sanctuary of the Oxus in Takht-i Sangin [123-125]. Conquest resulted in the formation of new political iconographies seen and interacted with by large portions of the populations, such as the bilingual coinage of the Bactrian rulers who won Indian lands or the iconography on Parthian coins in the formerly Seleukid Babylonia.

The impact of soldiers on the visual record is particularly strong among the votive offerings at sanctuaries. The majority of the votive dedications at Takht-i Sangin are of arms and armour, presumably dedicated by soldiers.²⁸ It is also possible the terracotta figurines of riders with flat hats and round shields [71] found at so many of the Babylonian and Elymaean sites were popular for dedications by the Macedonian soldiers posted there. These figurines were easy for local coroplasts to make due to their simple form and their similarity to the existing rider terracottas, and therefore they could be produced on a large scale and were presumably relatively cheap for the patron.

The weapons and their scabbards at Takht-i Sangin include many Greek types such as the *xiphos* and *makhaira* (functional, ceremonial and miniature versions). The *thureos* shield, associated with Hellenistic armies, is widespread among the archaeological record: represented in miniature terracotta appliqués at Susa [63], on the terracotta from Kampyr Tepe and in the relief on the miniature

²⁸ On this topic, see Lindström 2008 and 2010, unavailable to me.

ivory *makhaira* scabbard from Takht-i Sangin [119].²⁹ Functional versions were found at Takht-i Sangin and in the arsenal at Ai Khanoum (which may show some traces of a human figure).³⁰ The fragments of horse armour for a cataphract found in the arsenal at Ai Khanoum suggest direct Scythian influence on arms and armour made in Bactria (deposits of slag in the arsenal indicate local production).³¹

The publications of the thousands of arms and armour fragments from Takht-i Sangin suggest there was little cross-over between the different traditions of weaponry forms.³² Although several traditions of armour were present at these Bactrian sites, both imported and made in the vicinity, elements of different traditions were not combined to produce ‘hybrid’ forms. Co-existence was extensive in the material forms used by soldiers, but this did little to affect the way arms and armour were made. Military identities between and within armies were (and are) often demonstrated through the style and form of their weaponry and costume, often closely intertwined with the ethnicity of the soldiers or the troop, such as the Macedonian Ἀργυράσπιδες. This pride in a specialist and distinctive armed unit tied to cultural heritage is seen in the Macedonian antipathy towards Alexander’s Iranian recruits to the Ἐπίγονοι.³³

Businessmen. Another social group who left a large body of evidence were the businessmen (and women) in Babylonia who authorised their transactions by leaving a personal seal impression on the clay bullae around the document or on

²⁹ Abdullaev 1995, 167.

³⁰ Bernard 1980, pl.XXIII; Litvinskij 2001, pl.108.

³¹ Arr.*Anab.*III.13.4; Nikanorov 1997, 21, 39; Bernard 1980, 51-63.

³² Litvinskij 2001, 516-522.

³³ Plut.*Vit.Alex.*71.1; Arr.*Anab.*7.6.1.

the clay tablet document itself. The iconography chosen held significant value since it directly represented the individual to others. The very high quality of the seals suggests the attention and importance given to the choice and commission of a seal's design. The motif represented only that individual in public dealings and presumably held personal significance. There was an occasional family preference for a motif (not inherited, though), but most frequently there is marked individual choice.³⁴ The most dramatic change was in the form of seals from cylinder seals to predominantly convex gems and finger-rings – a Hellenistic-period format taken up widely, not only by Greeks.

While the official (larger) seals show purely Hellenistic motifs, often following numismatic iconography closely, the non-official seals are far more varied.³⁵ Some private seal impressions mimic numismatic iconography, but there were clearly other agents at work through which alternative motifs of the same deities travelled.³⁶ Greek motifs, particularly deities and heroes, predominate over other traditions at Seleucia-on-the-Tigris.³⁷ Theatrical masks and representations of business, such as granaries and amphorae, were also popular. The seal impressions at Uruk show a range of motifs that follow iconographic traditions from the many visual heritages of the Hellenistic-period city. These include Assyrian, Babylonian and Achaemenid (including 'Greco-Persian') motifs, Greek motifs from the Hellenistic period and before, and local motifs particular to

³⁴ Wallenfels 1994, 146.

³⁵ Rostovtzeff 1932, 23.

³⁶ Lindström 2003, 78.

³⁷ McDowell 1935, 225.

Hellenistic-period Babylonia.³⁸ A few of the motifs combine features from these different traditions into one image.³⁹

While the religious architecture of Uruk was consciously traditional and referred to and proclaimed the local Babylonian heritage, the seal impressions demonstrate the wider visual culture of Uruk was not closed off and defensive. Many members of established Babylonian families chose to use Greek motifs for their seals. A distinction in the more numerous Greek motifs on the bullae than the clay tablets may be caused by the function of these forms of document. The clay tablets were part of the administration of Uruk's temples, whereas the bullae around parchment documents were used by a wide range of businessmen who travelled and had contacts in many different urban centres.⁴⁰ The appearance of impressions of the same seals at Seleucia-on-the-Tigris and Uruk demonstrate these trade networks that created venues for the exchange and transmission of iconography.⁴¹

This openness in the visual culture of business transactions is demonstrated also in the combinations of iconography and archival format at Uruk. Seal impressions with Hellenistic motifs such as Athena and Eros were used alongside seals with Babylonian zodiacal symbols, Akkadian cuneiform inscriptions on a clay tablet.⁴² Here people using different visual languages joined in transactions using a traditional Babylonian form of document. There are only a few cuneiform inscriptions, however, on the Hellenistic sealing format of clay

³⁸ Wallenfels 1994, 151.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Lindström 2003, 78.

⁴¹ Wallenfels 1994, 150.

⁴² Ibid, 34-37; Lindström 2003, no.29-3, 29-5.

bullae (which necessitated the enclosed document to be written in Greek or Aramaic rather than cuneiform script designed for imprinting on clay).⁴³

Many of the seal impressions showing busts or heads are perhaps portraits because of the lack of divinising or royal attributes and occasional individualising details. The use of portraiture by a wider group (where before it was the prerogative of the divine and royal) demonstrates a change in practice and the attitudes to portraiture. At Seleucia-on-the-Tigris, the glyptic portraits of men are very varied and show a marked use of realism.⁴⁴ The predominant type of female bust among the seal impressions from Seleucia-on-the-Tigris and Uruk show the woman facing right with her hair secured in a bun at the nape of her neck.⁴⁵ This style is prevalent in Hellenistic art and among our material is seen in marble at Shami and terracotta at Failaka. It was a widespread mode of female representation in the Hellenistic period. The image of women is far more homogenous than men, far more subject to the prevailing fashions (as opposed to upholding a traditional image), and with few personalizing features.

The seal impressions with female busts did not always have female owners, and female seal-holders did not only use feminine iconography. Around 10 % of the people mentioned on Uruk sealed tablets are women and there are the seals of fifteen women, of which one shows a female head while the others show a range of male figures and animals (mostly of Babylonian derivation).⁴⁶ The

⁴³ Lindström 2003, no.341, 391.

⁴⁴ Invernizzi 2004, I.61-93.

⁴⁵ Wallenfels 1994, 15; Invernizzi 2004, I.95-110.

⁴⁶ Wallenfels 1994, 147.

women were involved independently in a range of business transactions, but act as witnesses only for transactions involving their family.

Rostovtzeff's analysis of the Uruk bullae concluded seals related to taxes show Antiochus III and IV attempted to hellenize Babylonia.⁴⁷ The administrative language and iconography in Uruk under the Seleukids and early Parthians was Greek, and some Uruk individuals took up Hellenistic iconography and forms for their seals and added Greek names to their own. This was the choice of the act of Hellenism rather than the passive assimilative process of Hellenization.⁴⁸ This is demonstrated clearly in that the Uruk elites' adoption of Greek names died out within ten years of the Parthian conquest.⁴⁹ The elite's participation in the long-established Babylonian visual culture was open to new fashions, was not monolithic, but was driven by an expedient balance between using the maintenance of their civic identity and visual heritage for political weight, and the use of and interaction with the visual language and culture of the royal administration.

Craftsmen and workshops. The mobility of craftsmen in the ancient world is well-recognised. The sculptor 'Antiochus son of Dryas' at Susa presumably had Macedonian origins, whether he travelled to Elymais or whether earlier generations of his family migrated.⁵⁰ The 3,000 artists (mostly entertainers and musicians) brought to Ecbatana by Alexander presumably included some

⁴⁷ Rostovtzeff 1932, 90.

⁴⁸ Lindström 2003, 78.

⁴⁹ Clancier 2011, 760.

⁵⁰ Cumont 1929.

craftsmen.⁵¹ The movement of craftsmen skilled in different visual languages selling their creations to patrons in new localities, exchanging ideas and trading the tools to replicate their art (such as moulds) was a central factor in the transmission of artistic repertoire.

The material records shows the creativity and openness of craftsmen to new forms, styles and techniques. This is evident particularly in the coroplastics of Failaka, which include a wide variety of subjects and styles. The corpus of terracottas is composed of numerous different clays, indicating many of the figurines were brought to the island. The numerous moulds at F4 suggest there was also coroplastic production.⁵² Two moulds were found that produced three of the figurines. The first shows the front of the wreathed head of a Hellenistic man resembling the Alexander type [54], perhaps a young Herakles (see 145, 151).⁵³ Although this mould was previously identified as a bust of Helios due to the interpretation of the grooves around the head as a radiate crown, it is possible they were used to align the front and rear moulds (though the back of 54 the head was modelled by hand). This demonstrates the reception of Hellenistic ruler iconography into the vernacular, without necessarily denoting a specific portrait.

The other mould whose products were found on Failaka was for the head of a Hellenistic woman [57].⁵⁴ The use of this mould to create the 'Parthian ruler' figurine [53] demonstrates the creativity of the craftsman who manipulated his

⁵¹ Plut. *Vit. Alex.* 72.

⁵² Matheisen 1982, 71.

⁵³ Ibid, 49-50, fig.43-44; Connelly 1989, 154 (F4 58 CX).

⁵⁴ Connelly 1989, 157.

available resources to create the required subject.⁵⁵ The craftsman did not consider there to be a boundary between Hellenistic and Iranian iconographies or within the visual traditions of different chronological periods (the use of the Achaemenid dentate crown on a figure in Parthian costume, not used by Parthian kings on their coin portraits). This is not a recognisable portrait of a specific king, whether or not intended as one, and resulted as a generalised representation of an Iranian king. The plaster medallions (moulds for expensive metalwork) found among the treasures at Begram demonstrate the importance of Hellenistic artworks to craftsmen there, since these items of little material worth were kept alongside objects of far greater value.

The transmission of Hellenistic iconography is visible in stock motifs developed (presumably indirectly) from imitations of famous statue types. This includes many such motifs on the ivory *rhyta* from Old Nisa [106] and a marble statuette of Aphrodite Anadyomene [98].⁵⁶ The Nike of Paionios is echoed in terracotta on Failaka [58], as are the images of young Hellenistic men following the model of Alexander [54]. The Lysippan ‘Weary Herakles’ is imitated in terracotta on Failaka but with the addition of a baldric [60]. As discussed above, the proliferation of so many other variations of these subjects, such as Herakles with a wreath [151] or fighting the Nemean Lion [65] or Acheloos [120] demonstrates imitation of famous statue types was not the only means of transmission.

⁵⁵ Connelly 1989, 157; Connelly 1990, 100.

⁵⁶ Pappalardo 2010.

The terracotta figurines and seal impressions discussed above create the image of a visually ‘multi-lingual’ society. This is supported by the multiplicity of styles and forms of votives found in the Temple of the Oxus at Takht-i Sangin. The people who dedicated votives here used a variety of visual languages. While the original date of use of these votives is somewhat obscured by the secondary context of the artefacts in depository pits, some examples, such as the similar style of the heads of an Iranian man [111] and two Hellenistic rulers [109-110] in clay, suggest these different subjects were made roughly contemporarily. The temple was built after the Macedonian conquest, perhaps at the end of the fourth century BC, and Achaemenid-style artefacts [116-118] were still in use. It seems the worshippers at this temple were a visually multi-lingual society, while not combining elements of different visual traditions into one object. The clearest example of the lack of boundaries between the ethnic identity of a patron and the choice of a particular visual language is in the dedication of Atrosōkēs [108]. This man with an Iranian name chose to a Greek votive form and inscription for his dedication to the local Bactrian river god, including a representation of a nude male figure, previously anomalous to Iranian art. We can only speculate whether this was caused by available options from local craftsmen, Atrosōkēs’ aesthetic choice or his desire to participate in the visual language of the royal sphere (Seleukid or Greco-Bactrian).

After the Macedonian conquest there was an influx of new artistic repertoire into Babylonia, Iran and Bactria. Many of the most frequent subjects built upon existing iconographic preferences. There is little discernable difference in the coroplastic repertoire of Babylonian urban centres and more peripheral

sites, or between the ancient Babylonian cities and the new Seleukid foundations. The frequent examples of stylistic and iconographic cross-over (which could be termed ‘hybrid’ objects) suggest there was not a segregation or polarity between the craftsmen and patrons of these objects – the ‘visual multi-lingualism’ and cultural co-existence of individuals and the societies. There were many agents involved in the transmission, exchange and transformation of these iconographies, in addition to the involvement of and model set by kings and the elite. This chapter will now explore the relationship and negotiation between the visual culture made and used by the wider populace and the shape of the civic space they inhabited.

Social identity in the built environment.

This section addresses the shape of the space in which the wider populace interacted and society functioned. The form of this physical space is created by and informs the day-to-day workings of society and social identity.⁵⁷ The decoration of civic space and more portable art do not necessarily align in character, but study of them together provides a fuller understanding of the visual culture. This section does not consider public space (public buildings and monuments) alone, but also the appearance of buildings and monuments that shaped the broader civic or urban environment, including civic sanctuaries, roads and infrastructure, domestic and funerary contexts.

⁵⁷ Root 1994; Revell 2009; Dignas & Smith 2012.

The evidence from Uruk shows it was not necessary to be isolated from Hellenistic visual culture to maintain vitality in the existing local traditions of decorating public space. The sanctuaries of the Bit Reš, Irigal and Eanna were physically in the centre of Uruk and also at the centre of the city's administration. The cost and care taken for their redevelopment and enlargement was therefore an expansive statement on the vitality of the traditional religious and civic life of the city made by the established Uruk elite, supported and approved by the Seleukid rulers. The links to Greek culture (in the use of official seals and the adoption of additional Greek names) facilitated the survival and revival of Uruk's Babylonian heritage.⁵⁸

The glyptic and coroplastic assemblages from Uruk and Telloh show that while these sites proudly revived their ancient visual heritages in public architecture, the smaller and more transient forms of art were open to new influences, comparable to the rest of Babylonia. The terracottas from Babylon similarly imply Hellenistic influence in that city was not segregated to one 'Greek quarter' concentrated in the immediate vicinity of the theatre. Babylonian visual culture was not enclosed and defensive against change.

This openness in exchange and participation in different visual traditions is explicit in the sculpture of Herakles Kallinikos at Bisitun [86]. The relief was a public monument commissioned by a member of the Seleukid elite called Hyakinthos, a friend of Macedonian descent of the Seleukid governor of the Upper Satrapies, participating in an established Iranian visual tradition. The

⁵⁸ Clancier 2011, 761.

choice of location is particularly significant and affects the perception by the wider population. It overlooked the busy highway from Babylon to Ecbatana and would therefore have had a large and varied audience. At the time of carving, this relief would have been alone on the cliff faces with the relief of Darius looming far above and behind it. While much closer to the road and a different form of relief (one figure almost in the round rather than a *bas*-relief of a panel with several figures), Hyakinthos' choice to make his own contribution to the rock reliefs at Bisitun displays a desire to be seen in a similar light to earlier renowned Iranian rulers. The significance of the site was recognised also at some point in the second half of the second century BC or early first century BC, in the dedication of the 'Mithridates Relief' [87], which echoes the *bas*-relief procession of the Darius Relief. Later Parthian kings and even a 17th-century sheikh also contributed to the reliefs at Bisitun and thereby placed themselves in an established public visual framework of rulers of the region. The significance of physical proximity to existing monuments of civic and cultural identity is seen also at Persepolis, where the Hellenistic-period occupation of the '*fratarakā* temple' was near but not on the Achaemenid terrace.⁵⁹ Visual connections to the Achaemenid past at Bisitun and Persepolis were sustained while adding new elements and developing new identities.

The Bisitun Herakles relief shows a member of the Macedonian elite following a traditional Iranian artistic format of commissioning rock reliefs on cliff faces and boulder. Such reliefs have a long Iranian tradition, from Elamite reliefs such as Kūrāngān and Kūl-e Farah to Achaemenid tomb reliefs at Naqš-i

⁵⁹ Root 1994, 36-37.

Rostam. It remained an important tool for public display of iconography for the Parthian rulers at many sites including Bisitun and the Sasanian rulers at Naqš-e Rostam.

The format is adapted, however, to portray a Hellenistic subject, accompanied by a Greek inscription and combines Hellenistic and Iranian elements in the form of the relief and style of carving. The sculpture is not a shallow *bas*-relief such as in Iranian carving tradition, but in high relief and is not engaged at Herakles' upper body. The rendering of the anatomy is far more soft, stocky and abruptly defined than the typical heavily muscular physique of Hellenistic sculptures of heroes and gods. This is a stylistic choice not a lack of overall detail through weathering or skill of the sculptor, since the wrinkles on the fingers are still visible. It is possible, therefore, that while the commission was from a Macedonian, some or all of the stonemasons were Greco-Macedonians or trained in Hellenistic sculptural techniques, especially considering the different technique required to carve a free-standing sculpture rather than a *bas*-relief. While it is possible there was already a concordance between the iconography of Herakles and Verethragna, this cannot be inferred from this relief. The choice of Herakles (and labelled as such) involved placing a depiction of a nude male figure next to the busy main road, not a common sight in Iranian and Mesopotamian visual culture (see above) and therefore likely to provoke or offend non-Greek viewers. This member of the Macedonian elite in Media was acting as an Iranian ruler while maintaining his foreign identity in this public monument.

A similar continuation of Iranian visual culture under Macedonian rule is seen in the preservation of Achaemenid infrastructure. The Bisitun relief lies by the Khorasan Highway, suggesting the continuing significance of this important route. It seems the Royal Road and irrigation networks of canals and *qanāts* were maintained under Seleukid rule.⁶⁰ Milestones, a new addition to the Achaemenid road system, were fragments of Persian architecture inscribed with Greek and Aramaic inscriptions.⁶¹ Forms of visual culture familiar to the local Iranian populations were maintained by the Macedonian rulers, with new elements introduced alongside.

The new foundations at Aï Khanoum and Seleucia-on-the-Tigris conspicuously display their Hellenistic heritage in the shape of their public visual culture. Pliny comments that Seleucia-on-the-Tigris ‘retained the Macedonian manners’ into the first century AD.⁶² From what we can gather from the archaeological record, the public buildings were made of mudbrick and decorated with glazed brick according to Babylonian construction techniques and available materials, with attempts to execute Hellenistic architectural elements in these media, such as Corinthian pilaster capitals glazed blue and green [1]. Stucco lion-head spouts and terracotta palmette antefixes [2] adorned the ‘stoa’ that bordered the large public open space of the ‘Archive Square’. The latter are far looser in their execution than the rigidly symmetrical examples from architecture in the Mediterranean. These may have been used alongside traditional Mesopotamian-

⁶⁰ Polyb.X.28. 1-4. See also Gardin 1989 on the irrigation system on the plain of Aï Khanoum irrigation.

⁶¹ Callieri 1995; Bernard 1995; *I.Estremo Oriente* 247, 248.

⁶² Pliny *HN*.VI.30.5.

Iranian stepped merlons, some with floral embellishment, though these may be from the Parthian period.

The erection of the theatre now under Tell 'Umar and the theatrical productions presumably staged there likely were catalysts for the abundant production of terracotta figurines of theatrical masks and actors made in the terracotta workshop on the south side of the same square, opposite Tell 'Umar. The construction of the theatre in Babylon and its associated complex (perhaps a *palaestra*) perhaps generated a similar interest, reflected by the coroplastic production.⁶³

The Greek institutions of the theatre and gymnasium pervaded the visual culture of Ai Khanoum beyond the immediate arena of the buildings themselves. While it is likely the gymnasium had a restricted participation, the theatre had the capacity to seat 5,000 people. The fragment of a Greek dramatic text found in the treasury and the comic mask that formed a waterspout of the public fountain suggest the performances in the theatre bore some resemblance to their Greek inspiration. Those who did not frequent the monumental theatre might still come across the waterspout [139] in the fountain outside the walls. The dedication to Hermes and Herakles show this Bactrian gymnasium respected the conventional Greek patrons of the *paideia*. The educational aspect of the Greek gymnasium was also active here, as implied by the two intricate sundials.

⁶³ Mallwitz, Schmidt & Wetzel 1957, 16-17; Boiy 2004, 93, 291-292.

In the appearance of public space at Ai Khanoum we can see a fierce commitment to an assertion of Hellenistic cultural identity. The use of ‘old-fashioned’ styles for public monuments was part of a conscious construction of a visual heritage for the city. The gymnasium inscription of Strato and Triballos appears mid-third century in style but dates to the mid-second century BC, in the last architectural phase of the city.⁶⁴ The hermaic statue the inscription accompanies [142] also imitates a much earlier Greek artistic style, in its Classicizing embodiment of mature male *sophrosyne*. The appearance of contemporary Mediterranean forms of pottery in the third century and first half of the second century BC made in Ai Khanoum shows contact was maintained and suggests this use of earlier styles was not through ignorance of the latest options and fashions but was the preferred visual language.⁶⁵ It is likely that Greeks and Hellenizing Bactrians used the gymnasium.⁶⁶

This conscious construction is exemplified by the erection of a stele in the centre of the city on the ‘Tomb of Kineas’, the semi-mythical founder, displaying Delphic maxims at the end of the third century or beginning of the second century BC. This is not the period of either the foundation of the city or the formation of the separate Greco-Bactrian kingdom, but after the Bactrian expedition of Antiochus III against Euthydemus.⁶⁷ This prompted a re-statement of civic identity after the threat from the Seleukid ruler.⁶⁸ The hyperbolic description of the maxims ‘shining from afar’ underscores the effort to place this inscription as a

⁶⁴ Lerner 2003/2004, 391.

⁶⁵ Gardin 1985.

⁶⁶ I *Macc.*1.14; II *Macc.*4.12.

⁶⁷ Lerner 2003/2004, 391.

⁶⁸ Mairs *forthcoming* (2009). The emphasis on the direct copying of the text from Delphi may suggest a concern to show independent and maintained links with Greece, not dependent on the good-will of the Seleukids.

prominent civic monument.⁶⁹ The little evidence of western manufacture in the archaeological record of Aï Khanoum reiterates this local impetus and demand for Greek forms.⁷⁰

The only domestic contexts discovered in the excavations inside the lower city at Aï Khanoum were the large houses in the southern district. These were composed of a reception room encircled by a corridor and living quarters, leading through a two-columned vestibule to a courtyard.⁷¹ The Greek convention of placing the living quarters around the central court was perhaps adapted to suit the more extreme Bactrian climate by sheltering the living quarters. The roofs are reconstructed as flat terraces, and the roofs of grander houses were trimmed with terracotta tiles.⁷² The Takht-i Sangin houses also place importance on combating the weather conditions, with their flat roofs and sunken floors. At Seleucia-on-the-Tigris, a fashion for construction of Greek-style peristyle houses was abandoned after a short period in favour of traditional Babylonian forms.⁷³

There are traces of shanty settlements on the side of the acropolis at Aï Khanoum. The temptation to associate these poor houses on the outskirts of the city with the local population and the mansions with the Greeks should be avoided due to the lack of substantiating evidence.⁷⁴ There is not enough evidence to support a clear correlation between socio-economic status and ethnicity. Similarly, it is not possible to assert, as Holt, that participation in the gymnasium

⁶⁹ See also the fragment of a Greek philosophical text from the third or mid-2nd century BC, *I.Estremo Oriente* 457.

⁷⁰ Gardin 1985; Rapin 1992, 295.

⁷¹ Lecuyot 1993, 32-33.

⁷² Lecuyot 2007, pl.3.

⁷³ Waterman 1933, 29-30.

⁷⁴ Holt 1999, 45.

at Aï Khanoum was limited to ethnic Greeks.⁷⁵ While the layout of the city is somewhat separated by function, there is no clear identifiable ethnic divide.

The centre of civic space in Greek *poleis*, the agora, is rarely identified in the sites in Babylonia, Iran and Bactria. There are several open spaces in the grid plan of Seleucia-on-the-Tigris that are credible options. A text from the treasury at Aï Khanoum refers to the role of an *agoranomos*, but no identifiable agora was found in the excavations.⁷⁶ While Diodorus mentions an agora at Babylon (sometimes identified with a platform on the Homera mound) the excavations have not revealed any firm candidate.⁷⁷

Although the two main temples of Aï Khanoum used Mesopotamian architecture and the palace used an Iranian architectural plan (the latter with some Hellenistic ornament), the two monuments in the centre of the city, next to the palace and facing onto the main arterial street, emulated Greek temple architecture. The ‘Tomb of Kineas’ and the ‘Stone-vault Mausoleum’, likely both funerary monuments to perceived founders of the city (perhaps with some ritual function), placed Greek visual heritage at the centre of civic identity. This emphasis did not exclude the use of other architectural forms where convenient or suitable.

The significance of funerary practices to civic identity and ethnicity is widely recognised.⁷⁸ At Aï Khanoum the inhabitants followed the Greek

⁷⁵ Holt 2006, 159.

⁷⁶ *I.Estremo Oriente* 322.

⁷⁷ Diod.XXXIV/XXXV.21; Boiy 2004, 12.

⁷⁸ Smith 2003, 40; Mairs 2007, 115.

convention of burying the dead outside the walls, to the north of the city. Similarly, at Takht-i Sangin the necropolis lies to the west of the settlement where there are no walls to the city but the burials were distinct from the settlement in the foothills of the Tešik Taš. The two monumental tombs in the centre of the city presumably followed the Greek tradition of reserving burial in the city for founders. Only one mausoleum from the extra-mural necropolis at Aï Khanoum is published.⁷⁹ The tomb included many generations, stored in jars marked with Greek names.⁸⁰ The funerary stele from the necropolis [144] also displays a concern to follow Greek funerary traditions and ideology. The funerary practices at these sites contrast with Hellenistic-period Uruk, where the Babylonian practice of burial under the floors of domestic dwellings continued through the Seleukid and Parthian periods.⁸¹ There were residents following these Babylonian funerary practices at Seleucia-on-the-Tigris, confirming the impression of a significant Babylonian population.⁸² These sub-floor burials were made contemporaneously with similar sarcophagi and *cappucina* tombs in a necropolis to the east of the city, under what later became the artisans quarter of Coche.⁸³ The inclusion of coins in the mouths of several of the bodies supports the hypothesis of an extramural Greek necropolis.

Themes of the Hellenistic forms of public architecture were echoed elsewhere in civic life (such as the adoption of the iconography of the theatre in figurines) suggesting they were understood and participated with by a wide proportion of society, presumably not only those of Greek descent. Though some

⁷⁹ Bernard 1972.

⁸⁰ *I. Estremo Oriente* 323ff.

⁸¹ Boehmer & Pedde 1994; Hannestad 2012, 998.

⁸² Waterman 1933, 35-37; Messina 2011.

⁸³ Invernizzi 1985, 99.

sites show the adoption of the peristyle for domestic architecture, the majority of examples kept the local forms of houses, far more suited to the available construction materials and the climate. The sparse evidence of funerary practices indicate preferences for local and Hellenistic burial forms, not restricted to the ethnicity of the city's foundation. The form of civic space was often more traditional than the objects used by individuals, such as at Uruk and Telloh, where emphasising the heritage of the city could be used for political weight. In Bactria, there were active links with the distant Mediterranean providing the impetus for the local replication of contemporary ceramic forms, yet the civic monuments of Ai Khanoum emulated Classical Greek forms. After the destruction caused by Antiochus III's attack, the gymnasium and Tomb of Kineas were rebuilt, and the Stone-vault Mausoleum, herm and Delphic maxims were erected as a reaffirmation of the Greek heritage of the city over a century after its foundation.⁸⁴

Conclusion.

The material record of Babylonia, Iran and Bactria shows a dramatic broadening of iconographic repertoire. This new repertoire did not replace all existing forms, and while there was much cross-over and exchange between different artistic traditions, often developing in response to each other, we also see independent local developments. The use of Hellenistic visual forms by local populations did not always equate to the adoption of a Greek way of life. Hellenistic iconography often retained its original meaning though could be selected, appropriated and reformulated (intentionally or gradually) to suit the purposes of the new audience

⁸⁴ Lerner 2003/2004, 385.

or users. In addition to the new Hellenistic subjects that developed existing iconographic preferences, perhaps the most dramatic innovation in Babylonian and Iranian art of this period was the introduction and replication of the nude male figure into the artistic vernacular.

This chapter has attempted to show how the transmission and exchange of Hellenistic iconography and visual forms took place independently of the agency of the royal sphere, long out-lasting direct Macedonian rule. The movement of styles and subjects was not solely down to royal involvement but was likely influenced by the large number of settlers from the Mediterranean. Non-Greeks also commissioned and used Hellenistic art and visual culture. A number of hybrid objects can be identified (those which combine features of different iconographic traditions), but in many cases we see the co-existence as much as merging of these iconographic traditions. It is likely there were many areas of tension or conflict in these interactions, as well as cultural significance to many of the choices, but it should be emphasised that there were not strict boundaries in the use of artistic repertoire. Individuals and societies in Babylonia, Iran and Bactria were ‘multi-lingual’ in their use of artistic forms.

Chapter VIII: Conclusion.

This thesis has aimed to demonstrate the multiplicity of networks and arenas of cultural interaction in Babylonia, Iran and Bactria after the conquest of the Achaemenid empire by Alexander, as evidenced in the art and architectural ornament created and used in these regions, emphasising the involvement of non-royal and local agency.

Cultural interaction between regions from the Mediterranean to the Hindu Kush was facilitated and heightened by the military conquests of Alexander and the many succeeding changes in power in the following two centuries. As well as the imposition of rule and the settlement of Greco-Macedonian settlers in new foundations, military conflicts also resulted in other formal areas of interaction, including treaties and trade agreements (including tribute), political marriages, the assignment of ambassadors and exchange of gifts such as between the Seleukids and Chandragupta.¹ Greco-Bactrian and Indo-Greek rulers catered to the visual languages of their subjects by creating 'bilingual' issues presenting themselves with Indian royal titlature and placing Greek and Indian iconography directly alongside each other on one object. There is a similar recognition of the visual language of newly conquered territory in the *philhellene* Arsacid coin issues minted at Seleucia-on-the-Tigris.² These examples demonstrate the role of the 'royal sphere' in cultural

¹ App.Syr.55; Ath.I.32; Tarn 1938, 100, 152.

² Zahle 1990, 127-128.

exchange and the transmission of artistic styles, also seen in the patronage of art at Old Nisa.

Individual features of the 'Hellenistic ruler' image were selected and reformulated to produce distinctive dynastic images for Greco-Macedonian and Iranian dynasties. The image of the contemporary dominant power in the regions affected the iconography of neighbouring and client rulers. Personal symbols of Seleukid rule, such as the anchor, were used by other dynasties including the Arsacids and Kamniskirids. The Seleukids ruled Media and Babylonia for over 170 years and so their artistic repertoire became part of the visual language of power in these regions. The Seleukid *philoï* may have been almost all Greco-Macedonians, but local elite had important roles in administration and in commissioning public monuments, such as at Uruk and Telloh.³ The Seleukid kings almost always used Hellenistic visual languages on their coinage, with Babylonian interpretations possible for some images such as Apollo-on-the-*omphalos* or horns on Seleukos I.

Use of Hellenistic visual languages was not confined to the royal sphere and direct emulation of the royal sphere, in contrast to the Achaemenid period, where a distinctive Achaemenid style is not very visible outside the royal monuments.⁴ Aspects of Hellenistic iconography not specific to the royal sphere were taken up in the artistic vernacular after the Macedonian conquest. This is demonstrated by, for example, terracotta figurines of Hellenistic subjects not associated with the royal

³ Habicht 1958; Savalli-Lestrade 1998; Austin 2003, 128-129.

⁴ Sancisi-Weerdenburg, Kuhrt & Root 1994, 5; See, however, Dusinberre 2003.

sphere or specifically championed by the Seleukids, such as Eros and ‘Macedonian rider’ figurines. This is supported also by the appearance of more obscure mythological subjects and multiple cultic configurations of Greek deities, such as Marsyas [108] and Herakles wrestling Achelaos [120].

This widespread adoption of Hellenistic art into the repertoire of Babylonia, Iran and Bactria was presumably a result of the many Greek and Macedonian colonists and veterans who moved eastwards, such as the Magnesians moved to Antiocheia-in-Persis by Antiochus I.⁵ This is not to say Greeks were the only users of Hellenistic-style objects, but that their movement and presence facilitated greater interaction and created more networks of exchange. It is likely many votive dedications, such as at Takht-i Sangin and Mašjid-i Solaiman, were made by soldiers and mercenaries. Scythian and Indian items could be the result of military loot as much as trade or dedications by people from those regions, although expansions and changes in territorial boundaries brought proximity between visual cultures, facilitating trade. The movement of settlers, soldiers (such as Soteles at Failaka), craftsmen (such as Antiochus son of Dryas at Susa) and businessmen (visible in Babylonian archives) created numerous networks of visual exchange and interaction.⁶

Openness to new visual forms and the transmission of Hellenistic artistic influences did not erase distinctive local artistic traditions. We see the revival and rejuvenation of long-standing forms of architectural ornament at old Babylonian sites

⁵ Austin 2006, no.190.

⁶ *I.Estremo Oriente* 416, 215; Lindström 2003.

such as Telloh, Uruk (and presumably Babylon and Borsippa) particularly for sanctuaries.⁷ Neo-Babylonian sculptural styles were maintained for cult statues in Esagila at Babylon [17] and Irigal at Uruk [35]. Elements of Achaemenid ruler representation and the Achaemenid-period Persian visual culture were important in the formation of *frataraka* iconography [84-85]. Rather than mindless replication, Persid rulers developed iconography to suit their own purposes by combining the Achaemenid elements of ruler representation in conjunction with motifs from Achaemenid buildings at Persepolis and contemporary Persian motifs. Aspects of continuity in art of Babylonia, Iran and Bactria outside the royal sphere noted in previous chapters complement aspects of continuity noted in administration after the Achaemenids.⁸ Temple administration remained very important to Babylonian society under the Seleukids, evident not only in the continuation of cuneiform archives but also in the maintenance of sanctuaries in Babylon, Borsippa and Uruk.⁹

In south-west Iranian lands, commissions of the traditional form of public monument, the rock relief, continued and developed in style. Rock reliefs hold a prominent position in the archaeological record of Elam and Achaemenid Persia. The Herakles relief at Bisitun [86] incorporated the Greek preference for high relief and sculpture in the round to this format, combining a naturalistic Hellenistic pose with a distinctive Iranian execution of the snail-curl beard, serene facial features and some awkwardness and brevity in the anatomy. The nearby 'Mithridates relief' [87] and Persepolis 'barsom relief' [83] follow Achaemenid sculptural formats of *bas-relief*

⁷ Parrot 1948; Mallwitz, Schmidt & Wetzel 1957; Kuhrt & Sherwin-White 1991.

⁸ Briant 1990; Aperghis 2004; Lane Fox 2007; Tuplin 2008.

⁹ McEwan 1981; Downey 1988.

panels but the carving style is more linear and roughly finished, in contrast to the smooth polish of Achaemenid sculpture.¹⁰ Rock reliefs continued to be central to public ruler representation, such as later Parthian reliefs at Bisitun and across Elymais, with a new emphasis on frontality, and Sasanian reliefs at Naqš-i Rostam next to Achaemenid tomb reliefs.¹¹

In the third and second centuries BC new Iranian visual forms developed, most prominently those associated with the Parthians. Parthian costume and the linear, frontal style of representation appear in the art of lands conquered by the Arsacids. Representations of rulers and important men in Elymais portrayed them in Parthian costume, such as the V-necked belted long jacket over baggy trousers with deep U-folds and tripartite hairstyle [76]. Terracotta figurines of men wearing the *bašlyk* and long-sleeved tunic and trousers were made in Babylonia as well as men in the cloak and *kausia* of a Macedonian.¹² Persid and Parthian (and later Elymaean, after Kamniskires III) rulers developed their own distinct character of ruler representation, adding the diadem into compositions focused on their local costume.

The material record also shows independent developments of artistic production based on local preferences, such as astronomical and astrological motifs on seal impressions at Uruk supporting their historical reputation as a centre for these studies. The grey schist *pyxides* from Takht-i Sangin and Ai Khanoum [148], for example, suggest a local market for these locally manufactured containers. The

¹⁰ Canepa 2010, 570.

¹¹ Schmidt 1978, 122-141; Kawami 1987; Mathiesen 1992.

¹² Klengel-Brandt & Cholidis 2006, 259-268, 257-287; 39.

availability of resources played a considerable part in the development of distinctive regional artistic expertise and preferences, such as in Parthia and Bactria where there were limited local sources of suitable stone for carving but unbaked clay sculpture became the main medium for large-scale sculpture, usually in relief.

A prominent feature of Babylonian coroplastics is the proportion of ‘new’ Hellenistic motifs that accentuate subjects already common in Babylonian terracotta figurines, such as nude female figures, riders and embracing couples. There was a distinct selectivity in the multiplicity of new artistic forms. The conservatism of composition noted in Babylonian terracotta figurine production also highlights this selectivity in the otherwise open reception of new iconography.

The visual record shows many Babylonian, Iranian and Bactrian subjects depicted in Greek styles and formats. The most frequent examples are the portrayal of Iranian iconography in a Hellenistic naturalistic style on Attic-standard drachms of Parthian, Elymaean and Persid coinage. This is illustrated at Old Nisa in the wall-paintings of Parthian riders [94]. The clay head of a bearded man with dark skin wearing a *bašlyk* from Takht-i Sangin [111] also shows an Iranian subject in a naturalistic manner. The execution of this head in the round rather than as a relief also suggests Hellenistic artistic influence. The reformulation of Greek styles and formats is seen also in Berossus’ creation of the *Babyloniaka*: the Babylonian priest used the Greek language and form of historical narrative to record his local history from the cuneiform archives of Esagila.

There are also many examples of Greek subjects executed in Babylonian, Iranian and Bactrian styles and formats. The Herakles relief at Bisitun, discussed above, follows the Iranian rock relief format but does not conform to the *bas*-relief style. The iconography of Herakles, perhaps representing Verethragna or Bel if not Herakles himself, appears in third-century AD *bas*-reliefs at Shimbar in Elymais.¹³ Hellenistic motifs were used also in combination with Iranian motifs in a single composition, such as the reverse of Wādfraḏād II's issues [85] where Nike crowns the Persid ruler with a wreath in front of the *faravahar*. Here the message of victory and divine favour implied by Nike is present, even if the Greek goddess was not worshipped or recognised as such. Forms of Hellenistic architectural ornament, such as Corinthian capitals, were adapted to the local building techniques and materials, such as the terracotta pilaster capitals from Seleucia-on-the-Tigris [1] glazed blue in the traditional manner of Babylonian architectural ornament, and the red-painted assembled pilaster capitals at Old Nisa [92]. The ceramics from Seleucia-on-the-Tigris also include Hellenistic forms with an added Babylonian blue glaze.¹⁴ The combination of forms and techniques from different visual traditions was practiced in many areas of artistic production unrelated to the royal sphere or any official programme of social cohesion.

¹³ Mathiesen 1991, no.8.

¹⁴ Valtz 1993, 41-44.

This emphasis on heterogeneity and creativity demands the avoidance of a single model to encompass the character of the visual culture.¹⁵ Features of Greek art could be used in many different ways, to various purposes by different groups, prompting multiple interpretations. It is not possible to assume the ethnicity of the patron from the choice of visual language in an artefact (see the dedication of Atrosokes [108]). The visual language does, however, illustrate the choices available in the area and perhaps the ethnicity or at least artistic training of the craftsman.

Aspects of Greek visual culture were adopted into many features of everyday life, and were seen and engaged with by large proportions of the populations. This is most notable in the iconography and form of coinage. Iconography accompanying business transactions on seal impressions and the form of sealings also changed dramatically. Perhaps the most dramatic iconographical change was the adoption of the nude male figure into the artistic repertoire of Babylonia, Iran and Bactria, particularly since it came to represent specifically Iranian subjects, such as Verethragna and Bel. Representations of nude male figures were commissioned by Iranians [108] and placed in arenas of traditional Iranian visual culture [86]. The Greek language was used across these regions into the early Parthian period, even by local dynasts (such as at Telloh) on traditional forms of architectural ornament to speak to a wider audience and participate in the language of the royal administration. Monuments such as the Bisitun Herakles relief [86] and the theatre at Babylon introduced new repertoire into the existing public landscape, in addition to the foundation of new cities such as Seleucia-on-the-Tigris and Ai Khanoum. The

¹⁵ Mairs 2011b.

absence of a clear break in the style of coroplastics between the Seleukid and Parthian period underscores the longevity of Hellenistic artistic influence in the wider sphere, independent of political change.

The examples of Hellenistic visual forms used by the general populace of these regions discussed above and throughout the thesis demonstrate the transmission of Hellenistic art was not solely driven by the Greco-Macedonian rulers, their court and those directly wishing to emulate the royal sphere.¹⁶ The Hellenistic artistic influences were not a detachable wash painted over the top of existing local traditions, only affecting those immediately involved in the administration and royal affairs. While there was undoubtedly a considerable ruler-driven impetus for artistic transmission and exchange, both directly and indirectly (see the discussion above), a focus on royal involvement gives a blinkered image of the situation.

The relationship and differences between the visual culture of centres and peripheries is subtle. The coroplast on Failaka who made **53** was limited by the available resources of moulds but also had an imprecise conception of a contemporary Iranian ruler. The overall repertoire of Failaka's coroplastics, however, is very similar to that of Babylonian urban centres. There is also a similar coroplastic repertoire at the royal Hellenistic foundation of Seleucia-on-the-Tigris to those at the ancient Babylonian cities of Babylon, Uruk and Telloh. These cities were familiar with Greek art, language and culture, but chose to maintain their traditional forms of public architecture. The seal impressions and terracotta figurines from Uruk show the

¹⁶ *Contra* Palagia 2012.

presence of Hellenistic artistic influences, while the proudly displayed gift of Greek names to the Uruk elite from the suggests close contact with and support from the Seleukid kings. The inscriptions and seal impressions from the Bit Rēš and Irigal include Akkadian, Aramaic and Greek: each language used for a particular context and function, as part of the temple, secular or royal administration. Some rich persons (unknown whether of Macedonian or Babylonian descent) at Uruk participated in the culture of Macedonian elite, as evidenced by the Frēhāt en-Nufēgi tombs. The transmission of Hellenistic artistic influences to ‘peripheral’ sites is also demonstrated in the local manufacture of contemporary Mediterranean pottery forms at Aī Khanoum, and in the use of Hellenistic forms at the rural sanctuaries of Mašjid-i Solaiman and Shami in the Zagros Mountains as well as their urban centre at Susa.

A more helpful theoretical framework is that of networks, both long and short, emphasising transmission and interaction. This thesis highlights these networks through the identification of regional connections and preferences. The Babylonian coroplastic *koine* suggests the maintenance of a strong Babylonian identity and the vitality of artistic networks. This is supported more explicitly by the trade and business networks attested by the appearance of some impressions from the same private seals at Seleucia-on-the-Tigris as at Uruk.¹⁷ The rejuvenation of Babylonian religious architecture at Babylon, Borsippa, Telloh and Uruk also illustrates the continuation of distinctive Babylonian visual languages. The visual culture of Susa long bore close links to Babylonian sites, such as in architectural ornament, and terracotta figurines from Susa in the Seleukid and Parthian periods suggests these

¹⁷ Wallenfels 1994, 150.

links were maintained. Networks of transmission between India and Bactria are illustrated in the appearance of Indian-style artefacts at Takht-i Sangin [123] and Aï Khanoum [153], of Indian names among the Greek economic texts and jars of Taxilan coins from Aï Khanoum, as well as the later store of Indian ivory artefacts at Begram.¹⁸ There are also visible networks between Bactrian sites, such as the silver reliefs of Cybele from Takht-i Sangin [126] and Aï Khanoum [152], and the preference for unbaked clay sculpture, evident at the other ‘north Iranian’ site of Parthian Old Nisa. The material record of these sites illustrates further links between the neighbouring regions of Bactria and Parthia with the Scythian Steppes. These networks built on existing connections, such as the ‘Mesopotamian’ stepped-niche architecture of Aï Khanoum’s temples also visible at the Bronze Age complex at Shortughai.

This thesis aimed to explore and demonstrate the flexibility and lack of mutual exclusivity in the use of Mesopotamian, Iranian and Hellenistic visual languages.¹⁹ The art of societies in these regions after the Macedonian conquest is characterized by ‘visual multilingualism’, where diverse artistic influences could be combined into individual objects and also co-exist independently, understood and reinterpreted by many sections of that society. Arsacid kings used Hellenistic motifs on coins minted at Seleucia-on-the-Tigris for their Macedonian subjects, but also employed Hellenistic motifs for their own purposes in the decoration of their Parthian citadel at Old Nisa. Their appreciation of Hellenistic visual forms was not solely a

¹⁸ *J.Estremo Oriente* 331, 328. 348; Bernard 1971, 439; Cambon 2007, 231-236.

¹⁹ Wiesehöfer 1994.

political ploy to cater to the expectations of one audience, but a selective process of use throughout their art, without compromising their Iranian identity. Similarly, the *fratarakā* included Hellenistic motifs such as Nike to accentuate their message of proudly asserting their Persian heritage [85]. Adad-nadin-akhe emphasised his local heritage at Telloh but included a Greek transliteration of his name on bricks that imitated Gudea's. The patrons of the sanctuaries at Uruk, while members of the local aristocracy, were 'friends of the kings' and included Greek names alongside their Babylonian names. Babylonians, Iranians and Babylonians used Hellenistic art for traditional local purposes, such as Atrosōkēs at Takht-i Sangin [108], who dedicated his votive altar to the local god. The use of Hellenistic artistic forms did not constitute a rejection of all traditional local values.

The art of Babylonia, Iran and Bactria during the two centuries after the Macedonian conquest was vibrant, receptive and diverse. The agency of populations outside the royal sphere was vital for the widespread transmission of Hellenistic visual languages into the artistic vernacular and for the longevity of these artistic influences. The subjects, styles and forms familiar to Hellenistic art were used by non-Greeks, often reformulated for their own purposes rather than because the original meaning was lost over distance. These uses were not incompatible with the simultaneous use of existing and independently developing local artistic traditions, which thrived in many areas during this period.

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